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# Neutralising Pinocchio (and Italian-ness): From Puppet to Monument\*

Stefano Jossa

SOME TIME AGO, while I was wandering among the shelves of the Feltrinelli bookshop in via Appia in Rome, I happened on a Pinocchio-shaped pencil, with Pinocchio's face on top and the pencil stick painted in green, white and red. This is just one of the thousands of toys making the connection between Pinocchio and Italy, usually through the reference to the three colours of the Italian national flag – green, white and red, indeed. The connection has become stereotypical, and yet it displays the enduring idea that Pinocchio works as a paradigm of Italian-ness, to the extent that Italians are invited and sometimes encouraged to identify and empathize with Pinocchio. No discussion is allowed: Pinocchio means Italy and is the Italian par excellence. Nonetheless, as is well known, the words *Italia*, *italiani* and *italiano* do not appear in Collodi's book, *Le avventure di Pinocchio* (1883).

Few literary characters have so consistently been associated with the national as Pinocchio. For all the regional pride that was involved in the most famous Tuscan creature in the world, up to the connection with Dante as Florentine icons, and for all his own global fame and American influence, Pinocchio has constantly been connoted as an Italian first and foremost. 'Pinocchio is the first taste of Italy for foreigners', the writer and journalist Giuseppe Prezzolini (1882–1982) famously claimed in 1923, at the dawn of Italian Fascism, when presenting Italian culture to his readers: 'Pinocchio è la pietra d'assaggio degli stranieri. Chi capisce la bellezza di Pinocchio, capisce l'Italia' ('Pinocchio is the touchstone for foreigners. Those who understand the beauty of Pinocchio, understand Italy').<sup>1</sup> 'Studiamo Pinocchio, fa bene all'Italia' ('Let's study Pinocchio, it is good for Italy'), the journalist and writer Paolo Di Stefano echoed in *Il corriere della sera* nearly a century later.<sup>2</sup>

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\* I should like to thank Stephen Parkin for his advice on the first version of this article and for his enlightening help with the translations from the original Italian.

<sup>1</sup> Giuseppe Prezzolini, *La cultura italiana* (Florence: La Voce, 1923), p. 222.

<sup>2</sup> Paolo Di Stefano, 'Studiamo Pinocchio, fa bene all'Italia', *Il corriere della sera*, 22 April 2012 <<http://lettura.corriere.it/debates/studiamo-pinocchio-fa-bene-allitalia>> [accessed 20 September 2018]



*Pinocchio e la fata* by Emilio Greco

Ninety years have passed between Prezzolini and Di Stefano's statements, yet the association between Pinocchio and Italy is still there, unchallenged and enduring, to the extent that we might justifiably suspect that Pinocchio has been able to transcend history and achieve a sort of metaphysical status: representative of national character, therefore, rather than national identity, to subsume the distinction proposed by Silvana Patriarca in *Italian Vices*, where she has suggested that

national character tends to refer to the 'objective' settled dispositions (a set of distinctive moral and mental traits) of a people, while national identity, a term of more recent coinage, tends to indicate a more subjective dimension of perception and self-images which may include a sense of mission and self-projection in the world'.<sup>3</sup>

National character would be made up of unconscious yet consistent elements at a sort of ethno-anthropological level, while national identity would be made up by the traces that history has deposited in the inner depth of a people through a discursive process. In fact, as we shall see, Pinocchio has usually been related to a rather unspecified Italian-ness than to precise literary, political or historical ideas of Italy and *italianità*.

The fact that Pinocchio's connection with Italian-ness has persisted over the passage of time, and continues to impress us today in many different ways, irrespective of his literary origin, leads to the consideration of what has made this survival possible and who the individual players have been in that process. That process might even be more important for our own perception of the past and our contemporary sense of historical identity than Pinocchio's actual literary identity. According to Jan Assmann:

Every culture formulates something that might be called a connective structure, [which] links yesterday with today by giving form and presence to influential experiences and memories, incorporating images and tales from another time into the background of the onward moving present, and bringing with it hope and continuity. [...] This connective structure is the aspect of culture that underlies myths and histories. Both the normative and the narrative elements of these, mixing instruction with storytelling, create a basis of belonging, of identity, so that the individual can then talk of 'we'. What binds him to this plural is the connective structure of common knowledge and characteristics — first through adherence to the same laws and values, and second through the memory of a shared past. The basic principle behind all connective structures is repetition. This guarantees that the lines of action will not branch out into infinite variations but instead will establish themselves in recognizable patterns immediately identifiable as elements of a shared culture.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Silvana Patriarca, *Italian Vices: Nation and Character from the Risorgimento to the Republic* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), pp. 2–3.

<sup>4</sup> Jan Assmann, *Cultural Memory and Early Civilization Writing, Remembrance, and Political Imagination* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011), pp. 2–3.

My hypothesis is that Pinocchio is a fundamental component of the ‘connective structure’ of Italian culture. In the course of time, Pinocchio has been continuously interpreted and reinterpreted as the champion of Italian-ness, identified with a rather vague idea of national character at an ethnic or anthropological level. This meant that he could be held up as an identification figure at the national level, which happened at various stages in the last one hundred and something years. The identification of Pinocchio with a generic idea of Italian-ness dates back to 1914, at the dawn of the Great War, when the French historian Paul Hazard (1878–1944) published an essay on children’s literature in Italy in *Revue des deux mondes*, later included in his masterpiece *Les Livres, les enfants et les hommes* (1932, translated into English in 1944 and into Italian in 1954), where he rooted *Le avventure di Pinocchio* in the tradition of Italian comedy. In his identification between Pinocchio and the Italian spirit, Hazard went so far as to identify also Italy and imagination:

Is not imagination, in fact, one of the most pleasing characteristics of the Italian spirit? What people have used their fancy to build more fairylike structures? [...] the Italian imagination is a magnificent heritage of which Pinocchio has received his share and spent it profitably.<sup>5</sup>

The identification between Pinocchio, imagination and Italy paved the way for the disclosure of Pinocchio as representative of the Italian soul:

Can we be sure that this simple and practical way of understanding morality is not an attribute of the whole Italian nation? Could it be a special form of that “profound good sense” so often presented as one of the most fundamental traits of the race?<sup>6</sup>

In the original French edition, Hazard cited two of the then most influential essays on Italian national character: Giacomo Barzellotti (1844–1917)’s article ‘La nostra letteratura e l’anima nazionale’, first published in *Nuova Antologia* in 1901, and Francesco Novati (1859–1915)’s book *L’influsso del pensiero latino sopra la civiltà italiana del medio evo*, published in 1897. Both Barzellotti (whom Gentile later defined as ‘Platonic’) and Novati had argued that a good balance between realism and comedy was at the core of Italian tradition, so much so that this was identified with a sort of anthropological, and possibly metahistorical, character. Mentioning national ‘spirit’, ‘soul’ and ‘mentality’, Hazard followed the idealistic prejudice of the primacy of the spiritual over the material and made Pinocchio the symbol of a rather ethereal Italian-ness.

Seven years later, on the eve of Fascism (1921), the writer and literary critic Pietro Pancrazi (1893–1952) proclaimed that Pinocchio represented the boyhood of the

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<sup>5</sup> Paul Hazard, *Books, Children and Men* (Boston: Horne Book, 1983), p. 115.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 117.



generation prior to his and invited his readers not to laugh at his statement that behind Pinocchio he saw ‘the honest little Italy of King Umberto I’: ‘Dietro Pinocchio io rivedo i bambini di un tempo [...]. Dietro Pinocchio, io rivedo la piccola Italia onesta di re Umberto’.<sup>7</sup> Pancrazi’s political reading of Pinocchio worked as a means of appreciation of the old rural Italy at the end of the nineteenth century as opposed to the new bourgeois Italy that emerged at the dawn of the twentieth century, but it also started the long series of Pinocchio’s political interpretations, of which the constant feature would be the identification between the book and Italy, on the one hand, and the puppet and the average Italian, on the other.

Consequently, whether willingly or not, warily or not, Pancrazi, who would later be humorously antifascist, together with the above-mentioned Prezzolini, who had instead fascist inclinations, paved the way to the upcoming fascist exploitation of Pinocchio that would make him a national icon. Works such as those by Gino Schiatti, *Pinocchio fra i balilla*, and Giuseppe Petrai, *Avventure e spedizioni punitive di Pinocchio fascista*, worked as a method of dissemination of Pinocchio’s pedagogical function as a bearer of fascist values. In one of his illustrations for Petrai’s book, Giove Toppi (1889–1942), who later became also the illustrator of the first Italian Mickey Mouse, or *Topolino*, depicted a Fascist Pinocchio kicking a Marx-like Mangiafoco (Fire-eater) with a label hanging out of the latter’s trouser pocket showing the communist symbol – hammer and sickle. The suggestion here is that the right and honest Italian, identified with Pinocchio – and Fascism – is expelling wrong and dishonest foreign influences, such as that of European, and especially Russian, Communists.

Nearly thirty years later, on the eve of the 1951 Italian local elections, the Christian Democrats issued an electoral booklet with a strip cartoon featuring Pinocchio and retelling his story in a political allegory.<sup>8</sup> The last strip showed Geppetto and Pinocchio walking hand in hand on a road leading to the rising sun. The landscape is described by Geppetto in a speech balloon above: ‘On the left there is a dangerous sea, where the red shark is ready to kill freedom, while on the right there is a swampland with shifting sands’. The father-figure Geppetto instructs the young Pinocchio in another balloon below:

The road you have to follow to save the fairy with tricolour hair and to become a man in full possession of your thoughts and your actions: the road of freedom, progress and justice, is in the

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<sup>7</sup> ‘Behind Pinocchio I see the boys of some time ago. [...] Behind Pinocchio, I see the honest little Italy of King Umberto I’). Pietro Pancrazi, ‘Elogio di Pinocchio’, in *Venti uomini, un satiro e un burattino* (Florence: Vallecchi, 1923), pp. 204–05.

<sup>8</sup> Stefano Pivato, *Favole e politica: Pinocchio, Cappuccetto Rosso e la guerra fredda* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2015), pp. 106–07.

middle. You cannot be wrong, Pinocchio [...]. But be careful: if you don't follow the right path, nobody will ever be able to save you. Go calmly, and good luck!

The political allegory was not too difficult to work out: the red shark on the left stood for the Popular Democratic Front, including both the Communist (PCI) and Socialist party (PSI), presented as enemies of freedom; the swampland on the right stood for political conservatism, to be identified with the two right wing parties of the time, the Movimento Sociale Italiano (MSI) and the Partito Nazionale Monarchico (PNM); the central road, the 'road of freedom, progress and justice', was identified with Christian Democracy. Pinocchio, in this poster, is both the past and the future of Italy. The past in that he is a literary character who is part of the childhood memories of every Italian voter; the future in that he is the good, adult Italian voter who will choose Christian Democracy against the threats of both the left wing alliance and the right wing parties. In so doing, the authors of the strip meant to use Pinocchio as a unifying figure, with which everybody could identify, so as to represent the average Italian with his political dreams and fears – it must be noted that the addressees at the time are thought of as male. Pinocchio is no longer a rebel, the puppet that disobeys his 'father'-maker Geppetto, nor is he the boy that emerged from the process of education and transformation set in place in the novel: he has become a neutral receptacle that could be imbued with any kind of political idea. Such political exploitations of Pinocchio were of course possible because Pinocchio had already been characterized as the average Italian and Italians had been encouraged to identify with Pinocchio during the Fascist regime; they thus mark a continuity rather than discontinuity between fascism and post-fascism.

Subsequently the late 1960s and early 1970s saw a relaunch of the idea that Pinocchio was representative of Italy – and actually its best aspect. In 1967, the historian Vittorio Frosini (1922–2001) declared *Le avventure di Pinocchio* to be 'un'immagine dell'umile Italia, quella dei casolari di campagna e dei villaggi di pescatori, che lotta ogni giorno per vivere'.<sup>9</sup> In giving Pinocchio a left-orientated political meaning, Frosini was still relying on the paradigm that Pinocchio was the right and good Italian, in line with the stereotype of *Italiani brava gente*.

In 1971, in an article published on the first page of the Italian daily newspaper *La Stampa*, a year before the general elections of 1972, the jurist and historian Arturo Carlo Jemolo (1891–1981) maintained that Pinocchio was a book *à clef*:

Scritto a Firenze tra l'81 e l'83 da chi si proclamava repubblicano, ed era partito volontario nel '48 e nel '59, Pinocchio è il popolo italiano, la fata il liberalismo progressista, la volpe ed il gatto i

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<sup>9</sup> 'An image of the humble Italy – that of hamlets and fishing villages – with its daily struggle for survival': Vittorio Frosini, *La filosofia politica di Pinocchio* (Rome: Edizioni Lavoro, 1990), p. 33.



legittimisti ed i clericali, ed il grillo parlante, così sfortunato, credo sia Mazzini, che magro, allampanato, vestito di nero, poteva evocare la figura del grillo. Ma se pure così non fosse, Pinocchio davanti alla medicina sarebbe sempre la immagine del popolo italiano, in specie degli italiani di oggi. Perché da qualunque lato ci si volti, si sentono deplorare dei mali, e si avverte altresì che rimedi sicuri, che li stroncassero tutti, non esistono, ma per ciascuno qualche medicina che desse un po' di sollievo, ci sarebbe; soltanto, sono tutte amare.<sup>10</sup>

Being similar to Pinocchio, Jemolo suggested, Italians had to mirror Pinocchio's route from puppet to good boy. Three years later, the literary critic and academic Alberto Asor Rosa (b. 1933) famously claimed that Pinocchio was born from the intuition that Italy in its first post-Unitarian phase was living out its coming of age, like someone who transforms himself from being a puppet to becoming a man.<sup>11</sup> Pinocchio mirrored Italian history and was in a certain way a sort of personification of Italy, in Asor Rosa's reading. Clearly indebted, albeit without explicitly saying so, to Hazard's reading, Asor Rosa suggested that Pinocchio was the good Italian, with his problems in growing up, as opposed to the sick Italian interpreted by Enrico, the protagonist of De Amicis's *Cuore*. As argued by Giuseppe Decollanz, Pinocchio was ready to become a political model to the Italians.<sup>12</sup>

The situation becomes more intriguing in more recent times, starting with the writer Antonio Faeti (b. 1939), a professor of children's literature at the University of Bologna, who in 1993 described Pinocchio as:

Ben confiscato nell'etnia italiana, [...] il protagonista di un *exemplum* laico e devozionale, [...] divinità lignea e totemica di un Paese che è sempre lì lì per cambiare, di un luogo nel mondo dove si vivono eterne vigilie di metamorfosi, di palingenesi, di terremoteschi mutamenti, sempre con il rischio di risvegliarsi diversi, sì, ma solo in virtù della differenziazione aggiunta di un paio di orecchie d'asino.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> 'Written in Florence between 1881 and 1883 by a republican and former volunteer in the wars of independence of 1848 and 1859, Pinocchio stands for the Italian people, the fairy for progressive liberalism, the fox and the cat for legitimists and clericals, and the unlucky talking cricket (I think) for Mazzini. However, even if this is not the case, Pinocchio in front of his medicine would still be the image of the Italian people, who love complaining about their problems, yet are aware that the only effective medicines are all bitter': Arturo Carlo Jemolo, 'A noi l'amaro non ci piace', *La stampa*, 6 March 1971, p. 1.

<sup>11</sup> 'Intuizione che l'Italia nella sua prima fase postunitaria stava vivendo il dramma di chi da burattino si fa uomo': Alberto Asor Rosa, 'La cultura', in *Storia d'Italia: dall'Unità a oggi*, (Turin: Einaudi, 1975), II, pp. 821-1664 (p. 939).

<sup>12</sup> Giuseppe Decollanz, *Educazione e politica nel Pinocchio* (Bari: Scuola '70, 1972).

<sup>13</sup> 'Firmly rooted in Italian ethnicity, [...] the protagonist of a secular devotional tract [...] the wooden totem-like deity of a country that is always on the verge of changing': Antonio Faeti, 'Pinocchio', in *L'identità degli italiani*, ed. by G. Calcagno (Bari: Laterza, 1993), p. 173.

while in 1997 the writer Raffaele La Capria (b. 1922) suggested that Pinocchio was ‘un’immagine dell’Italia eterna’<sup>14</sup> and in 2004 the diplomat and essayist Ludovico Incisa di Camerana (1927–2013) went so far as to proclaim that Pinocchio is ‘the proof that Italy exists’:

Valido per il Nord, per il Centro, per il Sud, Pinocchio è la prova che l’Italia esiste. Buono o cattivo, lavoratore o imbrogliatore, pronto a farsi ingannare dal Gatto e dalla Volpe, gatto o volpe lui stesso, generoso a volte, mascalzone altre, cinico e sentimentale, Pinocchio è il tipo nazionale.<sup>15</sup>

Meanwhile, in 2002 the comedian and film-maker Roberto Benigni (b. 1952) released a film on Pinocchio. In an interview in the daily newspaper *La repubblica*, Benigni stated that *Le avventure di Pinocchio* is ‘una storia che più italiana non si può, con tutti i sentimenti italiani, piena di uno sberlucichio che appartiene soltanto a noi’.<sup>16</sup> The connection between Pinocchio and Italy is not, however, an invention of later critics. As early as 1883, after the publication of the book as a serial in the *Giornale dei bambini*, an anonymous reviewer in *Corriere del mattino*, a daily newspaper in Florence, pointed out that the tale of Pinocchio was a synthesis of Italian *buon senso* and humour which successfully rivalled the English model: ‘C’è in questo romanzetto tutto il succo del buon senso italiano innestato al più schietto *humour*, che non ha più diritto di chiamarsi inglese’.<sup>17</sup>

Champion of Italian-ness, Pinocchio was able to give birth to what the literary critic and journalist Matteo Di Gesù, lecturer in Italian literature at the University of Palermo, has recently called ‘la litania dei caratteri tipici dell’italianità’.<sup>18</sup> Either allegorically interpreted or exploited politically, Pinocchio, both the book and the character, has rarely escaped its function as national icon. No observer can in fact deny the pervasive presence of Pinocchio and the accompanying discourse on it in framing Italian national discourse. So it seems appropriate to choose Pinocchio as one of Italy’s icons. But this

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<sup>14</sup> ‘An image of the eternal Italy’: Raffaele La Capria, *Il sentimento della letteratura* (Milan: Mondadori, 1997), p. 46.

<sup>15</sup> ‘Valid for North, Centre and South, Pinocchio is the proof that Italy exists. Good and bad, a hard worker and a cheat, a credulous victim of the Cat and the Fox, but a cat and fox himself, sometimes generous, at other times rascally, cynical as well as sentimental, Pinocchio is the national type’: Lodovico Incisa di Camerana, *Pinocchio* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2004), p. 144.

<sup>16</sup> ‘The most Italian of stories, with all the Italian sentiments, full of a sparkle that belongs only to us’: Curzio Maltese, ‘Benigni: “Grazie delle critiche, ma al cinema siate bambini”’, *La repubblica*, 19 October 2002 <[http://www.repubblica.it/online/spettacoli\\_e\\_cultura/pinocchiidue/critiche/critiche.html](http://www.repubblica.it/online/spettacoli_e_cultura/pinocchiidue/critiche/critiche.html)> [accessed 20 September 2018]

<sup>17</sup> ‘There is in this short novel the essence of Italian *buon senso* combined with such an open and frank humour that this can no longer be described as an English characteristic’.

<sup>18</sup> ‘The litany of typical characters of Italian-ness’: Matteo Di Gesù, *Dispatrie lettere: Di Blasi, Leopardi, Collodi: letterature e identità nazionali* (Rome: Aracne, 2005), p. 58.

icon comes at a cost, since Pinocchio's emptiness prevails over its other features at the expense of the book itself. It is this emptiness, for example, that has allowed Suzanne Stewart-Steinberg to speak of a 'Pinocchio effect', which has made Pinocchio equivalent to Italy on the grounds of his

strange combination of anxiety about the potential emptiness of the Italian subject, his fictional and rhetorical quality, his immaturity and even inhumane, puppet nature [...] [which leads to] the profundity of Italian interrogations of the social bond in a modern, post-liberal society.<sup>19</sup>

Nevertheless, the extent to which the interpretation of Pinocchio has led to a process of neutralization of Pinocchio itself, still needs to be addressed and understood. By neutralization, I mean a technique by which any subversive potential is absorbed into a more general process of harmonization. Here I will address the case of the monuments to Pinocchio which can be found throughout Italy.

1951, the same year as the Christian Democrat electoral booklet, also marked the promotion of a *Comitato nazionale per un monumento a Pinocchio*. The Comitato was set in place by Rolando Anzilotti (1919–1982), a professor of English literature at the University of Florence and the mayor of Pescia, the birthplace of Carlo Collodi, and the monument was to be installed in the planned Pinocchio Park in Pescia. Two years later the competition was won *ex aequo* by the sculptors Emilio Greco (1913–1995) with his project for a statue entitled 'Pinocchio e la fata' and Venturino Venturi (1918–2002) with his project for a 'Piazzetta dei Mosaici'. It is noteworthy that Greco's *Six Drawings for 'Pinocchio'* were later presented by the artist to the Tate Gallery, where they are currently stored. A drawing of Greco's monument was published in the December 1951 issue of *Domenica del corriere* and a national debate was ignited. To what extent was the proposed monument Italian? Was abstract art Italian enough to Italian people rather than just a few *eletti*? Enemies of abstractionism caused uproar; anti-clerical militants accused the Blue Fairy of being too ethereal and Virgin-like; churchgoing folk were instead disturbed by her provocative breasts ... There was a comic strip showing a father holding his child by the arm and telling him: 'Se non stai buono ti faccio vedere il monumento a Pinocchio'.<sup>20</sup> Criticism was so harsh that work on the monument was suspended until 1956.

In the same period, the Ancona section of the Società Dante Alighieri commissioned a monument to Pinocchio from Vittorio Morelli, which was inaugurated in 1954. The ceremony was filmed for the *Settimana Incom*, the Italian weekly newsreel distributed in cinemas from 1946 to 1965. The footage shows the mayor of Ancona, Francesco

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<sup>19</sup> Susan Stewart-Steinberg, *The Pinocchio Effect: On Making Italians, 1860–1920* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), p. 6.

<sup>20</sup> 'If you don't behave, I'll take you to see the Pinocchio monument'.

Angelini (1887–1964), of the Italian Republican Party (PRI), and the Minister of the Merchant Navy, Fernando Tambroni (1901–1963), Christian Democrat, shaking hands to celebrate Pinocchio as a way of overcoming political divisions at a time when anti-clerical parties and Catholics were unsuccessful in finding points of convergence. The film presents Pinocchio as a force of harmony and consensus, to the extent that even his enemies in the book that day applauded him: ‘persino i personaggi che nel libro gli sono avversi oggi applaudono’, the commentary says, while the footage shows the Cat and the Fox clapping, just as if Pinocchio was able to overcome political divisions thanks to his harmonising force. Once more, Pinocchio is not seen as part of the conflict, one of the elements in the game of oppositions, in the fight between good and evil, but above the conflict, the representation of right and justice at an idealized level.

Another monument was erected before Greco’s: created by the sculptor Nino Spagnoli, it was inaugurated in June 1955 in Villa Revoltella, Trieste, at the presence of Pescia’s mayor Anzilotti. The connection between Trieste and Pescia shows the extent to which Pinocchio could be exploited as a neutral icon of Italian-ness, superseding political divides. At the time Trieste was about to celebrate thirty-five years of its annexation to Italy and therefore a monument to Pinocchio could help to build a sense of belonging to Italy and its culture in a city which was still in large part remote from Italian culture.

On May 17, 1956, Greco’s monument in Pescia was finally inaugurated in the presence of the President of the Italian Republic Giovanni Gronchi, confirming the symbolical value of the puppet as a means of national reconciliation in what was still very much a divided country. Two days later, May 19, another monument to Pinocchio appeared in Milan, in Piazza Indipendenza, the work of Attilio Fagioli, concluding the 1950s heyday of monuments to Pinocchio.

Since then, monuments to Pinocchio have been put up throughout Italy over the course of time, but it is particularly significant that a revival of Pinocchio monuments occurred from the 1990s onwards, especially the 2000s, in a period when Italian-ness was again a widespread topic in public debate and national unity was again under threat, after the so-called birth of Italian Second Republic (coinciding with *Tangentopoli*, the economic crisis of the early 1990s, the mafia assassinations of the judges Giovanni Falcone and Paolo Borsellino, the dissolution of the historical parties, and the rise of the Lega Nord and Silvio Berlusconi’s own party, Forza Italia, in the 1994 general elections). To mention just a few: the 1997 monument to Pinocchio at Pescopennataro, Isernia, in Molise, dedicated ‘a Pinocchio grande educatore di tutti i tempi’;<sup>21</sup> the 2002 wooden Pinocchio at Viù, in the province of Turin; the 2006 bronze Pinocchio in Florence, in

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<sup>21</sup> ‘to Pinocchio great educator of all times’.

Piazza del Mercato, to celebrate Collodi's 180th birthday; and the 2009 15-metre high Pinocchio at Collodi on the side road by the Pinocchio Park.

Monuments, as Pierre Nora and Bruno Tobia have shown, are places where national memory is constructed.<sup>22</sup> There the national community can mirror its unity and its ideals. Pinocchio has historically worked as a way of idealising Italian-ness and reconciling national memory, independently of whether this memory is still in fact divided. Pinocchio can now be everybody and nobody, the Italian, simply because he is Pinocchio. It does not really matter whether we go for a revolutionary or conformist Pinocchio: he is the one who unifies and all conflicts disappear in the presence of Pinocchio. The only problem is that Collodi's Pinocchio is more divisive than cohesive: an opponent to his father, the talking Cricket and even the Blue Fairy, he carries the conflict in himself, with his amphibological nature, being, from the beginning to the end, both a puppet and a boy. Who knows whether monuments to him have served his cause, and Italy's cause, better.

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<sup>22</sup> Pierre Nora, *Les lieux de mémoire* (Paris: Gallimard, 1984–1992); Bruno Tobia, *Una patria per gli italiani: spazi, itinerari, monumenti nell'Italia unita (1870–1900)* (Roma: Laterza, 1991)