Don Quixote and Sancho did as they had been requested and went to the place where the puppet theater had been set up. It was uncovered and surrounded on all sides by lighted wax tapers, which made it look very bright and gay. Since he was the one who had to manipulate the puppets, Master Pedro took his place in the rear, while out in front, to act as interpreter, stood a lad who was his servant. It was the interpreter's business to explain the mysteries of the performance, and he had a rod with which he pointed to the figures as they came out.


I have a *Key* in my bosom, called *Promise*, that will, (I am perswaded) open any *Lock* in *Doubting-Castle*. Then said *Hopeful*, That's good news; good Brother pluck it out of thy bosom, and try: Then *Christian* pulled it out of his bosom, and began to try at the Dungeon door, whose bolt (as he turned the Key) gave back, and the door flew open with ease, and *Christian* and *Hopeful* both came out.


'A robot is infinitely more to be trusted than a human nursemaid. Robbie was constructed for only one purpose really – to be the companion of a little child. His entire “mentality” has been created for the purpose. He just can't help being faithful and loving and kind. He's a machine – *made so*. That's more than you can say for humans!'


'I'm not Pinocchio. I'm David!'

– Steven Spielberg, *A.I. Artificial Intelligence*.

In the midst of his picaresque adventures an exasperated Pinocchio blurts out his wish to become a man, surely a great expectation for a piece of wood. Without fairy-tale pomp or fanfare, Collodi introduces his eponym—
mous hero as “un pezzo di legno.” This particular piece of wood, etymologically related to the “pine nut” (pinocchio or pignolo) so popular in Tuscan cooking, has had a special—albeit hidden and perplexing—vitality from its first appearance, with its pleading (rammaricandosi) and complaining (rammaricandosi) voice that petrifies Master Cherry the carpenter, and with the nascent puppet’s mocking laughter (“che cominciò subito a ridere e a canzonarlo”) that irritates and ultimately saddens the carver-father. The cheeky, backsliding Pinocchio repeatedly invokes a desire to be “a proper boy” (“un ragazzino per bene”) and “a fine boy” (“un ragazzino ammodo”), reproaching himself for being “a brat, always promising to reform and never keeping my word” (“un monello che prometto sempre di corrergimi, e non mantengo mai!”), but delighting, in his final words, in having become “a proper boy!”

This moment of developmental triumph includes a sidelong glance at his former appearance: “a large puppet propped against a chair, its head turned to one side, its arms dangling and its legs crossed and folded in the middle so that it was a wonder that it stood up at all” (Collodi/Perella, 461). The concluding line drawing by Enrico Mazzanti, in the original book-length publication of Le avventure di Pinocchio, storia di un burattino, depicts a jauntily clad young man, looking every inch a gentleman with a full head of curly hair and well shaped limbs, and pointing either in bemusement or condescension to this shell of his erstwhile reality. He comments on his puppet behaviour (“Com’ero buffo, quand’ero un burattino!”) as “ridiculous” in Mary Alice Murray’s 1892 English translation, which is softened to “funny” in the more recent translations of Nicolas J. Perella and Ann Lawson Lucas. Rather than uncoupling these two manifestations of the hero, Collodi’s last scene actually prompts us to consider the links between them. Do we read this scene with an exhilarated sense of accomplishment or a mingling of sadness and loss? Is Pinocchio at last assimilated into an upright human community or finally severed from the animistic, egocentric realm of the fantastic adventurer?

Most of the voluminous commentary on Pinocchio addresses what is assumed to be the central quest “to be a human child” (Bacon, 74), in this “fairy-tale novel of development” (Zipes, 13) of the “good bad boy” (Lurie, 15). Scapegrace Pinocchio, who finally nurses Geppetto back to health and

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1Collodi, The Adventures of Pinocchio, 83. Unless otherwise indicated, all quotations from the English and Italian texts will be based on this bilingual edition. Other translations consulted are those by M.A. Murray (1892) and Ann Lawson Lucas (1996).
works to support his father, has suggested counterparts classical and modern—from Homer’s Telemachus to Huck Finn, Tom Sawyer, Horatio Alger, and Salman Rushdie’s boy-hero Haroun. The stress on Pinocchio’s childhood or boyhood, however, often overlooks the larger, more inclusive process of his becoming human and the diverse ways Collodi sketches his character’s autonomous, idiosyncratic, yet recognizable selfhood. Rather than concentrating on the lessons of his development, these features of Pinocchio’s being engage readers of every age. In the midst of all the bizarre episodes, histrionic exaggerations, absurd touches, and reformist impulses gone awry, we can discover reflections of ourselves, that is, if we are prepared to recognize our own selfish, libidinous, cranky, finicky, obstreperous behaviour.

Episodic and kinetic, Pinocchio pulses with rambunctious energy, which we might associate with boyhood or, more generally, with the activity and drivenness of being human. Even when he is re-learning to walk on new feet, Pinocchio is never tentative: he “sets off at a run” / “si dètte a scappare” (100-01) and, embodiment of exuberance, skips and capers “as though he had gone wild with joy” / “come se fosse ammattito dalla gran contentezza” (132-33). Impulsively, acrobatically affectionate, Pinocchio as a spectator at the puppet show throws himself “into the arms of his brothers-in-wood” / “vieni a gettarti fra le braccia dei tuoi fratelli di legno,” making “a bound from the back of the pit to the front section” and “spring[ing] onto the stage” (144-5). While Collodi captures the puppet’s gullibility to rush to the get-rich-quick Field of Miracles (“let’s get going!” / “Andiamo, subito” [164-65]), he also conveys—with brio but without celebratory comment—his hero’s eagerness to find Geppetto (“Galoppa, galoppa!” [262], he instructs the carrier-pigeon), his fearless dive “from the top of a reef into the sea” (267), and his escaping imprisonment by speeding “like a rifle shot” / “Andava via come una palla di fucile” (312-13). In fact, the puppet-boy’s energetic determination to rescue his father and restore his vigour involves Pinocchio’s swimming “the whole night through” (269), racing ahead of his smart-aleck schoolmates “as though he had wings on his feet” (295), swimming “fearlessly” (435) while carrying Geppetto on his shoulders, and setting off “on the run” (447) to procure milk for his father. This selflessness is not mere motor activity; sympathetic intuition is

2Patricia Merivale identifies both Pinocchio and Haroun and the Sea of Stories as “Telemachies” (204); Jack Zipes sees Huck Finn as “the American version of Pinocchio” (14) and Collodi’s tale as “the consummate Horatio Alger story of the nineteenth century” (11); Alison Lurie explores “similarities” between Pinocchio and Tom Sawyer (15).
its accompaniment, as seen in Pinocchio’s “running in high spirits” (455) to buy new clothes, only to donate his hard-earned pennies to help the bedridden Blue Fairy. In the final dream sequence the Fairy’s homiletic intervention that “boys who take loving care of their parents ... always deserve a great deal of praise and love” / “I ragazzi che assistono amorosamente i propri genitori ... meritano sempre gran lode e grande affetto” (456-7) precedes Pinocchio’s human metamorphosis.

Whether we interpret this forecasting as heavy-handed didacticism or appropriate cueing, an emphasis on moral comeuppance—smug or ironic—pervades the narrative. The morality favoured by one-time seminarian and long-time political satirist and theatrical journalist Carlo Lorenzini, who adopted the pen-name of “Collodi” to honour his mother’s birthplace and the location of an estate where his father was a steward, is that of Aesop rather than St. Paul. It is a worldly, commercial, materialist ethic in which, as Geppetto concludes, “when children go from bad to good, they have the power of making things take on a bright new look inside within their families too” / “quando i ragazzi, di cattivi diventano buoni, hanno la virtù di far prendere un aspetto nuovo e soridente anche all’interno delle loro famiglie” (460-61). The carver’s early lessons about the importance not “of fine clothes, ... but clean ones” and examples of “sacrifices” (137) have an immediate and lasting effect on his ‘son.’ Pinocchio often stands condemned in his own eyes, sermonizing about being “a lazybones, a vagabond” (245). With a sobering retrospective awareness, he reprimands himself: “If I had been a proper boy, the way so many others are, if I had been willing to study and work, if I had stayed at home with my poor father, I wouldn’t find myself here now in the middle of the country, being a watchdog at a peasant’s house” / “Se fossi stato un ragazzino per bene, come ce n’è tanti; se avessi avuto voglia di studiare e di lavorare, se fossi rimasto in casa col mio povero babbo, a quest’ora non mi troverei qui, in mezzo ai campi, a fare il cane di guardia alla casa di un contadino” (244-45). His wish for re-birth—“Of, if only I could be born over again!” (245)—reflects his truly re-formative zeal. Recriminatory logic controls him as he weeps “throughout the night” (257) over the tombstone of the Fairy whom he has “abandoned,” and reproaches himself as “a stubborn, pig-headed fool” (307) over the inert body of a school friend who had been knocked down by a book aimed at him. But over the unregenerate Cat and Fox, finally blind and lame, he wastes no sympathy, informing these invalids “If you’re poor, it serves you right” / “Se siete poveri, ve lo meritate” (442-43). Despite the barometric fluctuations in the hero’s fortunes, a careful but often parodic balance prevails in the narrative’s moral economy. For
having been robbed of four gold coins, Pinocchio the victim spends four months in prison, and is released only by lying about being a rogue. After wasting five months in Funland, until he grows “a magnificent pair of asinine ears” (373), Pinocchio pays back this lost time in his five months’ work for Geppetto’s health.

The tidiness of this moral balance frequently disintegrates, however, as bizarre, uncanny or fantastic elements of the tall tale take over. Do we balk at the idea of the thieving Cat prancing on two paws any more than we do at the notion of the culprit scampering away “on one leg alone” (179)? Pinocchio is a narrative of miraculous resurrections—from the Little Girl with the waxen face and “a voice that seemed to come from the world beyond” (183) to the puppet himself left hanging from a tree “as though frozen stiff” (189). Many of Collodi’s most memorable characters and scenes rely on ironic or deflating inversion of expectations. The judge, who hears Pinocchio’s case against the deceiving Cat and Fox and who condemns the plaintiff because he was robbed, is unforgettable not just as “a big ape of the gorilla family” but as a figure with “gold-rimmed spectacles without lenses, which he was obliged to wear all the time on account of an inflammation of the eyes that had been plaguing him for years” (227). While descriptions of the judge’s “occhiali d’oro, senza vetri” and “una flussione d’occhi, che lo tormentava da parecchi anni” invite comment on Collodi’s broad satire of a myopic, in fact sclerotic judiciary, the attack is not corrosive or Juvenalian; it is kept buoyant with Horatian humour and wit. The world of Pinocchio partakes simultaneously—and in almost equal measure—of the ersatz and the real. Geppetto’s poverty is evident, undeniable, and so is Pinocchio’s hunger. Yet, into these vivid scenes Collodi interjects characteristics of a stage backdrop. Geppetto’s bare and “modest” ground-floor room under a staircase conveys the theatrics of straitened circumstances with “a painted fire ... and kettle that boiled so merrily and sent up a cloud of steam that really looked like steam” (97). When the almost-fainting Pinocchio is presented with a tray of delectable-looking food, he discovers to his chagrin that “the bread was of chalk, the chicken of cardboard, and the four apricots of alabaster, painted to look real” (341). What is striking in both of these literally propped-up scenes is the narrator’s insistence on the credibility of the illusion: “che pareva fumo davvero” (96) and “come se fossero vere” (340).

This desire to be taken seriously and believably inserts itself in the narrative, positioning the history of a puppet’s adventures at the interface between fantastic jeu d’esprit and quest narrative. As the tale of a marionette, which itself necessitates external control, Pinocchio focuses atten-
tion not only on the hero, but on the puppeteer, either Geppetto or Collodi. It invites us both to believe in the illusion and to acknowledge the purposiveness and mechanics that maintain it. Collodi’s thirty-six-chapter tale discloses the art of suspended disbelief while it illustrates the activities of the appetitive, ambitious, reflective self. Such an amalgam participates in and, intentionally or inadvertently, borrows from a range of literary genres. Among the most prominent of these filiations, I want to propose, are the romance epic, the confessional allegory and, as a gesture of anticipation, science fiction. Remarkable shared or appropriated attributes link *Pinocchio* to *Don Quixote*, *The Pilgrim’s Progress*, Isaac Asimov’s early collection *I, Robot*, and Steven Spielberg’s *A.I. Artificial Intelligence*.

The scenes that suggest profitable comparisons between Cervantes and Collodi are Pinocchio’s visit to the puppet theatre in Chapters 10 and 11 and the interlude of Don Quixote and Sancho at Master Pedro’s puppet theatre in Part II, Chapters 25-26. Though embraced by his “brothers-in-wood” in that “dramatico-vegetal company” (145), Pinocchio actually causes a riot and faces the wrath of the ferocious puppet master, Fire Eater. Only when he pleads for Harlequin’s life and only when Fire Eater sneezes is Pinocchio granted mercy and sent on his way as a happier and, for the moment, richer puppet. The episode in Cervantes uncovers the power of the puppet theatre’s illusion. Don Quixote and Sancho are members of the audience for the story of Melisendra, a noblewoman reputed to be the daughter of Charlemagne, who has been abducted by Moors. Don Gaiferos, Melisendra’s husband, rides to Spain to reclaim his beloved, heroically lifting her from the balcony to the crupper of his steed. Don Quixote interrupts the performance three times: once to exhort the boy-interpreter to “keep to the straight line of [his] story” without “curves and tangents”; another time to question the accuracy of the account of Moors ringing bells; and the most dramatic intervention, to bound onto the stage to behead the Moorish puppets who are pursuing the French fugitives. “With accelerated and unheard-of fury he began slashing at the Moorish puppets, knocking some of them over, beheading others, crippling this one, mangleing that one” (Cervantes, 683). In light of the abrupt halt that Don Quixote brings to the performance by destroying the puppet theatre, for which destruction he reimburses Master Pedro handsomely “in good Castilian currency” (685), his first interruption against embellishment seems ironic, since it is the very power of this artifice that instigates his passionate response. He explains “that everything that took place seemed to [him] very real indeed”; moreover, he defends his actions as fulfilling “the duties of [his] profession as knight-errant” (685). Don Quixote’s unique
combination of “madness and liberality” (687) is also connected to the response of Fire Eater’s puppets to their brother-in-wood. Theatrical illusion and the artifice of a blood bond link the puppets as forcefully as the compulsion that propels the Knight of the Mournful Countenance to leap onto the stage and defend the fleeing puppet heroes from the pursuing puppet Moors. In each instance the initially vexed puppet master is placated; while Master Pedro receives money, Fire Eater gives gold coins to the selfless Pinocchio who begs for Harlequin’s life. Both circumstances use the platform of the puppet theatre to emphasize the power of illusion. While the narrative, satiric heft of Don Quixote places it in a realm apart from Pinocchio, the texts share an interest in the perennial “metaphysical problem: that of illusion and reality” (Cervantes/Putnam, xxix).

While Don Quixote and Pinocchio might be considered artistic relatives, the connection between Collodi’s puppet and Bunyan’s distressed, salvation-bound pilgrim appears, at first glance, much more tenuous. However, both Christian and Pinocchio are engaged in dangerous, unpredictable, yet necessary journeys. Each continually searches for meaning, interpreting the episodes of his journey as signs toward its fulfilment. Yet the consequences of these encounters are undeniably more serious for the pilgrim than the puppet. Their meetings with serpents are a case in point. Bunyan’s Apollyon is a monstrous fire-belching beast, “with scales like a Fish, ... Wings like a Dragon, feet like a Bear” (Bunyan, 47); he and Christian are locked in a life-and-death wrestling match, which only abates when Christian realizes he has “wounded Apollyon with his two-edg’d Sword” (Bunyan, 49). At the mid-point of his adventures, when he has resolved to “become a well-behaved and obedient boy” (233) en route to his father’s house, Pinocchio encounters the green-skinned, pointy tailed, fiery eyed Serpent who blocks his path. This is not a scene of martial combat, but of strategy gone comically wrong. The Serpent fakes out the hesitant puppet, who tries to jump over him at the very moment when the serpent shoots up “like a released spring” (239). The slapstick does not stop here, for the serpent laughs so hard at Pinocchio’s predicament, upside down in the mud, that he bursts a bloodvessel and dies. While Christian advances prudently from strength to strength, Pinocchio falls prey easily to another temptation, “a few bunches of muscat grapes” (239), which precipitates the next calamity. For all the shared, programmatic features of their adventures, The Pilgrim’s Progress and Pinocchio exist in different moral topographies. A high-minded seriousness separates Christian and Faithful, who are determined to “buy the Truth” (74), from the jeering hawkers of Vanity Fair, and from the easily swayed puppet who follows

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Lampwick to Funland with the lure of a “wonderful life of ease passed in fun and games all day long without ever coming face to face with a book or a school” (371). A comparable abjection characterizes both locales. With such members as Mr. Blindman, Mr. No-good, Mr. Love-lust and Mr. Hate-light, the jury at Vanity Fair is hardly impartial; Faithful is “burned to Ashes at the stake” (80) and Christian is imprisoned. Less overt malice, in the form of the lethal, de-humanizing lure of sloth, is on display in Funland. The boys crowded into the wagon trundling to this “true land of heart’s desire” are “piled on top of one another like anchovies in brine” (359). When these eight- to fourteen-year-olds walk on their hands and imitate hens cackling, they create “such pandemonium, such screeching, such a wild tumult, that you needed cotton wool in your ears to keep from going deaf” (367). Lampwick’s transformation to a donkey is complete, but “the famous Donkey Pinocchio known as The Star of the Dance” (393) eventually earns release from his jackass state. Though both fairs sell ephemeral, deceitful wares, Funland and Vanity Fair are designed on two parallel discursive planes. Bunyan’s Fair exists as a moral theorem, an established, proven, reiterated principle; journeyers to the Celestial City, who do not wish to “go thorow this Town, must needs go out of the World” (73). Collodi’s is an experiential ethics addressed to the will, a reluctant will; the experience must unfold before the warning to “poor gullible boys turned into so many donkeys ... to be sold at fairs and markets” (389) is intoned. Though both Christian and Pinocchio have great potential for saving themselves, Bunyan’s pilgrim is almost diffident about flexing his salvational muscle. After a night of prayer as a prisoner in Doubting-Castle, he announces that he has the ability within, the Key of Promise, to free himself and Hopeful. Pinocchio’s irrepressible confidence takes the form of what Collodi calls “a very good heart” / “un cuore eccellente” (314-15), which is canny and compassionate as well, when he decides to save the drowning dog Alidoro after recalling “that his father had often told him that a good deed never goes for naught” (317). Christian runs the race to gain salvation; Pinocchio completes the process of successful socialization.

Pinocchio’s relationships with his brothers-in-wood, his schoolmates, the Blue Fairy, and his carver-father supply one indicator of his maturing social skills. Because this grouping represents a balance of human and specially animated personalities, it also illustrates Collodi’s adroitness in making both sorts of exchanges valuable and engaging. The attribution of an emotional life and a dramatic function to the “terrible machine,” the “thing of metal” (Asimov, 24-25) called “Robbie” in the first of Asimov’s connected stories of I, Robot reveals the particular challenge of endowing a
machine, as opposed to a piece of wood, with human characteristics and attachments.

Based on the evidence of Collodi's narrative, Pinocchio fares better with puppets than humans. The members of Fire Eater's marionette troupe hug, clasp, and pinch Pinocchio, raising him on their shoulders and carrying him "in triumph before the footlights" (145). By contrast, Pinocchio's first day at the public school is full of tricks and taunts. "One snatched his cap out of his hand, another tugged at his jacket from behind; one of them tried to make a big mustache in ink under his nose, and someone even tried to tie strings to his hands and feet to make him dance" (291). By this point in his adventures (Chapter 26) Pinocchio, determined to reform, sounds like a responsible adult reasoning with his schoolmates, "I didn't come here to play the fool for you. I respect others, and I want to be respected" (291). The shouts of the little rogues to the "wise guy" / "Bravo berlicche!" who talks "like a printed book" / "Hai parlato come un libro stampato!" (290-91) quickly change to sensible affection after Pinocchio delivers a few expert kicks and pokes. Wooden blows convince mere flesh to take the new schoolmate seriously. Pinocchio's relationship with parental figures is more complex. In the guise of the Little girl with blue hair, the Good Fairy, and the kindly woman, the Blue Fairy intervenes at key moments to rescue and help Pinocchio. Despite the fact that he lies to her about having the four gold coins, she saves him from the hanging tree, sees to it that he is attended by doctors and nursed back to health, and ultimately fulfills her promise of making him into a real boy. Geppetto deals with Pinocchio's truculence, disobedience, truancy, and absence, yet he loves him unconditionally. Although the Fairy and Geppetto's lectures about industry and resolve are often disregarded, Pinocchio slowly comes to realize what they are saying. Perhaps it is debatable whether fully-grown or growing humans remain more (or less) resistant to good advice. Can obduracy or perversity be charted chronologically?

Although a gap of almost a half-century separates the fiction of Collodi and Asimov, the questions and claims involved in acknowledging the humanoid capacity of a robot are similar to those implicated in believing in Pinocchio's humanity. In Asimov's story the parental figures are divided—with sympathetic father and eight-year-old daughter lining up in support of this "companion of a little child" (25) and unconvinced mother vowing to get rid of "that terrible machine" so that her daughter can

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3 The twenty-year-old Asimov first published "Robbie" as "Strange Playfellows" in *Super Science Stories* in 1940.
“take her part in society” (24-25). While George Weston defends Robbie as “the best darn robot money can buy ... [which] set [him] back half a year’s income,” he considers the expense “worth it” since the robot is a “darn sight cleverer than half [his] office staff” (24). Young Gloria sees Robbie as “no machine” but “a person just like you and me” and her “friend” (28). A perfectly programmed playmate, Robbie “cower[s]” at Gloria’s threatened spanking, is “hurt at [her] unjust accusation,” gives in “immediately and unconditionally before [her] ultimatum” (21), and, most evocative of the human, wants to hear a story, in this case Cinderella, again and again. The title character is a robotic companion. He walks, runs, and plays games, but he does not develop, talk, or communicate beyond the emotional responses attributed to him. Asimov makes no mention of tears, or furrowed brows, or irregular breathing. Although Robbie is allowed to stay with the Westons “until he rusts” (38), Gloria as a teenager outgrows and discards him. The Asimov story, which is not featured in the 2004 summer blockbuster movie I, Robot, forcefully underscores the ideological, temperamental, and narratological differences between an initiating, venturesome, fully realized piece of wood who earns humanness and an agglomeration of metal parts that is discussed as a curiosity. Hence Robbie and Pinocchio live in opposite, mutually exclusive realms.

However, another recent film in the sci-fi genre, Steven Spielberg’s A.I. Artificial Intelligence, released in 2001, invokes parallels and allusions to Pinocchio to forge connections between the “mecha” child-robot “who can love,” “a perfect simulacrum” called David, and Collodi’s puppet-boy. Based on a short story by Brian Aldiss and developed from preliminary story boards inherited from the late Stanley Kubrick, A.I. pulses with special effects, designed by Industrial Light and Magic in Marin County and Pacific Data Images in Palo Alto, from cybertronomically generated mechas and all-terrain amphibicoptors, which the child David has the skill to drive, to cities such as Manhattan submerged under water and frozen for 2000 years. But it seems to me that the film’s invocations of Pinocchio accentuate the divides between the bleak, destabilizing futurism of sci-fi, where desires for human status can be both indulged and repudiated, and Collodi’s suggestive tale of the unique yet resonant process of becoming human.

As an example of the desire to be human, consider the situation of the android Commander Data in Star Trek: The Next Generation; by contrast, Arnold Schwarzenegger’s Terminator character repeatedly declares “I am a machine.” Both Richard Wunderlich and Jack Zipes attend to the deformation of Collodi’s text in Disney’s wildly popular cartoon.
David's human adoptive mother reads him the story of Pinocchio, and thus the idea to become “a real boy” coalesces in David's circuitry. After his adoptive parents leave him “in the woods” to fend for himself, because the return of their dead “real son,” who has been cybernetically restored to life, has caused tensions in the family, David's pursuit of the Blue Fairy, who, he is convinced, will make him a real boy so that he “can come home,” begins in earnest. David cannot be returned as a surplus article to Cybertronics; since he has been “hardwired” to love only one person, his ‘mother,’ and his “individual space-time pathway has been used,” he would only be junked for parts—an ominous forecast of the second half of the film, in which David's quest takes him to the phantasmagoric Flesh Fair and Rouge City.

The basic narrative patterns of *A.I.* derive from oppositional pairings. The mecha force, represented by David and “Joe Gigolo,” are pitted against the orgas, led by vindictive humans who hunt and round up mechas while shouting racist-sounding slogans such as “purge yourself of artificiality!” The grimness of the Flesh Fair, where captured mechas are publically executed to the delight of the frenzied orga crowd, is culturally and temperamentally far removed from the relatively anodyne threats Pinocchio faces from Fire Eater, or the Judge, or the Circus Master. The Flesh Fair of *A.I.* consciously recalls death camps and ritual degradation. Theories of origination and primacy account for some of the binary divisions in the film, and for another major contrast with the putative ur-text by Collodi. Unlike Pinocchio, who is an entirely original, spontaneous creation (despite the numbers of subsequent imitations), David is a deliberately modelled child-robot, bearing all the physical characteristics of the late son of the scientist who designed him. In fact, Dr. Hobby lectures David somewhat pedantically that his son was “one of a kind,” whereas David is merely “the first of a kind.” This explicitness in articulating distinctions and a related insistence to talk at length about “the ability to chase down our dreams,” as Dr. Hobby puts it, or the voice-over narrator's description of “the everlasting moment” when “David went to sleep ... in that place where dreams are born” point to one of the strongest contrasts between Collodi and Spielberg. Collodi's episodic romp still tinges with suggestive potentiality open to each reader's interpretations and needs, while Spielberg's film directs, cues, and moulds responses. The mecha alliance of David and Joe Gigolo, based not only on Joe's big brotherly protection but on the fact that his sexual prowess does not impress the uncomprehending David, is very different from the friendship, based on loyalty and attempted though not always successful rescue, between Pinocchio
and the fellow puppet Harlequin and Pinocchio and Lampwick, the lazy schoolboy. Another ostensible link to Collodi's story is David's search for the Blue Fairy as the saviour who will transform him to a real boy. Several scenes are bathed in blue light: David's bedroom, the moon that signals the roving patrols for the Flesh Fair, and the underwater city. Isolated and solitary, David speaks to a blue plaster statue of the Immaculate Heart of Mary and prays as he freezes to a blueish plaster female figure who eventually disintegrates. By contrast, Collodi's Blue Fairy is not a sought-after illusion. She simply appears, talks, and acts. Pinocchio gradually becomes aware of her importance and of his responsible indebtedness. He is not a tearful, sentimental figure, desperate for a mother's love and a home, but an autonomous agent who slowly constructs the surprising, undeserved interventions from which he benefits into elements of emerging human selfhood. Though extracting selective detail from Collodi, Spielberg's A.I. catapults Pinocchio into another dimension, medium, and time, effectsing as palpable a mutation as Disney's 1940 animated film produced on the Italian original and the Murray translation.5

Subject of operettas, ballets, pantomimes, comic strips, and countless translations in over 30 languages, Pinocchio continues to enjoy a life of its own. Although Mary Alice Murray's first English translation is now considered a collector's rarity,6 Ann Lawson Lucas's Oxford World Classics translation is readily and affordably available. Pinocchio remains a delightful, diverse character for illustration, with 135 illustrated editions in Italy alone being catalogued at the centenary of the text's publication. One of the most engaging recent illustrations, a hybrid of Maurice Sendak and M.C. Escher, it appears, is the Pinocchio Playing Card Collection, with art by lassen Ghiuselev; produced in Turin in 2003, with explanatory cards in Italian, German, Spanish, French, and English, the collection invites players to "re-enact" the story as Collodi told it, "or re-invent it as you wish." With this stroke Collodi is transported to a postmodern world, to be arranged as we see fit. Although the text itself has been studied and positioned in light of Collodi's republican politics and the debates over Italian unification which raged in his lifetime, and although the narrative is a palimpsest of allusions and borrowings, I believe that Pinocchio enjoys the longevity and adaptations it does because it is a supremely human tale.

5In the summer of 2004 prices at two London rare book dealers specializing in children's literature, in Cecil Court and on the King's Row, Chelsea, ranged from £ 3,000 to £ 7,500.

6See Rodolfo Biaggioni's Pinocchio.
Mirroring “Michelangelo’s notion of sculpture [that] the figure is already there in the material,” the artist’s task is similar to that of the puppet and the reader: “to find himself, which means that this is a story of becoming rather than of birth” (Auster, 133). What Pinocchio and over a century of readers continue to discover in this process is that the self is a product of community and that “one is a self only among other selves” (Taylor, 35).

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