

EXORDIUM

PINOCCHIO ILLUSTRATIONS IN THE FASCIST PERIOD: HISTORY OF IMPLICIT PROPAGANDA

LE ILLUSTRAZIONI DI PINOCCHIO DURANTE IL PERIODO FASCISTA: STORIA DI UNA PROPAGANDA IMPLICITA

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Il contributo intende indagare l'influenza che il Ventennio fascista ebbe sull'iconografia delle immagini, comprese le illustrazioni della letteratura per l'infanzia, prendendo a riferimento la rappresentazione di Pinocchio come immagine emblematica di questa riflessione. Spesso, infatti, si guarda alla Grande Storia tralasciando la storia non ufficiale, quella cioè, della cultura di massa che più di tutte ci restituisce il comune sentire della società tra le due guerre, aprendoci alla complessità di un periodo nel quale si dissolvono le storie di chi lo ha abitato.

Il contributo cercherà quindi di inquadrare storicamente e socialmente l'estetica nel periodo fascista ripercorrendo il rapporto tra immagini e propaganda e analizzando, attraverso il contesto sociale e culturale, le illustrazioni di Pinocchio e le influenze educative e iconografiche esercitate su di una intera generazione di bambini e giovani, prendendo come paradigma *Avventure e spedizioni punitive di Pinocchio fascista*.

The contribution aims to investigate the influence that the Italian Fascist period had on the iconography of images, including the illustrations of Children's Literature, using the representation of Pinocchio as an emblematic image for this reflection. Often, in fact,

we look at the Great History leaving out the unofficial history, that of mass culture, which more than anything else gives us back the common feeling of the society between the World Wars, opening us to the complexity of a period in which the stories of those who lived in it dissolve.

The contribution will therefore attempt to historically and socially frame aesthetics in the Fascist Period by retracing the relationship between images and propaganda and analysing, through the social and cultural context, the illustrations of Pinocchio and the educational and iconographic influences exerted on an entire generation of children and young people, adopting *Avventure e spedizioni punitive di Pinocchio fascista* as a paradigm.

1. Introduction

Illustration is a narrative machine. Therefore, illustration can and must be analyzed not as a single image, as a figure with the addition of a literary text, but as a story condensed into an image, a story that it is up to the reader, the viewer, to decipher, unravel and interpret. Thinking about the addressee, therefore, means thinking about what level of interpretation, what level of complexity the illustrator had foreseen based on who would then use it.

Another point to think about is that illustrations seem to be addressed to an undifferentiated public, while we all know that we only need to refine our investigations to discover the very different characters of illustrations and the equally distinct languages addressed to different audiences.

There is, in short, a different iconology, i.e., a system of images and references, that restores the different class levels on which the public is distributed. And so even a history of illustration risks becoming a complex system of stories, an interweaving of events that differ in terms of medium, format, image tradition and area of use.

When Eco, in his treatise on general semiotics, places himself in the perspective of fruition, in the perspective of use, he makes a

considerable qualitative leap with respect to *a priori* semiotic theorizations; therefore, tracing the history of publishing houses, their ties with the power and culture of the time and the privileged recipients of their work, will be indispensable to grasp the iconological choices at the basis of an illustration rather than another; the choice of formats, circulation, costs will give us a clue to understand the addressee of a product and which ideas were conveyed in a privileged way.

2. *Fascist Aesthetics and Image Politics*

For several years, the studies on fascism have underlined more and more the close link that exists between aesthetics and politics and the fascination that this nexus exercised on millions of people. In a 1977 essay, Mario Isnenghi underlines with particular attention the role of the image as an instrument of Fascist propaganda, not just in the direction of an aestheticization of politics, but rather of an extreme variety of the figurative support through which the ideology of the regime was expressed. The innovation of these studies consists precisely in recognizing a role for fascist aesthetics that goes beyond the simple influence exerted on the masses: that is, not reducing it to pure propaganda that manipulated people against their will, but recognizing the strong link between aesthetics and consensus (Isnenghi, 1977).

The attention of these studies has moved to the hermeneutic categories used: in fact, it often happened that, in order to investigate the representation that fascism had of its own, other ideologies were used (from the socialist theory to the democratic-parliamentary one, for example), without ever grasping it so from the inside and, what is more important, without ever fully grasping its fascination (Mosse, 1995).

We can talk of *aesthetics of politics* in the fascist period, where there is a perfect fusion between the figurative and the political and where the persuasion of the word is strongly opposed to the emergence of a symbolic language and where the propaganda message, becomes

iconic language, clear and easily decoded by the masses (Mosse, 1975). The aesthetics of Fascism, with its use of rituals and symbols, no longer became an ideology, understood in the traditional sense of the term, but a true civil religion (Arendt, 1967).

Fascists were driven to immerse themselves in a universe of symbols; since a large part of the Italian population was still illiterate and therefore unable to access verbal language, there was a real explosion of posters and postcards, and therefore a revival of figurative and iconic language.

So, if fascism was also a *faith*, it cannot be explained only in rational terms: through the aesthetic lens we can grasp the true meaning of the fascist ritual and the role it played with its fascination. And indeed, having to define the strength of fascisms, we could find it in having been the first to understand that the twentieth century presented itself as the era par excellence of the triumph of the visual, the era of political symbols, such as the flag, the star of David, the swastika, which were more effective than any pedagogical discourse; the leader's own discourse in fascism took the form of a symbolic action.

All of this brings out the articulation of the relationship between Fascism and culture, in the sense that the regime's cultural policy takes on a precise meaning through an overall cultural project, which is articulated differently over time, according to the various sectors and levels: and this is why we can then speak of *widespread culture* (Malvano, 1988, p. 21).

This globality is manifested both in the articulation of the structures of control and legitimation of figurative production, and in the objectives pursued from time to time by fascism, on its interventions in the figurative field, throughout the twenty-year period.

The official structures of Fascism, which intervened in the management of image politics, are extremely different, both in terms of their function and in relation to the status of the kind of image they were in charge of; first and foremost was the Press Office. Directed personally by Mussolini since 1923, the Press Office was the center for the elaboration and launch of propaganda themes, slogans and passwords, aimed at forging the spirit of the new Mussolini's Italy. It was from here that the great national themes around which the

entire propaganda machine of Fascism revolved: the cult of the Duce, Italianism, Romanism, rurality etc.

Other structures intervened, already during the twenties, to manage the growing flow of images: The Ministry of National Education, which managed, from the twenties to the mid-thirties, in a particular way those images with a more precise social destination; in fact, a special section dedicated to figurative production was created within the Ministry of National Education: the Fine Arts and Libraries Section to which the National Board for Popular and School Libraries belonged.

The interest in illustration as a propaganda tool is proven by the creation, in 1926, of the Committee for the diffusion of books among the masses, directly desired by Mussolini. Margherita Sarfatti was part of it, as an art critic, together with Enrico Corradini and Arnaldo Mussolini.

Particularly important, in the propaganda of the mass image, had the birth in 1924 of the Institute Luce (The Educational Cinematographic Union) which was assigned the dissemination of popular culture and general education using cinematographic visions.

With the need, towards the end of the thirties, for a more systematic planning at the national level, of that popular culture of which it became the main engine and organism of elaboration, it was created in 1937, the Ministry of Popular Culture, the omnipotent and omnipresent Minculpop (Malvano, 1988, pp. 33-34).

3. Educational Iconology and the Bologna Conference

«Occorre dare uguale spazio alla parte letteraria e alla parte illustrativa che deve essere moderna e sintetica-dinamica» (Various Authors, 1938, p. 8).

This is how Marinetti traced out the path to follow, in the Preface that served as the manifesto of youth literature at the 1938 Bologna Conference, for those who wanted to approach publishing for children and young people. He prophesied a book in which the lit-

erary and illustrative parts were absolutely inseparable. So much importance was attached to illustration that, in order to avoid negative influences on children, a ministerial directive was issued (30 September 1938) banning all illustrators and their books from being of the *Jewish race*.

Fascism tried to bring about a strong renewal in the field of children's books, especially school books. The Single Commission, set up by Gentile and chaired by Lombardo Radice in 1923, represented one of the most qualifying moments of the entire school reform; its aim was to put order and to select, for the first time, the textbooks that could be adopted by teachers through strict quality criteria. This Commission, while moving within the ideological demands of the regime, made an important contribution to research and criticism on such a delicate subject as reading books for schools, whose aesthetic and cultural quality criteria the book itself had to express.

Here and there, and in an unsystematic manner in the various reports of the Commission, a few observations are dedicated to the problem of images in textbooks, confirming the general indifference (and incompetence) towards illustrations in that period. Only Maria Pezzè Pascolato, devoted critical attention to this subject, able of moving between texts and images, with the didactic competence necessary to unmask the great editorial carelessness that characterized school literature, arguing that the illustrations were of very poor quality, especially in the syllabi. Pascolato denounced not only the poor quality of the images from a graphic point of view, but also the fact that they often contrasted with the text they accompanied: «Al carattere di ogni libro deve invece corrispondere il carattere delle immagini: ad ogni opera debbono convenire speciali illustrazioni che ne completino la fisionomia» (Pezzè Pascolato, 1926, in Lombardo Radice, 1926, p. 297).

The real problem of the regime was in fact another: the fact that the cultural models of fascism were not yet sufficiently expressed and exalted in those books, to which it was urgent to educate the Italian childhood in an explicit and strong way.

And it was precisely the Convention for Children's and Young People's Literature in Bologna in 1938 that bore witness to this desire to mobilize the best intellectual resources for what was considered an investment of primary importance in future generations that, well educated, would continue the greatness of Fascist Italy.

This intention was already well expressed in the Foreword, which underlined not so much its literary character as its political importance:

Il carattere che ben poté dirsi corporativo del Convegno [...], fu accentuato, se possibile, dal significato politico che la riunione assunse, a conferma della politicità di quel sistema educativo fascista in cui la letteratura giovanile e infantile deve essere definitivamente, senza eccezioni o tolleranze, inserita (VV.AA., 1938, p. 15).

Reflections on the fundamental role of images in children's and young people's books are a central motif in the various papers that fill the proceedings of this conference.

The psychological explanation that link children to their interest in illustrations is interesting. Children, it is stated, are essentially visual, because illustrations speak a clear language that everyone can understand and that stimulate the imagination more than any verbal description. This is because, given their limited life experience, words are still empty of meaning (VV.AA., 1938, p. 16).

Two significant considerations emerge from this conference regarding illustration in children's books.

The first refers to the practically unanimous criticism against the stylism of traditional children's pictures and the consequent call for an iconography more in keeping with the representation of reality. This criticism of stylization refers to a tradition of illustration for children, characterized by a sketchiness and simplification of the graphic sign that makes the image banal, inconsistent and of no real interest to the child to whom it is addressed.

In this rejection of graphic infantilism, there is the consideration of a demanding and competent childhood, which apparently seems to incorporate the most scientifically advanced concepts of psychology and pedagogy. It is enough to think of the contribution made

in this sense by Maria Montessori who, although not officially endorsed by Fascism, was probably known to those in the field.

However perhaps it is more reliable to trace this choice back to the ideology of childhood that fascism had elaborated, and which prefigured the masses of children in uniform, armed with books and muskets. Therefore, no childish and doll-like representation could be tolerated, no image that tended to bring childhood within a purely decorative iconography, from an ideology that recognized and exalted childhood and its values only in the perspective of its early Fascist adulting (Farnè, 2002).

Fascism's interest in young people is closely linked to its origins and its confused ideology, or perhaps to the absence of a well-defined and rational ideology. From the very beginning, to emphasize the novelty of the movement and meet the need for radical change that the war had made violent, it exalted youth and the characteristics attributed to it: activism, decision, optimistic faith in the possibility of changing the world, the daring shown in the war, which was still to guide the construction of the state in peace. These are all elements that fascism had absorbed from various irrational sources: from romanticism, from decadentism and especially from Futurism, whose keywords were speed, movement and a break with tradition (Alfassio Grimaldi & Addis Saba, 1983, p. 78).

The second consideration we can make concerns the call for a full visuality of the image in the observation of things and actions, under the banner of an aesthetic that tends to make reality coincide with truth, and which leads to the rejection of an iconographic production oriented both towards possible caricatural deformations of the human figure and reality, and towards the more openly fantastic and as such improbable dimension. Here Fascism intends to censor one of the most typical aspects of the relationship between the child and images, that is, the ability that figures have to leverage the imagination as a specific capacity and resource of childhood, which allows it to look beyond everyday reality. Basically, the authors of this conference all affirm the importance that images have in the life and education of children and intend to enhance this natural link, considering it extremely productive also on the educational level,

but on condition that the images lead the child towards reality, not away from it (Faeti, 2001, p. 294). A final consideration concerns the role that the *Adventures of Pinocchio* play in this conference:

La tutela della razza sta nelle genuine espressioni artistiche e letterarie. Le imitazioni degli stranieri nuocciono più che non giovino all'educazione infantile. Certe felici invenzioni americane non sempre coincidono col nostro spirito e con la nostra natura. Ad esempio, io sono ancora per Pinocchio, non ancora per Michey-Maus (VV.AA., 1938, p. 31).

Padellaro (VV.AA., 1938, p. 40) considers it harmful, from an educational point of view, to provide children with translations and reductions of foreign books, because they definitively shift the centre of interest of the culture of reference and contribute to mortifying the nascent and fundamental needs of the spirit, disorienting, sometimes irreparably, superimposing symbols and cultural mediators of other cultures in such a way that they are so deeply rooted in the consciousness that they can no longer be eradicated.

The list of *execrable* books would make us smile now, but at the time there was a real work of censorship going on: *Alice in Wonderland*, for its nightmarish atmosphere; *Little Women*, for the promiscuity between girls and boys; Kipling accused of not exercising a concrete imperialist policy consistently enough; and finally, *Mary Poppins*, who takes authority away from parents by ruling in other people's homes.

4. Description of the literary illustrations with particular reference to the assonances with fascist aesthetics

The editions of the *Adventures* taken into consideration range over a period that goes from the Twenties with Tofano's edition, to the end of the war with Jacovitti's 1943 edition.

Observing them in a temporal order, we notice that they follow the trend of what will be the historical events: we start from the first illustrations characterized by the light-heartedness and ingenuity of

the protagonist, up to the gloom and the almost sadistic irony of the last Pinocchios.

But let us start with the first editions to see, following historical events, how the illustrators' pencils have followed this course. The first was Sergio Tofano, in art *Sto*, with a stylized line, reduced to the essential (as recommended in the reports given at the Bologna Congress). This avant-garde Pinocchio completely omits any reference to the landscape and, as in the best Futurist tradition, only emphasizes the dynamics linked to the protagonist, who seems to run from one illustration to another without ever stopping. *Sto's* Pinocchio is always carefree and self-confident, an image that takes us back to a rather fascist conception of the child and the adolescent.

The only image in which a more distressing atmosphere could be detected is the one in which Pinocchio is undergoing his transformation into a donkey and is now walking on all fours: although he still has human features, his imminent fate is anticipated by the shadow of a mule standing behind him.

The image with the shadow is much used in this era and indicates a destiny soon to come; we find a similar image by Bernardini for the single text of the second class of the Fascist school, where a child ready to go to school finds himself surmounted by a long shadow of a soldier.

The illustrations in the edition presented by *Sto* were not successful, so much so that there were no others after it.

The second author is Maria Augusta Cavalieri who interprets her Pinocchio in an Art Nouveau style: it is in some ways a female version of the puppet (can we perhaps read it as an identification of the author with the character?).

This Pinocchio seems to have come straight out of the films that reigned supreme in Italian cinema during the twenty years of Fascism: the *Telefoni bianchi* genre, where everything was covered by a patina of affectation and mannerism, a setting that we find again in the illustrations of many serial novels, very popular at the time.

The versions by Sarri, Pompei, Mannini, Toppi, re-elaborating Mazzanti and Mussino, provide a volumetric synthesis of the puppet that will also undergo an initial anthropomorphisation of the face,

almost as if to interpret the need to adultise the children of the time who, according to Fascist dictates, could not have time for children's games but had to demonstrate that they would soon be young lovers and defenders of their country.

With Bernardini we return to the light-heartedness we had already seen in Sto, but with a very important additional element: space. Bernardini gives great importance to the setting, emphasizing that Tuscan character that seemed to be missing in other editions, and taking up that theme dear to Fascism, which was rurality, the countryside as an expression of genuine Italian tradition uncontaminated by the decadence of *Strapaese*. So, we find elements of rural houses such as the large fireplace or the well, but also the cypresses and the Renaissance style, which immediately take us back to Tuscany. Here Pinocchio's face becomes more muscular, more virile through the emphasis on a strong jaw (how can we forget the poses that Mussolini assumed in the postcards that were used at that time to advertise the Fascist campaigns and struggles).

With Jacovitti and Manca we find an ironic and peaceful Pinocchio, cheerful and carefree. In Jacovitti, however, we find a subtle sadism (what we will see in the Fascist Pinocchio), as well as clothing that leaves little doubt (Jacovitti's Pinocchio has a little black suit) (Monaco, 1982).

Manca's Pinocchio, on the other hand, comes straight out of a weekly satirical magazine where each character is a caricature of himself, thus maintaining a clean and legible trait at first glance. The distinction between good and bad, between type and counter-type, which is a classic stereotype introduced by Fascism, is also emphasized in these illustrations.

Among these Pinocchio, we have Faorzi's: statuesque, emphatic, fascist. Faorzi captures the puppet's most solemn and least ironic moments, in tune with what was official Fascist iconography.

The parable is at its end with the last illustrators: Galizzi and Porcheddu. The protagonist of these plates is no longer Pinocchio but anguish, gloom; the dark plates, the constantly wrathful, evil face of Galizzi's Pinocchio and Porcheddu's resigned, monochrome Pinocchio tell us that the war is about to end, bringing with it only

pain and anguish. So not even the amusing and graceful Pinocchio has passed painlessly through these years.

These plates leave no hope: Galizzi's puppet will end his adventures abandoned, with his eyes desperately open on a chair; while Porcheddu's image of Pinocchio in Geppetto's arms in search of support, of a humanity that one wonders if it is still possible after the events that marked these years, is emblematic (there will be no more news of Porcheddu after the end of the war).

5. *In propaganda: analysis of Pinocchio Fascist*

The validity and consistency of the Pinocchio myth is also strongly confirmed by the use that advertising and, in some cases, political propaganda have made of it, using it as an emblematic figure or as a character for an ex-novo narration of the puppet. Around the Twenties, a *Chocolate Pinocchio* was launched on the market, with a series of figurines by an unknown designer, which were different moments of the famous Collodi's *Avventure*.

In the same decade, the walls of Italian cities were covered with Orsi's posters for Gatto's heel saves (and Pinocchio, in this sheet printed by Ricordi, equipped with big shoes and hanging from a wire that the puppet himself is cutting with a huge scissors, is thus preparing, in the great leap, to prove the goodness of the advertised product); by Metlicovitz, a master of poster art from Trieste, who shows a very greedy Pinocchio intent on eating a mouthful of Fede jam; by Alcardo Terzi, a well-known illustrator of children's books, who uses a Pinocchio with a hilarious expression to advertise Jecomalt's pickled cod liver oil.

Other Pinocchio figurines came to light a decade later, designed by Attilio Mussino. They served as a support for a Nestlé Competition (1982a, p. 93).

The list of uses in advertising could go on, but what interests us is their use in political propaganda.

The only thing we should mention is an edition of *Avventure* of 1944: the dust jacket of this edition would seem to correspond to

that of Collodi's text, but in reality, it is false and was used to conceal, during the most dramatic days of the Resistance in the Veneto, an anti-Hitler volume written in 1939 by a former SS officer: Herman Rauschning (*Hitler's Confidences*) (N.C., 1982b, p. 96). This volume is an account of the mad dictator's chilling theories, which were then put into practice.

In *Catalogo delle edizioni fiorentine della Marucelliana*, the Adventures and Punitive Expeditions of Fascist Pinocchio published by Nerbini in 1923, is presented as follows: «Di nuovo Giove Toppi illustratore di una divertente parodia del potere fascista. Testi di Giuseppe Petrai» (Ministero per i beni e le attività culturali Biblioteca Marucelliana, 2000, p. 23).

I don't know if we will find this 1923 version of Pinocchio so funny if we analyse it closely. Let's start with the text.

In Fascist Pinocchio, the protagonist is no longer the brat we knew; he now has an adoptive father, who is still called Geppetto but who is a cobbler and who chose him out of many puppets for his characteristics:

Mi piacque subito Pinocchio, che era vestito da Capitan Fracassa. Rumoroso, franco, spavaldo (un po' di spavalderia nei giovani non ci sta male!), il Capitan Fracassa è allegro e picchia sodo. Tal quale è venuto su il mio Pinocchio: sempre ardito e di buon umore. La sua passione è di guadagnarsi la tessera fascista: ma per ora è ragazzo; dovrà aspettare. E aspettando si esercita (Petrai, 1923).

The peculiarity of this text immediately emerges it is not just any old story, but the insertion of Collodi's characters within a context of new adventures, set in the most diverse places. The story that we want to tell here is an excerpt of a well-known story, repainted with notes of cheerful boldness thanks to a hero of the collective imagination.

At this point, in fact, the illustration of the brave deeds of the puppet begins. While he confiscates *Libretto del vero comunista* from an unauthorized printer, he punishes a band of subversive communists with castor oil, already mocked by the fact that they have only managed to expropriate... a few kilograms of brigidini.

The dynamics governing the Fascist Pinocchio are already expressed in the first lines of the text: «Era un pezzo che non vedevo quel briccone di Pinocchio...Ma che dico briccone? Pinocchio si è fatto un burattino a modo. Il suo babbo adottivo me ne fa continui elogi» (Petrai, 1923, p. 3).

The narration begins by declaring the temporal distance of *The Adventures*. Much time has passed, it is said, so much so that Collodi's hero has lost his typical characteristic: he is no longer a rascal always ready to get into trouble. However, the protagonist is still a puppet; in this case, therefore, the strategy of actualization does not propose a re-reading of the entire story that culminates in his transformation into a child; only some elements of the original tale are taken into consideration, namely the characters or, rather, only their names.

On the other hand, the wooden nature of the protagonist is taken up again in the course of the narration of Fascist Pinocchio, with the insertion of the hero's feats in a context where they are all puppets: Nicolaccio, the leader of the subversive and unarmed band of communist subversives, is also a puppet. In reality, this choice seems to be due more to genre reasons than to reasons of narrative coherence: in this way, the comic-farsque connotation of the operetta is reinforced.

The suspicion also arises that the selected tactic underlines the ideological interpretation of Collodi's story: if Pinocchio is a puppet for a historical reason, rooted in the common fairy-tale imagination, this is not the case for his opponents, who receive a further mockery from the qualification of puppets. In the case examined, bringing the story of Pinocchio to the present has meant only taking the most characteristic characters and the concept of adventure interpreted in general terms from the original; the next step has consisted in devising another plot in which the Collodian elements serve rather as pretexts for giving a strongly ideological reading of contemporary reality (Bettetini, 1994, p. 116).

So, in conclusion, actualizing can mean recounting something of the present, using characters from an established history, as if to legitimize one's own. This dimension foresees, as we have seen, a minimum of adherence to the original text (in the example: the

name of the two characters and the adventurous character of the events narrated, also made explicit in the subtitle *Adventures and punitive expeditions*), to which corresponds, on the other hand, a maximum of interpretative freedom, which goes as far as the construction of another narrative universe, endowed with a different content.

Let's now look at the illustrations: already on the cover we have a strong image, which, while immediately evoking the protagonist, creates an immediate detachment from the Pinocchio of the collective imagination, both in terms of the way he is dressed, that is, as a young footballer, and for the high-impact scene.

Pinocchio is in fact dressed as a young fascist: black shirt, balilla hat, short trousers, coat of arms with a fascio pinned to his chest.

Physically, Pinocchio is an adolescent, no longer a child; even his face is anthropomorphised, so that only the joints remain of the old puppet; the nose that has remained long seems almost a sort of natural truncheon, always ready for action.

Already in the first illustration, Pinocchio, in tune with the text, shows all his boldness and impudence: legs open, arms on his hips, accentuated gestures; on the other hand, Geppetto seems to look smugly at his son, almost inebriated.

Another note concerning Pinocchio's physiognomy: a careful observer cannot fail to notice that Pinocchio's face is very reminiscent of the face of his illustrator Giove Toppi.

The expression of this Pinocchio is very different from the one that appears on the cover of the edition of the adventures illustrated by Toppi: while in that one the general expression was a sort of ingenuity and childlike cheerfulness, this one is instead bold and aware of his actions.

The stroke is decisive even if not particularly effective: the movement, almost like a cinematographic frame to which Toppi had accustomed us, here is lost in a rather theatrical but stereotyped construction of the image: overt and exaggerated gestures are well associated with the words of the text that we analyzed earlier. Besides the cover illustration, where Pinocchio administers castor oil to poor Niccolaccio, there are four other illustrations in the booklet: one where Pinocchio explains his intentions to Geppetto, the other

three where Pinocchio punishes, even physically, the communist puppets.

The puppet aspect appears more evident in the Communist puppets, where the movements and the puppet strings are often underlined; on the contrary, in Pinocchio this aspect seems not to appear except in the underlining of the joints. The edition of this Pinocchio is economical (the price on the cover indicates fifty cents): it is a small volume of twenty-three pages that in all probability (and from what we have gathered from Nerbini's editorial history) was distributed at newsstands like any other weekly magazine. The audience of this pamphlet is certainly, due to its price, its distribution and the naivety of the text, a popular audience with a minimum of schooling.

The reflections, while not exhausting the issue, highlight the importance of investigating history not only through institutional documents but also through documents that remind us of everyday life.

The illustrations taken into consideration is that they maintain a high quality. While accentuating now a more light-hearted reading, now a more problematic and dark reading, these illustrations give back a parallel reading of the text, inviting us to encounter a new point of view of history.

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