

ARTICOLI

“Pinocchio” with “Zarathustra”: which relationship between two such different anthropological models?

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(Translated by Cosimo Di Bari)

1. *Divergent texts and/or common myths*

These two texts were written almost in the same years (1881-1885) and this is an important aspect. In collective imagination both texts were grown as bearers of Great Myths and of a “complex of interpretations” that is always open and re-open. Both texts are also very representative, contain messages and have common elements, even if they develop with opposite lexicons and completely different purposes. Collodi’s *Pinocchio* is a casual text, written by chance and grown unwillingly, but it soon became a masterpiece. Nietzsche’s *Zarathustra* is the peak of a complex philosophical process, which is articulated step by step, but in the end unitary and organic, and where *Zarathustra* is central.

The texts are also divergent for what concerns narrative style: Collodi’s one is dark, fairy-tale and moral, written in conversational Tuscan dialect and soaked of “Toscanina”, even if it uses universal literary models and touches archetypal aspects of the culture of “soul” (such as Jung); the German philosopher’s one is a prophetic-oracle tale and it’s articulated by parables, with a *mélagene* of poetic language and critical reflection, by symbols and exemplar situations and figures. The texts are divergent also for their recipient: children for one, the occidental man, immersed in nihilism, in the other. Both texts are appreciated, but the Tuscan one with a constant ascent of critique and esteem, whereas the German one has been part of battles, even politic, and has been often execrated as matrix of the “will to power” of which Nazism appropriates even if equivocating. If the “complex and inexhaustible” text of Collodi grew more and more over time as exemplar and magnificent, the Nietzsche’s one had to wait all the “Nietzsche Renaissance” of Sixties and after to take root in its higher importance.

The affinity between those coeval texts is not only superficial. First of all it is related to the European crisis of the second part of nineteenth century, that moves toward the *Krisis* and its examination of all occidental civilization. This aspect is clearer in Nietzsche, obviously, but it is also present in Collodi. Other common aspects are the criticism of middle-class society, the praise of rebellion (in spite of risks), the call to renew man through his renaissance as child. The theme of *puer* clearly links both books: the child brings freedom, originality and innovation. He is beyond the current social man, who is integrated and philistine, lacking of life energy and lost his real body (the wood, the flesh). Both texts present also a radical point of view, that looks beyond the present and the past and tries to give a voice and a face to what is different: this way we have the wood or the escape of Pinocchio, this way we have the *anthropos* of tragic that is overtaken and dissolved in Zarathustra. These radicalisms are parallel, even if collocated in texts which are deeply different, for what concerns structure and purpose, but they both produce high and archetypal Myths. Both texts are also laic: in Nietzsche's opinion "God is dead" and we are free to be-what-we-are, in Collodi's opinion there is no transcendence, no *religio*, no echoes of church in our world, even inside the horizon of its "Toscanina". Both texts collocate in the definitive secularization of society and culture, for which the epoch between the two centuries was a decisive period.

2. *For the new-man: freeing and vitality*

Collodi and Nietzsche examine an archetypal-man, early and eternal, deep and different (compared with the historical declination of *homo sapiens sapiens*), who should emerge from the body-consciousness of everybody (wooden and full of contrasts): both talk about another-man, which stays beyond the occidental man, full of *cogito*, *logos* and *techne* and able to realize in himself the values of *pathos*, of flesh, of adventure. He is a *homo novus*, product by a stack of metamorphosis and able to arrive at new consciousness of himself, free from bonds (represented by God, which is "dead", by "woodiness", which however should remain as *memento*). In *Zarathustra* the metamorphoses are three: from camel (from "tradition") to lion (against "prejudice" and "idols"), to child (play and "new beginning"). Then it is possible to arrive finally at the "last man" (nihilistic) and at the start of *Übermensch* (Overman), who wants new values and becomes creator of a new form of life, lighted by the "eternal return" (connected to accepting events like they are). He collocates himself in the "great afternoon", conducted by "will of power" that is "passing of all values". He is a child-man who lives the power of vitality, who is "laughter", "body", "passions" and "freedom" and who is a paradigm of *Freigeist*, fighting against job, state and social "herd". He is an heroic individual and he follows three principles: the gift, the life, the will. And he is next to born, which Zarathustra, prophetically, announces and prepares.

The procedure of the *homo novus* represented in the Collodi's puppet is more complex. His wood is symbol of resistance and "convertibility" in the hands of his father, which is, finally, the very sense of his path: experienced affection, communicative symbiosis, dialectical mission. After the recovery of his father, Pinocchio becomes different, because he lived all the metamorphoses (from almost- death to illness, to animal degradations, to the total abandonment on the seaside), but above all because he recovers himself in the other. The dialectic between bonds and affections opens new perspectives, giving us a subtle and complex picture of the new-subject, as noted Manganelli in the end of Pinocchio, in relation to the "how funny I was when I were puppet", accompanied by a view which separates but also remembers and incorporates. The *homo-novus* emerges from a vitality that is not patterned in the moralistic "good boy" and that is made dialectic by the memory of his degradations. The final metamorphosis emerges as a summary of vitality and of duty, represented by affections, and it opens up to a new social foundation on values of reciprocity and solidarity.

Nietzsche and Collodi have the same view of a renovated man, but this man is articulated by different *itineras* that have only some common values (freedom, first of all, vitality as value and power *of* self and *for* self). The authors choose different results: the Proclamation and the Prophecy of a New Age; the regeneration of society and of self in the abode of affections which is family relationship (only paternal: and this is variously significant) and which opens up to a possible ethical decorum, founded on solidarity.

Going into details of both texts it is possible to note some others affinities and oppositions (the above mentioned radical laicism; the common strong criticism of the middle-class; the use of great cultural metaphors, starting from Bible, Old Testament and New: concerning affinities; the narrative style and the language as already mentioned; the beyond-good-and-evil *versus* the right-solidarity; the different use of Christian inheritance: with precise differences, in a quantity which is denied or ignored); but they have a common purpose to inspect the man to bring him *beyond* what he had been until now, renewing his identity, rethinking about it dialectically *beyond* and *against* every conformism and conformation.

3. *Evergreen Great Myths*

Collodi and Nietzsche narrate two Great Myths which, gradually, have revealed their *complexity* and their *significant power*, through a continue critical and interpretative recovery. The authors gave importance to the richness of messages, the radical intentionality, the innovate value in anthropological sense and the main role appointed to pedagogy-of-metamorphosis. The Sixties/Seventies/Eighties have been decisive to read again both texts *en profundeur*, with more dialectical and hermeneutical sensibility. Concerning Collodi, let's think about the voices of Garroni, of Manganelli, of Genot, but then also

of Bertacchini, of Marcheschi, etc., who gave us an articulate image of the puppet, as ideal symbol who can be read through sophisticated psychoanalytic and narrative routes, but, indeed, also through an archetypal procedure, enmeshing the text in an “inexhaustible play” (Cives).

The same happened to Nietzsche’s *Zarathustra*, which has been reread in different ways during the rediscovery of the German philosopher in Sixties, exalting the message of the final period (messianic-prophetic) of his philosophical work. During those years the various meanings of his thinking have been extricated by an anti-metaphysical mindset (of which the science/technique is the last “revelation”), an anti-Christian mindset (of which a “genealogy” has been done) and a critical-radical mindset (in a theoretical sense – strictly connecting *theorein* and value – and in a historical-cultural-political sense – against Germany and its Philistine, against every conformism, against every “comparison” – to decant the advent of a heroic man, who is tied to Life and who stays beyond Tragic, identifying himself in the bare “will of power”, interpreted on the basis of the unpublished works and made more anthropological and less political). The interpretations of Nietzsche made by Heidegger, by Derrida, by Deleuze, by Foucault and Vattimo, by Ricoeur and many others hint us that the thought of the German philosopher is an “infinite task” (Derrida) and a challenge which is constantly open and reopen.

The interpretative destiny of both masterpieces confirms that they are *epochal*, *complex* and *daring*, and, in particular, very *relevant today*; furthermore, the same interpretations clearly confirm the elements of *parallelism* (especially in relation to their function, but also to their message) that characterize them.

4. *Resuming*

Both nineteenth-century texts are *masterpieces* with strong pedagogical contents: one as “educational romance”, the other as anthropological and ethical-politic announce. They contain rather few pedagogies, which are all innovative (pedagogy of body, pedagogy of family, pedagogy of relationship, of laughter, of adventure, etc.), and they are pervaded by a clear and founding pedagogical essence. They are also distant texts: Collodi oversteps-with-memory the original “woodiness” (freedom plus escape) of man; Nietzsche goes beyond towards a subject that is completely “new”, marked by values and principles that are different and additional if compared with the past. Anyway, the texts are near to each other because of many aspects: the critical-radical approach to middle-class and to occidental tradition; the renovation as sheaf of metamorphosis, that produces decline and reprobation (passed only with the illumination in the whale’s belly and near to the father who has been rediscovered) in one, while it is seen as an overcoming and a conquest in the other; the child as a new starting-point for a new social life; the radical secularism, etc.

So: the texts are significant in relation to the spirit of their Epoch, but also universal texts, able to speak about an *anthropos* which is even now a issue and a task. Therefore the texts are very relevant in the complex and suffered crisis of Our State of Being Contemporary¹.

¹ Here is the bibliography used: R. Bertacchini, *Il padre di Pinocchio*, Milano, Camunia, 1993; G.M. Bertin, *Nietzsche. L'inattuale, idea pedagogica*, Firenze, La Nuova Italia, 1977; G. Cives, *Pinocchio inesauribile*, Roma, Anicia, 2006; F. Cambi, *Collodi De Amicis Rodari. Tre immagini di infanzia*, Bari, Dedalo, 1985; M. Cacciari, *Krisis*, Milano, Feltrinelli, 1976; G. Deleuze, *Nietzsche e la filosofia*, Firenze, Colportage, 1978; J. Derrida, *Sproni*, Venezia, Corbo & Fiore, 1976; M. Ferraris, *Nietzsche e la filosofia del Novecento*, Milano, Bompiani, 1989; M. Foucault, *Microfisica del potere*, Torino, Einaudi, 1977; M. Heidegger, *Saggi e discorsi*, Milano, Mursia, 1976; J. Hillman, *Saggi sul puer*, Milano, Cortina, 1988; E. Garroni, *Pinocchio e uno e bino*, Bari, Laterza, 1975; C. G. Jung, *L'uomo e i suoi simboli*, Milano, Longanesi, 1967; S. Givone, *Disincanto nel mondo e pensiero tragico*, Milano, Il Saggiatore, 1988; G. Genot, *Analyse strcturelle de 'Pinocchio'*, Florence, Industria tipografica fiorentina, 1970; C. Collodi, *Opere*, Milano, Mondadori, 1995; F. Moretti, *Il romanzo di formazione*, Torino, Einaudi, 1999; D. Marcheschi, *Collodi ritrovato*, Pisa, ETS, 1990; F. Nietzsche, *Così parlò Zarathutra*, Milano, Mondadori, 1957 (in *Opere*, VI, Milano, Adelphi, 1964 e ss.); G. Manganelli, *Pinocchio: un libro parallelo*, Torino, Einaudi, 1977; M. Poettinger, *Pinocchio. Un burattino in libertà nell'Italia di fine Ottocento*, in C. Ceccuti, A. J. Fontana (a cura di), *Carlo Lorenzini dal Risorgimento all'Unità*, Firenze, Associazione culturale Carlo Lorenzini, 2012; P. Ricoeur, *Dell'interpretazione. Saggi su Freud*, Milano, Il Saggiatore, 1967; B. Traversetti, *Introduzione a Collodi*, Roma-Bari, Laterza, 1993; G. Vattimo, *Introduzione a Nietzsche*, Roma-Bari, Laterza, 1991