

## ***Pinocchio* and its lasting legacy: A study across adaptations and dubbings**

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### ABSTRACT

This paper analyses how Italian culture is represented and translated through dubbing in three cinematic adaptations of Carlo Lorenzini's Italian classic, *Le Avventure di Pinocchio* (1881/1993). The first adaptation examined was the animated film produced by Walt Disney, which brought fame to the story in the US and was dubbed from English into Italian in 1947. Then, the 2002 feature-film Italian adaptation directed by Italian actor Roberto Benigni, who also starred as the wooden puppet. The dubbing from Italian into English of this film was carried out by the American distributor and employed the voices of famous English-speaking actors. Finally, the latest 2019 Italian film adaptation, directed by Matteo Garrone, was dubbed from Italian into English using Italian actors speaking in English, as requested by the director himself.

The analysis demonstrates how Disney's *Pinocchio* minimises cultural references to Italy and to the source novel, which the Italian dub partially reinstalls. Benigni's work is rich in cultural references to Italy, specifically in the protagonist's idiolect. However, the English dubbing was highly domesticating, removing much of the Italianness of the original and was harshly criticised by film critics and international audiences. Garrone's adaptation carefully preserves the cultural identity and authenticity of the source text, even from a nonverbal perspective. The English dubbing adopts a foreignising perspective, reflected not only in the Italianised English spoken by the dubbing actors but also in the translation choices that foreground references to Italian culture (e.g., through loan words) wherever possible.

Keywords: adaptation, cultural references, dubbing, *Pinocchio*.

### **1. Introduction**

*Le Avventure di Pinocchio* (1881-1883) by Carlo Lorenzini, known by the pen name of Collodi, is one of the most translated books ever, ranking second

only to the *Bible* along with Saint Exupery's *Le Petit Prince*. In addition to Latin, a dead language, and Esperanto, an artificial language, it has also been translated into less commonly known languages such as Irish Gaelic and Armenian.

Its genre and ideal readership have long been debated (Paruolo 2017; Tosi – Hunt 2018): several readings have emphasised that the adventures and misadventures of the puppet, who eventually grows up and transforms into a mature and responsible adult, are symbolic of the journey of a young country, Italy, which became a nation through the Risorgimento (for the equivalence, see Asor Rosa 1975: 939-940). Furthermore, *Pinocchio* is considered a children's classic but is also read by adults. In Calvino's words, certain ingredients make a book a classic: "the classics are those books which come to us bearing the aura of previous interpretations, and trailing behind them the traces they have left in the culture or cultures (or just in the languages and customs) through which they have passed." (Calvino 2000: 5; see also Tosi – Hunt 2018).

Tosi and Hunt point out that *Pinocchio* was innovative in many ways: a book for children, but not necessarily only for them, as it contained a moral lesson without being explicitly didactic, and, at the same time, was closely linked to its author's young country, yet also had a global appeal (Tosi – Hunt 2018: 4-5) because it told a universal story. Moreover, as the reader realises after only a few pages, the setting is Tuscany, which is very far from the utopian world of traditional fairy tales. The text is rich in references to everyday situations, to the lives of peasants and artisans whose main objective is to make ends meet (West 2006). At the same time, however, *Pinocchio* draws heavily on the tradition of oral literature but is also influenced by serious prose literature (Dante and Boccaccio, for example, see Cambon 1973). The reasons for the numerous adaptations, re-writings, new editions and translations into different languages lie in the motives mentioned above and in the fact that the story allows for different levels of reading, i.e., a superficial reading for children alongside "hidden depths" (Lawson Lucas 1996: xii), passages in which Lorenzini pours out his reflections on human nature, life, poverty, social and political institutions and hierarchies.

In this study, we aim to analyse Italian culture-bound references and cues in some adaptations/synchronised versions of *Pinocchio* into English to determine how much of *Pinocchio*'s "Italianness" is retained and how; what the result looks like; and how the English versions of *Pinocchio* have been received. To this end, we selected Disney's classic (1940), Benigni's film (2002) and its English dub, and Garrone's film (2019), which has also been

dubbed into English. We chose Disney's *Pinocchio* because it is one of the first and most famous Disney productions filmed in English and then dubbed into several languages, including Italian. Undoubtedly, this animated film helped the character gain international popularity, but at the same time many viewers ignored the puppet's Italian origins. Benigni's adaptation is the first Italian colour film based on Lorenzini's novel, a faithful rendition of the original text, which was dubbed into English by the American distributor. Finally, we chose Garrone's 2019 film, another faithful Italian rendition of Lorenzini's novel praised for its authenticity, especially in Italy, which was dubbed into English under the supervision of the director himself.

## 2. *Pinocchio* for the cinema

Pinocchio is a famous story from which many directors have drawn inspiration. As West (2006) notes, both Fellini and Coppola wanted to develop films based on Pinocchio, but neither did so. However, there are several references to the puppet in Fellini's final film, *La voce della luna*, starring Roberto Benigni. The first adaptation of Pinocchio for the cinema was a black-and-white silent film by Antamoro in 1911. The second version for the cinema was released in 1947, directed by Giannetto Guardone. The film cast a boy in the role of Pinocchio and Vittorio Gassman as the Green Fisherman.

Several experiments with different genres followed, including animation, from Disney (1940), Cenci (1971), which faithfully followed the story for which he also sought the approval of Lorenzini's heirs, and D'Alò, who presented his version at the Venice Film Festival in 2012. Lucio Dalla, the voice actor for the Green Fisherman, wrote the songs for this version of *Pinocchio*. There are also some attempts at the sci-fi genre, such as Spielberg's *AI – Artificial Intelligence* (2001) starring Jude Law and Robichaud's *Pinocchio 3000* (2004), a digitally animated film with a moving, topically relevant environmental message in favour of the conservation of plant species. One example of a horror film, *Pinocchio's Revenge*, by Tenney (1996), has little to do with Lorenzini's puppet but is more reminiscent of the killer doll. Barron's 1996 version, *The Adventures of Pinocchio*, is notable for its experimentation with the animatronic puppet that breathes life into the protagonist and a memorable performance by Martin Landau as Geppetto (for a detailed account of *Pinocchio* adaptations, see Borg 2019, Paruolo 2017, West 2006). Comencini's TV serial *Le Avventure di Pinocchio* was broadcast on Italian television in 1972 and was the most widely appreciated adaptation, at least by the Italian audience. Although

Comencini replaced the talking animals of the novel with actors, this version is quite faithful to the original and benefits from a compelling choice of actors. Audiences particularly liked Comencini's narrative skill in showing the changes in post-war Italy on both a social and individual level.

Benigni's *Pinocchio* followed in 2002, a film long remembered as the most expensive Italian film ever made, more than for its quality. As we will discuss later, its failure, particularly notable abroad, was a consequence of the poor quality of the English dubbing for the American market (Borg 2019). Another Italian director, Garrone, tried his hand at a new version of *Pinocchio* in 2019, which was considered quite faithful to the original but was praised mainly for its visual quality.

Two productions have been completed in recent months: a digital animation experiment by Guillermo Del Toro for Netflix (2022) and a Disney live-action by Robert Zemeckis (2022). Del Toro reinterpreted the classic Italian fairy tale in a stop-motion musical adventure, describing the adventures of the cheeky doll as he searches for a place in the world. Zemeckis' live-action remake was released on Disney+ in September 2022. The policy of Disney's live-action films, including Zemeckis' film, seems clear: remake animated classics without making too many changes.

### 3. Translating cultural traits in dubbing

One of the biggest challenges in dubbing is translating cultural references from the source language into the target language. Cultural references are essential to understanding the context of a scene and building characters, but they can also be a barrier to the comprehension of the target audience.

Two main strategies exist in transposing cultural references in dubbing (see, inter alia, Katan 1999, Pedersen 2007, Ranzato 2016). The first presupposes adapting them to the target culture to make the content more relatable and understandable to the audience. This approach emphasises the importance of cultural relevance and the need to make the content accessible to as many people as possible. For example, if a reference to a specific holiday or festival is made in the original language, the dubbing team may choose to adapt the reference to a similar holiday or festival in the target culture. This allows the audience to understand the scene's context without requiring them to know the specific cultural reference.

The second is in favour of cultural retention, i.e., cultural references should be kept as close to the original as possible to preserve the cultural

authenticity and integrity of the original work. This approach emphasises the importance of staying true to the original text, even if it means sacrificing some level of comprehension for the target audience. For example, if a reference to a specific cultural figure or event is made in the original language, the dubbing team may keep the reference as is and provide a brief explanation for the audience to understand the context.

In general, dialogue adaptors try to strike a balance between cultural relevance and cultural authenticity and hone their choices to adapt to the visuals: if cultural references are only verbally expressed, they have more scope for changes, but if they are anchored to the image, their choices need to be consistent with what the audience sees onscreen.

Another element which has a bearing on the decision of which strategy to choose is the context and goals of the dubbing project. Comprehension of the target audience is usually prioritised over cultural authenticity.

4. Data and methods

The three films selected for the analysis were accessed through the video streaming platforms currently hosting them (Disney+ for Disney’s *Pinocchio*, Netflix Italia for Benigni’s *Pinocchio*, and Amazon Prime for Garrone’s *Pinocchio*). They were then transcribed and organised in a table with three columns: the first one on the left dedicated to the name of the speaking characters, the second to orthographic transcription of the original soundtracks and the third to the transcriptions of the three dubbed versions, i.e., in Italian for Disney’s *Pinocchio* and in English for Benigni’s and Garrone’s films (see Bonsignori 2009 for the norms followed for the orthographic transcription). Table 1 summarises key information on the films making up the dataset.

Table 1. Key information on *Pinocchio* film adaptations

Film title	Year	Director(s)	Duration	Tokens (source text)	Tokens (target text)
<i>Pinocchio</i>	1940	Hamilton Luske, Ben Sharpsteen	88'	6,113	5,531
<i>Pinocchio</i>	2002	Roberto Benigni	107'	9,832	9,220
<i>Pinocchio</i>	2019	Matteo Garrone	125'	8,818	7,713

Once the dataset was assembled, the analysis was essentially qualitative as it aimed to investigate how the Italian culture, which is at the basis of the

source novel, permeates these adaptations, and observe whether and to what extent the translation via dubbing manipulates Italianness according to the target lingua-culture. Verbal, and occasionally non-verbal, elements related to the Italian culture from the original texts were, therefore, singled out through a close reading of the original transcripts, together with a careful evaluation of the corresponding audiovisual texts. Subsequently, the target translated texts were analysed similarly to critically ascertain how the verbal phenomena identified in the original texts were rendered via dubbing. This method is what Toury (1995: 13) calls “coupled pairs analysis”, an essential practice within descriptive translation studies, the theoretical framework that best defines the present research.

### 5. Disney's *Pinocchio* (Disney, 1940/1947)

Walt Disney's *Pinocchio* was released in the USA in February 1940, and is considered an essential cinematographic milestone that turned the Italian puppet into a global icon (Tosi –Hunt 2018). It is the first sound cinema adaption of Collodi's text and the second Disney feature film after *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* (1937). Disney's *Pinocchio* was universally acclaimed as a pioneering work for the high quality of the animation and the sound system involved in its production; so much so that with this film Walt Disney set parameters that are still crucial in animated cinema. Directed by Hamilton Luske and Ben Sharpsteen, *Pinocchio* was part of Disney's project for the cinematographic transposition of masterpieces of the European fairy-tale tradition, inaugurated in 1937 with *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*.

After the Germany of the Grimm brothers, Disney was inspired by the portrayal of Italy in *Le Avventure di Pinocchio* by Carlo Collodi. However, the resulting film adapted from the Italian classic was radically transformed and intensely Germanised. Some critics (see Mazzei 2019) argue that Walt Disney might have opted for this German relocation to make the film more palatable for the European market that was, at that time, ruled by Nazism. As highlighted by Wunderlich (1992), simplifying Collodi's source entailed the eradication of all the anti-social tendencies of the puppet and thus represented childhood as an exclusively positive experience. In this way, Collodi's plot would be substantiated by Disney's general objective of representing the European tradition according to an all-American ethos.

Furthermore, the cartoon came out in theatres in the period following the Great Depression but before the entry of the United States into World War II. It could have been for this reason that Disney chose to present the

outside world as hostile and threatening (e.g., “Pleasure Island”), while portraying home and family as a safe space providing a protective refuge. Indeed, the film’s ending culminates with Pinocchio returning home and restoring the happy family. Therefore, American optimism, undermined by the gloomy and tragic atmosphere of the World War, might have induced Disney to depart from the source story of Pinocchio, removing all the potentially disturbing elements (e.g., poverty, a tough childhood) and presenting the audience with an unproblematic and less multifaceted protagonist compared to the Collodian creation.

The result of this Disneyfication, or Germanisation, is manifest at the plot and representational levels, particularly in delineating space and characters. A clear example is the graphics used in drawing the protagonist: the puppet has Nordic blue eyes and wears the typical Tyrolean/Bavarian-type costume. The representation of the Disneyan hero contrasts with the Collodian puppet, a piece of wood taken from a stack and dressed in poor and worn clothes. In the Disney version, the Tuscan puppet becomes a Central European wooden child. Geppetto radically changes, too: he is no longer a coarse carpenter reduced to hunger, but a good-natured carver of cuckoo clocks and wooden toys, with a house/shop full of music boxes with figurines typical of the Germanic tradition. Accordingly, Christian Rub, the voice talent behind Geppetto, speaks English with a marked Austrian accent. Even the Tuscan village of Collodi’s story is transformed into a picturesque alpine village recalling a fairy-tale setting, utterly alien to the realistic poverty carefully described by Collodi.

### 5.1 Traces of Italianness in Disney’s *Pinocchio*: The original version

From the point of view of verbal language, references to Italianness in the original version of Disney’s *Pinocchio* are very rare. Only one character, Stromboli, i.e., the villain of the story voiced by the American actor Charles Judels, speaks English with a farcical and exaggerated Southern Italian accent that emphasises the rhotic /r/, a trait immediately suggesting the Italian language, and also switches to Italian for two almost unintelligible and meaningless sequences of cursing and mumbling. The only other cues to Italian culture are conveyed by the proper names of some of the main characters, most of which come from the source novel, for example, “Pinocchio”, “Geppetto”, “Figaro”, “Monstro”, and “Stromboli”. For some characters, however, the Italian names are substituted by English names, such as “Lampwick”, which literally translates “Lucignolo”, or the made-up

names “Jiminy Cricket” for “Grillo Parlante”, “Gideon the Cat” for “il Gatto” and “Honest John” for “la Volpe”. A similar trend can be found for the names of places, which were all translated into English (e.g., “Pleasure Island” for “Il Paese dei Balocchi”).

## 5.2 Traces of Italianness in Disney’s *Pinocchio*: The Italian dubbed version

Disney’s *Pinocchio* was dubbed into Italian only in 1947, seven years after its American launch, because of World War II. FonoRoma and CDC in Italy were commissioned with the task of dubbing which was handled by Alberto Liberati and Walter De Leonardis under the direction of Mario Almirante. The excellent quality and the success of this dubbing are demonstrated by the fact that it is the oldest Italian dubbing produced by Disney that is still in use, as many other Disney classics from that period, such as *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* (1937), *Bambi* (1942) and *Cinderella* (1950), have been redubbed in recent times.

In the Italian dubbing, all characters speak Italian with a standard supraregional accent. It is interesting to notice the proper names and names of places that were altered in Disney’s adaptation go back to the original form found in Collodi’s novel, e.g., “Jiminy Cricket” > “Grillo parlante”, “honest John” > “la Volpe” (cf. Table 2 for a complete overview).

The high quality of the dubbed soundtrack is also reflected in the solutions found for translating some names, such as “Stromboli”, which appears written on the screen. To respect the relationship between the uttered words and the images, the expedient “Stromboli, chiamato Mangiafuoco” > “Stromboli, called Mangiafuoco” is used in a line by “la Volpe” to adapt the name according to the strategy embraced for the dubbing, i.e., incorporating the names used in >Collodi’s novel, while being consistent with the nonverbal.

Moreover, some diminutive forms such as “fischiatina” (> “little whistle”), “fatina” (> “milady”), “stellina” (> “starlight”), “vocettina” (> “voice”), “pensierino” (> “thought”), “bellino” (> “cute”) and some Tuscan lexical variants such as “balocchi” (> “toys”), “bacucca” (> “grandmother”) or “babbo” (> “father”), which *Pinocchio* repeatedly uses to address Geppetto, are taken from Collodi’s book and used in the Italian dub to translate the corresponding English unmarked expressions. This function is a compensatory strategy to reinforce the intertextual link with Collodi’s book, which the Italian audience knows well and expects to find in the cinematic transposition.

Table 2. Proper names and names of places in the English original and Italian dubbed versions of Disney's *Pinocchio* as well in Collodi's novel

<i>Pinocchio</i> (Disney, 1940) ENG	<i>Pinocchio</i> (Disney, 1940) ITA	<i>Pinocchio</i> (Collodi, 1883) ITA
Proper names		
Pinocchio/Pinoke (for Jiminy Cricket only)	Pinocchio	Pinocchio
Geppetto	Geppetto	Geppetto
Blue Fairy	Fata azzurra / Fatina	Bella bambina dai capelli turchini / Fatina
Jiminy Cricket	Grillo parlante / Grillo	Grillo parlante / Grillo
Mr. Stromboli	Stromboli, detto Mangiafuoco	Mangiafoco
Lampwick	Lucignolo	Lucignolo
Monstro	Balena mostruosa	Pesce cane
Honest John	La Volpe	La Volpe
Gideon the Cat	Il Gatto	Il Gatto
Coachman	Postiglione	L'omino di burro
Names of places		
The great Stromboli Marionette show	Gran teatro dei burattini	Gran teatro dei burattini
Red Lobster Inn	Osteria del gambero rosso	Osteria del gambero rosso
Pleasure island	Il paese dei balocchi	Paese dei balocchi

## 6. *Pinocchio* (Benigni, 2002)

Benigni's *Pinocchio*, which premiered in 2002, was the first Italian cinematic colour film adaptation of Collodi's fable, for which the academy-award-winning Italian actor Roberto Benigni was both director and star (as the protagonist). The project of realising a big screen adaptation of *Pinocchio* started a decade earlier with an idea of the famous Italian director Federico Fellini who had approached Roberto Benigni proposing he play the part of Pinocchio so as to exploit the parallels between Collodi's protagonist and the actor, two world-renowned Italian icons. Despite the mixed reviews the film received, it has been generally praised as a linear and faithful audiovisual rendering of Collodi's text, which, as Benigni himself

declared, was the only source used for the adaptation in order to reclaim the Italianness of *Pinocchio* following the Walt Disney version, both for Italian and international audiences.

Given the popularity Roberto Benigni has acquired outside Italy, and in particular in the United States thanks to the success of *La Vita è Bella* (1997), it was decided to distribute the film abroad in an English dubbed version, and not just with the subtitles as was usually the case for the other Italian films of that period. As pointed out by Caracciolo (2008), the choice of dubbing the film in English was probably dictated by the ideal target audience the American distributor (Miramax) had in mind, i.e., children who are notoriously less prone to accept, appreciate, and understand, depending on the age of the child, a subtitled product (Matamala 2017).

If the film's reception was quite good in Italy and the box office results met the expectations, the English dubbed version was a fiasco. In effect, the American review-aggregation website Rotten Tomatoes registers a rating of 0%, meaning that none of the critics who reviewed the film gave a positive vote. This starkly contrasts with Disney's *Pinocchio*, which has a rating of 100%. One of the aspects that was condemned the most, outside Italy in particular, was the interpretation of Roberto Benigni in the role of a puppet/child. This was found hardly credible, if not downright embarrassing, according to the comments by some critics, given the actor's age and the total absence of special effects to make him more puppet-like. As the film critic Ryan Cracknell (2002) affirmed a few days after the release: "not only does Benigni look like all the other humans on screen (despite the fact he is a puppet), but the five o'clock shadow on his face makes it mighty hard to be convincing as a young puppet."

The English dubbing soundtrack, entirely handled by the American distributor Miramax, was another element that the critics and the audience highly criticised. The journalist Luke Y. Thompson (2003) declared that "Miramax sabotaged *Pinocchio* – and its own credibility – with a lousy dub" and Elvis Mitchell (2002) wrote in the *New York Times*:

the quality of the voice-overs [...] are so sloppy you might feel as if you're watching a 1978 Hong Kong action picture: the dubbed mouths of the Italian cast are probably still moving an hour after the film is over. There must have been such a rush to get the prints into theatres for the nationwide opening that no one bothered to check the lip-syncing.

Hence, the dubbing was condemned because it was perceived as an obstacle that undermined the suspension of disbelief, both for its quality in terms

of lip synch and, as we will describe in the following paragraphs, for the English and American dubbing voices that were deemed inappropriate. On this matter, Caracciolo (2008) commented that such a lousy reception could also be related to the fact that American audiences of the early 2000s were not used to dubbed products and, more generally, to non-domestically produced films. Therefore, viewers needed more time to be ready to accept and enjoy dubbed films as is common in so-called dubbing countries.

### 6.1 Traces of Italianness in Benigni's *Pinocchio*: The original version

In the original Italian dialogues of Benigni's *Pinocchio*, Italianness clearly surfaces in the representation of the dimension of diatopic variation as the protagonist Pinocchio and, to a lesser extent, Geppetto speak with a marked Tuscan dialect, which is not only reflected in the phonetics but also in a vast array of Tuscan lexical variants, e.g., "birba" (>"rascal"; uttered by the Cricket), "ciuco" (>"donkey"), "piccoso" (>"pettish"), "garbare" (>"like"), "bevere" (>"drink"), "baloccare" (>"playing around"), "gonzo" (>"nitwit"), "babbo" (>"dad"), "punto" (>"not at all"), and marked Tuscan morphosyntax (e.g., "a me mi" (>"to me me"), "gl'è" (>"he is"), the deictic "costì" (>"there"), all of which come straight from Collodi's novel.

The diastratic variation as well contributes to rendering the flavour of Italian culture, for example, through the usage of a wide range of alteratives, which are typical of informal Italian and of Collodi's style, e.g., "pizzicorino" (>"little itching"), "grillaccio" (>"bad Cricket"), "acquaccia" (>"lousy water"), "Pinocchiuccio" (>"little Pinocchio"), "berrettino" (>"little cap"), and also some creative forms such as "te lo promettissimo" (>"I do promise"), "Mangiafuochissimo" (>"super Mangiafuoco"), "poverissimissimo" (>"super poor").

By contrast, the culturally loaded words (i.e., the culturemes), which abound in the novel, are reduced to just a few, i.e., "cachi" (>"persimmons"), "zecchini" (>"gold coins"), "polenta" (>"cornmeal mush"), "Sant'Antonio" (>"Saint Anthony").

The adherence to Collodi's text is also manifest in the choice of characters' proper names and toponyms that, apart from some minor adaptations as in the case of the "bella bambina dai capelli turchini" (>"beautiful girl with blue hair") becoming "bella signora dai capelli turchini" (>"beautiful lady with blue hair") show the actress starring in this role is an adult.

## 6.2 Traces of Italianness in Benigni's *Pinocchio*: The English dubbed version

The (American) English dubbing of Benigni's *Pinocchio* was commissioned by the Miramax producers Harvey and Bob Weinstein to cater to the accessibility needs of the broadest possible audience and, in particular, of youngsters and families. Hence, the dialogues were adapted by Brendan Donnison after the first translation of the soundtrack from Italian into English by Chiara Ingrao. In keeping with the decision to target children, also reflected in the choice of the release date, i.e., Christmas Day, the film was dubbed casting celebrities, in the tradition of American cartoons, such as Glenn Close (Blue Fairy), Breckin Meyer (Pinocchio), and the former Monty Python actors John Cleese (talking Cricket) and Eric Idle (Medoro). The critics almost universally panned the resulting dub, so Miramax reissued the film in Italian with English subtitles in 2003.

When looking more closely at the dialogues and the translation choices in terms of references to Italian culture, it emerges that for diatopic variation, the markedness of the Tuscan accent is wholly obliterated in favour of Breckin Meyer's California accent, which was considered highly inappropriate by most critics. The only allusion to the Italian language is in the voice of Mangiafuoco, who, as in Disney's version, has a strong rhotic accent. With reference to diastratic variation, alteratives are rarely rendered, apart from the example of Pinocchio's hyperbolic use when addressing Mangiafuoco: "I beg you, your excellency, your colossality" (<"Pietà, illustrissimissimo Mangiafuoco" in ST), and one instance of "kiddies" (<"Amor mio" in ST), used by the Coachman to seduce children to take them to Funforeverland.

Pinocchio's idiolect, which is richly portrayed in the ST through Tuscanisms, contains a selection of English colloquialisms that, as commonly happens in telecinematic discourse, become indexes to convey the idea of local colour and compensate for the loss of diatopic variation, e.g., "crooks", "tummyache", the grammatical error "the most good", and the reduced semi modal "gonna".

The few realia represented in the ST are deprived of their cultural specificity: "peaches" is used instead for "cachi" (<"persimmons"), "pieces of gold" for "zecchini" (<"gold coins"), "fried egg" for "polenta" (<"cornmeal mush"), and the swearing "Oh Sant'Antonio!" (<"Oh Holy Anthony") is rendered with the unmarked periphrasis "I'm going out of my mind".

As for proper names, we can observe different interventions in the dub that point to its disconnection from Italian culture. Pinocchio's father, for example, becomes "Gepetto" by removing the double consonant,

a typical feature of Italian phonetics. In line with that, the way Pinocchio addresses him, i.e., the typical Tuscan variant “babbo”, becomes “papa”, an informal address sometimes used in American English and no longer perceived as Italian derived. Other evident cases in this direction are the translation of “Mangiafuoco”, which is rendered as “Giant”, a generic name that, instead of recalling Italy, refers to the fairy-tale world, and “Giangio”, a farmer, rendered with the English name “George”. The only name whose translation seems triggered by the intention to retain and convey Italianness is “Lucignolo”, translated as “Leonardo”, a name universally known as Italian given Leonardo da Vinci’s fame. Finally, toponyms are always translated into English with particular attention to creating children-oriented puns rather than transposing the nuances of the meaning of the original. For example, “il paese dei balocchi” (>“the land of toys”) is dubbed as “Funforeverland”. Hence, the overall aim of this English dubbing was to adapt and domesticate the source text as much as possible to make it more straightforward and accessible for the American audience.

## 7. *Pinocchio* (Garrone, 2019)

Garrone’s *Pinocchio* is another faithful adaptation of Lorenzini’s novel, praised for its faithfulness, especially in Italy. As the director himself expressed in an interview, “[I] tried to keep the soul of the book, which talks to kids as well as adults” (Garrone 2019). All the magical effects were obtained not through special effects but thanks to makeup artists and prosthetics<sup>1</sup>. The film was released in Italy on 19 December 2019, by 01 Distribution, and grossed 15 million euros domestically, making it the highest-grossing film of

<sup>1</sup> In an interview, as a member of the makeup team, Dalia Colli explained that “At the end of the 19th century, Italy was a country where most people lived in conditions of poverty. Farmers, cattle breeders, artisans were all people who often didn’t have enough food, were homeless, or unable to have a shower every day. To incorporate poverty into the makeup, I used specific water-based pigments to recreate the effect that prolonged contact with the ground, the fatigue of work and poverty have on the skin. The kids were actually very happy to be covered by dirt without their mothers getting mad at them.”

Francesco Pegoretti added that “Poverty is probably one of the main characters of the book. From the beginning, the director, Matteo Garrone, wanted its presence to show through the look of each actor. I tried to recreate the most natural looks possible, using products that would help me give a raw feel, or in the case of the cat and the Fox a dirty look.”

the Christmas week in Italy. Box office results were positive in the US and the UK, too. In the US, the film was classified as PG-13, i.e., a product to be watched with parental guidance under the age of thirteen because of its grim scenes.

### 7.1 Traces of Italianness in Garrone's *Pinocchio*: The original version

As typically happens in fiction and cinema, names are an evident index of culture. In Garrone's film, they are retained in the dub, except for animal names: e.g., "la Volpe" becomes "the Fox". Diminutives are often employed to adhere to Lorenzini's original text and the 'fairy-tale' genre. They are also rendered in the dub with a certain regularity: cf. "Fatina", which becomes "Little Fairy". Diatopic variation appears in some Tuscan forms, mainly in Geppetto's idiolect (also some minor characters such as Cecconi and the teacher), e.g., a few lexical items such as "mascherine" (>"little masks", of which there are 4 tokens in Collodi's text), "garbare" (>"like"), "pigliare" (>"take"), "veduto" (>"seen"; here used by Grillo parlante; 6 tokens in Collodi's original). There are also substandard or colloquial morphosyntactic variants such as the clitic *ci* + *avere*: "c'hanno", "c'hai" (>"you have/they have") (uttered by Lucignolo), "a me mi" (a sort of dislocation that aims at underlining what is thought most important), "te" (the object pronoun for "you"), "du' piedi" (>"two feet", with the numeral "due" apocopated), "il mi' nonno" (>"my grandad", with the possessive "mio" apocopated), "di'" (>"say", in its apocopated form, which is very typical for verbs; cf. also "vede'", "porta'"), "l'era" (typical of the Florentine area, "he/she/it was", in this case, uttered by Cecconi), "c'è rimasto solo le seggiole" (>"there are only chairs left", but with the wrong subject/verb agreement), "un" (meaning "non", as in "un ci si mangia qui", >"you don't eat here"). The forms "vole" (instead of "vuole"), meaning "wants", and "so' belle" (instead of "sono belle"), meaning "they are pretty", display phonological reduction. The latter form is typical of Roman and Southern Tuscan dialects.

Apart from Geppetto and the Fox, impersonated by Benigni and Ceccherini, and the minor characters Barbara, Geppetto's neighbour, Cecconi the shopkeeper, and the shortest man in the world (one of the circus artists) no one else speaks with a detectable Tuscan accent of the Florentine variety.

Several minor characters also speak with an accent: the Rabbits who are supposed to take Pinocchio away in a coffin, the crier who announces the puppet show, and Moreno, the innkeeper (who interacts with Geppetto at the beginning of the film) speak with a Neapolitan accent. The Blue Fairy,

who at the beginning is a child of the same age as Pinocchio, has a slight Roman accent, similar to Pinocchio. In contrast, the Gorilla Judge talks in an animal fashion.

Diastratic variation surfaces in the presence of alteratives, i.e., diminutives and superlatives, which abound in the register employed by the Fox as a straightforward, observable instrument to ensnare Pinocchio, by pretending to be his friends and associates. Diminutives typically evoke a family/pet/lover context (Dressler – Merlini Barbaresi 1994). The ones used here are: “monetina” (>“little coin”), “buchina” (>“little hole in the ground”), “piantina” (>“little plant”), “spizzichino” (>“little snack”), “spasimetto” (>“little pain”).

Superlatives and diminutives also appear in the Omino di burro’s mellifluous way of talking, as he calls the rascals that will turn into donkeys “amorini” (>“little darlings”, 7 tokens), a term that usually presupposes a loving or familiar context. It is retained in the dub as a loanword (see 7.1.2 below). He also uses the word “ciuchino”, a seemingly affectionate term for a donkey (4 tokens). The children/donkeys are described with superlatives: “coraggiosissimi” (>“extremely brave”), “intelligentissimo” (>“very clever”), and “bravissimi” (>“very good”). The same promotional intention is conveyed by using relative superlatives to account for spectacular circus acts: “il più alto del mondo” (>“the tallest (man) in the world”, 1 token), “il più piccolo del mondo” (>“the smallest in the world”, 1 token), “il più forte del mondo” (>“the strongest in the world”, 1 token).

Also worthy of note is the artificial and intentionally complex register used by Dottor Corvanti and Dottor Civetta. A remark by the latter is “Qui siamo di fronte ad un gravissimo caso di morbus lignorum, volgarmente detto lignite.” (>“Here we are facing a very grave case of morbus lignorum, vulgarly called wooditis.”) Throughout the film, there are only a few realia: “giubbetto” (>“jacket”) and “casacca” (>“tunic”). The language and the photography depicting a seemingly Tuscan scenario contribute to cultural representation more than cultural objects.

## 7.2 Traces of Italianness in Garrone’s *Pinocchio*: The English dubbed version

Garrone’s *Pinocchio* was dubbed into English in 2020 and then distributed by Vertigo films (UK) and Roadside attractions (US). Francesco Vairano, an experienced professional figure in dubbing, wrote the dialogue and worked as a dubbing director, but Garrone supervised the whole process. After

shooting his *Tale of Tales* (2015) in English, he changed his mind and said in an interview: "If I could go back, I would probably make *Tale of Tales* with Italian actors. [...] I think it's very important to keep the cultural identity of every country in its films. This was an Italian project, taken from one of the best books of Italian fairy tales. But it looked like I was taking other actors because we don't have good actors in Italy. This is wrong." (IndiWire 24 December 2020) As a consequence, when tackling the adaptation of *Pinocchio*, he was determined to preserve the spirit of the original. After producing the film in Italian, he decided to dub it into English (a subtitled version was released subsequently for arthouse projections only) by employing Italian actors. Garrone explained that he trusted that a good job could be done without necessarily losing the spirit of the original because he would employ Italian actors who dub in English, preserving their accent (Garrone for IndiWire magazine 24 December 2020).

In the English dub, diatopic variation is retained in that Italian actors dub the characters to preserve a flavour of Italianness: 9-year-old Federico Ielapi, starring as Pinocchio, dubbed himself into English. A foreignising tendency can be observed in this target text.

As for diastratic variation, alternatives diminish from 52 to 28, of which only a part entails a change in lexis or the addition of the adjective "little". An effort was made to retain some of them: "a little hole" (corresponding to "buchina"), "a little something", "a little treat" and "nibble something" (respectively 3, 3 and 1 token, to translate "qualcosina"), "nibble" (2 tokens, for "spizzichino"), "a few little twitches" (1 token for "spasimetto"). Diminutives applied to characters' names are often retained: the 10 tokens of "Fatina" are translated 6 times as "Fairy" and 4 times as "Little Fairy"; "the meaning of "Lum achina" is made explicit with a term of endearment, "dear Snail". The endearment used by the Omino di burro, "amorini", is always left in Italian, whereas "ciuchino" is never modified by a diminutive in the dub.

The superlatives used to describe the children/donkeys are translated with periphrases: "their strength is legendary" for "coraggiosissimi", "its mind is a sponge" for "intelligentissimo", and "fantastic" for "bravissimi".

Next to this, there is, however, an attempt to introduce some typical markers of orality, such as four tokens of ellipsis of the subject and the auxiliary, 2 of the subject only; 2 idiomatic expressions, the latter also metaphorical, "a penny to his name", "its mind is a sponge"; two instances of informal pronunciations: "'em", "lemme". In addition, there are some borrowings: "babbo" (as a vocative but also in descriptions such as "it's for my babbo"), "babbino", "bravo", "ciao", "grazie", "amorino". The artificial

and purportedly complex register spoken by the doctors is retained (terms such as “*morbus lignorum*”, “*morbus lignotus*”, “*wooditis*”, “*trunchitis*”, “*chippingitis*”, translated respectively as “*morbus lignorum*”, “*morbus lignotus*”, “*legnosi*”, “*trunchite*”, “*truciolosi*”).

The very few realia described above for the source text are completely neutralised: “*giubbetto*” becomes “*waistcoat*”, and “*casacca*” is turned into “*jacket*”.

### 7.3 Forms of address in Garrone’s *Pinocchio* (2019/2020)

Personal relations are codified through pronouns of address in Italian: “*voi*”, “*lei*”, and “*tu*”, with “*voi*” being used only in diachronically or diatopically marked varieties. All three forms are employed in the original dialogues to represent reciprocal/symmetrical and non-reciprocal/asymmetrical dyads, with some examples of switches. Switches generally occur when people get closer or, much more sporadically, when they distance themselves from one another.

The relationship between Geppetto and Ciliegia is mainly codified by “*voi*”, but at the end of a long exchange, Ciliegia switches to “*tu*”: “*Prendi quello là*” (>‘Take that one’, referring to a piece of wood). The switch is because Ciliegia has a higher social standing than Geppetto and feels authorised to use an address form usually employed to express confidence or address someone with a lower social status. Geppetto never addresses him with “*tu*”. He once says, “*Fammi vedere*”, but it is a self-address, as if he were talking to himself.

There are several other examples of asymmetrical dyads: Barbara and Geppetto, in which she addresses him with “*voi*” but receives “*tu*” because of their age gap. Similarly, Pinocchio addresses Mangiafuoco and Cecconi with “*voi*” but receives “*tu*”.

The most compelling example is the relationship between Geppetto and the Teacher. It starts with a reciprocal “*voi*”, then Geppetto switches to “*lei*”: “*Guardi, manca un bambino*”. This change seems to trigger a similar switch in the teacher’s turn: “*Senta, mi perdoni, qui di legno c’è rimasto solo seggiole*”. The change is confirmed in the subsequent turns by both speakers.

- (1) Geppetto: “*Ma che dice, solo le seggiole? Ci dev’essere il mi’ figliolo, l’ho portato io stamattina. Guardi bene.*” (‘What are you saying, only chairs? My son must be here; I took him here this morning. Take a good look.’)

- (2) Teacher: “Visto che m’ha detto com’è il bimbo, perché un va a vede’ nel Teatro dei Burattini, eh? C’ho da fare, ora non lo dico più, abbia pazienza.” (‘Since you explained what the child looks like, why don’t you go and look for it at the puppet theatre? I’m busy. I’m not going to repeat it; bear with me.’).

In Collodi’s times, “lei” was the pronoun of extreme deference, so it seems unlikely that Garrone used it in this way, given the reciprocity and Geppetto’s low social status. It is conceivable that some instances of “voi” were used to convey the idea of a story taking place in the past, before a switch to the more natural and contemporary “lei” was made (Serianni 1988: 262-263).

## 8. Concluding remarks

Carlo Collodi’s *The Adventures of Pinocchio* is a quintessentially Italian story, rooted in the culture and traditions of its time, which linguistically translates into the usage of culture-loaded words, expressions, and situations.

Our analysis has shown that Walt Disney’s adaption ultimately deprived the story of its cultural identity, with references to Italy reduced almost to zero visually and linguistically. The translation via dubbing, in this case from English into Italian, attempted to reclaim some of the references to Italy, e.g., in the rendering of some proper names, names of places and vocatives that are translated according to Collodi’s book (e.g., “Mangiafuoco” for “Stromboli”, “Il Paese dei Balocchi” for “Pleasure Island” and “babbo” for “father”). The success of this Disneyfied version has since come to overshadow the literary work to the extent that it still dominates perceptions of the narrative for many, especially outside Italy.

As for Benigni’s adaptation, it was an attempt at reclaiming the story of the wooden puppet for Italy. This is reflected in how Italianness dominates the visual (e.g., the Tuscan countryside) and the dialogue. Roberto Benigni (starring as Pinocchio) and, to a minor extent, his father Geppetto, use throughout the film, a diatopically and diastratically marked Tuscan dialect that establishes a solid intertextual link with Collodi’s text. Many Tuscan lexical variants that Pinocchio and the other characters (who do not speak with a marked Tuscan accent) use, e.g., the Tuscanisms “garbare”, “bevere”, “baloccare”, or the alteratives “piccoso” or “berrettino” are also found in the book.

The English dubbing of this film is famous for being one of the worst attempts at dubbing a film into English. The American distributor

who performed the task decided to turn Benigni's faithful adaptation into a cartoon-like depiction. Thus, American and British celebrities were selected to dub the original Italian voices. No attempts were made to maintain Italianness from a diatopic point of view, not even in rendering the famous Italian vocative "babbo" that is rendered with the impersonal "papa". The same happened for diastratic variation as informal dialectal Italian was transposed into informal and slangy American English. In line with this domesticating tendency, some proper names were altered and often divested of their cultural load, e.g., "Mangiafuoco" is translated with "Giant" or "Giango" with "George".

Matteo Garrone's film adaptation of *Pinocchio* offers a visually stunning representation of Italian culture. The film brings to life the idyllic Italian countryside, with its rolling hills and lush greenery, as well as the bustling cities and charming coastal towns that make Italy so beloved. Moreover, the film showcases the Italian passion for storytelling, with Pinocchio's adventures as a metaphor for the importance of truth and the consequences of lying. Among the film's protagonists, Geppetto and some minor characters like Cecconi, the shopkeeper, the Fox and the circus artist speak with a very evident Tuscan accent and employ several lexical and morphosyntactic dialectal choices. Characterisation also avails itself of diastratic variation, with some characters using different accents and features of colloquial language, among which alteratives take the lion's share.

In the dub into English, apart from taking advantage of the visual representation, there is an attempt at preserving both diatopic and diastratic variation. Garrone's decision to employ Italian actors who dubbed themselves into English while keeping their original accent is a bold and unique approach to filmmaking. By doing so, Garrone has maintained his film's authenticity and cultural identity while making it accessible to a global audience. This approach allows the nuances of the Italian language to shine through, adding an extra layer of depth to the performances and the story. It also highlights the importance of language and its role in shaping culture and identity. Using the original accents adds an extra dimension to the film's characters, making them feel more authentic and relatable. Finally, the choice of preserving some traces of orality in the English dialogues and the use of several borrowings from Italian, notably words that are universally recognised, such as: "babbo"/"babbino", "bravo", "ciao", "grazie", "amorino", also contribute to a faithful representation of the setting and characterisation.

Overall, in different ways, the three adaptations of *Pinocchio* for the screen demonstrate an interest in Italian culture. In the case of Disney, the

original story by Collodi provided the skeleton for the plot while the setting and protagonists became universally appealing elements of the beautified and polished Disney world. Benigni and Garrone reclaimed the story's Italian origin by taking advantage of visual and verbal representation. Both films were distributed abroad, with an English dub, but, while Garrone's experiment received unanimous appreciation from critics and audiences, Benigni's was harshly criticised for the poor quality of the dialogues and the messy synchronisation. Despite this, both represent a reversal of a typical trend within audiovisual translation (i.e., dubbing from English into Italian) and testify to an increased interest in Italian cinematic products (and ultimately in Italian culture). This interest is also reflected in two recent productions based on the wooden puppet: Zemeckis' (2022) and Del Toro's (2022). The former is a live-action and animation hybrid adaptation of the classic story, featuring the voice of Tom Hanks as Geppetto. The film follows Pinocchio's journey as he learns how to become a real boy, encountering various obstacles and characters along the way. The dark and somewhat eerie tone sets it apart from the more lighthearted and whimsical Disney animated version. The version of *Pinocchio* by Guillermo del Toro is a stop-motion animated musical adaptation with a typical Del Toro blend of fantasy and horror elements. Both examples would be an interesting benchmark for future investigation to gain deeper insight into how Italian culture is viewed from the outside and to what extent it is reproduced in modern products destined for a broad international audience.

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