

Under Pinocchio's Skin: The Uncanny Woodeness of a Permanent Body

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Carlo Collodi's *Le Avventure di Pinocchio* has undergone an extraordinary volume of manipulations, showing the great malleability of a text whose protean capacity echoes the one of its own character. Rather than addressing the multitude of adaptations, I analyze *Pinocchio* from a psychoanalytical standpoint. I consider the experience of *Unheimlich* – or uncanny – as a pivotal stylistic element of the story and explore its function in Collodi's critique of Risorgimento's prescriptive moral code. Here, I understand the uncanny as pertaining to a class of frightening experiences that lead back to what is long known, a familiar that has been removed by repression. In this light, *Pinocchio* surprisingly emerges as a tale deprived of any actual morally successful teleology. Instead of engendering a new bourgeois life, the ethical and physical transformation of the puppet into a 'bambino perbene' actually exposes the contradictory phenomenology of this metamorphosis, and subtly announces Pinocchio's radical death. The presence of Pinocchio's dead wooden body reveals the ineffectiveness of the moral-teleological project of the Italian Risorgimento, which gives away its inability to restrain those unsettling forces that destabilize it from within.

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After long and a-systematic editorial ordeals, and almost eighteen months from the publication of the first chapter in Ferdinando Martini's *Giornale per bambini*, in 1883 Carlo Collodi's published his most celebrated book with the title *Le avventure di Pinocchio*,¹ an edition adorned with "le celebri illustrazioni di Enrico Mazzanti."² After its first publication, Collodi's singular endeavour very quickly achieved what Charles Klopp has defined as an "iconic status,"³ which exposed the short tale to an extraordinary volume of adaptations and re-adaptations, translations, transpositions, transliterations, paraphrases, glosses, media displacements, and so on. These manipulations have shown the great malleability and fluidity of a text whose protean capacity almost resembles that of its own main character. As Isabella Pezzini remarks, such a success "è motivo di sfida e di preoccupazione insieme: come osare affrontare un testo così letto e così studiato, come riuscire a non farsi travolgere dalla quantità e dalla qualità dei dati che lo riguardano, e che immediatamente gli si affollano attorno in copiose armate?"⁴

¹ Carlo Collodi, *Le avventure di Pinocchio*, (CreateSpace: Scotts Valley, CA, 2015). From now on *Pinocchio*.

² Alberto Asor Rosa, *Genus Italicum. Saggi sulla identità letteraria italiana nel corso del tempo*, (Turin: Einaudi, 1997), p. 563.

³ Charles Klopp, 'Workshop of Creation, Filthy and Not. Collodi's Pinocchio and Shelley's Frankenstein', in *Pinocchio, Puppets and Modernity*, ed. by Katia Pizzi, (New York and London: Routledge, 2012), pp. 63-73 (p. 63).

⁴ Isabella Pezzini, 'Tra un Pinocchio e l'altro', in *Le avventure di Pinocchio. Tra linguaggio e l'altro*, ed. by Isabella Pezzini and Paolo Fabbri, (Rome: Meltemi Editore, 2002), pp. 7-34 (p. 7).

In order to welcome the challenge presented by Collodi's tale, this article will not resort to a catalogue of the rich multitude of different interpretations of *Pinocchio*,⁵ but it will rather attempt a new reading that contrasts the long list of accurate critical analyses offered so far. Here, I address *Pinocchio* by taking cue from the overly used and abused psychoanalytical approach, whose application Collodi's endeavour too easily lends itself to. Within the psychoanalytical framework, I specifically consider the usually overlooked⁶ concept of *Unheimlich* – the commonly known Freudian uncanny⁷ – as a pivotal stylistic element of the puppet's story and explore how such a concept contributes to Collodi's critique of the Risorgimento's regimented and prescriptive moral code. Contrary to interpretations that conceive of *Pinocchio* as a complement to Collodi's military "contribution to Italian independence and unity,"⁸ I identify this tale with an intellectual operation that opposes contemporary national pedagogies designed to instigate the all-encompassing "religion of the fatherland"⁹ that was promoted by

⁵ This kind of analysis is something that Paolo Fabbri carried on with his 'Dal burattino al cyborg. Varianti, variazioni, varietà', in *Le avventure di Pinocchio. Tra un linguaggio e l'altro*, ed. by Isabella Pezzini and Paolo Fabbri (Rome: Meltemi, 2002): 277-298.

⁶ Interpretations that apply a psychoanalytical lens to the reading of *Pinocchio* usually resort to Freud's drive theory. See, as an example, Maurizio Gagliano, 'Pulsioni di morte e destini di vita: dal burattino al replicante', in *Le avventure di Pinocchio. Tra un linguaggio e l'altro*, ed. by Isabella Pezzini and Paolo Fabbri (Rome: Meltemi, 2002): 95-111.

⁷ From now on I will use *Unheimlich* and uncanny interchangeably.

⁸ Stelio Cro, 'Collodi: When Children's Literature Becomes Adult', *Merveilles & Contes*, 7.1 (1993), 87-112 (p. 107).

⁹ In this regard, David Levi explains how the overreaching power of the ideal of a fatherland overthrows other forms of social belonging: "Amid this whirlwind of events and the spread of associated forces, the individual life was for an instant almost suspended, and we were all as if pushed and swept away in the vortex of the revolution. [...] Age, sex, social condition, all the differences melted away, all blended into one thought, came together in one action – the independence of Italy. All beliefs united, mixed into one faith – the

Italian patriots' bourgeois liberalism. Therefore, rather than representing "an allegory of [a] new Italian hero"¹⁰ and celebrating the moral prestige attached to the sacrifice for the construction of a newly united Italian homeland, *Pinocchio* emerges as a tale devoid of that successful moral teleology that allowed pedagogical texts to instruct new generations of Italians according to a plethora of virtues embodied by the pantheon of the Risorgimento martyrs¹¹ (e.g., self-abnegation, patience,¹² self-sacrifice, masculine honor,¹³ etc.).

To do so, I firstly explain how the dialectical relationship between appearance and reality, along with the recursive rhythm that defines the diegesis of *Pinocchio*, fundamentally structure the narrative of a tale that has usually been read as a *bildungsroman*. Secondly, I describe the concept of the *Unheimlich*, as understood by Freud and Jentsch, and examine how their interpretations allow to clarify the relationship between the aforementioned narrative qualities and Collodi's criticism of the Risorgimento. Without hasten too quick of a definition, suffices to say that the *Unheimlich* pertains to a class of frightening experiences that lead back to what is long

religion of the fatherland, Italy." David Levi, *Ausonia. Vita d'azione (dal 1848 al 1870)* (Rome-Turin-Florence, 1882), pp. 80-1.

¹⁰ Cro, p. 90

¹¹ See Maurizio Ridolfi, 'Risorgimento', in *I luoghi della memoria. Simboli e miti dell'Italia unita*, ed. by Mario Isnenghi (Rome: Laterza, 1998), pp. 5-47.

¹² See Adrian Lyttelton, 'The Hero and the People', in *The Risorgimento Revisited. Nationalism and Culture in Nineteenth-Century Italy*, ed. by Silvana Patriarca and Lucy Rall (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), pp. 37-55 (p. 45).

¹³ See Alberto Mario Banti, *La nazione del Risorgimento. Parentela, santità e onore alle origini dell'Italia unita* (Turin: Einaudi, 2000), especially pp. 139-148. See also Silvana Patriarca, 'A Patriotic Emotion: Shame and the Risorgimento', *The Risorgimento Revisited. Nationalism and Culture in Nineteenth-Century Italy*, ed. by Silvana Patriarca and Lucy Rall (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), pp. 134-51.

known, a familiar that has been removed by repression. I also look at archetypal dimension attached to the *Unheimlich* and show how it helps strengthening the rebellious attitude of Collodi's character vis-à-vis the oppressive civic pedagogy of post-unification Italy. Lastly, I focus on the ineliminable permanence of the puppet's wooden body through the series of metamorphosis that lead to the last one. In this regard, I argue that Pinocchio's allegedly ethical and physical transformation into a 'bambino perbene' exposes the contradictory phenomenology of such an apparently patriotic metamorphosis, one that, instead of finally engendering a new bourgeois life, subtly announces the effective termination of Pinocchio's existence through his radical death. In this sense, the presence of Pinocchio's dead wooden body at the end of the tale symbolically reveals the ineffectiveness and failure of the moral-teleological project of the Risorgimento. By disclosing the presence of unsettling forces underneath the veneer that makes up the new moral code of nineteenth-century Italian patriotism, the eerie presence of the unanimated puppet exposes the inadequacy of an attempt to "transform a people [...] into a nation, with defined historical and geographical identity, united by a common will and by the mutual recognition of right and obligations."¹⁴

Pinocchio's Structures: An Uncanny Growth?

As stated above, the concept of the *Unheimlich* furnishes the reader with a useful critical frame to analyse and problematize two aspects that underpin the whole teleology of Pinocchio's development conceived of as a "*bildungsroman*."¹⁵ In this regard, the alleged improvement of the puppet has often been described in terms of

¹⁴ Lyttelton, p. 51.

¹⁵ Thomas Morrissey, Richard Wunderlich, 'Death and Rebirth in Pinocchio', *Children's Literature*, 11 (1983), 64-75 (p. 71).

acquisition of a self-awareness that ripens with the final transformation into a good, Italian, bourgeois young boy. In other words, one may say that the actual and proper purpose of Pinocchio's existence coincides with becoming "an adult, which means to become aware of the effect he has and can have on others, to take the concerns of others into account, and, if necessary, to assume responsibility, deferring his own needs on behalf of others."¹⁶ In this respect, some critics have even spoken of a secular conversion and identified the adventures of Pinocchio with an actual story of moral edification consistent with the newly rising patriotic dogmas that defined the Risorgimento.¹⁷ Here, then, the idea of Pinocchio's moral formation, as the ultimately defining element of his tale, finds its fundamental bases in an understanding of learning and knowledge as built on the phenomenon of repetition. In other words, the constant recurrence of mostly failing experiences related to the puppet's rebellion, along with the reiteration of sententious maxims uttered by those characters who should guide him toward a final bourgeois ablution, mean to reveal the convenience of the new Risorgimento morality. By adapting to a moral code that, by the end of the tale, has become familiar to him by virtue of a recursive dynamic, the recalcitrant puppet would be convinced to abandon the trickery life of appearance – symbolized by the wooden body – and finally join in the realm of virtuous and real existence, embodied by the fleshiness of the 'bambino perbene'. Then, a certain comprehension of the relationship between appearance and reality, on the one hand, and of the familiar, on the other, seems to subterraneanly constitute the premises for interpretations that identify *Pinocchio* with the story of a teleologically oriented moral development, culminating

¹⁶ Richard Wunderlich, "The Tribulations of *Pinocchio*: How Social Change Can Wreck a Good Story", *Poetics Today*, 13.1 (Spring 1992), 199.

¹⁷ One of the most explicit critics, in this regard, is Stelio Cro.

with the puppet's conclusive admission into a revealed and finally familiar real life. In this regard, the concept of the *Unheimlich* shows to be a valuable tool to re-examine the two structural features upon which *Pinocchio*'s narrative is organized: indeed, by troubling the coincidence between appearance and reality, highlighting the presence of a dissonance between these two dimensions of experience, and estranging what it is usually perceived as familiar, the uncanny displaces and reorganized the phenomenon of repetition that has been used to describe Collodi's tale as a *bildungsroman*.

As Scott Eberle observes, when talking about the *Unheimlich* "we have no trouble remembering the Viennese critic who popularized his idea, Sigmund Freud"¹⁸ and his characterization of the uncanny as the mark of the return of the repressed. Indeed, Freud's study locates the displacing and eerie experience of the *Unheimlich* in a cognitive region related to "that species of the frightening that goes back to what was once well known and had long been familiar."¹⁹ Translated into psychoanalytical terms, "this uncanny element is actually nothing new or strange, but something that was long familiar to the psyche and was estranged from it only through being repressed."²⁰ Notwithstanding the validity of these observations, the complex experience of *Unheimlich* cannot be reduced only to Freud's insightful interpretation. Eberle, again, recalls that "the strangeness and richness of the word *unheimlich* [actually] attracted two early twentieth-century German-speaking psychological thinkers:"²¹ the first is clearly Freud; but before him, Ernst Jentsch – whose theory Freud accused of

¹⁸ Scott G. Eberle, 'Exploring the Uncanny Valley to Find the Edge of Play', *American Journal of Play* 2.2 (Fall 2009), 167-194 (p. 169).

¹⁹ Sigmund Freud, *The Uncanny*, trans. by David McLintock (London: Penguin, 2003), p. 124.

²⁰ Freud, p. 148.

²¹ Eberle, p. 169.

incompleteness – published “Zur Psychologie des Unheimlichen” in 1906. While the former’s theory represents a suitable framework to address the problematic experience of the familiar within the diegesis of *Pinocchio*, Jentsch’s understanding of the uncanny allows to investigate the other notion that informs Collodi’s tale, that of facticity, or “the odd disjuncture between appearance and reality.”²² Therefore, by combining Freud and Jentsch’s different articulations of the uncanny, one manages to re-interpret both motifs constituting those critical readings that recognize in *Pinocchio* the presence of a traditional *bildungsroman*-ish teleology.

The use of the uncanny as a critical frame, moreover, is motivated by reasons of historical nature. Indeed, both Freud and Jentsch’s reflection surfaced in a specific period defined by “an exploration in literature, ballet and opera of imaginary attempts by human beings [...] to reproduce their species by scientific or mechanical means, sometimes with the suggestion of alchemy or magic also being employed.”²³ As Lawson Lucas suggests, “these fantastic experiments resulted in the creation of imaginary automata, monsters, toys and puppets whose stories are always tragic and always raise questions of human morality, responsibility and even sanity.”²⁴ Therefore, the experience of psychological displacement and estrangement that can be identified with the *Unheimlich*, acquires a specific relevance after literary imagination tapped into the relationship between the human psyche and its response to a presence whose humanoid appearance and behavior dangerously simulated those of real human beings.

²² Eberle, p. 172.

²³ Ann Lawson Lucas, ‘Puppets on a String. The Unnatural History of Human Reproduction’, in *Pinocchio, Puppets and Modernity*, ed. by Katia Pizzi, (New York and London: Routledge, 2012), pp. 49-61 (p. 50).

²⁴ Lucas, p. 50.

In this sense, the publication of works such as Goethe's *Faust* (1808), E.T.A. Hoffmann's "Der Sandmann" (1816), Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1818), and, some years later, Collodi's *Le Avventure di Pinocchio* (1883), might have historically justified, bred and epistemologically prepared the ground to Freud and Jentsch's interest in the uncanny.

The Radical Indiscipline of a Puer Aeternus

The archetypal dimension that a discourse on the *Unheimlich* entails strengthens Collodi's criticism of the Risorgimento's homogenizing project and transfers the writer's beratement from a mere political and social plane to a more structural and psychological one. In this regard, Franco Cambi's observes that "con Freud è l'infanzia profonda ("o archetipica") ad essere analizzata"²⁵ and, in this light, Pinocchio "si afferma, ad un tempo, come un fanciullo elementare e universale."²⁶ Collodi's character, indeed, epitomizes "un *puer aeternus*, contraddittorio e ambiguo, che racchiude gli archetipi di ogni infanzia e il suo dramma acutissimo e necessario."²⁷ In this sense, the archetypal element, that ancient familiar that is always subterraneanly present and resurfaces in the experience of the *Unheimlich*, struggling against constantly operating repressive forces, could be identified with a kind of childhood characterized by transgression as a vital act. As Cambi notes, "tra la componente anarchico-trasgressiva e la componente di classe, Collodi sceglie la prima e si incammina così a delineare un approccio alla e ad avviare un sondaggio nella infanzia

²⁵ Franco Cambi, *Collodi, De Amicis, Rodari. Tre immagini d'infanzia*, (Bari: Edizioni Dedalo, 1985), p. 63.

²⁶ Cambi, p. 49

²⁷ Cambi, p. 38.

universale.”²⁸ The archetypical drive, which is meant to resurface insofar as it is consistently repressed, and that constantly shapes Pinocchio’s action as *puer aeternus*, could be recognized in what Andrea Righi denominates as “indisciplina.”²⁹ This attitude ultimately coincides with a constant vital and autonomous element that is persistently threatened by the authoritarian imposition of an irreflective national identity and patriotism.³⁰ By integrating his civic criticism via the opposition between a psychological structure and a political organizing force, Collodi seems then to further emphasize the oppressive imposition of the new regimented order. In this sense, Pinocchio “rappresentava per Collodi quel repertorio di energie vive e non addomesticabili dal compromesso sabauda che avevano dato un contributo fondamentale all’unificazione della nazione e che avrebbero potuto salvarla dalla decadenza qualora fossero state guidate da saldi valori morali.”³¹ Under these circumstances, the puppet’s disobedience reflects an instinctive opposition to the rising and monolithic formative project proposed by the Italian liberal bourgeoisie³² and “assume i connotati di una resistenza attiva e progettuale rispetto al modello post-unitario.”³³ In this context, the *Unheimlich* understood in terms of “indisciplina” achieves the status of a vital rebellion that constantly lurks under the surface of an uniformed national identity, of an anarchical *impetus* that remains hidden and perennially troubles the alleged established order. However, as Freud observes, the

²⁸ Cambi, p. 46.

²⁹ Andrea Righi, ‘L’indisciplina e il suo contenuto sociale da Collodi alle riletture di Carmelo Bene e Luigi Malerba’, *California Italian Studies* 2.1 (2011), 1-18 (p. 1).

³⁰ See Righi, p. 1.

³¹ Righi, p. 4.

³² See Righi, p. 8.

³³ Righi, p. 9.

predisposition of the uncanny to remain and endure exposes the uncanny to its very repression to come. Indeed, by quoting Shelling, Freud remarks that “uncanny is what one calls everything that was meant to remain secret and hidden and has come into the open.”³⁴ In this sense, the *Unheimlich* is identified with that which is always born within the hidden layers of experience and, therefore, is invariably controlled and oppressed until the moment when it suddenly breaks through the repressive cowl of institutions of power. When faced with the abrupt emergence of the unruly vitality of the uncanny, repressive forces claw back at their authoritarian and restrictive role in order to return the uncanny to secrecy, for the *Unheimlich* is meant to – or ought to – remain hidden and exist into disappearance. It is not by chance, therefore, that in the event of the *Unheimlich*, “the prefix *un-* is the indicator [the token] of repression.”³⁵

Within such dialectics, more than synthesizing the bare displacing experience of eeriness, the *Unheimlich* seems to syntactically converge toward the description of the actual emergence of the very displacing experience. Indeed, the ambiguous nature of the uncanny manifests itself through its very emergence: as Freud notes, the *Unheimlich* and its alleged opposite, *Heimlich* (the familiar, the homely), reach a point of coincidence at the moment of the uncanny occurrence. Semantically speaking, the withdrawn obscurity that characterizes – and ought to designate – the uncanny both echoes and recalls the same inaccessible (private) secrecy that pertains to certain homelike and familiar experiences. In this respect, the Austrian psychoanalyst maintains that “the most interesting fact [...] is that among the various shades of meaning that are recorded for the word *Heimlich* there is one in which it merges with its formal antonym,

³⁴ Freud, p. 132.

³⁵ Freud, p. 151.

Unheimlich, so that what is called *Heimlich* becomes *Unheimlich*. As witness the passage from Gutzkow: ‘We call that *Unheimlich*; you call it *Heimlich*.’ This reminds us that this word is not unambiguous, but belongs to two sets of ideas, which are not mutually contradictory.”³⁶ Such an ambiguity belonging to the experience of the *Unheimlich* helps understand the figure of Pinocchio and his both psychic and bodily ambivalence as rebelling *puer aeternus*. As I will illustrate later, the character of Pinocchio simultaneously harbors the liberating drive of insurrection and the oppression of the prescriptive moral code of the Italian Risorgimento. Indeed, according to Cambi, Pinocchio represents both the “età libera, almeno nella propria dimensione di autonomia e nella potenzialità; [and the] età coatta, invece, nei percorsi obbligati che il mondo adulto ritaglia per il fanciullo o negli sbocchi precostituiti che gli vengono fissati.”³⁷

Two Childhoods and One Filial Rebellion

The ambiguity that defines the wooden puppet is further layered by his role as a synthetic embodiment of two other different models of childhood to which Collodi devotes his attention and literary production long before *Pinocchio*: “il ragazzo di strada” and “il ragazzo borghese” (who are characterized by the same, though differently translated, anarchical energy). As Cambi observes, the character of Pinocchio sprouts from the unresolved dialectical tension between two apparently different models of childhood, “tra i due modelli di fanciullo che Collodi ha illuminato nelle pagine delle sue opere. Pinocchio è il ragazzo di strada, ma è anche il fanciullo borghese, monello e *gâté*.”³⁸ However, the twofold identity of Pinocchio suffers a

³⁶ Freud, p. 132.

³⁷ Cambi, p. 50.

³⁸ Cambi, p. 56.

twofold constrictive and conforming repression: indeed, “il ragazzo di strada approda al conformismo da picaro e disadattato, legato al mondo della piccola criminalità, che si materializza poi nella frequentazione di riformatori; il fanciullo borghese si infila nel tunnel dell’opposto e speculare conformismo delle buone maniere e delle norme costituite.”³⁹ In this regard, that the reader is exposed to the literary representation of “due unilateralità, due conformismi, due ‘adultizzazioni’”⁴⁰ which culminate in split childhoods, each one expropriated from its own intrinsic possibilities of development.⁴¹ To be sure, the archetypal quality of Pinocchio does not oppose or contrast the inescapable repression to which both the street boy and the bourgeois child are destined: the *puer aeternus* does not rescue the two other representations of childhood as a sort of consummation. Rather, it universalizes and symbolizes the dialectics between the authoritative supremacy of a morality specific to the Risorgimento and the rebellious nature of the well-known (*Un*)heimlich, which remains hidden under the surface of conformism, destined to be suppressed as quickly as possible when it emerges.

In this sense, Chapter III of Collodi’s tale exemplifies the conflict between Pinocchio’s anarchical drive and the moral code of adulthood, embodied here by Geppetto (the carpenter who gives Pinocchio the form of a puppet, in this way becoming his putative father). Such opposition defines Geppetto’s very generative act (to be sure, an act that only beget the puppet’s body, while his rebellious identity lies uncreated in the log since the beginning of times) and is reflected in the very first dialogue between Pinocchio and his maker. It is in this regard that the half-carved

³⁹ Cambi, p. 46.

⁴⁰ Cambi, pp. 46-7.

⁴¹ See Cambi, p. 47.

puppet's first gesture toward his putative father is one of disrespect and disturbance; accordingly, Geppetto's first reaction is one of severe reproach:

Quando ebbe trovato il nome al suo burattino, allora cominciò a lavorare a buono, e gli fece subito i capelli, poi la fronte, poi gli occhi. Fatti gli occhi, figuratevi la sua meraviglia quando si accorse che gli occhi si muovevano e che lo guardavano fisso fisso. Geppetto, vedendosi guardare da quei due occhi di legno, se n'ebbe quasi per male, e disse con accento risentito: – Occhiacci di legno, perché mi guardate?⁴²

Rapidly, the confrontation escalates (“– Smetti di ridere! – disse Geppetto impermalito; ma fu come dire al muro. – Smetti di ridere, ti ripeto! – urlò con voce minacciosa. Allora la bocca smise di ridere, ma cacciò fuori tutta la lingua”)⁴³ until the repressive moral code – although seemingly defeated here – emerges with melancholy sanctimony to contain and control the overflowing of ungoverned disrespect: “A quel garbo insolente e derisorio, Geppetto si fece tristo e melanconico [...], e voltandosi verso Pinocchio, gli disse: – Birba d'un figliuolo! Non sei ancora finito di fare, e già cominci a mancar di rispetto a tuo padre! Male, ragazzo mio, male!”⁴⁴ In Chapter III, therefore, the reader immediately encounters a paradoxical phenomenon: the moralistic organon of Italian Risorgimento – symbolized here by both Geppetto's carving act and his emphasis on a needed attitude of abnegation and respect toward the forefathers– appears to contemporaneously be, on the one hand, the cause for the emergence of the antagonistic disrespect (it is Geppetto who carves out and moulds Pinocchio) and, on

⁴² Collodi, p. 12.

⁴³ Collodi, pp. 12-3.

⁴⁴ Collodi, p. 13.

the other, the repressive/restrictive potency which ought to suppress and silence the displacing force that itself has generated (Geppetto's sententious rebukes).

In this sense, the contrast between the repressed and the repressing power, the hidden and the unveiled, the un-homely and the homely, the *Unheimlich* and the *Heimlich* is smoothed to the degree to which the terms of the alleged dialectics almost merge, as Freud observed, exhibiting the impossibility of reciprocal annihilation. Consequently, one might say that the ultimate homogeneous conformity, which Cambi identifies with the final destiny of Collodi's models of childhood, is possibly troubled by the intrinsic ambiguity of the unconsummated dialectics between repressed energies (Pinocchio) and oppressing forces (Geppetto in Chapter III). In other words, it is the threshold between oppressed and oppressor, i.e., the ambiguous uncanny state that Pinocchio embodies, which seems to become the epistemological substratum of Collodi's *Pinocchio*.

Unheimlich Through and Through

However, the seditious presence of the *Unheimlich* is introduced into the narration already at the very outset of the tale, although, in the first chapter, the uncanny merely affects the ambiguous bodily state of Pinocchio. Indeed, the beginning of the tale could be understood as a quite isolated scene, for Maestro Ciliegia's sole diegetic role is that of functioning as intermediary between the log and Geppetto, as well as exposing the puppet's uncanny character. Pinocchio represents, from the very beginning, an already troubling and disquieting presence, even when his body consists of a familiarly looking log, i.e., a piece of matter generally not characterized by any particularly unsettling properties. Here, the anarchically uncanny dimension and the archetypal character that define Pinocchio already belong to the very instance of a log

provided with a voice: the both chronological and spatial uncertainty related to the origin of the voice – Maestro Ciliegia does not know where the voice comes from or when it originated – endorses the epistemological assumption that the “vocina sottile sottile”⁴⁵ could have been there since ancestral times and lurked in the unknown, waiting to burst forth in order to ‘deploy’ its *Unheimlich* effect. In this sense, Maestro Ciliegia’s series of reactions suffices to describe his experience of the disconcerting perturbation:

Girò gli occhi smarriti [...] Maestro Ciliegia restò sì stucco, cogli occhi fuori del capo per la paura [...] cominciò a dire tremando e balbettando dallo spavento [...] perché gli era entrata addosso una gran paura, si provò a canterellare per farsi un po’ di coraggio [...] maestro Ciliegia cadde giù come fulminato [...] Il suo viso pareva trasfigurato, e perfino la punta del naso, di paonazza come era quasi sempre, gli era diventata turchina dalla gran paura.”⁴⁶

However, besides inducing a reaction of dismay and terror, Pinocchio’s voice also engenders Maestro Ciliegia’s violent and oppressive response: “O dunque? Che ci sia nascosto dentro qualcuno? Se c’è qualcuno, tanto peggio per lui. Ora l’accomodo io! – e così dicendo, agguantò con tutte e due le mani quel povero pezzo di legno, e si pose a sbatacchiarlo senza carità contro le pareti della stanza.”⁴⁷ As previously described, the *Unheimlich* that Pinocchio embodies is always strictly intertwined with (and often caused by) its opposite, the *Heimlich*. In Chapter I, Maestro Ciliegia is in his homely

⁴⁵ Collodi, p. 7.

⁴⁶ Collodi, pp. 7-8.

⁴⁷ Collodi, p. 8.

“bottega”⁴⁸ ready to work the modest log with his axe: it is the very carpenter’s customary action, located in such a homelike place, that provokes the uncanny event represented by Pinocchio’s voice. Indeed, Mastro Ciliegia’s very initial actions pertain to the semantic sphere of oppressive violence: by delivering a “solennissimo colpo sul pezzo di legno”⁴⁹ he means to both decorticate and trim the log. The coming into being of the mysterious voice is effectively elicited by an act of violence and the first two spoken lines are meant to respond to such a brutal assault and prevent other possible ones: “– Non mi picchiar tanto forte! – [...] – Ohi! Tu m’hai fatto male!”⁵⁰

Consequently, the very opening of *Pinocchio* is already centred on what I previously described as the unresolved dialectics between the archetypical un-homely and the oppressive homely: on the one hand, Pinocchio’s voice emerges as disquieting *Unheimlich* due to the intervention of the *Heimlich* actions of Maestro Ciliegia’s carpentry; on the other, the carpenter’s violent and autocratic reaction means to reconstitute the (bourgeois) order that has been broken as a result of the uncanny event, in turned caused by the initial homely deed of carving.

Interestingly enough, Chapter I also illustrates the second interpretation of the *Unheimlich*, i.e., Jentsch’s emphasis on the dissonance between reality and appearance. In this sense, Collodi’s tale commences both by calling into question the usual overlap between appearance and reality, as well as by problematizing the possible odd disjuncture between these two dimensions (a simple log, which is not supposed to talk and ought to exist as a lifeless commodity, actually hides more than what its appearance would disclose: a vivacious, linguistic existence). The refutation of the commonsensical

⁴⁸ Collodi, p. 7.

⁴⁹ Collodi, p. 7.

⁵⁰ Collodi, pp. 7-8.

juncture between reality and appearance is transcribed by Maestro Ciliegia's long monologue:

– Ma di dove sarà uscita questa vocina che ha detto ohi?... Eppure qui non c'è anima viva. Che sia per caso questo pezzo di legno che abbia imparato a piangere e a lamentarsi come un bambino? Io non lo posso credere. Questo legno eccolo qui; è un pezzo di legno da caminetto, come tutti gli altri, e a buttarlo sul fuoco, c'è da far bollire una pentola di fagioli... O dunque? Che ci sia nascosto qualcuno dentro?⁵¹

In this scene, Maestro Ciliegia behaves according to a logical reasoning based on what one may call commonsensical facticity: by means of a thought process that makes coincide reality and appearance, the verb phrase composed by the adverb “eccolo” and the deictic “qui” localize and reinstate the identity of the log as a harmless piece of wood. This, however, is given a meaning and confirmed in its practical purpose – its ‘piece-of-woodness’ meant for the fire – through a logical procedure structured on tautology (i.e. the log is a log because it looks like a log: in fact, “eccolo qui” in its ‘log-ness’). In a context organized on the logical dynamic of facticity, Maestro Ciliegia cannot believe that the voice is coming from the piece of wood for the log is self-evidently ‘just’ a piece of wood, something that is supposed to be nothing more than what it appears to be. Indeed, since it can burn in a fireplace and cook some beans – i.e. since it can perform its function as a piece of wood – thus it ought to be a piece of wood. In this sense, the logical evidence is conveyed by the deictic adverb (“qui”), which emphasized the tautological structure of the carpenter's reasoning. The grammatical deixis, however, does not suffice to support and validate Maestro

⁵¹ Collodi, p. 8.

Ciliegia's tautological logic for, as soon as he goes back to his work, the "vocina" burst out laughing and says: "Smetti! Tu mi fai il pizzicorino sul corpo!"⁵² The aspect that this scene challenges is the conformity of reality (the fact that the log talks, regardless its condition as a piece of wood) and appearance (the fact that the log is a log for it looks like a log, and therefore should not be able to talk). This opening scene, then, is fraught with the troubling role of the *Unheimlich*, which, by displacing facticity, causes the familiar – specifically located and underlined through the grammatical deixis and reinforced by the pronoun "-lo" – to be uprooted into the un-familiar – the unsettling discordance between reality and appearance. Moreover, the lack of obviousness that informs the scene (it is not obvious for a log to speak) further emphasizes and exposes the presence of a hidden location where the *Unheimlich* disguises itself: thus, the absence of any evidence to the "vocina" confirms the secrecy of the uncanny event, which can only occur abruptly and unannounced. In other words, the only piece of evidence that would justify the existence of the mysterious voice is the voice itself, which becomes evidence of itself only when it decides to become evident, that is self-evident. In this regard, one may say that this scene somehow already sets the tone of that criticism of the juncture between reality and appearance with which Collodi will imbue his whole tale.

Metamorphoses and Unbalanced Double

Collodi uses another and blunter literary expedient to complement the experience of the uncanny and to express more effectively his criticism: Pinocchio's propensity and pliability for metamorphoses. In this sense, the final (alleged) change

⁵² Collodi, p. 8.

into a child represents but the conclusive step of a series of transformations that occur along the whole diegesis. As Veronica Bonanni writes,

Pinocchio [...] non cambia forma solo nel finale, ma lungo tutto il romanzo. Le sue trasformazioni, reali o metaforiche, sostanziali o effetto dello sguardo altrui, sono assai numerose: (presunto) albero, pezzo di legno, burattino, burattino rotto (senza piedi), burattino coi piedi rifatti, marionetta (tra i suoi “fratelli di legno”), albero (quand’è impiccato alla Quercia Grande), cane da guardia (al posto del colluso Melapo), granchio (secondo il temibile Pescatore Verde), asino, animale da circo, pelle di tamburo, legna da ardere (nelle minacce dell’uomo che l’ha comperato), feto (nel ventre della balena), asino (mentre gira il bindolo al posto del defunto asino Lucignolo), bambino.⁵³

Differently from what Bonanni believes, however, the series of transformations are only identifiable with apparent or analogical metamorphoses. Indeed, the persistent and irrefutable presence of Pinocchio’s body effectively prevents the full metamorphic change from occurring in each and every one instance listed by the critic. In this sense, one could more properly talk about doubling mutations, insofar as the very physicality of the wooden body is never actually erased from the picture. It is not by chance that even the rhetorical choices of Collodi’s descriptions enhance the identification of Pinocchio’s transformations with the phenomenon of the double rather than with full metamorphoses. As Isabella Pezzini observes,

⁵³ Veronica Bonanni, ‘Riscrivere la Fine di *Pinocchio* tra Parola e Immagine’, *Between* 2.4 (November 2012), 1-32 (pp. 9-10).

L'uso della *similitudine* è un procedimento costante nelle descrizioni collodiane [...] Ed è questo particolare uso delle similitudini, per lo più animali, che viene insistentemente dispiegato anche nel caso di Pinocchio. [...] Citiamo quasi a caso: cap. VI: ...[Pinocchio] in un centinaio di salti arrivò fino al paese, colla lingua fuori e col fiato grosso, come un cane da caccia.

cap. VII: ...gridò il burattino, rivoltandosi come una vipera.

cap. X: ...il povero Pinocchio, divincolandosi come un'anguilla fuori dell'acqua, strillava disperatamente.

E ancora, Pinocchio “si arrampica come uno scoiattolo su per la barba del burattinaio”, “corre a salti come un levriero”, è trasportato “per la collottola come un agnellino di latte.” [...] Pinocchio è detto “vispo e allegro come un gallettino di primo canto”, e subito dopo essere stato liberato dal naso paralizzante, comincia nuovamente a “correre come un capriolo.”⁵⁴

Rhetorically speaking, the use of similes maintains the presence of both terms of comparison, thus diegetically rendering the dynamic that constitutes the phenomenon of the double. In doing so, the similes split the first whole, wooden, physical identity and displace the alleged prior unity (Pinocchio's physical rigidity) by attributing a second and more organic dimension to it. Namely, the grammatical conjunction “like/as” contaminates Pinocchio's original identity with that of animals: the second term of the similes, in a way, intrudes and claims to redefine the puppet's identity by subtly and slightly alienating him from himself. Without revealing in advance too much of the conclusion of this article, one might say that such an alienating dynamic, detectable in the use of similes, prepares the reader for Pinocchio's final change, and for the ultimate

⁵⁴ Pezzini, pp. 13-4.

metamorphic usurpation that such an alteration represents. It is worth noting, however, that the retention of both terms of comparison – something that happens rhetorically with the similes and narratively with the double – exhibits Pinocchio’s wooden body’s resistance to both annihilation and actual change. Indeed, the physical permanence of his body would indicate that Pinocchio cannot undergo any modification or bend to any real alteration or evolution. In his *Pinocchio uno e bino*, Garroni maintains that the puppet “è tutto d’un pezzo come [...] monoplanare, sempre attualmente presente, già nato e nascente, con coscienza e senza coscienza, [...] rigido come una contraddizione, come due ingranaggi che lavorano in antitesi [...]. È, in questo senso, il personaggio più semplice che si potesse immaginare, dato che può soltanto passare di situazione in situazione senza mutarsi [...]. Non potendo modificarsi realmente e neppure piegarsi, Pinocchio può solo continuare a ribellarsi o può morire.”⁵⁵ Thus, while the transformations should hypothetically alter the physical identity of the puppet (or at least partially contaminate it), they effectively reiterate the wooden body’s irreplaceable significance. In this sense, every transformation that Pinocchio undergoes concludes with an irrevocable relocation of his identity into the wooden body, i.e. to his original form as a puppet. Besides corresponding to the traditional diegetic structure of myths and fairy tales, such a recursivity accustoms the reader to identifying the character Pinocchio with that specific body carved out from the original log. In this regard, rather than being defined by a balanced rhetorical symmetry, the double described above reveals to favor and confirm Pinocchio as unequivocally identified with a puppet made of wood.

⁵⁵ Emilio Garroni, *Pinocchio uno e bino* (Bari: Laterza, 1975), pp. 67-68.

Permanence and Recursivity

Along with the phenomenon of the double, Pinocchio's inability to learn engenders a diegetic structure based on a different kind of recursivity: the anarchical puppet – even when yielding to the Fairy's pedagogical pressure to go to school – makes always the same 'mistakes', and always rebels according to the same moral stand, mistakes and stand that are intrinsically related to his identity as a wooden puppet. Pinocchio's adventure, in a sense, functions on a very mechanical narrative and moral structure organized on the sequence "seduzione-colpa-punizione-pentimento-seduzione...",⁵⁶ which exhibits an extreme internal rigidity or fixity, symbolized by the permanence of Pinocchio's identity within the confines of his wooden body. As Pezzini remarks, Pinocchio "non cresce, non evolve, la competenza teorica che dà prova di conoscere, oppure la sua abilità di manipolazione – ad esempio quando si trova alle prese con Mangiafoco – convivono con la 'risposta' istintuale (la collera omicida nei confronti del grillo) e la massima ingenua disponibilità nel seguire le proprie pulsioni e gli adescamenti del mondo."⁵⁷ Indeed, as Gianfranco Marrone confirms: "Pinocchio resiste a qualsiasi reale trasformazione narrativa, non fa passi avanti, non impara nulla, non si forma un carattere o una personalità adulti [...]. Ma questa situazione di irrealtà, questa sua naturale negatività non può durare in eterno: e l'unica soluzione è quella di darsi la morte."⁵⁸ While the tale seems to be superficially built according to an alleged moral teleology, a deeper and latent diegesis reveals the structural importance of a

⁵⁶ Asor Rosa, p. 572.

⁵⁷ Pezzini, pp. 11-2.

⁵⁸ Gianfranco Marrone, 'Parallelismi e traduzione: il caso Manganelli', in *Le avventure di Pinocchio. Tra linguaggio e l'altro*, ed. by Isabella Pezzini and Paolo Fabbri, (Rome: Meltemi Editore, 2002), pp. 277-298 (p. 3).

hidden recursivity which resonates and conspires with the phenomenon of the double. It is no coincidence that Freud observes how the experience of the uncanny is profoundly concerned with “the idea of the ‘double’ [...] in all its nuances and manifestations,” which in turn is tied to “the constant recurrence of the same thing, the repetition of the same [...] features, [...] the same misdeeds.”⁵⁹ It seems, then, that the complicity between the coaction to repeat⁶⁰ and the double that defines Pinocchio’s identity also enhances the *Unheimlich* associated with the archaic and anarchic body of the puppet. The reiterated confirmation, through multiple transformations, of Pinocchio as a very specific wooden puppet corresponds to the persistent stratification of the uncanny value of his bodily presence, one that is ceaselessly ratified as fixedly troubling the stagnant code of the Italian Risorgimento (symbolized here by the multiplicity of attempted metamorphoses and the moral change they are meant to bring about).

In this sense, the *Unheimlich* exhibits its fundamental and structural character even when the tale stages Pinocchio’s seemingly completest transformation into a donkey. This could be theoretically identified with a proper metamorphosis inasmuch as the wooden body really disappears: what I defined earlier as the second term of similes used to describe the puppet’s pliability to change, here radically phagocytizes a wooden body that so far has shown great resilience and resistance in the face of disappearance. Despite the legitimacy attributable to such a transformation, however, the uncanny abruptly bursts in its diegetic predominance when Pinocchio returns to be a puppet. In this specific circumstance the *Unheimlich* is signalled, on the one hand, by the reaction of the man who has bought Pinocchio-donkey in order to build himself a drum, reaction

⁵⁹ Freud, pp. 141-142.

⁶⁰ See Marrone, p. 3.

that resonates with Maestro Ciliegia's even in the word choice. On the other hand, the troubling effect of the uncanny is exhibited in the way Pinocchio is freed by his animal body. Collodi's text reads:

[Il compratore] cominciò a tirare la fune [...]: e tira, tira, tira, alla fine vide apparire a fior d'acqua... Indovinate? Invece di un ciuchino morto, vide apparire a fior d'acqua un burattino vivo, che scodinzolava come un'anguilla. Vedendo quel burattino di legno, il pover'uomo credé di sognare e rimase lì intontito, a bocca aperta e con gli occhi fuori della testa. – E il ciuchino che ho gettato in mare dov'è?... – Quel ciuchino sono io! – rispose il burattino, ridendo. [...] – Ah, mariuolo! Pretenderesti forse di burlarti di me? [...] Bada burattino, bada!... Non credere di divertirti alle mie spalle! Guai a te, se mi scappa la pazienza! – Ebbene, padrone; volete sapere tutta la vera storia? [...] La buona Fata, appena mi vide in pericolo di affogare, mandò subito intorno a me un branco infinito di pesci, i quali credendomi davvero un ciuchino bell'e morto, cominciarono a mangiarmi! E che bocconi che facevano! Non avrei mai creduto che i pesci fossero più ghiotti anche dei ragazzi!... chi mi mangiò gli orecchi, chi mi mangiò il muso, chi il collo e la criniera, chi la pelle delle zampe, chi la pelliccia della schiena... e, fra gli altri, vi fu un pesciolino così garbato, che si degnò perfino di mangiarmi la coda. [...]

Dovete sapere che quando i pesci ebbero finito di mangiarmi tutta quella buccia asinina, che mi copriva dalla testa ai piedi, arrivarono com'è naturale, all'osso... o per meglio dire, arrivarono al legno, perché come vedete io son fatto di legno durissimo.⁶¹

⁶¹ Collodi, pp. 120-2.

The counter-transformation is described as if Pinocchio's wooden body were concealed by the donkey's skin, constituting thus the bones, the structural meaning of the animal's flesh. Such a metamorphic phenomenology, once again, emphasizes and confirms the durability, presence and recursivity of the wooden physicality of Pinocchio; simultaneously, however, it displays a consonance with the dynamic that designates the experience of the *Unheimlich* as that which ought to be hidden in the secrecy of the *Heimlich*, the disquieting as lurking under the conformity of the docile homely. In this sense, the disappointment of the "compratore" is not only revealing of an economic frustration; rather, it denounces and exposes the buyer's oppressive and proprietorial desire for the wooden body to recede once again into secrecy, to tame the disquieting feeling produced by the *Unheimlich*, and to recuperate the familiar relationship with reality represented by the donkey (which coincidentally would have also produced some profit). To be sure, Pinocchio's behaviour as he runs away from his owner reinforces once again the anarchical and unbridled rebellious power of the uncanny, which acquires an ironic tone that enhances the puppet's character as a blithe trickster:

– Rivendetemi pure, io sono contento – [...] Ma nel dir così, fece un bel salto e schizzò in mezzo all'acqua. E nuotando allegramente e allontanandosi dalla spiaggia, gridava al povero compratore: – Addio, padrone; se avete bisogno di una pelle per fare un tamburo, ricordatevi di me. – E poi rideva e seguitava a nuotare: e dopo un poco, rivoltandosi indietro urlava più forte: – Addio, padrone; se avete bisogno di un po' di legno stagionato per accendere il caminetto, ricordatevi di me.⁶²

⁶² Collodi, p. 122.

A Stubborn Wooden Body

As explained earlier, the metamorphic dynamism that characterizes the puppet's adventure functions as a double emphasis: on the exclusivity of Pinocchio's identity as coinciding with the bodily dimension of a wooden puppet; and on the association of such a wooden body – with its moral and diegetic implications – with the experience of the *Unheimlich*. Moreover, besides underlining the disjuncture between reality and appearance, the accent on Pinocchio's physical receptiveness to metamorphosis also “highlights the gap between reality and representation in direct relation to Pinocchio's status as a carved wooden log.”⁶³ In this sense, the actual physicality, the concrete form of Pinocchio's body, could be identified with a kind of sculptural representation, i.e. Geppetto's personal representative interpretation of what a puppet should look like and evoke in terms of similarities and dissimilarities with the human body. Thus, Pinocchio's body both symbolically and factually assumes the features of a canvas on which the new Italy of the Risorgimento tries to represent and inscribe its moral code according to different fashions and methodologies (embodied by the adult figures throughout the entire tale). Michel Foucault describes well how institutions of power, in order to produce new subjects, mark the body with their disciplining systems of norms: “the body is the inscribed surface of events (traced by language and dissolved by ideas), the locus of a dissociated self (adopting the illusion of a substantial unity), and a volume in perpetual disintegration.”⁶⁴ The recursivity, the resilience and the resistance to the perpetual disintegration of the wooden body, however, prompt the conceptual

⁶³ Stephen Wilson, ‘Unpainting Collodi's Fireplace’, in *Pinocchio, Puppets and Modernity*, ed. by Katia Pizzi, (New York and London: Routledge, 2012), pp. 109-133 (p. 112).

⁶⁴ Michel Foucault, *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice*, ed. by D. Bouchard (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1977), p. 139.

identification of Pinocchio's body with a palimpsest – more than just a bare surface – on which the Italian Risorgimento inscribes and re-inscribes its own moral prescriptive code in the attempt to convert the puppet into a faithful representation of the new 'Italietta.' In this sense, the transformations and the doubling dynamic entailed in such a diegetic metamorphic context become the symbolic, continuous, and pertinacious re-inscriptions of an ultimately violent post-unitary pedagogical program, which uses Pinocchio's body as a support for its rhetorical code. Pinocchio, however, does not relinquish his wooden body and its rebellious nature; in this way, he becomes an unredeemable palimpsest that ought to be discarded for it is un-inscribable, untreatable, un-subjectable and unsuitable to the sanctimonious rhetoric of the Risorgimento.

Given his 'unredeemability,' the only possible coercive solution to adopt with Pinocchio resides in actual alienation. In other words, since the disquieting and troubling presence of the *Unheimlich* embodied by the puppet cannot be hidden, Collodi closes his tale with alienation as an ultimate repression. Indeed, as Freud maintains, the uncanny ought to become "estranged from [the psyche] only through being repressed. The link with repression now illuminates Schelling's definition of the uncanny as 'something that should have remained hidden and has come into the open'".⁶⁵ The last chapter of the tale, thus, depicts the 'success' of the Risorgimento's moral prescriptive directives through the radical alienation of Pinocchio's identity, and yet, in doing so, it also unveils its ultimate failure. Here, I mainly understand alienation according to two different meanings that could well describe the hidden tone that characterizes the last scene: the juridical connotation of alienation, which indicates a transfer of ownership (in this case the ownership of Pinocchio's identity, held first by the wooden body, is

⁶⁵ Freud, p. 148.

transferred to the ‘real’ body of the bourgeois child); the second connotation, instead, regards the figurative dimension and conveys the idea of estranging or removing someone from somewhere (which is the same meaning that Freud refers to in the quoted passage above). As Bonanni suggest, Pinocchio’s final transformation

non è una vera trasformazione; non è cioè un passaggio da una forma ad un’altra, ma uno sdoppiamento [...] Ed è proprio questo sdoppiamento a provocare quell’effetto inquietante, straniante del finale di *Pinocchio*. [...] Quella duplicazione improvvisa suscita nel lettore [...] l’impressione di vedere, tutto ad un tratto, un personaggio nuovo, sconosciuto, poiché il protagonista del racconto si trova ancora là, sebbene ormai esanime, sulla sedia. Più che un nuovo Pinocchio, dunque, il bambino perbene sembra un losco impostore, che ha preso il posto del burattino senza esserne autorizzato.”⁶⁶

In this regard, one may see how Pinocchio as a wooden puppet is, or ought to be, finally ostracized, that is, alienated, for he could not yield and convert to the new, and ultimately violent, moral code. In the final chapter, the body that the reader has grown accustomed to identifying with the repository of Pinocchio’s identity – through the many returns and confirmations of that body as that owned by Pinocchio – lies without any vital spirit on a chair, exposed to the scorn and mockery of the ‘ragazzino perbene.’ In this sense, the *Unheimlich* embodied by Pinocchio, with his wooden body, has been finally suppressed and repressed by means of bourgeois usurpation: indeed, the only way for the homely impostor to repress and restrain the unbridled uncanny takes the form of incorporation, containment, and concealment into another body. To a certain

⁶⁶ Bonanni, p. 8.

extent, however, this is a predictable conclusion, for, as Freud holds, within the context of the double the *Unheimlich* ultimately ends up turning into the “harbinger of death.”⁶⁷ In other words, Pinocchio-wooden-puppet is destined to die if a vague moral consummation needs to be reached. Yet, both the final ‘transformation’ and the alleged double evoked by it have a very unusual character, for one of the two terms of the double (the wooden Pinocchio) is deceased and inert, while the other term (the child) displays homologized and bourgeois features that can hardly be identified with any actual degree of vitality. Then, Cambi is right when he observes how the final scene is dominated by “due infanzie dimezzate”⁶⁸ and ruled by a “falsa vittoria in quanto l’infanzia [i.e. the archetypical and anarchic impetus represented by the puppet] resta come un fantasma.”⁶⁹

In this regard, the ‘success’ of the new moral code over rebellious indiscipline is symbolized and actualized by the appearance of the ‘real’ child; and yet, this success is fraught with failure, for the wooden body eerily endures (as it has always done throughout multiple metamorphoses) as an adamant memory, a ruin, a residue, a trace of the *Unheimlich* that cannot be erased. The dual Pinocchio, in this sense, should not simply be identified with Garroni’s fundamentally diegetic ‘Pinocchio uno e bino,’ but also with the eerie permanence of the wooden body which is “appoggiato a una seggiola, col capo girato sur una parte, con le braccia ciondoloni e con le gambe incrocicchiate e ripiegate a mezzo, da parere un miracolo se stava ritto.”⁷⁰ The duality of Pinocchio, in fact, does not merely lie in the textual division of *Pinocchio I* and

⁶⁷ Freud, p. 142.

⁶⁸ Cambi, p. 47.

⁶⁹ Cambi, p. 60.

⁷⁰ Collodi, pp. 137-8.

Pinocchio II (which still stands as a valuable narratological insight), but it could also be seen in the uncanny, irremovable and constant attendance of the dead wooden body, which embodies the ambivalent semantics of the *Unheimlich* and its ambiguous reciprocity with the *Heimlich*. The impossibility to both annihilate and assimilate the anarchic dimension of Pinocchio (i.e., his disquieting wooden body) faced by new prescriptive order of post unitary Italy, displaces the conclusive ‘victory’ and moral conversion of a tale that ultimately closes with the perception of an uneasy loss.

By employing the unsettling effect of the *Unheimlich* as a narrative and epistemological strategy to give voice to his criticism, Collodi anticipates some of the political tendencies that came to fruition in 1895, after simmering for some time under the friable veneer of a recently united Italy. The celebrations of the capture of Rome that befell on September 20th, 1895, represented the opportunity to compare and evaluate different understandings of the intersection between the politicization of the recent history of the Italian people, the myth of the Risorgimento, its martyrs and the national consciousness newly formed.⁷¹ Mario Ridolfi observes that in that occasion “la tendenza politica e culturale fu quella di demitizzare le mitologie popolari del Quarantotto e i loro aspetti simbolico-rituali; si celebravano i combattenti e i caduti, ma si stemperavano alquanto le passioni democratiche di un tempo e la religione del sacrificio.”⁷² In this sense, the desacralizing tenacity of Pinocchio’s body, the puppet’s constantly uncanny presence, his susceptibility to metamorphizing and, yet, maintaining his irresolute identity, and, lastly, the autonomous and rebellious attitude that characterizes him as an archetypical figure, are utilized by Collodi to ominously

⁷¹ Cf. Ridolfi, p. 26.

⁷² Ridolfi, p. 26.

interpret the Italian *Zeitgeist* at the end of the XIX century and prophetically unveil the fragility of a civic project that, already a few years after the unification, shows to be fraught with intimate contradictions and indisputable shortcomings.