Chapter Four: Fucini and the Macchiaioli School of artists and their illustrated edition of *Le Veglie di Neri*

In this chapter the close relationship between Fucini and the Macchiaioli artists is examined and the synergy between them which produced one of the most important Italian illustrated books in the Ottocento is analyzed.

Fucini was a close friend of the proto-impressionist artists, referred to as the Macchiaioli, whom he first met at the Caffè Michelangiolo, when he moved to Florence, in the 1860s.[[1]](#footnote-1) Some of these artists were leading lights in the school and included his life-long friend Giovanni Fattori, Telemaco Signorini, Adriano Cecioni and Diego Martelli, the principal theorists of the school, as well as the Gioli brothers, Francesco and Luigi, Rafaello Sernesi, the Roman artist Giovanni (Nino) Costa, Giuseppe Abbati, Vincenzo Cabianca, Serafino De Tivoli, Vittorio Corcos and Eugenio Cecconi. The relationship between Fucini and the Macchiaioli was close and mutually productive. Fucini, for example, dedicated his story *Fra due litiganti* to the Macchiaiolo Vittorio Corcos who, in turn, illustrated *Fiorella*. Fucini often invited the Macchiaioli to his villa, at Dianella, or to his house at Castiglioncello, near Cecina, where Diego Martelli also had a villa, and he frequently suggested subjects they should paint to them and supported them with the occasional personal commission. Apart from close friendship and the numerous personal gifts of their art which the Macchiaioli presented to Fucini, they, for their part, responded magnificently to a request to illustrate Fucini’s novelle in the first illustrated edition of *Le Veglie di Neri*, (1890). Since Fucini and the Macchiaioli shared a common goal in the depiction and the recording of life in rural Tuscany in the second half of the nineteenth century, albeit in two different media, the very close personal relationship and interaction between Fucini and the Macchiaioli was extremely fruitful and produced a special synergy between author and text and artist and illustration, and especially, between text and illustration.

We should not undervalue the importance of the relationship between writer and illustrator, culminating in an illustrated book at this period, because while there are numerous examples of texts accompanied by illustrations in England and France at this time[[2]](#footnote-2), there were comparatively fewer illustrated books produced in Italy during the Ottocento. Despite the glorious Italian tradition of illustrating books with woodcuts in the incunable period and the exquisite wood, copper and steel-engravings produced from the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries, surprisingly, there are comparatively fewer examples of Italian illustrated texts, in the latter part of the nineteenth-century in which there is such a close interaction between a text and an illustration. Moreover, two of the few illustrated books were for children - the illustrated editions of Collodi’s *Le Avventure di Pinocchio*, (Florence: Paggi, 1883), illustrated by Ennio Mazzanti, and De Amicis’ *Cuore*, (Milan: Treves, 1886), illustrated by Arnaldo Ferraguti. Some notable exceptions for the adult market, include Francesco Hayez’s lithographs for Sir Walter Scott’s *Ivanhoe* (1820), Bartolomeo Pinelli’s illustrations for *Meo Patacca* (1834), Francesco Gonin and Luigi Riccardi’s woodcut vignettes for the 1840 edition of *I promessi sposi*, Aleardo Terzi’s illustrations for the *Novelle di Térésah*, Ferraguti’s illustrations for Verga’s *Vita dei campi*, (Milan: Treves, 1897), the edition of D’Annunzio’s collection of poems *Isotta Guttadauro* illustrated by Vincenzo Cabianca and others (Rome: La Tribuna, 1886) and Gaetano Previati’s illustrations for *I promessi sposi* for the Hoepli edition of 1900. Since the relationship which exists between Fucini’s text and illustrations by the Macchiaioli in *Le Veglie* is very close indeed, and, equally important, at this time, very few books in Italy were illustrated by artists from the same school, Fucini’s *Veglie* is also an important, if not a seminal book in the history of the illustrated book in nineteenth-century Italy. The illustrated edition of *Le* *Veglie di Neri* and the relationship between text and illustration are, consequently, also analyzed in this chapter.

4.1. The foundation of the Macchiaioli as a Movement and as a School

The celebrated art historian and literary critic, Emilio Cecchi, described the predominantly Tuscan, if not principally Florentine, School of artists, referred to generally, as the Macchiaioli School, as ‘The most striking Movement in nineteenth-century Italian painting, the one which produced the “purest” artists…the so-called Macchiaiolo Movement, the name of which is derived from “macchia”: splash or spot of chiaroscuro and colour’.[[3]](#footnote-3) The art critic Raffaele De Grada also emphasized the importance of the Movement: ‘In quel periodo convennero a Firenze da tutta l’Italia i giovani artisti più vivaci dell’epoca e si svolse sulla scena fiorentina il fenomeno artistico più importante dell’Ottocento italiano, il movimento ‘macchiaiolo’.[[4]](#footnote-4)

The Macchiaioli accepted the name of Macchiaioli, applied facetiously to them, in 1862, in order to identify them and to set them apart from the more formal and rigid conventions and painting style favoured by the art establishment and by many of the contemporary art Academies in Italy and France, particularly in Florence and Paris.[[5]](#footnote-5) Bearing in mind that the first French Impressionist Exhibition was not held until 1874, whereas the Macchiaioli began painting and exhibiting their works from 1855 to 1865, they are considered by most art historians to be precursors of Impressionism and anticipators of the celebrated French Movement. Indeed, some early critics, especially Helen Zimmern[[6]](#footnote-6) and Enrico Somaré,[[7]](#footnote-7) originally referred to the Macchiaioli as Impressionists, and the celebrated art critic Lionello Venturi and the art historian Norma Broude, even ventured to refer to them as Proto-Impressionists.[[8]](#footnote-8)

Given the close physical proximity of the Florentine Accademia dell’arte, to the Caffè Michelangiolo, in Via Larga, the Macchiaioli first began meeting as a group at the Caffè from the 1850s. A comparatively small (53.5 x 82 cm.), and sombre watercolour sketch on paper, in the style of Daumier,[[9]](#footnote-9) painted by Adriano Cecioni (Fontebuona, Florence 1836-Florence 1886), entitled *Il Caffè Michelangiolo* (c.1861), (Milan, Gerli Collection) featuring caricatures of some of the principal members of the group, enables us to identify the core of this school: Serafino De Tivoli, Saverio Altamura, Pasquale Betti, Ferdinando Buonamici, Lorenzo Gelati, Michele Rapisardi, the sculptors Augusto Rivalta and Vincenzo Consani, Vincenzo Cabianca, Raffaello Sernesi, Odoardo Borrani, Vito D’Ancona, Giovanni (Nino) Costa, Giuseppe Bellucci, Giovanni Mochi, Alessandro Lanfredini, Giovanni Fiorucci, Gabriele Castagnola, Cristiano Banti, Leonardo Gasser, ‘Giamino’, Stanislao Pointeau, Augusto Rivolta, Michele Gordigiani, Cristiano Banti, Silvestro Lega and Telemaco Signorini. Conspicuous by their absence from the sketch are Giovanni Fattori and Giuseppe Abbati, probably excluded by Cecioni because of his alleged professional jealousy of these two leading lights of the School. The Caffè Michelangiolo became for Florence and its artists, especially the Macchiaioli, at this time, what the Café Guerbois and the Café de la Nouvelle Athènes were later to become for the French Impressionists.

Several of the founding members of the Macchiaioli had previously been involved in the uprisings which had occurred in many parts of Italy in 1848 and some of them could be considered to be political ‘revolutionaries’. Many, like Fucini, did their military service in the Guardia Nazionale; some, like Fucini, were Garibaldini; indeed, some Macchiaioli actually fought French, Austrian and even Papal troops.[[10]](#footnote-10) Abbati later lost an eye at the battle of Volturno and both he and Sernesi were captured by the Austrians in the Veneto Campaign in 1866. Sernesi, eventually died of his wounds, aged twenty-eight, at Bolzano, in the same year.[[11]](#footnote-11) All the members of the Macchiaioli School, with the exception of Giovanni Fattori, who always had to struggle to make ends meet, came from relatively comfortable, middle-class, backgrounds. Given the historical period, it is unsurprising to learn that each of these artists, was fiercely patriotic and all were firm supporters of the Risorgimento movement which had, as its principal goal, the liberation of foreign invaders from Italy and the ultimate unification of the Italian peninsula. This partly accounts for the great interest of some of the Macchiaioli in military subjects, at least in the early stages of their careers, and especially in their depiction of patriotic subjects, for example,Borrani’s *Cucitrici di camicie rosse* (1863)(Fig.2), Lega’s imposing *Ritratto di Giuseppe Garibaldi* (1861, Modana, Pinacoteca Comunale) and, in particular, the recording of important Italian military victories, such as Lega’s *Bersaglieri che conducono prigionieri austriaci* (1861)(Fig.3), or Fattori’s *Il campo Italiano dopo la battaglia di Magenta* (1861)(Fig.4), his *Carica di cavalleria a Montebello* (1862, Livorno, Museo Civico Giovanni Fattori) or his celebrated *Assalto alla Madonna della Scoperta* (1868) (Fig.5) for which he was awarded the prestigious Concorso Nazionale di pittura in 1868.

Fattori, like Degas, appears to have maintained a life-long fascination with the very close relationship between man and horse as we have seen with his military subjects, not only in the works depicting the cavalry, just cited, but also in his numerous paintings and sketches of *butteri* working with their horses in Maremma, for example, *I butteri* (1893, Livorno), *Mandrie maremmane* (1893)(Fig.6) *Mercato a San Godenzo* (*c*.1882))(Fig.7) and *La* *Marcatura dei torelli in Maremma* (*c*.1887)(Fig.8) to the etchings and engravings he made of similar subjects, up to his death on 30 August 1908. Indeed, the unfinished canvas entitled *Le ultime pennellate* (also referred to as *Cavallo presso un capanno*) which Fattori was working on until his death, poignantly features a solitary horse, bereft of its rider (1908)(Fig.9). This last, powerful painting which Fattori painted in his small room in the Accademia delle Belle Arti, where he taught and lived, is reproduced in *I luoghi di Giovanni Fattori* marking the centenary of Fattori’s demise.[[12]](#footnote-12) The painting recalls the sad message contained in the closing lines of Fucini’s final poem in *Ombre*, *Il mio cavallo* – ‘E mi dice, succhiando un beverone: *-* Siam finiti, padrone!’. Fucini might well have had Fattori in mind when he wrote these lines, especially since Fucini had commissioned Fattori to paint *Cavalli sulla spiaggia*, and moreover, Fucini had suggested the subject matter of *Lo staffato* to Fattori as we will see later in this Chapter.[[13]](#footnote-13) We should also recall Fattori’s powerful and poignant painting *Il cavallo morto (e ora?)*, (1903)(Figs.10a and 10b), which portrays a dead horse and the anguish of its distraught owner.[[14]](#footnote-14)

It is surprising, though not paradoxical, to note how the Macchiaioli, particularly Fattori, Signorini, Abbati and the Gioli brothers Francesco and Luigi, and Cabianca persisted in painting the somewhat dated, historical subjects since the Academicians and the general ‘good taste’ of the establishment dictated fashion, and, inevitably, it was the fashionable painting, rather than the new style of the macchia, which sold more readily, before the Macchiaioli and their theory of the macchia began to be better understood and was more widely accepted. In the final analysis, all these artists principally relied on selling their works for a living. Fattori, moreover, being widowed three times, and the poorest of all the Macchiaioli, had little choice in some of the subjects he was commissioned to paint.[[15]](#footnote-15) He readily accepted a commission, from an unknown ‘signore Inglese’, to paint his *Elisabetta Regina d’Inghilterra consegna al Cardinal Arcivescovo* *il Giovinetto Duca di York*, between 1853 and 1855 (Fig.11) [[16]](#footnote-16) and even in 1861, Fattori still painted his celebrated history painting *Maria Stuarda al campo di Crookstone* (Fig.12).[[17]](#footnote-17) Given Fattori’s meagre finances, together with the fashion and contemporary demand for patriotic subjects, he, and other Macchiaioli artists, principally Borrani and Lega, found an ideal solution- they decided to paint contemporary military subjects, often depicting decisive incidents, particularly notable Italian victories in the Risorgimento, subjects they knew were to bring them fame and, more importantly, were guaranteed to sell well.[[18]](#footnote-18)

In a manner not dissimilar to what was occurring at the time with some anti-classical and anti-neoclassical Italian writers, such as the anti-Carducciani and with some Romantic artists in France and in other parts of Europe, the Macchiaioli were becoming increasingly disillusioned with some of the artistic (and literary) conventions espoused by the celebrated Accademia d’Arte in Florence which was originally led by the pro-neoclassical, Pietro Benvenuti, until his death, in 1844. They gradually realized that the somewhat frigid, classical and neoclassical themes and subjects, still favoured by the artistic establishment in Paris, which still praised the works of Géricault and David, and the relatively arid history paintings also favoured by the Accademia in Florence, (especially by Benvenuti), which encouraged the painting of historical subjects[[19]](#footnote-19), and even the early work of Fattori, held little appeal for them. These establishment values appear to have been increasingly perceived by many, especially by Tuscan artists, living and working in the new capital of a newly created European country, to be little more than anachronistic costume-dramas and to have little relevance to a newly created country whose inhabitants were striving to rid themselves of their present invaders and of their country’s chequered historical past.[[20]](#footnote-20) These artists were now endeavouring to create a new set of modern standards and to create and adopt new contemporary values which were worthy of, and had more relevance for a new nation of new Italians and were perceived to be of more value in achieving a rapidly developing and freshly evolving, new, national identity.

In 1855, the artists Saverio Altamura, Serafino De Tivoli and Domenico Morelli travelled to Paris expressly to see the celebrated Exposition Universelle, held there that year. The works of three French Romantic artists, Alexandre-Gabriel Decamps, Rosa Bonheur, and those of the Barbizon School of painters, Constant Troyon and especially the latter’s *Bétail conduit au travail. Impression du matin* (Musée d’Orsay)[[21]](#footnote-21) exhibited at the Exposition, influenced their three Italian counterparts profoundly. They appreciated the lyrical, poetic, vibrant and romantic qualities in the works of these French artists and the relative simplicity of their subjects and the expressive manner in which they handled and captured the effects of chiaroscuro and the bold tonal structure they admired in the old masters including Titian, Caravaggio, Tintoretto and Rembrandt.

Greatly influenced by the rural and social realism of Courbet which reached the attention of a wider international audience, on their return to Florence, they described what they had seen and communicated their admiration for Courbet, Decamps, Bonheur, Troyon and the Barbizon School to their friends at the Caffè Michelangiolo.[[22]](#footnote-22) However, we should recall the considerable influence of the Roman landscape painter Giovanni (Nino) Costa on the Macchiaioli, especially in his conversion of Fattori to realism, duly acknowledged by Fattori – ‘se io sono divenuto artista con qualche poco di merito lo devo a Nino Costa’ [[23]](#footnote-23) - since Costa had, in turn, been influenced by the Barbizon school and Corot, and had already started painting ‘rapide e folgoranti impressioni dal vero’[[24]](#footnote-24) around the outskirts of Rome and at Ardea.[[25]](#footnote-25) Indeed, it was Costa who persuaded Fattori to enter the painting competition, sponsored by Bettino Ricasoli, in 1861, which Fattori won, with his celebrated *Il campo italiano dopo la battaglia di Magenta* bringing Fattori considerable fame and attention. After lengthy discussions, the Macchiaioli clearly considered abandoning the conventions of the Accademia and of turning to a more modest style of painting. They concluded that in future, the old, large canvasses with their outdated, somewhat frigid, historical subjects, often depicting events which had taken place several centuries ago, painted in large studios, (often under artificial light) were a thing of the past. From now on, paintings were to be more modest – canvasses, in future, were to be small. Indeed, paintings were no longer to be painted exclusively on expensive canvas- several paintings were executed on card, wood, or on the lids of wooden cigar-boxes. Indeed, the size of a cigar-box lid was deemed to be the ideal size for a small painting and the perfect size for the representation of figures depicted in paintings; as Cecioni recommended: ‘Le figure non dovevano oltrepassare i quindici centimetri.’[[26]](#footnote-26) They also decided that their paintings were also to be executed locally, in Tuscany, mainly in rural Tuscany, in the open air, following the example of the plein-air painters of the Barbizon School, who, in turn, had been influenced by the work and seminal treatise of Pierre-Henri de Valenciennes.[[27]](#footnote-27) Probably influenced by the simple and humble subjects painted by Decamps, Bonheur and Troyon, and especially Troyon, all three of whom were probably influenced by the social aspects of art, later crystallized in Proudhon’s seminal work,[[28]](#footnote-28) the Macchiaioli also decided to paint their impressions of everyday life, especially in rural Tuscany, economically and with immediacy. Indeed, two of Fattori’s paintings contain the word *impressione* in their titles *Tre impressioni di una giornata di pioggia* (1876)(Florence) and *Impressioni fuori la Porta Romana* (1878?) (Florence), as does Signorini’s *Impressione a Chioggia* (1877?) (Livorno, Collezione Alvaro Angiolini).

We should also recall that artists choosing to paint plein-air subjects, were initially restricted to painting small, private studies on little canvases and consequently, their work was not, primarily, intended for public consumption. However, their work could be displayed in public at a later stage. Plein-air painting, practised both by the Macchiaioli and the Impressionists, can be traced to the early seventeenth century and was widespread by the eighteenth. Several French Impressionist artists had also followed the advice and example of Valenciennes and that of Thomas Jones, Simon Denis and others,[[29]](#footnote-29) and were irresistibly drawn to Italy, as Lorrain and Poussin had previously been. Italy had been the natural choice of many artists, for many reasons- its brilliant light, beautiful landscapes, antique monuments and ancient ruins, especially in Venice, Florence, Rome, Naples and their surrounding campagna. In the nineteenth century many of the most important artists, from Turner to Ingres, also visited Italy, especially Rome and its surrounding countryside, Naples and Venice. Corot and Degas, were no exception and added an almost obligatory sejour in Florence, especially from 1865 onwards, when the Italian capital was transferred there. While the Italian sculptors Lorenzo Bartolini and Carlo Marochetti (before transferring to London) lived for a considerable period in Paris, contemporaneously when Luigi Cherubini, Gaspare Spontini, Gioacchino Rossini and Saverio Mercadante had cemented Italo-French cultural ties in Paris (as early as 1816). Géricault had lived in Florence for a month before moving to Rome to study Caravaggio’s works, and to meet Ingres who was to become the Director of Villa Medici, the French Academy in Rome. Ingres had shared a studio in Florence, with Bartolini, in Via delle Belle Donne, from the 1830s to the 1840s. Delaroche and later, his pupils, Daubigny and Auguste Gendron, also spent a considerable period in Florence, the latter becoming a frequent visitor to the Caffè Michelangiolo. Corot, who stayed in Rome and Naples frequently, also lived in Florence, in 1834, and painted memorable luminous views of the city. We should recall that the Gabinetto Vieusseux, founded by Giovan Pietro, from Geneva, the munificent Demidoffs at Pratolino and Niccolò Puccini, an arts patron at Pistoia, offered hospitality to French artists. Degas, Manet and Marcellin Desboutin also lived and painted in Florence.[[30]](#footnote-30) The latter spent seventeen years in Florence, having acquired the Villa Ombrellino, and it was Desboutin who showed the similarities and the links between the Macchiaioli and the French Impressionists when holding court at the celebrated Cafè de la Nouvelle Athènes, on his return to Paris. We should also recall that Manet had also lived in Florence with his brother, Eugène, in 1853, to return again, in 1857, when the Macchiaioli were achieving some notoriety, while he was copying frescoes by Andrea del Sarto at the church of the Annunziata, or works by Lippo Lippi at the Uffizi.

The places initially favoured by the Macchiaioli for their earliest plein-air painting were the Southern part of the River Arno, in Florence, not far from the Ponte Vecchio, near L’Affrico (towards Le Cascine) called La Piagentina– see in particular, Lega’s *Motivo dal vero presso Firenze* (*o Orti a Piagentina*)(1865?, Florence, Private Collection)[[31]](#footnote-31) Sernesi’s sensitive *Il pratone alle Cascine* (1865?, Florence, Private Collection),[[32]](#footnote-32) Giuseppe Abbati’s *L’Arno alla Casaccia* (1863?)(Fig.16),[[33]](#footnote-33) Signorini’s *La Casaccia sull’Arno* (1865?)(Fig.17),[[34]](#footnote-34) or his beautifully atmospheric *Una* *mattina sull’Arno* (*I renaioli*) (1866?)(Fig.18),[[35]](#footnote-35) or his tranquil interpretation of the same river, at dusk, in *L’Arno* (1865?)(Fig.19),[[36]](#footnote-36) and also at Diego Martelli’s house and at La Cuccetta, Fucini’s house at Castiglioncello, in particular, Abbati’s *La casa di Diego Martelli a Castiglioncello* (1865?)(Fig.20),[[37]](#footnote-37) Borrani’s *Castiglioncello* (1865?, Florence),[[38]](#footnote-38) especially Borrani’s *La chiesina di Sant’Andrea a Castiglioncello* (1865?)(Fig.21),[[39]](#footnote-39) a painting once owned by Fucini, which reproduces the parish church of a chaplain, well known to Fucini, as we will see in the Conclusion. Since the Macchiaioli began their new and revolutionary style of plein-air painting at Piagentina and at Castiglioncello, one can see why the Tuscan artists were initially referred to as belonging to La Scuola di Piagentina or La Scuola di Castiglioncello before being given their definitive title of Macchiaioli, in 1862. The Macchiaioli later extended their plein-air painting to recording and depicting numerous aspects of rural life in many parts of the Tuscan countryside, especially in the Appennino Pistoiese and the Alto Mugello, especially at Pietramala, due north of Firenzuola, faithfully depicted by Signorini, and the wild area of Maremma, in Fucini’s native Province of Grosseto, so lovingly and accurately captured by Fattori.

Painters had to accept that the new technology of photography had pre-empted competition with the new medium when the reproduction or an exact replica of a monochrome image was required. Painters, however, still had the advantage when reproducing images in colour. Despite the creation of the first colour photograph, by James Clerk Maxwell, in 1861, colour-photography did not expand commercially, until the turn of the century.

The Macchiaioli conceived of the macchia and its use in contrast and against the chiaroscuro of the Barbizon School as their artistic vehicle, or medium, for capturing their realistic impressions of humble and plein-air, everyday-life in Tuscany. In 1880 Cecioni wrote illuminatingly about their theory of the macchia:

Tutti i Macchiaioli o *impressionisti se preferiamo chiamarli così* [sic.] erano concordi che la loro arte consisteva non nella ricerca della forma, ma nel modo di rendere le impressioni che ricevevano dal vero, col mezzo di macchie di colore, di chiari e di scuri, come per esempio: una sola macchia di colore per la faccia, un’altra per i capelli, un’altra, mettiamo, per la pezzuola, un’altra per la giacchetta o vestito, un’altra per la sottana, un’altra per le mani o per i piedi, e così per il terreno e per il cielo.[[40]](#footnote-40)

Fattori was more direct in his description of what the Macchiaioli initially meant by the macchia:

‘La macchia consisteva nel vedere sul vero una figura, o umana o animale, stagliata su uno sfondo, fosse un muro bianco o aria limpida o altri oggetti. Il Cabianca, ricordo bene, ci mostrò un quadro che si ispirò nel vedere, a Porta alla Croce, un maiale nero su di un muro bianco. Ecco la macchia.’[[41]](#footnote-41)

Diego Martelli’s view of the revolutionary nature of the aims of the Macchiaioli and what they risked in contesting the conventions of the artistic establishment, (especially of the Florentine Accademia) was expressed as early as 1861, when he wrote:

si affermò e completò un movimento di vero nichilismo artistico che riunendo in un pensiero comune di ribellione a tutte le autorità costituite una eletta schiera di martiri dell’idea nuova, a poco a poco distrussero tutto quanto di falso si era fatto e si facevan allora e trasformavano di cima a fondo il sentimento e le parvenze dell’arte moderna.[[42]](#footnote-42)

Indeed, the Macchiaioli’s revolt against the values of the Academy, especially neo-classical values, was no less courageous and revolutionary than the gauntlet thrown down to challenge the values of the artistic establishment by later ‘revolutionary’ artists such as the Divisionists, the Scapigliati, and by Marinetti and the Futurists.

4.2. Fucini and the Macchiaioli

Fucini first met the Macchiaioli in Florence, in the 1860s, in his twenties, either at the Caffè dei Risorti, where some would have heard him reciting his sonnets in Pisan dialect, or, more likely, at the Caffè Michelangiolo. It was here Fucini first met Sernesi, Costa, Fattori, the Gioli brothers, Signorini, Abbati, Cecioni, Cecconi, Cabianca, de Tivoli, Corcos, Martelli and probably, other members of the School, but not Verga, who also frequented the Michelangiolo while in Florence, intermittently, from 1869 to 1871 (as did Capuana from 1864-1868), nor Degas, who was also a frequent visitor in 1855, 1857 and 1858.

Fucini’s friendship with the Macchiaioli was so close that he spent most of his spare time in their company, particularly before marrying Emma Roster. Fucini who had studied painting and drawing, albeit as an amateur, under Giuseppe Baldini, the same

artist who taught Fattori,[[43]](#footnote-43) was an accomplished amateur painter in his own right and painted works of a high standard.[[44]](#footnote-44) Consequently, he had a very fine eye. Not being extremely wealthy, he acquired many paintings, at first-hand, directly from the Macchiaioli, often for modest sums, and many of his paintings were given to him by the Macchiaioli as presents. He was extremely proud of his collection as we learn in a letter he wrote to the Torinese painter, Marco Calderini: ‘da eterno e sfrontato saccheggiatore di studi quale sono, ho raccolto una discreta collezione di bozzetti dei migliori artisti fiorentini.’[[45]](#footnote-45) In an exhibition held at the Gabinetto Vieusseux, in Florence, in 1985, entitled *I Macchiaioli di Renato Fucini*,[[46]](#footnote-46)which displayed the very extensive collection of works by the Macchiaioli which were in Fucini’s possession, [[47]](#footnote-47) it transpires that he owned no fewer than two hundred and eighteen works painted by the Macchiaioli and post-Macchiaioli artists, which is still one of the largest collections of their works in private hands.

Fucini’s personal art collection of the Macchiaioli can be broken down as follows:

one hundred and fourteen oil-paintings, fifty-five watercolours, eleven pencil drawings, twelve tempera-drawings, twenty-four pen and ink drawings and two pen and oil-sketches.

This very extensive collection was formed largely through friendship. Fucini narrates in *Acqua Passata* how he first befriended Giovanni (Gianni) Fattori, probably his closest friend among the Macchiaioli, and how their friendship lasted over thirty years, until Fattori’s death, on 30 August 1908.[[48]](#footnote-48) His extremely affectionate and moving description of Fattori gives us a great insight into one of the greatest Macchiaioli painters and is worth citing in part:

Erano belle le sue pitture, ma il suo cuore d’uomo, d’artista e d’amico era anche più bello. L’ingenuità, la freschezza e la bontà di questo suo cuore era anche nei suoi dipinti.

A vedere quest’uomo in mezzo ai suoi allievi era una tenerezza. Baci e abbracci con gli occhi umidi di lacrime si ripetevano all’arrivo nella scuola e alla partenza.

E senza falsità. Pochi babbi, pochi nonni affettuosissimi possono essere circondati, dai figliuoli e dai nipoti, di tanto affetto. La sua modestia superava la sua bravura e la sua bontà.

Ed è vissuto ed è morto povero, perchè, al solito, o punto o male compreso finchè è stato vivo. Ma, però, sempre contento e sempre sereno anche quando, come suol dirsi, contrastava il desinare con la cena. Gli ultimi anni di sua vita li passò, come diceva lui, da gran signore, per merito di Ferdinando Martini, il quale, venuto ministro dell’Istruzione, si ricordò di lui e gli procurò un posto nell’Istituto di Belle Arti di Firenze.[[49]](#footnote-49)

Fucini also narrates how the impoverished Fattori, on the rare occasions he dined out, invariably went to ‘una oscura bettola tenuta in via del Parione da una certa Cesira….per riguardo alla suddetta cassaforte, non ne approfittava altro che rarissimamente’, on being asked by her, what he would like to eat, Fattori invariably replied: ‘Sora Cesira, mi dia qualche cosa d’indigesto’[[50]](#footnote-50)- Fucini’s comment on this, is poignant:

‘Quanta tristezza se si pensa che quell’uomo dipingeva allora dei quadretti di dimensioni piccolissime (0.15 x 0,10) che dopo la sua morte sono stati venduti mille e anche millecinquecento lire l’uno!’.[[51]](#footnote-51)

We are fortunate to have a description of how Fucini commissioned Fattori to paint *Cavalli sulla spiaggia* a painting which is still in the Fucini family’s private collection to this day (Fig.22)[[52]](#footnote-52) Apart from providing a rare insight into how informally Fattori worked, on occasions, at least when painting for friends, and into how he did not exclusively paint from real life but also improvized, which is of great interest to the art-historian, it is further evidence of the close friendship between the two Tuscans:

Essendomi capitata fra le mani una tavoletta che mi parve adattata per dipingervi, la portai al Fattori, chiedendogli che mi ci desse due pennellate. Accettò l’invito e si mise subito all’opera. Ma io lo fermai, dicendo che volevo prima fissare il prezzo. Povero Gianni! Da prima si ribellò; poi, nonostante il gran bisogno nel quale si trovava, mi chiese la somma favolosa di *dieci lire*.

Lui al cavalletto, io seduto alle sue spalle, incominciò la pittura e la conversazione.

-Che vuoi che ti dipinga?

-Quello che ti pare. Quattro pennellate, la tua firma e basta.

-E allora, siccome ti piace tanto il mare, ti ci farò un po’ di mare.- E lo fece; poi, sulla destra, un po’ di terra, in salita; poi due barche in acqua, poi una sulla spiaggia, rivoltata; poi un omino sdraiato in terra, come mi disse lui, era un pescatore che si riposava; poi un gruppetto d’animali…- E ora, - disse lui- ti ci farò…

-Non mi ci devi fare altro. - E gli levai il dipinto di sul cavalletto... .

Fucini narrates that as Fattori’s painting proceeded and became increasingly more beautiful he calculated that with each brush-stroke he owed his friend more for the painting until:

E così aumentando di cinque lire a ogni pennellata nuova di mia soddisfazione che vedevo dare su quel gioiello di dipinto, arrivai a *premeditargli* il prezzo di cinquanta lire.[[53]](#footnote-53)

Fattori was not very practical, had little business acumen and died in relative poverty, yet he profited from some sound financial advice Fucini gave him. After the death of one of Fattori’s compagne with whom he had co-habited after being widowed (on no fewer than three occasions) Fattori learned that from the money he gave her to run their household, she had managed to save 2,000 Lire - a veritable fortune for Fattori. Never having had such a large sum to his name, Fattori panicked and wished to give the money to Fucini, who suggested Fattori should open an account with the Cassa di Risparmio and deposit it there. Fattori appeared to have been eternally grateful to Fucini for this sound advice, which, together with the position and room at the Accademia delle Belle Arti, enabled him to eke out a reasonably comfortable, albeit modest, existence, until his death.

Fucini was also of great assistance to Fattori when, in 1880, he suggested the subject for one of Fattori’s most celebrated paintings *Lo staffato* which, has pride of place in the Galleria d’arte Moderna in Florence (Fig.23).[[54]](#footnote-54) Given the celebrity and importance of this painting, and the circumstances in which Fucini suggested the subject to Fattori are generally unknown, it is worth quoting:

Il quadro *Lo staffato* lo fece per mio suggerimento. Stando un giorno a

vederlo dipingere una scena di guerra, dove era un folto gruppo di soldati a cavallo, in fuga,[[55]](#footnote-55) gli domandai: - O l’idea di fare uno staffato, in queste cariche, in queste fughe, non t’è mai venuta? - Mi guardò maravigliato, in aria interrogativa. Sempre lui! Non sapeva che cosa era uno *staffato*. Lo illuminai, gli piacque e fece subito il quadro che destò ammirazione e che fu sollecitamente e bene comprato da un ricco e intelligente amatore. Voleva farne una copia per regalarmela; non volli.[[56]](#footnote-56)

The incident is also informative because it sheds further light on the close relationship between artist and writer. When Fattori came to illustrate Fucini’s *L’oriolo col cucolo*, it is very likely they consulted each other closely over the illustrations for the story and Fucini may well have given Fattori some advice on these illustrations. If this were the case, and given the close attention the other illustrators paid to Fucini’s text, it is equally likely that Fucini, who was a trained artist, was also closely involved with the other artists and their illustrations for his stories in *Le Veglie*.

In *Acqua Passata* Fucini adds further details which show how intimate his relationship with Fattori was since he was privileged to see him working in his studio frequently. He was also in an ideal position to observe and to comment upon the relative poverty in which Fattori lived.[[57]](#footnote-57)

Fattori’s beautiful and imposing painting of a *Contadina nel bosco* (*Costume toscano*)(1861)(Fig.24), was the key exhibit in the exhibition *Fattori e il Naturalismo in Toscana*, held in Florence, in 2008.[[58]](#footnote-58) The painting is privately owned and has seldom been displayed publicly. Because Fucini was often in Fattori’s studio, it is extremely likely he saw the painting, especially since it was on public display for a few years before being sold in the 1870s. Fattori’s painting, moreover, might have inspired Fucini to write his novella *Lucia*. The young girl in Fattori’s painting is wearing the clothes of a typical Tuscan peasant-girl, who, like Lucia, in Fucini’s story, is also a goatherd, who tends her brown and white goats. By coincidence, one of the goats in Lucia’s care is white, and is named Bianchina. The goat goes astray and becomes the catalyst for Lucia’s rape at the hands of the peasant Tonio. Fattori’s *Contadina* has a sad expression- perhaps she is reflecting on her hard life, or, if she had been the real-life inspiration for Fucini’s fictional Lucia, she could have been reflecting on her rape by ‘il ruvido Tonio’.

When Stefano Bruzzi came to illustrate Fucini’s *Lucia* for the first illustrated edition of *Le Veglie*, he might have recalled Fattori’s striking painting when he illustrated *Lucia*. In the first illustration she is depicted bare-headed and bare-footed (p.39)(Fig.25). However, in his second illustration, (p.49)(Fig.26),Bruzzi depicts her bare-footed, (she carries her oversize ‘scarpe di vacchetta’ in her left hand to save on wear and tear) and is depicted with a sad expression, probably because of the loss of her goat, Bianchina, (p.52)(Fig.27)(white as well as brown goats feature in Fattori’s painting) and she is wearing a head-scarf similar to the one depicted in Fattori’s painting. There is also another curious link between Bruzzi’s illustration, Fucini’s story and the tall, narrow, birch-saplings which feature in Fattori’s painting. Tonio, after raping Lucia, is described by Fucini thus:

‘Tonio quella sera non aveva sonno. Aguzzò tutti i pali per i gelsi della colmata; rifece la traversa all’erpice vecchio e fino al tocco dopo la mezzanotte rimase a frescheggiare sull’aja, cantando a gola spiegata.

Era uno stellato di paradiso.’ (p.53)(*TGS* p.27).

Tonio is clearly described by Fucini sharpening similar tall, narrow, saplings to make supporting-posts for mulberry-trees. Bruzzi, moreover, similarly depicts Tonio sharpening similar tall, narrow, birch-saplings to make supports for mulberry-trees (Fig.28). If one considers all the features in Fattori’s *Contadina nel bosco*-the costume, the head-scarf, the girl’s sad expression, that she, like many contemporary Tuscan peasant-girls often went barefoot,[[59]](#footnote-59) both white, as well as brown, goats and birch-saplings feature in Fattori’s picture, in Fucini’s *Lucia*, and Bruzzi’s illustration to *Lucia*, it is possible that Fattori’s *Contadina Toscana* was the inspiration for Fucini’s *Lucia* and for Bruzzi’s later illustrations to the story. It is also possible that *Lucia* was based on a person Fucini knew in real life, and just as Fucini suggested *Lo staffato* to Fattori as a suitable subject, he could also have done the same for *Lucia*.

Before leaving Fucini’s ‘cari e lontani ricordi di quei tempi e di quell’amico’[[60]](#footnote-60) we should be aware of a detail in these memoirs which sheds light on a possible source for Fucini’s *Scampagnata*. In ‘Gianni Fattori’ Fucini recalls:

‘In questa storiella …c’è secondo me, un po’ di posa; ma merita d’esser raccontata, perchè ha un carattere che rivela sempre più il temperamento di quel simpatico originale; così saldamente temprato alla scuola delle privazioni’ [[61]](#footnote-61)

and records meeting Fattori after he had been invited:

‘a Pistoia da Cecco Bartolini, un bel signore, un caro amico nostro, il quale, nella sua

ricca casa provvista d’ogni ben di Dio e larga d’ospitalità goduta... anche dal Carducci, gli offriva un’accoglimento intimamente festoso come il Fattori si meritava’[[62]](#footnote-62) Fucini

describes the lavish hospitality shown towards Fattori, which Fucini, and Carducci, had also enjoyed on numerous occasions. Fucini recalls how Fattori found himself ill-at-ease in a house where his every whim was catered for. Fucini recalls Fattori’s words:

‘Capirai - mi disse l’amico Gianni, chiudendo il suo racconto - che in una casa dove c’è tutto, non ci posso stare io. M’è rincresciuto di lasciare così il povero Cecco: ma, in verità, non ne potevo più .’[[63]](#footnote-63)

Fuciniinforms us that *Scampagnata* was based on events which had actually taken place.[[64]](#footnote-64) It is possible that Cecco Bartolini, the wealthy paterfamilias from Pistoia, whose lavish hospitality Fucini had often enjoyed, and who could not let his guests want for anything: ‘Con quella pietanza ci sarebbe stata bene quella salsa che viene d’Inghilterra, ma…- Ce l’ho - rispondeva il Bartolini e me la faceva portare…’[[65]](#footnote-65) could have been the real-life inspiration for Signor Cosimo, the paterfamilias in *Scampagnata* who insists on stuffing his guests with food. The final outcome of what happened, both in fact and in fiction, was identical- both the narrator in the story and Fattori, and very probably, Fucini too, in real life, were forced to curtail their visit. Moreover, the real-life Don Paolo, to whom Fucini refers in ‘Come nacque la *Scampagnata*’ was clearly interested in hunting and in snaring birds, was possibly, the real-life inspiration and model for the gluttonous priest, also, coincidentally, named Don Paolo, (and nick-named Cotenna), since Sor Cosimo’s brother, is equally obsessed with snaring birds, in *Scampagnata*. This could well be further information to confirm the true identity of the real-life Signor Cosimo and Don Paolo and is further evidence that Fucini drew on fact for his novelle and turned fact into fiction.

The very close relationship between Fucini and Fattori is also important because Fattori was, very probably, the first artist Fucini approached in order to commission the illustrations for the *Veglie*. Fucini was, probably, also of the opinion that once Giovanni Fattori, arguably the most important Macchiaiolo participating in the project, was willing to collaborate with the edition, the other artists would soon follow. The closeness of the relationship between Fucini, Fattori and some of the other Macchiaioli artists also had a marked effect on some aspects of their illustrations to *Le Veglie* as will be examined later in this chapter.

The second reason why Fucini acquired such a large collection of works by the Macchiaioli was the consequence of his close friendship with many of these artists. They would either bring him their works, as presents, or would paint and draw portraits of him and his family, and of seascapes, at Castiglioncello, while staying at La Cuccetta, or of the landscape at his villa, at Dianella, near Empoli. Fucini also commissioned some of the Macchiaioli to paint works for him. One of the most fruitful sources of watercolours and tempera and pen and ink drawings for his collection came through his commissioning, (possibly pro parte Ulrico Hoepli) the Macchiaioli to illustrate his novelle, in *Le Veglie*. As we learn from ‘Storia del *Matto delle giuncaie*’, this *bozzetto padulano* grew out of a real hunting-trip in the Padule di Fucecchio which Fucini and Telemaco Signorini both attended.[[66]](#footnote-66) After the hunting-trip, Fucini wrote *Il Matto* on 22 October, 1876, at Daniella, and forgot about it. When asked by Augusto Franchetti (on behalf of Francesco Protonotari, the editor of *Nuova Antologia*) whether he had anything of his he might publish, Fucini recalled his bozzetto.[[67]](#footnote-67) Protonotari invited him to read it out loud to him together with Luigi Capuana, who was also present for the reading, as Fucini recalls. Pietro Fanfani also asked Fucini to read it aloud to him at the Biblioteca Marucelliana, where he was director. The reading, according to Fucini, reduced Fanfani to tears.[[68]](#footnote-68) The *Matto* which, as we learn from his manuscript, Fucini dedicated ‘Alla memoria di Raffaello Foresi’, was accepted for publication in *Nuova Antologia* in December 1876.[[69]](#footnote-69) No fewer than twelve of Fucini’s novelle were initially published from 1876 to 1882- the *Matto delle giuncaie* in *Nuova Antologia* and the remaining eleven were first published in *La Rassegna Settimanale*. The first edition of Fucini’s *Veglie* was published in Florence, in 1882, by Barbèra. Second and third reprints were published in 1883 and 1884, respectively, also by Barbèra. The first illustrated edition of *Le Veglie*,however, was not published until eight years later, by Hoepli, in Milan, in 1890. It is worth surmizing why Fucini changed his publisher from the Florentine, Barbèra, to Hoepli in Milan. We should also be aware for whom Fucini was writing. I believe the answer to the first question lies, partially, in the reply to the second. Clearly Fucini was not writing for a lower-class reading public since the lower orders, who greatly enjoyed his novelle, would have followed the Tuscan oral tradition of having them read to them, out loud, ‘a Veglia’, since many were illiterate, as Theodore Hamerow states:

‘Tuscany had an adult illiteracy rate of about 80 percent in 1841, probably close to the national average. According to the census of 1871, 69 percent of all Italians above the age of five were illiterate, but the percentage ranged from 54 in the north to 75 in the central region, 84 in the south, and 86 in the islands.’[[70]](#footnote-70)

Even making allowance for the later census, illiteracy in rural Tuscany was still high, even in the 1880s. Fucini was clearly writing for literate and relatively comfortably-off members of the middle classes. When the prestigious Milanese publisher, Ulrico Hoepli, of a similar status to Treves, one of Verga’s principal publishers and the founder of the very successful periodical *L’Illustrazione Italiana* (1873), approached Fucini, in 1889, with the offer of publishing an illustrated edition of his *Veglie*, to be illustrated by ‘artisti fiorentini’, the offer was too good to refuse. Indeed, between 1898 and 1904, Hoepli published no fewer than four editions of *Le Veglie* illustrated by Florentine artists. Hoepli had probably calculated that the full potential of the Barbèra edition of the work had not been fully exploited. It had clearly been intended for the polite, salotto society of Florence, judging by the favourable comments from Fucini’s correspondents on receipt of the first illustrated edition of the *Veglie*.[[71]](#footnote-71) However, the ever practical Hoepli had realized that Barbèra, by charging the high price of three lire for a book, without illustrations, had restricted his market to a particularly Tuscan, middle-class, *salottiero* audience. In 1889, Hoepli had spotted the niche in the market and had calculated that by incurring the additional, considerable expense of commissioning ‘Florentine’ artists to illustrate his edition of the *Veglie*, and by producing a more elegant volume with a chromotype title-page, he could charge a full five lire (five and a half lire for a bound copy) for his illustrated edition and could still make even more profit by producing an *edizione scolastica*, with sixteen illustrations, at a price of two and a half lire, which he also published, nine years later, in 1898.[[72]](#footnote-72) Indeed, Fucini’s partnership with Hoepli was so successful in making his *Veglie* better known to a wider reading-public, not only to a wider Milanese, salon society, but to a much broader readership, consisting not only of a growing number of lower middle-class Italian readers, but also to a wider European public, the same public which had looked to Milanese publishers for the production of works of major Italian writers such as Manzoni, Verga, Capuana (and later Pirandello), that he remained with Hoepli for the publication of his *Veglie*, until his death, in 1921. Fucini was flattered by the success of the *Veglie* (1889), (confirmed by the fact that the work appears in Hoepli’s list for that year)[[73]](#footnote-73) and also by the very complimentary correspondence from admirers, for example, Calderini, who wrote to Fucini on 8 September 1889, stating that he had seen ‘ieri l’altro le *Veglie di Neri* fare arcibellissima figura nelle vetrine’[[74]](#footnote-74) and, more intriguingly, by Vittorio Corcos who had provided the five sketches to illustrate *Fiorella*, who wrote on 4 September, on receipt of his copy of the book: ‘*Le Veglie* che mi sembrano una cosa proprio riuscita. Ti ringrazio per il pensiero gentile che hai avuto di mandarmele subito…auguro al libro un nuovo successo che certo non potrà mancargli visto l’eccellenza del testo, dell’edizione, ed anche dei disegni, modestia a parte’,[[75]](#footnote-75) and particularly, by Emilia Peruzzi who wrote to Fucini on 14 December 1889: ‘Ma sa che io mando ad alcuni amici all’estero, come strenna, le sue novelle illustrate.’[[76]](#footnote-76) I believe Hoepli intended to issue the *Veglie* as a *strenna*, either for Christmas, 1889, or as a collection of stories, early in the New Year of 1890, at the same price of five lire, or five and a half lire bound- thereby making an even greater profit. This does not explain why Fucini decided to publish *All’Aria Aperta*, in 1897, with Bemporad, and to continue publishing this work with Bemporad, until Trevisini, in Milan, published the first edition of Fucini’s *Tutti gli Scritti*, in 1944.[[77]](#footnote-77)

It is also odd that Fucini who had the first edition of *Napoli a Occhio Nudo* published by the prestigious Florentine publisher, Le Monnier,did not remain with Le Monnier for the publication of the second edition of this work (in 1913) but chose to publish with La Voce in Rome (later in Florence).There might be a simple explanation for this– perhaps, La Voce offered Fucini a more favourable contract or, equally plausible, Giustino Fortunato, who wrote the introduction to the second edition, had good contacts with La Voce, thereby saving Fucini some of the bureaucratic dealings many writers have to enter into with their publishers.

As we have seen in Chapter Three, by the time Fucini wrote all the stories for *All’Aria Aperta* he had been deliberately and consciously writing for a wider readership rather than limiting himself to merely Florentine or Tuscan readers, and must have concluded that the ideal vehicle for reaching this wider readership was Standard Italian rather than non-educated Tuscan, let alone Tuscan dialect. This is apparent from Fucini’s manuscripts of *All’Aria Aperta* where there is clear evidence that he systematically substituted Standard Italian words for Tuscan dialect words and Tuscan or Pistoian *modi di dire*, in order to make his stories more accessible to a wider reading public. Indeed, the deliberate and conscious reduction of the Tuscan linguistic element of the novelle in *All’Aria Aperta* might have produced a slight loss of the original spontaneity and charm of the stories in *Le Veglie* and, is perhaps, another reason why this second collection may appear to be slightly less successful than the first. It is surprising to see Fucini publish *All’Aria Aperta* exclusively with Bemporad since he had clearly established a very good and profitable relationship with Hoepli, who was the more prestigious and the more internationally acclaimed publisher of the two. It is also probable Fucini might have thought he could have reached an even wider audience had he published *All’Aria Aperta* with Hoepli. We will, perhaps, never know why Fucini remained with Bemporad for the publication of *All’Aria Aperta*, perhaps, he might not have wished to enter into fresh negotiations with Hoepli or, perhaps, Bemporad offered him better terms than Hoepli, or perhaps, it could have been a combination of both these factors.

Unfortunately, it has proved impossible to find conclusive evidence to establish whether it was Hoepli or Fucini who initially approached the ‘artisti fiorentini’ to ascertain whether they would be willing to contribute to the first illustrated edition of *Le Veglie*, and whether the artists received any payment for their labours. However, knowing what a shrewd businessman Hoepli was, it is unlikely Hoepli paid anything for the illustrations out of his own pocket, and probably left it to Fucini to make the initial approach to his Macchiaioli friends. Given the close friendship between Fucini and Fattori, Corcos, the Gioli brothers, and Cecconi, and their generous nature, especially Fattori, it is very probable these artists offered to illustrate Fucini’s *Veglie* for a modest amount, or even, for no payment whatsoever. It is equally likely Fucini approached his close friend Fattori first. Once Fattori and the other four leading lights in the artistic firmament of Florence had agreed to illustrate the work, whether for payment or not, the other twelve artists would, very probably, also have agreed similar terms and accepted the offer, especially the less celebrated artists, such as Stefano Bruzzi and Corrado Sarri, who in all likelihood, would have deemed it an honour to have their work published by one of Italy’s finest publishers, work which would also appear in the company of such other celebrated artists, and indeed, the positive effect this would have on their future careers, was not lost on them. Since the original illustrations for the *Veglie* remained in Fucini’s possession and are still housed in the family’s Florentine apartment in Piazza San Lorenzo, this would confirm that Hoepli did not personally pay the artists - a possible bone of contention between Fucini and Hoepli and, perhaps, the decisive factor for not approaching Hoepli for the publication of the first edition of *All’Aria Aperta*, in 1897. Given the close friendship between Fucini and the artists, it is probable that he too, did not pay them anything. We know from Corcos’ letter to Fucini, cited above, that Fucini sent him a signed, complimentary copy of the book, and presumably, Fucini did the same with each of the other sixteen illustrators of *Le Veglie*. Since the elegant book clearly had a great success, and was regarded by many as a seminal illustrated book by the Macchiaioli, it is very likely that all the artists were very pleased to have been associated with the book and it would certainly have served as an eloquent calling-card for those in need of one.

4.3. The first illustrated edition of *Le Veglie di Neri*

Turning to the first illustrated edition of *Le Veglie* of 1890, one is struck by several

facts. First, the extremely high quality of the illustrations which accompany Fucini’s text which, as Vittorio Corcos alluded to in his letter to Fucini, already quoted, is hardly surprising, given the enormous talent of the ‘artisti fiorentini’ who illustrated the work. We should clarify that by ‘Artisti Fiorentini’, Hoepli might have meant artists who had studied at the Accademia delle Belle Arti in Florence, or who had, at least, spent part of their careers working in Florence, since of the seventeen artists who worked on the first illustrated edition of the *Veglie*, only Federico Andreotti (1847-1930) who was responsible for illustrating *Dolci ricordi*; Niccolò Cannicci (1846-1906) who illustrated *La pipa di Batone*; Arturo Faldi (1856-1911) who illustrated *Vanno in Maremma*, and Ruggero Panerai (1862-1923) who illustrated *Sereno e nuvole*, were actually born in Florence. Moreover, not all of the artists who illustrated the *Veglie* trained at the Accademia delle Belle Arti in Florence - Stefano Bruzzi studied in Piacenza and at the Accademia in Rome and Alfonso Holla(e)nder studied at the Academy of Fine Arts in Berlin, in 1868, before taking Italian citizenship, in 1872, and settling in Florence. For the record, and for convenience, the details of all seventeen artists who illustrated the *Veglie* are listed, in alphabetical order, in Appendix Four.[[78]](#footnote-78)

When Fucini approached his Macchiaioli friends to illustrate his *Veglie*, it is very likely he contacted Fattori first, and being eager to have him commit to the project, probably gave him first choice as to which novella he wished to illustrate. Fortunately, Fattori chose to illustrate *L’oriolo col cucolo* since his final illustration (of four), features a scene close to Fattori’s heart, the plein-air scene of woodcutters kneeling to recite the *De profundis*. Fucini then probably contacted another close friend, Vittorio Corcos, to illustrate *Fiorella* and was very keen to have the services of Eugenio Cecconi, the celebrated painter of dogs, (‘Cecconi dei cani’), to illustrate *Il Matto delle giuncaie*, since a dog features prominently in the story. The choice of artist to illustrate the two literary bozzetti which Fucini ‘paints’ in *Lo spaccapietre*, working both in summer and in winter, fell on one of the finest Macchiaioli, the celebrated Francesco Gioli, and equally inspirational, was the choice of his brother, Luigi, to illustrate *Tornan di Maremma*. Once these important Macchiaioli artists had agreed to illustrate *Le Veglie*, it must have been relatively easier for Fucini to persuade other artists to join the celebrated team of illustrators.

One cannot fail to notice the very close attention all the illustrators of the *Veglie* paid to Fucini’s text. It is very evident they had read and studied Fucini’s text very closely after he had approached them and they clearly chose both important and telling episodes which are visually attractive, if not stunning images, to illustrate each of his stories. In my opinion, not one single illustration in the *Veglie* is merely ‘cosmetic’, but rather, apart from the visual function of illustrating the written text, each illustration forms a perfect fusion and synthesis between the image and Fucini’s text, and enhances Fucini’s text, creating a concrete visual image of what is a ‘verbal’, and at the same time, a ‘visual’ image which Fucini conjures up in his descriptions in his narrative. Despite the fact that illustrating a book implied that each artist had to work on relatively small illustrations which were a mere fraction of the size of the paintings they were normally used to, each artist has produced both beautiful and powerful images.

Cecconi’s second image in his illustrations for *Il Matto*, (which is in deliberate contrast to the peaceful landscape scene of a punt moored to a bank in the first head-piece illustration to the story p.13)(Fig.30)), depicts two typical *padulane* who spend their lives in the marshlands of the Padule di Fucecchio, cutting reeds. (p.15)(Fig.31). One of the girls is shown knee-deep in water, among the lush reed-beds, cutting reeds near the bank, facing away from the viewer. The other, facing the viewer, is depicted on a bank holding her sickle in the air, has a sad expression (rather like the sadness in Lucia’s face in Bruzzi’s illustrations to *Lucia* (pp.39-40) because she is singing a melancholy song. Since the main figure is set against a sunset, she stands out against the background, producing an extremely strong and striking image which is all the more powerful since it is the largest image in the entire book. It is also a melancholy image since Cecconi accurately reproduces the stagnant and mephitic atmosphere and conditions of the padule by illustrating the main figure in dark tones, which captures the menacing nature of the landscape, described so well by Fucini, which not only heralds the dramatic conclusion to the tale, but also serves as the perfect backdrop to the words of the melancholy song which are about to be sung (and quoted) in the story, which adds a further musical and phonic dimension and poignancy to the story. Cecconi was probably inspired by the following lines in *Il Matto* to conjure up his image:

E idillj soavi e drammi sanguinosi si svolgevano dinanzi alla mia immaginazione, e la tristezza intanto si faceva maggiore nell’animo mio. Quando una voce di fanciulla, di una di quelle tante miserabili che vivono felici in quell’ambiente mefitico i mesi e gli anni interi, lavorando con l’acqua fino alla cintola e il fango alle ginocchia, intonò un canto malinconico, piano come la superficie dello stagno, lento come le acque del canale, e portò fino a me queste dolenti parole:

È morto l’amor mio che amavo tanto:

Ahi! dal dolor più reggere non posso;

L’han portato laggiù nel camposanto,

E gli han buttato anco la terra addosso

(pp.15-16)(*TGS*, p.10) (Fig.31).[[79]](#footnote-79)

Fucini’s choice of song, which adds an aural dimension to the literal, could not have been better suited for his purposes since it conveys a prophetic foreboding which the reader will only realize in hindsight. The sombre tones of Cecconi’s illustration also capture this sense of impending doom– the landscape is threatening and is as menacing and treacherous as the Matto’s tormentors will prove to be, and build up a crescendo to the violence which will soon unfold in the story.

The third illustration (Fig.32) depicts the Matto’s fiancée, Stella, who, on his return from Maremma, he sees for the first time, at the processione delle Rogazioni:

‘Non l’avevo nemmeno riconosciuta: povera Stella, non aveva altro che gli occhi! La guardavo fissa fissa, perchè mi pareva e non mi pareva, e quando mi passò davanti, fece le viste d’accomodarsi i capelli e inciampò due o tre volte e gli cascò la candela di mano’ (p.21)(*TGS*,p.15).

Cecconi captures Stella’s despondency and despair very effectively. Her body language which shows her barely having the strength to hold her procession candle (which she drops a few times) and the pretence of adjusting her hair, to avoid direct eye-contact with the Matto, clearly convey that she is at her wits’ end and has been troubled for a considerable period- indeed, the Matto states that on seeing her for the first time, in eighteen months, he could barely recognize her. Cecconi accurately depicts a woman who is a shadow of her former self, and captures Stella’s inner turmoil and mental strain, who, having fallen for the empty promises of money and a house, offered by the Matto’s love-rival, clearly, does not have an entirely clear conscience. Cecconi’s illustration not only illustrates and captures Fucini’s text accurately, but adds a psychological dimension with the pressure and anguish Stella has suffered, and enhances Fucini’s text.

Cecconi’s fourth illustration captures the precise moment when the Matto meets his love-rival, purely by chance, while out hunting in the padule. They both shoot at the same bird, they quarrel over who shot the bird first and the Matto, goaded by his rival, can stand the humiliation no longer and shoots him fatally. The episode Cecconi illustrates is the most dynamic and the most dramatic episode in the story– he freezes the action at the precise moment when the Matto shoots his rival. The composition of the illustration is intriguing. The viewer only sees the barrel of the Matto’s shotgun, which sends the rival recoiling in agony from the force of the blast. Just as Fucini does not name the Matto and only gives the cruel nick-name assigned to him by the *padulani*, Cecconi does not show the Matto’s face in any of his six illustrations to the story- the viewer (and reader) have to use their imagination to conjure up a mental picture of the Matto, which imparts an added air of mystery to the story: ‘Io in galera e te all’inferno, urlai, e gli lasciai andare la canna mancina nel core’(p.22)(Fig.33)(*TGS* p.16).

Fucini the dog-lover, introduces what, at first, appears to be a little light relief, in his story, with his description of Moro, ‘un vecchio restone’, the Matto’s sole companion, in the padule. This allows Cecconi to show his prowess in illustrating a mangy, yet completely loyal, mongrel which he captures beautifully. Despite its dishevelled appearance, Moro is an extremely affectionate creature, brilliantly rendered by Cecconi, who depicts him as he jumps up, inquisitively, and rests his paws on his owner’s punt (Fig.34). However, we soon learn that even the Matto’s sole companion is soon to be taken from him, when the narrator enquires after the fate of both dog and owner:

‘Quel restone vecchio?

Sissignore. Cotesto serpente, gli cascò morto di vecchiaja, di cimurro, di fame,

o che lo so? ’(p.25)(*TGS*, p.18).

Cecconi’s final illustration of the lifeless body of the Matto lying, face downwards, in a swamp, perfectly captures the poignancy and tragedy of the closing lines of the story (Fig.35):

‘e quattro giorni dopo fu trovato stecchito anche lui nelle giuncaje mezzo mangiato dagli animali…Dica la verità, ci ha avuto piacere anche lei!?-

Non risposi e mutai discorso’ (p.32)(*TGS*,p.18).

As we have seen when Fucini read the story aloud to the sensitive Pietro Fanfani ‘nella sua stanza alla Biblioteca Marucelliana’, it reduced him to tears.[[80]](#footnote-80)

Fattori’s four watercolour illustrations to *L’oriolo col cuculo* are stunning, as one would expect from one of the greatest Macchiaioli artists. In the first illustration, depicting the opening scene of Fiore and his master, Sor Pasquale, returning in the family calesse, drawn by the faithful horse, ‘la vecchia e fida Gigia’ (expertly captured by Fattori) from the market at Cutigliano, with Pasquale’s pride and joy, his cuckoo-clock, (p.47)(Fig.36). The scene is very typical of so many plein-air subjects Fattori painted of rural life in Tuscany. Fattori’s life-long love of horses is apparent as he faithfully captures the struggle which the elderly Gigia has to make to drag the heavy calesse and its two occupants up the steep incline to Pasquale’s house– Fattori even highlights the sweat on the horse’s back with a pennellata of light colour. In the second illustration, the intimate, internal domestic scene, depicting La sora Flaminia who is eagerly awaiting her husband to come down for dinner with their hungry, impatient sons, is beautifully depicted by Fattori. With the positioning of the boy’s leg, in the right foreground, Fattori perfectly captures his fidgeting, restlessness and hunger and helps build up the excitement leading to Pasquale’s surprise: ‘intanto, col cucchiajone in una mano e la prima scodella nell’altra, aspettava guardando la porta dalla quale doveva comparire il marito’(p.50)(Fig.37). The third illustration, of Pasquale taking the air, on doctor’s orders, is an interesting composition by Fattori who depicts Pasquale from behind, with his back to the viewer, showing his bald patch, from the interior of the room, and successfully depicts the weary frame of a man who is close to death. The figure of Pasquale is, literally, framed by the window and, since he is depicted in dark tones, he stands out strongly against the lighter tones emanating from the window. Fattori captures the fleeting nature of life and the tenuous hold man has on life and the indifference nature has to man’s suffering- Fattori has made these themes, which are implicit in Fucini’s story, much more explicit in his illustration. The infirm Pasquale has to support himself at the window-sill and the reader wonders what is going on in his mind:

‘E Cecco e la sora Flaminia corsero subito a spalancare ogni cosa, e alla folata di maestrale che inondò la camera, Pasquale mandò un sospiro di contentezza e disse:- Ah! come mi fa bene !’ (p.60)(*TGS*, p.39)(Fig.39).

Fattori’s final watercolour, illustrating the closing lines of Fucini’s story is, perhaps, the most successful of his four illustrations and the most poignant. Fattori, as well as Fucini and the other Macchiaioli, was very familiar with rural life in Tuscany in general, and in Maremma in particular. He knew the work of *butteri* in Maremma, shepherds, goat-herders, herdsmen, woodsmen, charcoal-burners, stonebreakers, and gleaners (*macchiaiole*) (to name but a few) and painted hundreds of canvasses depicting most aspects of life in rural Tuscany in the latter part of the nineteenth-century. This is why Fattori’s illustration of the woodcutters, who Fucini previously mentions in the story when Pasquale is at the window taking the air: ‘I boscaioli cantavano nella faggeta’(p.39) who are now depicted kneeling, to recite the first *De profundis*, are so realistically portrayed. Fattori and Fucini, would have seen woodsmen at work on many occasions in the Tuscan countryside, consequently, Fucini’s descriptions and Fattori’s illustrations, which are both based on real-life experiences and observation, are extremely accurate. This fidelity also explains the synergy and the close relationship between text and illustration- both work so effectively together because both are drawn from real life and both text and illustration complement and enhance each other. In their respective media, both Fucini and Fattori appear to describe wistfully, not only the tragic demise of Sor Pasquale, but also, rather nostalgically, the passing of an era when spontaneous and genuine piety of the humble orders in rural Tuscany, were also rapidly disappearing:

La sera di poi quando la campana della parrocchia sonava alle forre della montagna l’*avemmaria* della sera, il sole mandò i suoi ultimi raggi a riflettersi sulle fronti aduste e madide di sudore di un gruppo di boscajoli, che inginocchiati sui tronchi de’ faggi abbattuti, accanto alle loro scuri luccicanti, dicevano il primo *De profundis* all’anima benedetta del povero signor Pasquale (p.61-2)(*TGS*, p.40)(Fig.40).

It is also possible that Fattori had Millet’s iconic *L’Angélus* in mind when he composed this illustration, however, Millet’s peasants are standing and not kneeling.

Francesco Gioli’s five illustrations for *Lo spaccapietre* are also very striking. They are the perfect visual accompaniment to the images conjured up by Fucini’s narrative text which, in effect, consist of two bozzetti, of the stonebreaker, working both in summer and in winter:

Quando il sole piomba [picchia in later editions] infocato sulle groppe stridenti delle cicale, e il ramarro, celere come l’ombra d’una rondine, attraversa a coda ritta la via; o nel tempo che la bufera arriccia e spolvera all’aria [nell’aria in later editions] l’acqua delle grondaje ficcandoti nell’ossa il freddo e la noja, lo spaccapietre è al suo posto. Un mazzo di frasche legate a ventaglio in cima d’un palo lo difende dal sole nell’estate; (pp.145-6)(*TGS*, p.90)(Fig.41). un povero ombrello rizzato fra due pietre e piegato dalla parte del vento, lo ripara dalla pioggia nell’inverno (pp.145-6)(*TGS*, p.90)(Fig.42).

The positioning of the teasel, in the foreground of Gioli’s first illustration, apart from imparting a very good and long perspective to the overall design of the composition, has the added effect of immediately drawing the eye and the interest of the viewer into the illustration. The line of light-coloured stones, which reflect the bright sunlight, serve to convey the aridity of the landscape and the extreme heat the stonebreaker has to endure. The perspective of the long line of stones which extends to the horizon, also serves to highlight the stonebreaker’s endless labour (an infinite task, illustrated by an endless line of stones, which extends to infinity- which conveys some of the futility of Sisyphus, only with stones that do not roll back- but could also be interpreted as the stonebreaker’s personal ‘Via Crucis’) and the loneliness of the stonebreaker’s task and labour. Just as the teasel which is a weed, has to survive without human intervention, Gioli illustrates the point, that Fucini’s stonebreaker, ‘uno di questi splendidi esemplari di carne da lavoro’(p.91) has to survive, almost without any other human intervention- the only person he has in the world is his elderly, blind, wife who is entirely dependent on him (an improvement on the Matto who was only left with the companionship of his dog, il Moro).

Gioli also depicts the harshness of the stonebreaker’s life with his second illustration:

‘E all’ombra di quelle frasche o sotto il riparo di quell’ombrello, seduto sopra una pietra bassa e quadrata, consuma le sue lunghe giornate, finchè la massa di macigni che la mattina stava alla sua sinistra non è passata dall’altra parte, ridotta dal suo pesante martello in minuti frantumi di breccia acuta e tagliente’(p.146)(*TGS*, p.90)(Fig.42). in which he faithfully adheres to Fucini’s description. This clearly shows the stonebreaker working in winter trying to keep dry under an umbrella, one of the green, canvas umbrellas, which are still popular in Tuscany (and used by Pelagia in *La strega*) which has obviously seen better days. The positioning of the umbrella is exactly as Fucini describes it: ‘un povero ombrello rizzato fra due pietre e piegato dalla parte del vento, lo ripara dalla pioggia nell’inverno’(p.90) and the pile of stones which the stonebreaker has broken, is also carefully reproduced in the foreground. The bleakness of the weather and the wild, desolate landscape reflect the bleakness of the stonebreaker’s lot. Yet, despite this bleakness, Gioli communicates his, and Fucini’s, admiration for a man who, despite the numerous hardships and vicissitudes of his life, (like *Menico*, *Il Matto* or *Il battello*) still maintains his inherent dignity and is an unsung hero since he performs his duty and adheres to the work ethic.

The third illustration shows the stonebreaker bowed down and carrying a heavy load of stone- the position recalls the traditional iconography of Christ, in a Via Crucis type pose (p.148)(Fig.43). Gioli depicts the stonebreaker weighed down with stones in a basket he carries on his shoulders (not unlike the *battello*) and for Fucini, who, we should recall, actually met and spoke to a real stonebreaker, and perhaps for Gioli too, the stonebreaker symbolizes an embodiment of the work ethic and the dignity and sanctity of work, and especially of manual labour. These admirable qualities, together with the inherent piety of the lower classes, especially displayed by the peasantry, was popularized by Van Gogh in his drawings of Dutch peasants, by Courbet in his *Les Casseurs de pierres*, and especially by Millet in his *Les glaneuses* (1857) and *L’Angélus* (1859) which became iconic images in the nineteenth century, to which Signorini’s seminal *L’alzaia* (1864) and Fattori’s *Raccolta del fieno in Maremma* (1867)[[81]](#footnote-81) or his *Le Macchiaiole*,[[82]](#footnote-82) is not lost on the reader, nor the viewer. Roberto Bigazzi considers Fucini’s *Lo spaccapietre* to be ‘un omaggio al grande modello comune Courbet.’ [[83]](#footnote-83) We should recall that the great realist painter Courbet, painted his celebrated *Les Casseurs de pierres* [[84]](#footnote-84) which caused a scandal for daring to depict mere common labourers, was described by Proudhon as the first ‘oeuvre socialiste’. However, Courbet’s other painting of a single, elderly, stonebreaker which has survived, is in Milan.[[85]](#footnote-85) Italian artists and writers were clearly influenced by Courbet’s naturalist or realist painting and concepts, however, although a plausible concept by Bigazzi, in my view, it is merely coincidental that Fucini should have written about a stonebreaker and Courbet painted a picture of (a) stonebreaker(s). Moreover, Bigazzi was unaware of the existence of Fucini’s school-inspector’s notebooks in which he describes meeting a stonebreaker since these had not yet been discovered and were only published in 1974.[[86]](#footnote-86) Bigazzi’s comment, however, does underline the considerable points of contact that existed between French and Italian literary oeuvre and visual culture during a period which is generally referred to as the age of realism in Europe. One could argue that through the social and political engagement of Italian writers such as Fucini and Verga, Capuana and De Roberto and painters like the Macchiaioli, especially Signorini’s *L’alzaia* and Fattori’s *Butteri in Maremma*, they were responding to the focus which had been placed on the lower classes, particularly by French writers and artists, earlier in the nineteenth century.

Gioli’s fourth and fifth illustrations are of the stonebreaker’s wife who, blinded in one eye by a stray splinter from her husband’s hammer, is reduced to begging- her abject poverty and the sheer wretchedness of her existence are faithfully communicated by Gioli’s illustration (p.150)(Fig.44). Gioli depicts her with her closed, blind eye and her outstretched hand as if she were begging for alms from the viewer. Despite her equally desperate position, as we learn:

‘E ora passa le sue giornate sull’uscio, seduta a chiedere la carità ai viandanti; ma da che hanno fatto la strada ferrata non passa più quasi nessuno, e spesso, dopo essersi accostata, mezza cieca, a chieder l’elemosina a chi le viene incontro per chiederla a lei, vede andar sotto il sole senza aver fatto nè un centesimo nè un boccone di pane’(p.93).

Gioli still depicts her with her rosary in her hand as well as her stout stick for support and her tough boots– Gioli (and Fucini) might have had the Tuscan proverb in mind when he drew her boots:‘Contadino, contadino, scarpe grosse e cervello fino’ as Stefano Bruzzi might have done when illustrating *Lucia*.[[87]](#footnote-87)

Gioli also illustrates some of the closing lines to Fucini’s story: ‘Allora s’accuccia per abitudine accanto al fuoco spento, dove, aspettando il marito e dicendo la corona, s’addormenta’(p.93). Despite her wretched circumstances, she still takes time to say her rosary. Gioli’s final illustration is deliberately dark and gloomy in order to convey the fact that the fire has gone out in the hearth and that the couple cannot afford to heat their home. Indeed, the only source of light to illuminate the very sparsely furnished room, comes from the doorway which frames the stonebreaker as he returns home. The only light touch to the scene is Gioli’s inclusion of a small cat which is kept as a companion (but is not mentioned in Fucini’s text), probably to indicate the couple’s love of animals (p.151)(Fig.45).

It is intriguing to see that some of the illustrations to some of the novelle in *Le Veglie* in which the narrator is depicted, bear an uncanny and more than a passing resemblance to Fucini himself. I do not think this is another case of the traditional convention of a grateful artist flattering a patron. Fucini, was a very keen huntsman and sported a full beard (Fig.46). We can also see this in Arturo Faldi’s final illustration of the bearded huntsman in *Vanno in Maremma* (p.98) when the narrator, in the closing lines of the story, describes his final actions:‘E stetti qualche momento a vederli allontanare tra la bufera’(p.103)(Fig.47).

Similarly, the huntsman depicted by Vittorio Corcos, a close, personal friend of Fucini, is also depicted in the first illustration of *Fiorella* when the narrator first meets the young shepherdess (p.156)(Fig.48). Although the character has his back to the viewer in the illustration, he is also bearded, as we see from the final illustration, which shows the huntsman endeavouring to reassure the unconsolable Fiorella, after her tragic breakdown (p.168)(Fig.49). In *Scampagnata*, which according to Fucini, was inspired by real events, he uses the personal ‘io’ form for his narrator, as if drawing on his personal memories and experience and in the illustration which depicts Il sor Cosimo ‘in piedi con la bottiglia spianata, [che] cercava un posto della stanza dove rivolgerne impunemente la bocca, ma non lo trovava’ (p.236) Arturo Faldi depicts Fucini as the hapless guest at Sor Cosimo’s groaning table (Fig.50). The significance of depicting Fucini as the narrator in these stories might not be immediately apparent, but could be further proof that the artists, who knew Fucini well, especially Corcos, Francesco Gioli, and Fattori, were aware that many of his stories had their basis in fact and that some of the events Fucini had narrated to them, had actually occurred. This would explain their choice of Fucini as the ‘natural’ narrator of the story, hence their depiction of Fucini in some of his novelle- further evidence that Fucini’s stories have their basis in fact.

Unfortunately, not all the illustrations in *Le Veglie* are of this very high quality. This is not a value judgement on the artistic merits of some of the less established artists, but rather, a consequence of the relatively limited technology available in the 1880s and the small format of the book. The transfer of images from original artwork to illustration has not been fortunate in all cases. Some of the monochrome illustrations reproduced are rather grainy and muddy and in some cases, are not very clear. Some of Ruggero Panerai’s illustrations to *Sereno e nuvole* are very dark and one can see the texture of the original paint, affecting clarity in some of his illustrations in the first edition. Indeed, some of the illustrations reproduced in the exhibition catalogue of *I Macchiaioli di Renato Fucini* are much clearer since they have been digitally enhanced, and since more contrast has been introduced into the reproductions, the illustrations are much brighter and the viewer can better appreciate the images. The relatively small book, a duodecimo, with each page measuring just 18.8 by 11.3 centimetres, is hardly the largest canvas for an artist, even a Macchiaiolo, to work on. The dimensions of the illustrations are much smaller than many of the artists were used to. Indeed, some of the watercolour illustrations provided by Gamberini, Faldi and Sarra, the three illustrators of *Scampagnata*, are very small indeed, amounting to little more than thumbnail-sketches, let into the text, particularly the illustrations of minor characters, for example, that of Sor Cosimo’s young son, (p.212)(Figs.51 and 52), the Proposto delle Sièpole, (p.228)(Fig.53), the ‘prete spicciolo’(p.229)(Fig.54), L’assessore Stelloni,(p.230)(Fig.55) and La signorina Olimpia (Fig.56). However, a perfect synergy is produced by having the text and the thumbnail-sketch so physically close to each other. Some of the illustrations are small and have the function of serving as front and tailpiece illustrations, for example, Gamberini’s charming headpiece, a general view of Sor Cosimo’s property (p.209)(Fig.57) and Faldi’s final ‘liberation’ scene (p.251)(Fig.58).

Despite these minor cavils, the edition is lavishly illustrated and works very well since it is a perfect synthesis between Fucini’s text and some of the finest accompanying illustrations produced in Italy during the latter part of the Ottocento. Indeed, the first illustrated edition of *Le Veglie* was precisely the kind of book which the unsigned writer of an article on ‘Le strenne illustrate’ which appeared in *L’Illustrazione Italiana* had in mind when he, or she, penned the following:

‘Chi non vorrà ornare la sua biblioteca o il suo salotto di veri gioelli ?... Ripassare un libro gradito in compagnia d’un artista che ne illustra ogni pagina è uno dei più grandi piaceri intellettuali.’[[88]](#footnote-88)

4.4 Fucini’s impressionistic narrative technique

Fucini had received formal artistic training in painting and was a reasonably gifted amateur artist in his own right. He was also familiar with the theory of the macchia and the concept and the definition of the bozzetto, especially the definition provided to him, personally, by his Macchiaiolo artist friend, Vittorio Corcos:

‘Il bozzetto, nella sua vera espressione, non dev’essere altro che l’immagine istantanea di un’idea, fermata su tela, carta o creta, senza preoccupazione di forma né tampoco di colore’[[89]](#footnote-89) and the work of his Macchiaioli friends and their impressionistic style of painting. It is uncertain whether Fucini consciously chose to adopt a literary version of impressionism or an impressionistic narrative technique in his novelle, first identified by Procacci, in his preface to the first edition of *Le Veglie*, and examined, more extensively, by Pancrazi and Baldacci. However, there is little doubt that Fucini had a great facility for painting and conjuring up distinct images or impressions in his descriptions in his stories. He has an affinity to describe and to create mental images using the literary brush-stroke or pennellate in his narrative, which, as we shall see in the Conclusion, was greatly admired by Verga. However, we should not interpret impressionism, nor Fucini’s version of literary impressionism, to be limited entirely to broad, brush-stroke work, because the Macchiaioli, as well as the Impressionists, from Turner to Monet, did not always use broad brush-stroke work in all their paintings-indeed, many of their works contain a great deal of fine detail- for example, Fattori’s *Il Campo Italiano dopo la battaglia di Magenta*, Signorini’s *L’Alzaia*, Monet’s *Haystacks* (1890-91), or his paintings of his *Garden at Giverny* or his *Water-lilies* (1890-1891). Similarly, many of Fucini’s descriptions, which conjure up mental images for the reader, are, on occasions, also quite detailed.

Pancrazi, who was one of the first to remark on the relationship between Fucini’s impressionistic narrative style in his stories and the impressionistic use of the macchia by the Macchiaioli, wrote:

Quando tornava a Firenze, il Fucini…o saliva allo studio di Telemaco Signorini in Piazza Santa Croce, o finiva dalla sora Cesira in Parione, dove si sfamavano gli artisti, Giovanni Fattori,…il Lega, il Cabianca. L’arte poetica delle *Veglie* è l’impressionismo (che allora nasceva) *dei macchiaioli*. Il buono e il meglio delle *Veglie* viene dalla pittura; da quell’aria e gusto di vita libera; e a volerne giudicare, di lì bisogna rifarsi.…i bozzetti...del Fucini…restano pittorici. *Le Veglie* sono i quadri del Fucini; non se ne stacca nessun carattere, nessun personaggio a tutto tondo; il loro tono, la loro poesia stan tutti nell’accordo tra le figure disegnate o abbozzate sino a quel punto, e il paese; anche l’azione quando c’è, e può non esserci, di solito è raccontata da un personaggio e così diventa essa pure un po’ pittura, colore del personaggio che la racconta. Perciò, dei suoi bozzetti, ricordate prima il luogo, poi certi riflessi, certi toni che uniscono il personaggio al luogo, e soltanto dopo, e non sempre, il fatto.[[90]](#footnote-90)

Indeed, the lasting impression which rests with the reader from *Il Matto delle giuncaie* who after having appeared, suddenly, from the reed-beds, having narrated his sad story, is contained in these lines:

‘A questo punto tacque; si alzò in piedi, dette un’occhiata in giro al di sopra delle piante palustri, e ricadde a sedere con le braccia incrociate sulle ginocchia e il mento su quelle, quasi aggomitolato sopra sè stesso, fissando nell’acqua gli occhi invetrati.’ (p.14).

The lasting image which remains is, indeed, that of the poor man huddled up, with his arms across his knees, a sad and pathetic figure. Pancrazi is correct when he states: ‘L’impressione della storia raccontata si riassume tutta in quell’atto “aggomitolato” del poveretto, in quegli occhi invetrati sull’acqua del palude.’[[91]](#footnote-91)

The brief opening description of the elderly Pelagia and her grandson, Cecchetto, walking in the rain in the direction of Le Capannacce, in *La strega*, is an even better example:

L’aria era fredda, piovigginava fitto e sottile, e gli alberi lungo la via, tristi e aggrondati, lasciavano cadere, ad ogni sbuffo di vento, una scossa di grosse gocciole e di foglie gialle sul piano fangoso della via.

Una vecchia oltre la settantina e un ragazetto sui nove anni, nonna e nipote, andavano lentamente, riparandosi stretti sotto un solo ombrello d’incerato verde, accecando con le scarpe inzaccherate tutte le pozzanghere: la vecchia perchè non le vedeva, il ragazzo perchè ci si divertiva.(p.241).

In the space of a mere nine lines, with Fucini’s impressionistic description, in his bozzetto, the reader conjures up a mental picture of the couple sheltering from the rain, under the typical Tuscan umbrella, made of green, waxed-canvas. One can visualize the image painted by a macchiaiolo- bright yellow macchie to represent the fallen leaves and a bright green macchia of colour for the umbrella. Francesco Gioli’s illustration of *Lo spaccapietre*, at work under his umbrella (Fig.42), is the closest interpretation a macchiaiolo would have made of the scene. As Baldacci correctly points out, Fucini’s description could be:

un quadro un po’ di maniera dipinto da qualche macchiaiolo… un Cecconi per esempio; ma c’è qualcosa di più, cioè di più vero: è quel verbo ‘accecare’ che è còlto direttamente dalla fantasia espressiva del popolo, ma còlto con tanta prontezza che dal Fucini sembra quasi reinventato; e poi, sulla base di quel dato, una spiegazione che illumina tutto un arco di età: la vecchia perché non le vedeva, il ragazzo perché ci si divertiva.[[92]](#footnote-92)

Within a few lines, and with relatively few literary, impressionistic, brush-strokes, Fucini produces a strong visual image for his reader. This sets the scene in a dramatic fashion, which builds up to a crescendo of expectation as Fucini moves the action of his story, backwards and forwards, using his flashback technique, between this couple and the superstitious peasants at Le Capannacce, with such dramatic and disastrous consequences.

Pancrazi correctly points out that the point of departure of Fucini’s stories is, invariably, the macchia:

Anche nei racconti più complessi, che racchiudono un fatto più disteso, la partenza, il tono iniziale è sempre dato da una ‘macchia’ di colore che poi troverà rispondenze o variazioni o contrasti nel seguito. Il Cecioni avvertiva così i suoi pittori: ‘La macchia è base, e come tale rimane nel quadro. Lo studio della forma e le ricerche del dettaglio hanno l’ufficio di render conto delle parti che sono in essa, senza distruggerla nè tritarla. Vale anche per i bozzetti del Fucini.’[[93]](#footnote-93)

*Tornan di Maremma* contains two very good examples to illustrate the point. The opening ten lines of the story set the scene, and confirms Pancrazi’s view- it begins with a macchia of colour which conjures up a mental image of the scene in the reader’s mind:

In una bottegucia d’un povero casolare alle falde della montagna stavano due pastori attempati oltre la cinquantina, i quali appena che fui entrato, attirarono tutta la mia attenzione a motivo di una certa loro aria d’impazienza e di sgomento, per la quale pareva non potessero trovare fermezza. Si asciugavano il sudore della faccia senza che fosse caldo, sospiravano forte, e barattando fra loro occhiate dolorose e pochi monosillabi, non levavano un momento gli occhi dalla vetrata per guardare attenti sulla via che per quattro buoni tiri di schioppo si stendeva bianca e polverosa davanti alla porta. (p.82).

The above scene of the two shepherds waiting impatiently, in the shop, for the return of their colleagues, from Maremma, with their precious flock of sheep, is captured extremely effectively in Luigi Gioli’s second illustration to the story (Fig.59). As well as the macchia of the dusty, white road which conjures up images of many similar dusty roads reproduced in numerous paintings by Fattori, Signorini, as well as Luigi Gioli’s first and third illustration to *Tornan di Maremma*, (Fig.60), Fucini skilfully, and immediately, engages the narrator’s, and, more importantly, the reader’s interest in the two men and their apparent consternation.

The penultimate paragraph from *Tornan di Maremma*, which is only eleven lines long, is, in my view, one of Fucini’s best and most graphic, visual descriptions and leaves the reader with a lasting impression of the dust raised by the sheep and the mule-train as they disappear into the distance:

Passarono le pecore quasi a corsa, stimolate dalle grida e dalle vergate degli uomini, i quali, sgomenti dell’accaduto, senza sapere che nella bottega c’era un boccone preparato anche per loro, tirarono innanzi mandando fischi e sassate alle pigre; passarono i somari legati a fila per le cavezze, sballottando fra sacchi e corbelli una donna e due ragazzi che li cavalcavano; passò il nuvolo di polvere sollevato da questa truppa tumultuosa, si allontanò adagio adagio il tintinnìo de’ campanacci, e dopo poco si perse per le forre del monte anche la voce di Marcello che sempre più fioca e dolente chiamava: Gian Luca! Gian Luca! ’ (p.89).

The reader conjures up another mental image of the scene which corresponds exactly to the perfect illustration to the story provided by Luigi Gioli (p.170)(Fig.61). Note Fucini’s use of alliteration and onomatopoeia in his choice of the words ‘truppa tumultuosa’and ‘tintinnìo’ and the very effective way in which he describes Marcello’s fading voice as the party disappears from view- an aural dimension which is a form of synaesthesia, is also added to the story with the ever fading, calling of the name ‘Gian Luca’- note the choice of name with its long, open, vowels, which imparts the lingering and haunting quality of a fading echo to the poignant close of the story.

The closing lines of *Dolci ricordi* which contains autobiographical elements– the student in the story studies at Pisa University but spends his allowance given to him by his stern father, a ‘medico in un comunello di montagna’, too quickly, so has to return home for a subsidy. After a sleepless night, he meets his father outside in the snow:

Corsi sulla porta e alla luce della lanterna con la quale il servitore ci faceva lume, vidi, lì davanti, mio padre già a cavallo, immobile, rinvoltato nel suo largo mantello carico di neve.

-Tieni, -mi disse, parlando rado e affondandomi ad ogni parola un solco nell’anima.

-Prendi…Ora è roba tua…Ma prima di spenderli…guardami! – e mi fulminò con un’occhiata fiera e malinconica.-Prima di spenderli, ricordati come tuo padre li guadagna.

Una spronata, uno sfaglio e si allontanò a capo basso nel buio, tra la neve e il vento che turbinava.(pp.124-25).

The description leaves a powerful, monochrome image in the mind of the reader, brilliantly interpreted by Federico Andreotti (Fig.63) and is another good example of the macchia generating or creating the bozzetto, as Pancrazi points out:‘Ė sempre una ‘macchia’ a generare il bozzetto; e poi lo domina; l’azione, i personaggi le restan soggetti’.[[94]](#footnote-94)

The opening lines of *Sereno e nuvole* which describes a rustic duel between Cecco and Pierone for the hand of Chiarastella, begins and ends with descriptions of the weather and the cloud formations (hence the title of the story) which, apart from imparting a symmetry to the tale by framing the action, is a balance to the flash-back technique used by Fucini to re-narrate a tale, post factum. The gentle description of the weather in November, deliberately lulls the reader into a sense of well-being to make the dramatic events which are about to unfold, even more unexpected for the reader:

Il primo sole del novembre si affaccia malinconico alle ultime cime della montagna già biancheggianti per la neve caduta di fresco, e mandando i suoi languidi raggi attraverso ai rami brulli dei castagneti, tinge di rosa la croce di ferro del campanile e l’asta della bandiera fitta sulla vecchia torre del castello.

Qualche nuvola bianca sta fissa sui monti più lontani, uno strato bigio di nebbia allaga la pianura, e il villaggio dorme ancora sotto un freddo e splendido sereno d’autunno (p.105).

After the action has taken place, in the closing lines of the story the reader is left with a similar description of the weather which also serves to underline the Leopardian theme that nature is often oblivious to man and his problems:

Nessuno è comparso ancora sulla piazzetta. Su all’alto, dopo la levata del sole, s’è messo a nevicare, il vento è rinfrescato e giù pei poggi si rincorrono le ombre delle nuvole ad investire il villaggio, che ora brilla al sole ora rimane bigio nella penombra, prendendo un’aria di freddo e di tristezza che s’intona perfettamente coll’aspetto della piazzetta, in fondo alla quale un cane della campagna passa arruffato dal vento e fiuta sospettoso il terreno (p.112).

By referring to the new fall of snow Fucini not only preserves a symmetry and counterpoint in his opening lines, this also serve to underline nature’s indifference to man’s lot but, on occasions, even physically wipes out all trace of his suffering.

The description of the sad group of montanini on their perilous migration to Maremma in *Vanno in Maremma* is also particularly memorable:

Il babbo, un ometto sulla cinquantina, basso, già curvo, con le gambe a roncolo…strasciandosi dietro faticosamente i suoi gravi zoccoli con le suola di legno alte tre dita; aveva in capo un berrettaccio intignato di pelle di volpe, calzoni formati di cento toppe di altrettanti colori sudici e sbiaditi, e giacchetta di mezza lana quasi nuova, di sotto alla quale scaturiva la lama d’una roncola e il manico d’una manneretta raccomandate alla cintola, e teneva per il ferro una scure, servendosene come di mazza... (pp.99)(*TGS*, p.63)(Fig.62).

These montanini have been very faithfully and accurately described by Fucini since, as we have seen from his school-inspector’s notebooks, they have been drawn from life and are based on descriptions of real people who actually undertook the long and perilous journey to Maremma: ‘portano in Maremma bambini di 10 anni a piedi’.[[95]](#footnote-95) This is also why Arturo Faldi’s illustrations to the story, especially (Fig.62), have such an air of authenticity. Indeed, apart from the artistic excellence of the artists, which is certainly undeniable, their task has been made easier since Fucini’s descriptions conjure up a mental image in the mind of readers, let alone in the inventive minds of such accomplished artists. This explains why this synthesis between the descriptive phrase or pennellata used by Fucini, works so well on a visual level with the Macchiaioli artists:

Dietro a lui subito venivano i due bambini…il primo, con un ombrellone a tracolla tenuto da uno spago, se la rideva divertendosi a fare i passi lunghi dietro a quelli del babbo, mentre tirava a stratte misurate il fratello minore che gli andava dietro frignando e zoppicando, forse pei geloni ammaccati dentro un pajo di scarponi da uomo sfondati e senza legacciolo. Questo piccolo disgraziato, a forza di rasciugarsi il moccio e le lacrime con la manica della giacchetta, se l’era ridotta, fino al gomito, un cartoccio di ghiaccio.

The illustrations both complement each other in an extremely harmonious and homogeneous fashion.

Other telling, but briefer, examples of Fucini’s impressionistic narrative technique include the following pennellate:

from *Lucia*:

‘Un ramarro, verde come le foglie del fico selvatico sul quale si era arrampicato per cercare gli ultimi raggi del sole cadente, vibrando la lingua veloce, la fissava, non visto, coi suoi occhi d’ebano’ (p.26)

from *Lo spaccapietre*:

Quando il sole picchia infocato sulle groppe stridenti delle cicale, e il ramarro celere come l’ombra di una rondine, attraversa a coda ritta la via; o nel tempo che la bufera arriccia e spolvera nell’aria l’acqua delle grondaie ficcandoti nell’ossa il freddo e la noia, lo spaccapietre è al suo posto. Un mazzo di frasche legate a ventaglio in cima d’un palo lo difende dal sole nell’estate; un povero ombrello rizzato fra due pietre e piegato dalla parte del vento, lo ripara dalla pioggia nell’inverno (p.90).

Indeed, the phrase ‘le groppe stridenti delle cicale’, seems even to anticipate some of Vincenzo Cardarelli’s later prose descriptions.

There can be little doubt that the close relationship and collaboration between Fucini and the Macchiaioli school of artists, generated a considerable synergy and produced an outstanding book with the publication of the first illustrated edition of *Le Veglie di Neri*. Apart from knowing each other very well, both parties had witnessed, at first hand, many of the scenes faithfully described by Fucini as a school-inspector in the Appennino Pistoiese, which ranged from a stonebreaker hard at work, to the migration of montanini from the Appennino to Maremma, and equally, by the Macchiaioli - ranging from Signorini’s faithful paintings of rural scenes in the Tuscan contado, particularly at Pietramala, in the Alto Mugello, north of Firenzuola, or to Fattori’s accurate recording of the life of *butteri* in Maremma. What Fucini and the Macchiaioli have in common is their quest for fidelity and accuracy. Both were recording aspects of life in rural Tuscany during the second half of the Ottocento, as faithfully as they had recorded aspects of life in urban Tuscany - Fucini in Pisa and Florence, and Signorini, Fattori and Borbottoni in central Florence. All art is a product of the time in which it is produced, but the art of Fucini and the Macchiaioli is particularly valid and relevant precisely because of its fidelity and realism. Both Fucini and the Macchiaioli were very conscious that what they were recording, especially the scenes of life in rural Tuscany, were historic, since life in post-Unification rural Tuscany had changed for ever. This awareness instilled in Fucini and the Macchiaioli an even greater desire for accuracy and fidelity in their respective descriptions and depictions.

The great synergy generated between Fucini’s accurate descriptions, many based on real-life encounters and personal experience, using the genuine language of his popolino characters, coupled with the very faithful adherence to Fucini’s text and the artistic brilliance and search for accuracy by the Macchiaioli, has provided us with an extremely faithful time capsule and document of contemporary life in rural Tuscany and has produced one of the most important collaborations and seminal books published in Italy in the latter part of the Ottocento.

1. *Acqua Passata*, p.501.This is confirmed by Francesca Dini in *Fattori e il Naturalismo in Toscana* (Florence: Polistampa, 2008) p.17. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Cruikshank’s, John Leech’s and Hablot Browne’s (Phiz’s) illustrations to Dickens’ works, the illustrations by Turner, Ackermann, Nicholson, William Morris, Charles Keene, Millais, Beardsley and Rackham and in France, the illustrations by Delacroix, Daumier, Doré, Grandville, Gavarni, Manet and Toulouse Lautrec. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Emilio Cecchi, *Italian painting of the nineteenth century: The Macchiaioli* (*The first ‘Europeans’ in Tuscany*)*- An International Tribute to The Macchiaioli to Celebrate the Centenary of the Birth of the Movement…Organized by the Tuscan Association of Arts ‘Europa Oggi’* (Florence: Olschki, 1963), p.11. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Raffaele De Grada, *I Macchiaioli* (Milan: Fabbri, 1967), p.9. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. The term Macchiaiolo was first used by an anonymous reviewer in the Florentine *Gazzetta del Popolo* in 1862. Others have pointed out that the Macchiaioli themselves liked the term ‘macchiaiolo’ since another interpretation of ‘macchia’ could refer to the phrase ‘darsi alla macchia’ to beat a retreat or hide out in the bush, brush or ‘macchia’/‘maquis’ which also captured the adventurous and ‘rebellious’, ‘anti-academic’ spirit of the Macchiaioli and so the name stuck.

   6 See her article on Telemaco Signorini in *The Art Journal*, (London) 1895, 687, September, pp.266 ff.

   7 Enrico Somaré, *Signorini* (Milan: L’Esame, 1926), p.29.

   8 Lionello Venturi, ‘Les Macchiaioli’ *Gazette des Beaux Arts*, (Paris) 1933, pp.251-54. See also Norma Broude, ‘The Macchiaioli as “Proto-Impressionists”: Realism, Popular Science and the Re-shaping of *Macchia* Romanticism, 1862-1886’, *The Art Bulletin*, (New York) 52, December, 1970, pp.404-14.

   9 See Appendix Four, Fig.1, p. 409. See also Silvestra Bietoletti *I Macchiaioli: La storia, gli artisti, le opere* (Florence: Giunti, 2001). Contemporary sepia photographs are reproduced on pp.10-11 of the same work. Telemaco Signorini’s *Caricaturisti e Caricaturati al Caffè Michelangiolo*...(Florence: Crivelli, 1893) contains contemporary caricatures of the Macchiaioli. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. 10 Silvestro Lega (Modigliana,1826-Florence,1908) and Serafino De Tivoli (Leghorn, 1826-Florence,1892) enrolled as Tuscan volunteers in the Piedmontese army to fight the Austrians, and Giuseppe Abbati (Naples,1836-Florence,1896), Odoardo Borrani (Pisa,1832-Florence,1905), Diego Martelli (Florence,1839-Florence,1896), Raffaello Sernesi (Florence,1838-Bolzano,1866) and Telemaco Signorini (Florence,1835-Florence,1901) joined the Tuscan Expeditionary Force in 1859; Giovanni Fattori (Leghorn,1825-Florence,1908) and Vincenzo Cabianca (Verona,1827-Rome,1902) both endured and suffered the sieges of Livorno and Bologna, respectively, by the Austrians; and Federico Zandomeneghi (Venice,1841-Paris,1917) was one of the Mille who fought and landed with Garibaldi, at Marsala, in 1860. See also *Acqua Passata*, pp.514-20. Verga also enrolled in the Guardia Nazionale in 1860 and served until 1864. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. 11 Telemaco Signorini, ‘Raffaello Sernesi, morto il 14 agosto 1866 nello Spedale Militare di Bolzano’ *Gazzettino delle Arti del Disegno*, I, no. 29, 1867. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. See *I luoghi di Giovanni Fattori nell’Accademia di Belle Arti di Firenze*. *Passato e presente* a cura di Giuliana Videtta e Anna Gallo Martucci (Florence: Pagliai, 2008), p.228. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. *Acqua Passata* p.632. The poem is partly quoted in Chapter One, footnote 128 on page 61 of this thesis. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. Andrea Baboni, *Giovanni Fattori tra epopea e vero* (Milan: Silvana, 2008), p.316. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. 15 Fucini confirms this in *Acqua Passata*, p.627 and this is confirmed by Francesca Dini, *I luoghi*, p.17. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. 16 See Francesca Dini, *I luoghi*, p.179.

    17 The painting (rarely displayed) is reproduced in Francesca Dini, *I luoghi*, p.181. Fattori was inspired to paint this historical subject through his reading of Sir Walter Scott and Fattori would certainly have seen and been familiar with Francesco Hayez’s lithographs for *Ivanhoe* (published in 1822). Fattori was an avid reader of Foscolo, Francesco Domenico Guerrazzi and Tommaso Grossi especially his *Ildegonda* which inspired Fattori to paint the eponymous heroine in his celebrated painting of 1851. Fucini also admired Grossi’s *Ildegonda* and *La Fuggitiva*, see *Foglie al Vento*, p.725. Apart from his illustrations for Fucini’s *L’oriolo col cuculo*, published by Hoepli in 1890, Fattori also entered the competition, organized by Hoepli to celebrate the latter’s first 25 years of his entry into publishing.

    18 For example, Fattori’s *Il campo italiano dopo la battaglia di Magenta* (1861), but also his lesser known *Gli eccidi di Mantova* (1859-60 (Fig.13), his *Carica di cavalleria* (1873) Livorno, Museo Civico Giovanni Fattori, his later *Episodio della Battaglia del Volturno* (*Porta Capua*)(1899-1900)(Livorno, Museo Civico Giovanni Fattori), his *Grandi manovre* (1904, Verona, Galleria d’Arte Moderna di Palazzo Forti) and one of his last bozzetti, *Soldato seduto* *a cavallo* (1906, private collection). [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. 19 Such as the early Cabianca’s *I novellieri toscani del secolo XIV* (1860)(Fig.14), Saverio Altamura’s *I funerali di Buondelmonte* (1860, Roma Galleria Nazionale d’Arte Moderna) reproduced in Silvestra Bietoletti *I Macchiaioli la storia, gli artisti, le opere* (Florence: Giunti, 2001), p.40; Altamura’s *Esilio di Giano Della Bella* (1864, Private Collection) and Odoardo Borrani’s *Il disseppellimento* *di Jacopo Pazzi* (1864)(Fig.15). [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. Adriano Cecioni, the theorist of the Macchiaioli summed up the views of many Macchiaioli when he wrote ‘Chi avrebbe mai pensato…ad interessarsi di una strada fangosa, non abituati a spalancare gli occhi di faccia ai teloni storici e agli statuoni classici?...Chi l’avrebbe mai detto, che noi così mal educati, edificati sempre dalle prodezze accademiche, dovevamo commuoverci di faccia a una strada fangosa?’ in his *Scritti e ricordi* (Florence: Tipografia Domenicana, 1905), p.117. Cecioni may well have had Giuseppe de Nittis’ *La traversata degli Appennini*, (1867) Napoli, Museo di Capodimonte, in mind when he wrote this.

    21 Reproduced in Francesca Dini, *I Macchiaioli*: *Opere e protagonisti di una rivoluzione artistica (1861-1869)* (Florence: Polistampa, 2002), p.37. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. Reproduced in Francesca Dini ‘I macchiaioli e il realismo, ovvero il realismo dei macchiaioli’ in *Da Courbet a Fattori: I princìpi del vero*, a cura di Francesca Dini (Milan: Skira, 2005), pp.13-41. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. Piero and Francesca Dini, *Giovanni Fattori, epistolario edito e inedito* (Florence: Il Torchio, 1997), p.581 and in *Da Corot ai macchiaioli al simbolismo*, *Nino Costa e il paesaggio dell’anima*, a cura di Francesca Dini e Stefania Frezzotti (Milan: Skira, 2009), p.32. [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. See Raffaele Monti and Geno Pampaloni, *I Macchiaioli di Renato Fucini* (Florence: Pananti, 1985), p.70. [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. Ardea is situated 35 kilometres south of Rome. [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. ‘I macchiaioli sostenevano che per ottenere un’impressione del vero quando si guardava a una certa distanza, le figure non dovevano oltrepassare i quindici centimetri. In questo modo le parti della scena si vedevano per masse e non per dettaglio’, Adriano Cecioni, op. cit., p.302. [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. Pierre-Henri de Valenciennes’ *Éléments de perspective pratique à l’usage des artistes, suivis de reflexions et conseils à un élève sur la peinture et particulièrement sur le genre du paysage* (Paris : L’Auteur, 1799), had a profound influence on nineteenth-century artists, especially the French Impressionists. His exhortation to capture the fleeting nature of water, sunsets, cloud formations and of nature in studies which were ‘rapidement effectuées, pour saisir la nature telle qu’elle est’ and suggestions that the artist should ‘peindre la même vue à divers moments de la journée et d’observer les différences que la lumière occasionnée aux formes’ influenced Constable, Turner, Théodore Rousseau and became almost de rigeur for the Macchiaioli, particularly Fattori, Signorini, the Gioli brothers, Cabianca and the French Impressionists, especially Monet. [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, *Du Principe de l’art et de sa destination sociale* (Paris: Garnier, 1865), especially, chapter one. [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. Sarah Herring and Antonio Mazzotta, *Corot to Monet: French Landscape Painting* (London: The National Gallery, 2009), p.21. [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. Edgar Degas who was of Neapolitan descent, on his paternal grandfather’s side, painted *La Famille Belelli* (1865, Musée D’Orsay) which included his aunt, la Marchesa Belelli, cousins and uncle the Marchese Belelli, his portrait of Diego Martelli (1865?, National Gallery, Edinburgh) and his hitherto lost portrait of Giovanni Fattori (1875?, Florence, Private collection) while living in Florence. The latter, lost for over eighty years has been recently re-discovered, by the undersigned, in 2010. [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
31. 31 Reproduced in Francesca Dini, *I Macchiaioli. Opere e protagonisti*, p.142.

    32 Reproduced in Ibid., p.159.

    33 Ibid., p.163.

    34 Ibid., p.165.

    35 Ibid., p.173.

    36 Ibid., p.175.

    37 Ibid., p.93.

    38 Ibid., p.97.

    39 Ibid., p.83. [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
32. [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
33. [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
34. [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
35. [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
36. [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
37. [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
38. [↑](#footnote-ref-38)
39. [↑](#footnote-ref-39)
40. Adriano Cecioni, *Scritti e ricordi* quoted by Pier Francesco Listri in *Dizionario dei Macchiaioli* (Florence: Le Lettere, 2003), p.164. [↑](#footnote-ref-40)
41. 41 Ibid., p.97. [↑](#footnote-ref-41)
42. 42 *Scritti d’arte di Diego Martelli* p.218 and also cited by Francesca Dini, *I Macchiaioli*, p.19. [↑](#footnote-ref-42)
43. 43 Luigi Pescetti ‘Fucini, Fattori e Marradi’ *Liburni Civitas*, 12, 1939, ff.vi-vi.

    44 See Fucini’s painting of *Paesaggio a Vinci* in *I Macchiaioli di Renato Fucini* (Florence: Pananti, 1985), p.16 or his *Una gita a Monsummano*, Riccardiana, Carteggio Fucini-Martinez, cass.[etta] 7 reproduced in Giovanna Lazzi *Renato Fucini in Riccardiana...*(Florence: Polistampa, 2014), p.98. [↑](#footnote-ref-43)
44. 45 Letter dated Dianella, 6 July 1910, Riccardiana, cass.[etta] Cald. [erini] quoted in *I Macchiaioli di Renato Fucini*, p.11. [↑](#footnote-ref-44)
45. 46 Ibid., p.71. [↑](#footnote-ref-45)
46. 47 Fucini’s personal collection of Macchiaioli works consisted of: oil paintings by Federico Andreotti 3, and 3 watercolours on paper for *Dolci ricordi*, Agostino Bachi 1 oil-painting; Niccolò Barabino 1 oil-painting; Luigi Bechi 1; Alfonso Belimbau 2; Odoardo Borrani 1; Stefano Bruzzi 3 and 3 tempera and 2 pen and ink drawings on paper for *Lucia*; Vincenzo Cabianca 2; Marco Calderini 4 oil-paintings and 4 watercolours; Niccolò Cannicci 5 and 4 watercolours on paper for *La pipa di Batone*; Giuseppe Cassioli 1; Adriano Cecchi 4 watercolours and one oil and pencil sketch for *Passaggio memorabile*; Eugenio Cecconi ‘Cecconi dei cani’ 8 oil-paintings and a pencil-drawing of Fucini’s dog Bosco, plus 6 tempera sketches on paper for *Il Matto delle Giuncaie*; Antonio Ciseri 1 oil-painting ; Vittorio Matteo Corcos 4 oil-paintings plus 4pencil-drawings and 5 tempera sketches on paper for *Fiorella*; Giovanni Costa 1 oil-painting; Fabio Fabbi, 4 watercolours on paper; Arturo Faldi 3 oil-paintings and 4 watercolours on paper for *Vanno in Maremma* and 12 watercolours on paper for *Scampagnata*; Giovanni Fattori 10 [↑](#footnote-ref-46)
47. oil-paintings and 2 etchings and 4 watercolours on paper for *L’oriolo col cucolo*;Gioacchino Gamberini 1 oil-painting and 2 watercolours for *Scampagnata*; Michele Garinei 1 oil-painting; Edoardo Gelli 1 oil-painting; Francesco Gioli 10 oil-paintings and 5 tempera sketches on paper for *Lo spaccapietre*; Luigi Gioli 5 oil-paintings and 3 tempera sketches on paper for *Tornan di Maremma*; Felice Giordano 2 oil-paintings; Michele Gordigiani 6 oil-paintings; Alfonso Holl(a)ender 5 oil-paintings and 5 watercolour and pen and ink sketches on paper for *Il merlo di Vestro*; Silvestro Lega 1 oil-painting; Giovanni Muzzioli 2 oil-paintings and 2 tempera and 2 pen and ink sketches on paper for *Primavera*; Ruggero Panerai 1 oil-painting and 6 watercolours on paper and 1 tempera on canvas for *Sereno e nuvole*; Michele Rapisardi 3 oil-paintings; Arturo Ricci 1 oil-painting; Corrado Sarri 4 watercolours on paper and 4 pen and ink sketches on paper for *Scampagnata*; Pietro Senno 1 oil-painting; Telemaco Signorini 11 oil-paintings and 6 pencil- drawings; Filadelfo Simi 1 oil-painting; Raffaello Sorbi 1 oil-painting; Alfonso Testi 2 oil-paintings; Angiolo Tommasi 5 oil-paintings; Ludovico Tommasi 2 oil-paintings and 2 tempera sketches on paper for *Perla*; Angelo Torchi 1 oil-painting and 1 tempera sketch on paper for *Perla*; Francesco Vinea 1 oil-painting. [↑](#footnote-ref-47)
48. *Acqua Passata*, pp.627-33, (p.627). [↑](#footnote-ref-48)
49. Ibid., p.627. [↑](#footnote-ref-49)
50. Diego Martelli confirms Fattori’s poverty and voracious appetite in a letter to Francesco Gioli dated 25 March 1877, Carteggio Gioli, Biblioteca Marucelliana, Florence cited by Francesca Dini *Fattori e il Naturalismo in Toscana* , p.17. [↑](#footnote-ref-50)
51. Ibid., p.628. One should recall that Signorini’s celebrated *L’alzaia*, (1864) was sold, in 2010, for 40 million euros. [↑](#footnote-ref-51)
52. Fattori painted *Cavalli sulla spiaggia* c.1885-1890 see *I Macchiaioli di Renato Fucini* p.80 and Appendix Four p.424. [↑](#footnote-ref-52)
53. Op cit., pp. 628-29. This statement is uncorroborated. [↑](#footnote-ref-53)
54. *Lo staffato* is reproduced in *I Macchiaioli prima dell’impressionismo* a cura di Fernando Mazzocca e Carlo Sisi (Venice: Marsilio), 2003), p.310. Fucini’s account is accepted see Silvestra Bietoletti *I Macchiaioli* (Florence: Giunti, 2010) p.142. [↑](#footnote-ref-54)
55. 55 The painting was probably Fattori’s *Manovre di artiglieria*, also painted in*.*1880, which depicts horse-drawn artillery turning and disappearing into the horizon and is reproduced in Andrea Baboni, *Giovanni Fattori tra epopea e vero* (Milan: Silvana, 2008), p.310. [↑](#footnote-ref-55)
56. *Acqua Passata*, p.632 Fucini’s account is accepted see Silvestra Bietoletti *I Macchiaioli*, p.142. [↑](#footnote-ref-56)
57. Ibid., pp.632-3. Fattori’s poverty was well known and is confirmed see Dini, op.cit., p.17. [↑](#footnote-ref-57)
58. *Fattori e il Naturalismo in Toscana*, a cura di Francesca Dini (Florence: Polistampa, 2008), p.29. [↑](#footnote-ref-58)
59. See Vittorio Corcos’ illustration of *Fiorella*, on p.156 of the fourth illustrated edition of *Le Veglie* (Milan:Hoepli, 1905), or Fattori’s *Le Macchiaiole* (*Adiacenze livornesi presso Antignano*)(1865-1866) see note 94, or Andrea Baboni, *Giovanni Fattori tra epopea e vero* (Milan: Silvana, 2008), p.76, or his *Il carro rosso* (*Buoi al carro*) c. 1885, op. cit. pp.230-31. [↑](#footnote-ref-59)
60. *Acqua Passata*,p.633. [↑](#footnote-ref-60)
61. Ibid., p.630. [↑](#footnote-ref-61)
62. Ibid., pp.630-1. [↑](#footnote-ref-62)
63. Ibid., p.631, however, this is uncorroborated. [↑](#footnote-ref-63)
64. ‘Come nacque la Scampagnata’, ibid., pp.563-4, however, this is uncorroborated. [↑](#footnote-ref-64)
65. Ibid., p.631. [↑](#footnote-ref-65)
66. *Acqua Passata*, pp.522-3, however, this is uncorroborated but is very probably true because *Il Matto* was published so soon after Franchetti wrote to Fucini, in *Nuova Antologia*, 33, December 1876, pp.765-73. [↑](#footnote-ref-66)
67. Francesco Protonotari founded *Nuova Antologia* (Florence) in 1866, which published *Mastro Don Gesualdo* and Fogazzaro’s *Piccolo Mondo Antico* in various fascicules. It was printed by Le Monnier. Guido Biagi succeeded Protonotari as Editor. [↑](#footnote-ref-67)
68. Op. cit., p.523 this is uncorroborated and appears unlikely. [↑](#footnote-ref-68)
69. Raffaello Foresi was a celebrated intellectual from Elba. For bibliographical details of where all the novelle were first published see Bibliography Four pp.309-10. [↑](#footnote-ref-69)
70. Theodore Hamecrow, *The Birth of a New Europe: State and society in the nineteenth century* (Chapel Hill: University of Carolina Press, 1988), p.156. [↑](#footnote-ref-70)
71. Giuseppe Rigutini, in a letter dated 23 January 1882, thanked Fucini ‘del bel librettino…che dal tuo leziosissimo cervello è venuto fuori’ and three days before, Leone Bolaffio was equally complimentary – ‘che amore di libretto mi avete regalato, civettuolo…mandatemene un numero sufficiente di esemplari, e concedetemi di fare un po’ di propaganda pel buon gusto.’ and another friend, Leopoldo Barboni, praised him for ‘quelle ore graditissime che con tanto garbo tu sai far passare ai tuoi lettori’ Fondo Fucini cass.[etta] 9.21 (Rigutini), 1.59 (Bolaffio), 1.23 (Barboni) to Fucini dated 16 December 1882). [↑](#footnote-ref-71)
72. 72 See *Edizioni Hoepli 1871-1914* (Milan: Hoepli, 1914). [↑](#footnote-ref-72)
73. 73 Ibid. p.104.

    74 Carteggio Fucini, cassetta 2.8. [↑](#footnote-ref-73)
74. 75 Ibid., cassetta 3.57. [↑](#footnote-ref-74)
75. 76 Ibid., cassetta 8.21. [↑](#footnote-ref-75)
76. [↑](#footnote-ref-76)
77. 77 Trevisini published four reprints of *Tutti gli Scritti* in 1944, 1946, 1956 and the new edition with Bargellini’s introduction, in 1963. [↑](#footnote-ref-77)
78. See Appendix Four, p.430. [↑](#footnote-ref-78)
79. Cecconi’s illustration of the girl singing and carrying a sickle recalls Jules Breton’s painting *Le chant de l’Alouette*, 1884, (Private Collection), reproduced in Francesca Dini’s *Fattori e il Naturalismo in Toscana*, p.18, see Fig. 29. [↑](#footnote-ref-79)
80. *Acqua passata*, pp.522-3 ‘Si commosse. Arrivato all’ultima pagina, gli domandai che cosa gliene paresse.- Guardi- mi rispose, e, alzando la faccia dal banco sul quale la teneva appoggiata, me la mostrò tutta piena di lacrime. Avevo imparato a scrivere in prosa. Meno male!’(p.523).This is uncorroborated and sounds rather improbable. [↑](#footnote-ref-80)
81. See Francesca Dini, *Fattori e il Naturalismo*, p.35. [↑](#footnote-ref-81)
82. *Le Macchiaiole* (*Adiacenze livornesi presso Antignano*) c.1865, (Private Collection), Reproduced in Fernando Mazzocca e Carlo Sisi, *I Macchiaioli prima dell’impressionismo* (Venice: Marsilio, 2003), p.215. [↑](#footnote-ref-82)
83. Roberto Bigazzi, *I colori del vero* (Pisa: Nistri-Lischi, 1969), p.283. [↑](#footnote-ref-83)
84. The painting, formerly in the Dresden State Art Gallery, was destroyed by Allied bombing in February 1945. [↑](#footnote-ref-84)
85. The painting is in a private collection. The choice of a stonebreaker as the subject of an oil-painting was not uncommon, (nor new to Courbet) and was previously painted by Sir Edwin Henry Landseer *The Stonebreaker and His Daughter*, 1830, (Victoria and Albert Museum); see also *The stonebreaker* by Henry Wallis, 1857, (Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery); John Brett, 1857-8 (Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool); *Spaccapietre* by Giovanni Fattori, c.1870 (Private Collection) and his etching *Spaccasassi*, c.1887 (Museo d’arte, Lugano); *Cassepierres* by Georges Pierre Seurat, c.1882 (Norton Simon Museum, Pasadena, California); by Sir James Guthrie, 1886 (Paisley Museum and Art Galleries) and the etching by Robert Sargent Austin, 1925, (San Francisco Art Gallery); Francesco Gioli *Lo spaccapietre*, c.1880, oil on canvas and his engraving, c.1885, private collection, to name a few examples. [↑](#footnote-ref-85)
86. See chapter two of this thesis. [↑](#footnote-ref-86)
87. See Bruzzi’s second illustration to *Lucia* (Fig.26). [↑](#footnote-ref-87)
88. Unsigned article ‘Le strenne illustrate’ in *L’Illustrazione Italiana*, (Milan) 25 December 1892. [↑](#footnote-ref-88)
89. Text of a letter from Vittorio Corcos to Fucini dated Forte dei Marmi, 21 August 1891 also cited by L. Sbrocchi, *Renato Fucini l’uomo e l’opera*, p.52. [↑](#footnote-ref-89)
90. Pietro Pancrazi, *Il Fucini poeta de’ Pisani e novelliere dei Macchiaioli* (Bari: Laterza, 1937), pp.91-110. [↑](#footnote-ref-90)
91. Ibid., p.101. [↑](#footnote-ref-91)
92. Baldacci, ‘Renato Fucini’ in *Letteratura e Verità...*(Milan: Ricciardi, 1963), pp.70-88 (p.79). [↑](#footnote-ref-92)
93. Pancrazi, op. cit., p.102. [↑](#footnote-ref-93)
94. P. Pancrazi, op. cit., p.104. [↑](#footnote-ref-94)
95. See p.90 of this thesis. [↑](#footnote-ref-95)