

MARCO GASPARINI

the “puppet” ... one of us

With the forward
by Maurizio Socci

CONTECAMILLO



*On the cover:
Letizia Pagnetti who is thanked for the kind collaboration.*

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THE "PUPPET" ... ONE OF US

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Preface

Are we destined to happiness or to unhappiness? I believe this is the question around which turns the sense of all life in the world. It is the classic question that embarrasses us, including when we pose it to ourselves. And yet with lucidity and courage, this is where my friend and colleague Marco Gasparini starts in his “The Puppet, one of us”. Just as Geppetto of Collodi started at night the creation of his Pinocchio, it is also at night that Gasparini starts to model his puppet. Mobile phone, contacts, a question burst through the sms: “What is happiness for you?”. What do the friends answer him? Happiness as serenity, as rejoicing about small things and or also as unattainable yearning. The aim of the survey, according to Gasparini himself, is “to narrate life”. The book is nothing but a lucid analysis of the author on the modern reality, tackled in a modern way – interviews, testimonies, field tests – borrowed from his journalistic experience.

Here then a kind of happiness “commercialised” by the means of communication, of having ergo being, almost always that of being a plagiarised consumer. Like: “Bu these pair of jeans and you will like Belen”. This, explains Gasparini, in a context in which the “digital” knowledge of a person(through the notorious social network) has almost replaced in entirety the “analogical” knowledge of the classic

friend, that true one, of those that in the arch of a lifetime are countable on the fingers of a human hand. It is the society of fiction, that is mirrored, recognizing itself, in the TV of fiction.

Who loses? The youth, “guilty” of being young, that is, of being often abandoned by those adults who do not find their place in the contemporary reality. In this sense, Gasparini does not shy away from giving a proper reminder to all, Fatina of Pinocchio included: all else but wisdom, smiles, tiny blue dresses and wand. Do you really want to meet the youth? Torn jeans, down boots and off you go!

Gasparini does it: he arms himself with a microphone, camera, spotlight and he challenges the people of the disco night of Rimini, to realize that deep down, the youth does not desire other than knowing themselves through knowing others. In summary, they are out hunting for people, “true” people. And who is he that ever wanted to be “true”? Pinocchio himself, who the author imagines to interview.

How many Pinocchios are there today among the youth? Forced to say, do and even dress based on how the society is moving their strings. How many parents of today, the style of Geppetto, loose their children along the way trying to buy their affection and finding themselves in the belly of the whale, without understanding where they-we went wrong? Are there still good “Fatine”, able to give good advice to others? From how many self-styled friends like the

cat and the fox should we defend ourselves? How many modern wicks try to cheat us that the world is a village of toys and that study, patience and sacrifice in obtaining what we need is not important? All questions that certify the extreme actuality of the collodi's Pinocchio. Questions that Gasparini relaunches in his text, in a farsighted manner, without falling in the risk of giving easy answers or banal recipes. To the contrary, connecting them to true stories, of true people, of those who have become pinnochios ...of true children, after having tackled and answered those questions.

This is the case, touching, of Lara, the daughter of a drug addict. Of Fr. Beppe, who is fighting the drug dealers of Colombia with a smile. Or of Tatiana, graduated in economy, who understood how the true riches is the happiness of helping others. Yes, happiness. The starting point. And the arrival point. These questions that wrap "the puppet" are inside each of us. Who knows if this book does not help us to become "true children?"

Truly.

Good reading!

Maurizio Soggi.

Introduction

It has been long since I wanted to write something, or rather that I wanted to try put some order upon the many ideas that in these years have passed through my mind. Is it present to you when in the evening you go to sleep and while the body is trying to rest, the head instead continues to work? That is what happens to me many times, I try to sleep but my mind wanders between projected ideas and unachievable dreams ... at least for now, and many of these dreams are there invading the little memory that I have. The moment has come for me to put order, to catalogue my ideas, to give them a logical sense and maybe, who knows, that they may not be useful to someone else.

One of the most recurrent question that comes to my mind is this: "...but what is happiness?" good question you would say ... and yet if we think of it well, I is the motive for which we are in the world: to look for happiness. In order to try to give an answer to this interrogative, one evening in June, towards midnight, I took my old mobile phone, wrote a message and sent it to a good part of my contacts in the phone book. The message said: "Hallo, can I ask you a question? What is happiness for you and how do you attain it?" many friends responded to me saying, "are you drunk or are you ill". In fact I must point out that, to receive such a message and above all at that hour, is not very normal thing, especially if

the sender is me ... the issue worsened further!

Strange of all however, was the fact that all answered me and some even came to see me at home in order to respond in person. That which could have passed for a banal "sms" was becoming a true and proper occasion for relaunching beautiful rapports with friends that had been forgotten somewhere at the bottom of my the phone book. Actually as the owner, every now and then I forget some numbers.

Well, without elongating it, given that by now you must be curious, I will narrate to you in the next chapter what my friends responded to me, I was forgetting to tell you that it was in this manner that I started writing this book, a result of many voices, of many ideas, of many evenings spent on the couch chatting just to narrate life to all of you.

Good reading.

CHAPTER 1

THE VILLAGE OF PINOCCHIO

1.1/ HAPPINESS.

Many times I asked myself if in the society in which we live there still is something profoundly true, profoundly necessary for which it is worthy to live or to give up one's life for. Deep down, what is it that every person who travels on this earth is looking for? I have always told myself that everyone is looking for happiness! Easy as an answer isn't it? It may look a given, but what is happiness and how is it found? One evening a lamp was lit to me, not only the figurative mental lamp that one has in head when an idea emerges from the grey of the brain, but also the lamp of my abat jour at my bedside and I started sending random short message texts to all the numbers in my phone book. To all I asked this question: What is happiness? How is it measured? Some thought I had smoked some drug, some thought I had gone nuts and maybe they were not mistaken, but majority of them responded to me ...and this is how:

SMS – before attaining happiness, one needs to achieve serenity, because happiness is one step above and is rarely tasted. Happiness is when your heart explodes. (Gra')

SMS – happiness is a feeling that no one will ever attain fully for the simple motive that we are never satisfied and that in any case life gives us everyday tests that seems so difficult ... therefore we find ourselves unhappy. We can partially measure happiness when we manage to see in the eyes of

someone that we cherish, but part of happiness is inside us and in the moment in which we managed to be in an empty room by ourselves and manage to smile then we are happy. (Gloria).

SMS – happiness is a state difficult to attain because it implies a series of things but if attained then one can live life fully. (Alessia).

SMS- I believe that happiness is measured in those rapid but intense instants that life every now and then gifts. (Claudia).

SMS – according to me happiness is found round the corner but the itinerary to arrive there is full of obstacles, I have just started on that itinerary. (Giada).

SMS – happiness is not about great things or that which is sought for at 20 years of age when like gladiators we combat the world to emerge victors. It is not that which is sought after believing that love is either everything or nothing. It is not about strong emotions, it is not about skyscrapers to be climbed. Happiness is made of small, simple, precious things...the aroma of coffee in the morning, my song, a good book at the fireplace, someone waiting for you at the station when you arrive, the perfume of summer, a surprise bouquet of flowers, a nice surprise, a telephone call or a message, an embrace, a smile: this for me is happiness. (Lalli).

SMS – maximum happiness is when an equilibrium in the various spheres of life i.e. love, family, work,

faith, friends, free time, is attained. It seems a banal thing but it's enough for one of these things to miss and we feel sad and in crisis. (Elena)

SMS – for me happiness is everything or nothing! It is a whole life lived but that also fills you without anything. You are already at the maximum and only He knows your happiness. (Lucia).

SMS – when the heart finds its magnet that attracts it, it is a heart in peace and a heart in peace tastes happiness. The eyes of a happy man glitters, they are like the stars! (Flavia)

SMS – sometimes we are happy and sometimes it all passes. Happiness is by moments, it is present when you are close to people dear to you, when you are content for anything even close to people you trust. It would be beautiful to be happy always, but how can you? One is happy when they manage to conclude something they have given their all. Maybe we should also stop desiring because desire is a need for something that one doesn't have and therefore not having it one is not happy...(Paola).

SMS – considering that the Lord speaks to us in dreams and it is measured by these, therefore for each person, it is attained differently, but for all it is the same thing. (Giulia).

SMS – happiness is to feel loved. (Francesco).

SMS – empty message – one girl sent me an empty message... who knows, maybe she made a mistake

pressing some key on the cell phone or it was her response ... emptiness.

Truly I was not expecting so many reflections through the “cell phone”, a river of ideas and visions of the same dimension, happiness. To think that we usually talk of young people as not having ideas, that they don't have ideals and that they are empty, these responses have encouraged me and have made me reflect and recommit myself to the search for happiness. This theme of happiness has introduced us to the first reflection on our world; as young people, we feel hijacked by an irresistible force that is pushing us beyond ourselves in an uncontrollable search for happiness in a context that is in constant mutation. Fashion changes, trends and even joints change and maybe even the people idealized by a society that communicates, actually transmits to us slowly, in small daily doses models of reference. These are men and women who appear, studied in every small detail to be appreciated by the public, they are the “media men”. They are the ones who serve at the TV principally but also the newspapers and the great networks, at the sites and at the portals to talk to us, to converse with us but not about us. To convince us that what we see is beautiful, pleasurable and opportune. The media men and women make us to ask this very simple question; why can't I be like them? Oh yes! This is the unstoppable desire that pushes us to go down to compromises just to be like they who appear to us. The compromise is only one,

to buy that which makes them visible, whatever it is. It is the model of our society based on being in service of having.

1.2/ the youth and the culture of the media.

I was in Pesaro to participate in a formation course for the communication operators. Talking to us was a famous RAI journalist from Marche and the theme that evening was the relationship between the youth and the media. The very interesting talk had just ended and many of the participants present, I must point out not really young, were reflecting on the words they had just heard when a very young lady, the only one present of her age, took to the microphone. She narrated to us that her 13-year-old brother is always locked in his room at home in front of the computer communicating with his virtual friends. Do you know how many contacts he has between messenger and skype (these are computer programmes that allow us to talk to friends)? Over three thousand! I couldn't believe what I heard, three thousand people talking to a 13 year old lad directly without any kind of control.

Well, I really do not know what kind of parent would leave such a young boy alone in the middle of a crowd of over three thousand strangers. But see, today this happens inside our very own houses and homes without even having to take the trouble of going out. This fact really hit me hard. We create a

thousand problems on the use of the media while our young people, actually very young people are using the media. This means of communication, one of the many available today, is actually the norm now. It is not a thing of a few, but actually the rule of many. This fact drove me to ask a few questions around. With a small group of young people from my village, we styled a questionnaire on the theme of “youth and the internet. And we had the theme make rounds among our friends and acquaintances. This was to try and understand how young people today use the internet and for what purpose. Do they understand the intrinsic potentials and the risks? This is what emerged:

-Almost all the youth between the ages of 15 to 20 years use the internet.

-A great many of them use the internet daily and those who have ADSL are practically connected 24 hours a day.

-The web principally is for entertainment, for talking to friends, for doing homework and for searching for things that interest them (soccer, music etc.).

- Risks perceived by the youth: meeting some ill-intentioned person or a paedophile.

- Among the navigators of the web, the youth have between 100 and 200 virtual contacts with friends and acquaintances and almost all of them have personal blogs or facebook pages where they mainly publish

photos and messages.

The image has become the primary means of communication; boys and girls insert online their personal photos of every kind. From birthday parties to photos taken during a walk along the beach or taken in their bedrooms or plunging in a swimming pool or better still, a photo of a romantic kiss to the girlfriend or boyfriend.

The image therefore, is a mode of transmitting to others and potentially to the whole world, a piece of the personality of the young person in question. This way or style of being and living is very difficult for the adults to understand. In fact, whoever has garnered a few years to his/her name cannot imagine posting their personal photos for the whole world to see. In any case, they feel ashamed and the few photos they own are well kept for remembrance in the family album.

In a nutshell, there is a truly a new way, I would say, “digital” of communicating that juxtaposes itself against the “analogue” way. On one side, there is a way made of personal relationships, of direct contact with each other and of words. On the other hand, there is a mode of communication that is virtual, without limits, made of images, short messages and of many “connections”. In order for us to enrich this discussion on the digital world, I would like to suggest to you an alternative interview with a refractory youth:... meditate if you like:

Stefano, do you have a smartphone?

No, for heaven's sake...

Why are you refractory to the digital world?

He started it... invades my life, my spaces, my time and my relations with other people. I wish you knew how many times it happens that right in the middle of a conversation my interlocutor starts "swiping" up and down with his finger on his brand new cell phone. What a disturbance! "Hey! I am here with you, for you..." I am not refractory to the digital world 'tout court', but to the abuse done or better suffered of the same. These means of "hyper communication" remove attention, they block that profound exchange with the people around, they interrupt, they divide, they do not create communion but create loneliness instead. Maybe the greatest risk I see is that, if attention is not paid and if the means are not used critically (and young people scarcely have this critical use of these means, given that there is no digital education), one risks to remain entangled in the virtual realm, losing sight of the true life. I lose sight of the people I have around me, the things that happen and it is a kind of estrangement from the real.

What do you think of these new means of communication?

In addition to what has been said already, I add that these means of communication are an enormous source of ambiguity: a message cannot substitute

efficiently the non-verbal communication that is always present in a face-to-face encounter. Therefore, the contents of a message may be misunderstood if not changed completely. The “smileys” also called emoticons usually help to alleviate this problem, but they will never substitute the tone of one’s voice, the look, the gestures or the posture of a person. And then they impoverish the language; how many people are unable to understand a text they read? Very many, especially the youth. They do not know the significance of many words. They only know those used in the chat and usually the grammar is optional. These aspects are not exclusively to be blamed on the new means of communication, but quite a chunk of them, yes!

What is communication for you?

Justly intended, I think it is one of the most indispensable things for a person, in the same token as food and water. If I could not communicate something about myself, share that which I am, offer myself to others, then of what service would be my ‘being’? If I could not open myself to a ‘you’, I would feel so alone...

What is missing in order that the youth can communicate well?

I believe that above all silence. Silence is missing. Moments in which one can remain alone with oneself, to reflect, taste the present and enjoy one’s presence. I see almost all young people with smartphones (or

tablets or such things) or with earphones in their ears. I believe it is because they fear silence. They fear to be alone with themselves. Maybe they fear to be disappointed, maybe because they did not have an adequate education on affection. It is a paradox to say that for better communication, there is need for silence, maybe, but I firmly believe it.

On what condition would you touch a smart phone?

Ah well, just touching them, I can, I mean am not allergic to them! But I wouldn't use any as my cell phone on any condition. I believe that the advantages would never beat the disadvantages. I do not want to be always connected, always online. I do not accept that tens of notifications be sent to me every hour. That would make me waste a lot of time that I can put to better use. I want to live. I do not have time to waste on nonsense and notifications. Accessible yes, in fact I have a cell phone. But to be shrouded by the web and the apps, no! I love managing my life, not to suffer the management of an instrument that should be one of my implants. In my opinion, this is a new mode of slavery.

The other significant aspect of the world of media is the TV. Even the TV has suffered through the years profound changes in its being and appearance. The TV has changed fabric passing from that which was defined as "Paleo televisione" or better the container of contents which had in one way or another educate, transmit values and culture; to a "Neotelevision"

hinged more towards channelling models of life and create audience. The TV is now more attentive to the number of viewers and consequently attentive to the sponsors, than to the quality of the product. And this is how musical, reality shows in deserted islands or in closed houses and many more were born. In these shows, the reality is mixed with fiction and more often than not, the fiction is clothed like reality. One of the changes worthy to be mentioned in this historic passage is the television flux. In the olden television, programmes were well separated. In between programmes were breaks, advertisements, presentations, beginning and finishing anthems and so on. Today instead, we talk of the flux of programmes that are interconnected. One kind of rides in on the other. We are in a situation where the viewer doesn't really know where one programme ends and where the other starts. Even the advertisements are chosen in function of the programmes, in fact it enters in the programme itself. Now even the interludes of telefilms are entertainment programmes!

We are part of the flux that like a swollen river is carrying us having swept us and is pushing us where it wants. It is slowly creating in us a culture of media. I took a pen and a paper on some afternoons, sat in front of a TV and I tried to write that which I saw; the advertisement, how long they lasted, the themes that were covered etc. and I created my personal media diary. When I later looked at what I had collected, I realised that in one hour of an afternoon transmission

(telefilm), we have to make do with 17minutes of advertisements at an interval of 20minutes. It worsens especially when we consider the lunch hour when the soap operas are aired! Even more shocking are the themes covered by RAI in their programmes that are transmitted in the early hours of the afternoon: “ I love a certain divorcee but his daughter doesn’t approve” or “ When the mother in law is so intrusive” or consensual separations at 85% and *dulcis in fundo*, “He cheats on his wife with her sister”. The problem is not the low level of cultural in this themes, (which , when all is said and done can actually be discussed), but the mode in which they are done i.e. the reconstruction through fiction of the facts and the ensuing discussion in the studio by some TV personalities that have nothing to do other than comment on these paradoxical situations. Last concern is that the systematic presence of these themes in TV in the afternoon hours, superficially discussed, makes these issues to slowly enter and make part of our culture, making everything look normal. Slowly we become used to everything and nothing scandalizes us anymore. Things that ordinarily would have been thousands of kilometres away from our culture slowly become solidified and taken for granted without our notice.

We forgot one personality....who. Pinocchio! I believe that Pinocchio is that personality that represents better the youth of today, who like Pinocchio is searching for happiness and lives in a

truly complicated context, in a society full of propositions (sometimes even alluring like that of the TV) but also full of traps. Pinocchio will accompany us through this journey and will help us ask ourselves some questions. Maybe we will have to answer in the hope that our nose doesn't grow!

1.3/ THE NEEDS OF THE YOUTH

“We would like to talk of serious things”. This was the request that some young people handed me one summer evening. I couldn't believe my ears, but how? If the talk is always about today's youth who are empty, who never think about anything serious but pleasure and that like Pinocchio all they do is search for the village of the Balocchi? And these youth here are asking me to talk about serious things? And then, why particularly me? It is a short time that I stay in this village, they barely know me!

But can you imagine the talking cricket that at some point sees Pinocchio come close to him and asks him; “Cricket, listen, can we talk about some serious things, you and me?”. According to me the Cricket must have somersaulted twice! Well, far from the doubts, to this question I answered ... ok am game!

A new adventure was born with a group of mixed young people; males and females and of different age groups ranging from 15 to 18 years of age and from different villages. With them we defined some rules

and made a timetable. First rule: seriousness. All that we tell each other remain amongst us and no one can make a joke of the ideas of the other. The second rule...there isn't one! One rule is enough. Timetable? We will meet once a week and we will talk about what you want, ok? All agreed and we started living together, narrating to each other our experiences and asking ourselves, where am I going?

And why?

Believe me in two years of our journey together, many questions come up about life, death, love, friendship, enjoyment, God, this known unknown, about any imaginable theme and more. But one question come up from the young people to which there is no verbal answer: "Are you with us?" Today, what are the youth looking for? They are looking for us, we friends, we parents, we educators, we adults, we politicians, we ministers (of God). The young are asking us to be physically present, to spent time with them, to take a walk along the avenue with them, to go Holy Mass with them, to go skiing with them, to listen to them, and to share with them our joys and sorrows! That's what the young people are asking for, PRESENCE!

Enough with conventions, rationalizations, thesis and antithesis about the youth. The youth as a resource, the youth as a problem, youth discomfort etc. in my view there is only one discomfort, ours. We are not able anymore to stop for a moment and just be with

the youth in their midst, to sit at the bench or on top of the seat of the scooter and just talk to them. Let us ask ourselves why we do not do it. Whom did Pinocchio meet on his way? Who stopped to be with him? Unfortunately, wrong and cruel advisers; Fire eater- the cat and the wolf. And today who are the cat and the wolf? I want to be cruel ... but Fatina (Miss Perfection), who for heaven's sake is a good person, if instead of gloating infatuated in her castles would have put on a pair of torn jeans, a t-shirt, and a pair of worn out tennis shoes, and come out from the castle to walk along with Pinocchio, without making her appearances and disappearances from the series, ... "I told you.." wouldn't it have been better? But this is another story.

1.4/ THE ILLUSSION OF THE "BALOCCHI"

Well, I acknowledge that I was a bit cruel. Let us leave the good mythical Fatina alone and let us talk about the Balocchi instead. Yes! This is indeed a great theme, interesting and about which is worthy to go down in details. Can we make a list of our Balocchi? PC, notebook, PS2, PS3, MP3, MP4, I Pod, I Pad, CD, DVD, VCD, Blue Ray, Moto, Video camera HD, FULL HD, Google glass, Drone, Digital Foto camera, WII, I Phone, Sports cars ... and many other devilry but are these our only Balocchi? Noooo. By balocchi we mean also that organised complex system made of people and things that produce entertainment like the

discotheque! A couple of years ago, on a Saturday night, together with my associate and faithful friend Francesco and with my beloved, we left almost at midnight armed with radio microphones, video camera and a spotlight for the cathedral of entertainment; the Imperial Baia of Gabicce. It is one of the best discotheques of the Riviera. Our objective was to interview young people. Having parked at the reserved parking given that we belong to the 'MEDIA', we enter together in the great Baia and immediately some young people get interested in us and straight they run to us. They ask us if we belong to "Lucignolo" (a TV programme from Italia 1) and if we can interview them. Seeing the process of events, we decide to take a lap of recognition. The discotheque is full, many youths are also outside in the open given that it was summer. The DJ raises the volume and takes to the microphone, "friends, this is our sound, your Baia Saturdaaaaaay!" and on with the deafening music. We take our instruments of work, on goes the spotlight and we start understanding some secrets. To two girls in the open we ask, "what is having fun for you?" – response, "having fun for us is dancing, is being with our friends" We then try with a small group of boys, the same question – response, "having fun for us is music, friends and finding girls". We get back into the discotheque and this time round, we focus on two girls a little older, well dressed and with their make up on, practically the cameraman seems stuck on them! To them as well we ask the recipe for having fun and here is their answer, "to

know people, socialize, listen to good music and to be in company of others”. Have you understood? Having fun is to be together, get to know each other and not to “have something”. These young people, chosen randomly with the journalistic calculation or statistics, are telling us that there is no need for the balocchi but people in order to have fun. Maybe it was by mere coincidence that we met these particular boys and girls but I guess a great many of them think it this way. But then the balocchi? Maybe the real Balocchi is the difficulty we have to get into relations, meet the other person and socialize that pushes us to shift our attention to things. We use these things as alternatives when we are unable to meet and socialize with real people. Thinking about it, even Pinocchio only looked for the Balocchi to have fun, but deep down he cared about one thing and one thing alone, the friendship of his big soul friend Lucignolo. (...not that one of Italia 1).

1.5 / THE WHITE NIGHT

Having read and reread many times the above topics, I have decided to add a reflection that is fruit of some issue that occurred in the news of some small city in the Marche: the rape of some 15-year-old girl in a white night.

I dedicate to you this thought with the hope that it can contribute in putting another element on the way that leads to happiness. Thinking about it; “are we men or

beasts?” Reflecting about this, I think that the beasts are better than we are sometimes and we have a lot to learn from them on humanity.

The news in these days are full of facts and events, discussions, evaluations, comments opportune and inopportune depending on one’s point of view.

Everyone seems to have had their say, political and institutional organs, labour unions, representatives of different categories, the armed forces, the religious, the ordinary people etc. but in these recent days, the media have started the hunt for the culpable.

Who is responsible for all these violent acts that have happened in our city? It is alcohol, the high sounding music or the sitting politician?

I would like to start with a simple consideration; the economy governs our thought! This is the real evil of all that is happening. We have demanded and delegated the running of our life to the economy. All have to be evaluated, considered, put in monetary value and the balance has to be positive...obviously for us! only that when one gains someone else loses, and in this case the loser is the entire society that has created a system that is capable of destabilizing and sending to sleep the conscience under the apparently enjoyable light of profit. Let me explain myself better. All are looking for someone responsible for the acts of violence that happened during the “note Bianca”, a night that in my opinion was nothing other than a sad extended Saturday evening during which everyone

was trying to give sense to their pilgrimage towards the search for happiness. Deep down, note Bianca is nothing other than depriving oneself of sleeping and rest and giving away that time to something else.

The idea in se is good if truly you deny yourself sleeping time and you dedicate it to something else for example listening to music that is able to bring out of us sentiments, memories, positive emotions that we can dedicate to other people in our relationships. People who are increasingly slaves of the little time that is at our disposal. People to whom we can dedicate some gesture of affection, generosity and why not, even solidarity. But this is not the case! What I see the note Bianca thing is a denying oneself of the precious sleeping time to go in search of the famous “I don’t know what”. And to cover the emptiness our search is the economy. It is enough to pay and this emotional and relational emptiness is all covered; drink and don’t think of it! You listen to “techno” music and you don’t listen to yourself, you look for love and you don’t find it. You pay or you bring out your muscles but you don’t take that which you are missing. That is our new culture where you we give space to what we don’t need and even pay for it dearly so that we don’t have to listen to ourselves. In fact we pay in order to silence the profound desires that come to us from the heart and from the conscience. So who is guilty of this success?

Primarily, the media and the newspapers need to examine their conscience. This is because among the

sponsors of the note Bianca, put on the bench of the accused , are the media and the newspapers who obviously do not care about their consistency. Important to them is to sell the news, and to increase the number of those to access their news and the viewers. But then let us come to the rest. The guilt of this situation lies with those who believe that the body is an object to be put on the show, to be used, to be scrambled for. It lies with those who, walking on the road, believe that there is nothing wrong with taking to bed whoever comes our way and especially if they satisfy our desires for the moment. It lies with those who have public roles to play but only thinks of showing off and doing favours to their friends instead of serving others and working for the mutual good of all. It lies with those who instead of educating about the good accept the evil only because it is more comfortable. It also lies with those who have accepted the idea that the society is driven by the economy and that the profit on one day, month or year is more important than the dignity and the happiness of men. For this I say “mea culpa” and I ask for forgiveness from all the young victims of this system that, also due to my fault, is spreading without even me having done enough to help awaken the conscience of men who cannot be called as such today. You also think about it ... if you can ... if you want to ...

CHAPTER 2

THE PUPPET ONE OF US

2.1 / WHO ARE YOU PINOCCHIO? (APUPPET!)

Dear Pinocchio, who knows what you would tell us if you were with us today, which version of your story you would present to us, you that were a piece of wood, you who had been worked on by both strong and soft hands at the same time. Hands that knew how to remove from you all the excesses so that they could bring out a puppet; But not just any puppet, a puppet who knew how to talk, who knew what it wanted, maybe with a bit of confusion and a little bit too much good faith, but a puppet that knew what it wanted.

One question though dear Pinocchio, who are you truly?

Let us imagine ourselves watching on TV, on the 20:30 exclusive of the TG, Pinocchio interviewed. This is how I imagine it rolling:

-exclusively only for the TG and live from Collodi we have managed to secure and have here with us Pinocchio, one of the most sought after and unreachable VIPs of all time: Pinocchio how does it feel to be a real star?

-is the story of the wooden puppet true or was it all a creation of the TV?

-and where is the fatina now, what does she do....a stripper?

-the cat and the wolf are investigated for aggravated and continued graft, hiding and dealing in archaeological products, luring of minors etc, up to now they are at large and are looked for by Digos, what is your judgement of these personalities? Do you feel like an accomplice or a victim?

-is the Pinocchio story really one of great humanity, orphaned by the mother, lives with his old dad in a carpenter's shop, in extreme hygienic conditions among pieces of wood and crickets because the social services of the municipality did not act in time?

Respecting the author, I don't dare let poor Pinocchio say even a word, but I imagine how certain situations are so close to our present society where it is very easy to be "made of wood" and equally easy to meet personalities to say the least, ambiguous, like the cat and the wolf or like Mangia fuoco.

But then who is that puppet? Who is not Pinocchio if not one of us! A young man, a youth who finds him or herself at the risk of being a puppet, manipulated by others and by the socio-economic system. A young man that maybe is trying to emerge and find happiness but on whose path are people less recommendable who take him away from true affection, from people who love him or her and lead her to false joy. Every now and then the good Fatina tries to make them reason but the little light of easy success is more attractive than the good words from friends.

A youth of our present time finds him or herself living in a profoundly changed social context compared to a few years ago. For sure it is never ok to generalize also because there is a deep difference between the city and its peripheries, the locations on the provinces and the small villages that actually make up the biggest part of the fabric of our Italy. In all these realities, however, lies the globalization of the thoughts and ideas, and of desires of wanting to put up a show in order to be like others. In this context conditioned by the media and by the instant culture, youths find themselves profoundly attracted on one side and on the other profoundly in doubt and insecure.

One Wednesday evening I was talking to some girl and together we were observing the shoes of her colleagues. Well, all were of the same label and make, even their stockings were of the same label and I let you imagine what else. But from this fact was born a discussion; I ask her, “is it possible that you all have the same taste? That there exists in the whole world only one label of shoes? Is this not the sign of some downward kind of auctioning where in order to be part of a group you are forced to annihilate your diversity? And she responds, “ maybe you are right, but am only sixteen and for me it is ok like this. I will consider those problems when I will be much older. But right now, I want those shoes!”

But then dear Pinocchio 2015, who are you truly? You are a manipulated puppet I do not know by who

and why or is it not just to ask you, more than your name and age, is it not just to ask you to emerge from the crowd and to ask you to use your unique peculiarity that renders you unique in the world? Maybe it is not even just to give one blanket answer to these questions. Everyone is a portion of all, is mirror of the society, everyone is a bit a puppet that more or less consciously feels manipulated by the many social variables. And somehow that person is not a duplicate, they are different from everyone and they will leave a mark on the world by their life.

2.2 / GEPPETTO (THE ROLE OF THE FAMILY, WHAT FAMILY?)

None of us an island, we were born to be in relations. The moment of birth is itself and act of entering in relation. Already our first cry on entering this world is a perfect example. We breathe in the air containing everything and we exhale the air that had entered to be part of us and in that way we enter into a profound relationship with the world that surrounds us. From that moment on we cannot do without relations, we can no longer live without relating to others, without dialoguing, without giving and receiving to and from others, share in things, food until we arrive that immaterial thing that is love and affection. Our life becomes continuous search for relationships that are able to fill the inner emptiness that everyone feels inside them.

Am profoundly convinced that man needs relations with all, men and women, because both realities are present in each one of us anyway and we are in need of both to grow and arrive at that relational equilibrium that makes us be fully men or women.

Pinocchio finds himself born in a family where poor Geppetto does all in his power to make him feel loved but to Pinocchio this love seems not to suffice. He looks for something else, something that makes him happy and that makes him feel accomplished. Maybe that family made up of only a man is not enough for him, he is not able to achieve his relational equilibrium and this makes him hyper active and full of desire to search. But what more could poor Geppetto do for his beloved son?

In 1998 I made a journey to Kenya in the middle of the savannah in the zone of Isiolo some 350 km from the capital Nairobi. After a day of travelling on roads that had only the name to show for them, I arrived in a mission. Ngaremara is a village composed of huts made of sticks and cow dung, surrounded by thorny acacia branches in the middle of nowhere. Here, water, gas, electricity or even the sewage system does not arrive. But, GSM signal for the cell phone is clear! The inhabitants of this village are nomads, the Turkanas who are dedicated to pastoralists (goats).

In this reality, I discovered a social nucleus different from what we are used to seeing. The Clan. That is some kind of extended family where a part from the

mother and the father, who by the way is polygamous, there are all the other relatives who are living in perfect harmony. In the clan, the mother is mother to all children and she is not there trying to establish if the child is hers or of the sister, or cousin or even of the neighbour. Concisely, there is a sense of co-responsibility and solidarity amongst them. Why am I narrating this to you? Because I think that this kind of society is more open to the other and is able to preoccupy itself with the young ones more than we are to with our mode of thinking that is egoistic and unilateral. Maybe if Pinocchio was born in Turkana, he would have had a mother close to him, maybe not as beautiful as Fatina, but more close and present. Now am sure, after these affirmations, that you think am picking on Fatina! That is not the case, I will show that in the pages to come ... if I manage.

2.3 / LA FATINA (WHO IS SHE? HAVE WE MET HER?)

I dedicate this song to my dear Fatina of the Turchini hair and hope that she forgives me for the cruelty I have written about her:

“Lord make me an instrument, make me an instrument of your peace, where there is hatred that I may bring love, where there is offence that I may bring pardon, where there is doubt that I may bring faith, where there is discord that I may bring unity [...] etc.”

I guess it is not easy at all to be Fatina today, in a context that seems to give privilege to those who think for themselves and their own profit. And yet there are “Fatines”! They are associations, movements, groups or even individuals who take to heart the poverty and the difficulties of others by trying to give solutions to the immediate needs of daily life. Certainly we have happened to come across such realities in our life journey or at least we have seen advertisements on TV of initiatives of charity or of social activities in favour of the poor. That which may have not happened to us is to be in reality the “FATINA”.

You see, it is not enough to be ready to help others by taking our hands to our wallets and purses as we usually do. In the story of Pinocchio, if you remember well, the Fatina appears when Pinocchio has need, she materializes herself in various places, takes the puppet home with her and takes care of it! This becomes much more difficult to do than just give away a few coins to beggar or send an sms from the comfort of our couches at home or to swipe one of our credit cards in an one of the open banks as they speak on TV about some pathology. But if it is so difficult to be Fatina according to that of the story of Pinocchio, if it causes fatigue, why should I do it? I could attempt some response but I do not feel like it. I also do not feel like responding to you “Fatina”. For that reason, I have redirected this question to he who, according to me, is a real Fatina.

To Fr. Gabriel, a young Consolata Missionary from Kenya, now working in South Africa, I asked:

-Why dedicate your life to others?

Because, like Pope Francis says, you get life giving life, hope giving hope and love giving love! Self-giving is a call from God to all of us, believers and non-believers alike.

-And the choice of the least in society?

Dedicating one's life to others is the right thing to do, especially to the less fortunate in the society; it is a matter of justice. It is satisfying, humanly speaking, to do something for someone that can help you become a better person!

- What would you ask from God?

I ask the Lord that has called us, each in their own way, to help us make it, to serve like he did. I believe!

2.4 / THE CAT AND THE WOLF (FROM ADVERTISEMENT TO POLITICS THROUGH THE BANK)

Generally, the cat and the wolf are sweet animals (even if I don't love cats) but they have one common character, they only think of themselves! It is very difficult to make friends with the wolf, it is not trusting, hides, is dodgy but then, when darkness falls, it is not afraid to come out to light, get into poultry pens for some snack at the expense of some farmers.

On the contrary, the cat is a domestic animal that allows itself to be caressed, is affectionate, knows how to make itself loved, likes being in soft and warm places but then does whatever it wants i.e. it is cunning. To put these two characteristics together in the society is really dangerous. A terrible profile comes up, you will have an animal that is gracious, that allows itself to be caressed, that cheats whoever gets affectionate with it, but then it is an animal that at night becomes uncaring and does all that is possible to snatch from us every valuable thing i.e. our money, our time and our trust.

And do not tell me that this does not arouse in you some example, that you don't find any similarity with politicians, financial experts, and some advertisements or maybe some TV sales? Those who do this jobs honestly will pardon me, but we know that majority of their colleagues do the same thing as does the cat and the wolf, with an objective that is clearly not our common good.

Promises of easy profits, of happiness at a cheap cost (from material things), of feeling like someone, or of having security in life, all by simply voting this or the other politician. We are swarmed by such proposals every single day. But tell me, from time immemorial, if by burying some euros in the miracle field also called security exchange or any financial markets, will germinate a plant that produces money! Maybe yes, for some time it may happen, but then in the long run, can we have wealth made of indices and

speculations? Don't we need maybe, work, struggle and concrete things? Everyone is free to believe whatever they want, but then, if like for our dear Pinocchio, you reach a point of lacking even the few coins that he had, let us not complain. I wouldn't trust the wolf and not even the cat. Let me make a bracket of the world of advertisement, do you know how a TV programme works?

Well, an author has an idea for a new TV programme, this programme is then structured and is quantified and the cost of the project is worked out. At this point sponsors are sought for i.e. whoever is ready to pay for the transmission in exchange for advertisement with a given number of viewers for every transmission. The programme starts, but if after the first or the second transmission the number of the viewers is less than what was agreed upon, the programme is terminated. Even if it was a beautiful programme, full of great contents and values, it is terminated. The only true parameter of evaluation is the audience, not the quality.

The problems is that this is true as well for the TG, for the news, if there are more viewers during the gossip news compared to the real news, national and international, well we will continue drinking the gossip! And so we remain ignorant of the current affairs of the world we live in. Some journalist from RAI confided in me that from the studies carried out, there are more viewers when animals are talked about, and so out goes the directors of the various

TGs to hunt for news on animals. They look for the orphaned cat and of the dog imported from countries in the east. In a nutshell, they tell us what we want to hear, not what is actually happening in the world, be it good or bad. Even information has aligned itself to the laws of the market.

2.5 / LUCIGNOLO: JOURNEY COMPANIONS ON A SATURDAY NIGHT.

The joint is in fashion, the atmosphere is the right one, the scholastic stress is sky rocketing, all is ready to gift oneself a Saturday to remember, one that send a chill down the spine, actually, a Saturday that can help one forget the studies, the exam anxiety, problems and thoughts that bedevil the mind. The whole school is participating in the offered medium and therefore on with the party! Dear Lucignolo starts the engine and off they roll towards the village of the Balocchi. Now, up to this point, nothing to laugh about, but the story I want to tell you continues, in fact in the discotheque, apart from the music, young people and lights, there appears the striptease of whoever is ready to show their own bodies for the pleasure of whoever is watching. Personally, even if I don't agree with that choice, I can understand, but the story continues with these personalities that interact with the audience of 18 year olds involving them in these erotic exhibitions, to say the minimum, sexy poses and sensual attitudes made to arouse the

masculine and feminine hormones in order to push them to a state of euphoric excitement. This kind of sensual excitement calls for a sexual act that can not be fulfilled in the discotheque in front of this inciting crowd.

Many may object that in any case it is now a normal thing and that in TV we see worse, that times have changed and that we should not be scandalized by such and so on. I will tell you that I share those sentiments as well! What I do not agree with is something else altogether. It is the fact that this society made up of managers of joints, of organizers of shows, of agencies that organize events, of politicians, of parents, of educators, of teachers etc. on one part show case values and ideas that were the foundation of many generations and on the other side they corrupt the consciences of young people, making them believe that happiness is in the material things. Do you really think that sensuality and affection can be sold out for 30 euros in an evening? Don't you think our young people merit much more than only sensual excitement, payed for or forced on to them or ordered or provoked by some 40 year old that is profiting on their psychophysical growth? Do you really consider them that less important for the future of the planet? Not me! I would like to donate them a bit of serene happiness made up of sincere friendship, of deep relations, of true and deep love that comes from journeying together in order to discover immense and unlimited beauties.

I would hope for them an affectionate life, full, clean that fulfils them not only in body but especially in the soul! This is why I get angry. Not only that! All this is spiced up with a sickening and terrifying lack of conscience. It is thrown there thinking that that sexy image should help acquire some points in front of the other party goers of the Saturday night. But surely dear parents, educators, priests, teachers etc. is it possible that you don't see anything? What kind of world is this gives to her children for food the worst that can be found? Or do you believe that this is instead an excellence that we should feed to your ... and our children?

2.6 / THE TALKING CRICKET.

Do you know of any talking cricket? Yes, maybe one yes, one ,that of a cricket carries only the name, but to be sincere, to me that type of cricket is not liked by many, not so much for the ideas that it puts across, but because it envisions a media itinerary that aligns itself with the political strategies used by the system. Another speaking cricket could be Alex, a missionary who having talked, chose to stay and live among the “crucifixes of history” as he says, among the poor of the poorest in the slums of Nairobi in Kenya. Fr. Alex is a person who, thanks to God's grace, talks to the heart of man and says the truth!

Truth is a difficult concept to explain. Today we tend to consider true that which a majority of people

believe. “It is true that we are a democratic country, it is true that we are a developed country” etc. but we need always to ask ourselves in respect of what do we think to have the truth.

One can feel tall if he looks at the people that are shorter than him, but if he looks at those taller than him, he will obviously feel short. The truth, for sure, is not a result of some statistics, but that, which is inscribed in our hearts and in our consciences. Alex has always narrated to us that poverty is not a result of some casualty, but that it is a result of a cruel distribution of the wealth of the planet where 83% of the resources is consumed by 20% of the planet, where 1 billion and a half of people have to make do with less than a dollar per day. These considerations are a truth that shake or at least should shake consciences. These are facts that are about justice and not just a case or a fact. All these is possible because we long lost the way of justice. God dreams for man, an economy of equality that presupposes politics of justice that in turn presupposes a religion and a faith where God is free to be with the least, with the poor and with the crucified of history. The talking cricket today, like in the time of Pinocchio, is an uncomfortable personality that speaks too much. He is the one that doesn't SAY that which we want to hear, but says the truth about the world, about us and reminds us that for everything that happens we must feel responsible, and an active part that can change to better the ourselves and the planet.

2.7 / THE WHALE

From a very small anima to an enormous one, the whale! Even herself on the way to extinction, bracketed and terminated by unscrupulous fishermen. And yet the whale is a symbol of strength and grandeur. In the story of our friend Pinocchio, the whale has a very strange role. She limits herself to swallowing, first Geppetto and then Pinocchio, only to eventually vomit them out after a period of ‘come we stay’ in her belly. It is like she bore them afresh after a period of reflection. It makes me think that this mammal, that is also well feared, could be a representation of silence today. Silence, an attitude that is on its way to extinction as well. Threatened by music and words, by MP3/4 and radios turned on everywhere. To be in silence, apart from the world, in darkness, etc. is something that we struggle to achieve in our daily lives and we actually fear being in silence and alone! And yet it is in this silence and darkness that Pinocchio and his father meets and loves each other and this experience and process leads them back to the shore ready to continue with their daily lives. Silence is a bitter medicine that helps us to heal from today’s evils, it helps us to retrace the way of the truth dreamt of by the speaking cricket.

CHAPTER 3

PUPPET

WHAT ARE YOU LOOKING FOR?

3.1 / THE SEARCH FOR A SIGN IN LIFE.

The witness of Lara

I have always been a curious and a reflecting person who asked a thousand questions also to herself. At fifteen years of age, I remember as if were only yesterday, I got for the first time, a panic attack while at school. In that period, I always felt alone and with a lot of fear because I did not understand what was happening to me. One day, while taking me to the doctor, my mum asked me what it was that was disturbing me so much ... With tears in my eyes; I explained to her that it was all about the phone calls that I was receiving from my dad. He had started calling me when I was still at school, then late in the evening and he was telling me that he was on a train and that he would never come back. That day, my mum revealed to me the truth about that man ... The situation that I had just been thrown in and that I had to face, was much bigger than I was. From that day, I started to research in earnest.

The only way through which I could face that situation was to find someone who could help me by informing me so that I could get to know better the world of drugs. I needed to listen to the stories of people that had been in that world so that I could be able to know and understand exactly what causes people to fall in that tunnel . I started going every Saturday, without mum's knowledge, to an

association of volunteers, run by the same volunteers and the family members of young people that were drug dependant. Every Saturday for five years. At 19 years of age, started looking for other contacts: doctors, psychiatrists, psychologists, police, the mayor, the boss of the social services etc. I reported the menace to them!

At 21, I realised that the problem had taken control of me and of my head. I was seeing drug addicts of every kind, everywhere.

In a nutshell, with time I understood that even a hyper sensitive and impulsive person like me could manage life without having to escape from problems. I realised that for a long time I identified with the feelings of my mother. Symptom of a loner. I slowly lost the illusion of omnipotence, I searched and in the meantime changed. Am now in search for the return route, for the sense to give to all this that I am today. Am in search of beauty that surrounds me. Am grateful to the friend that knows how to warm and make you feel less alone with a powerful hug. I heartily thank the exception of him who showed themselves to me as man and not as a hare. I thank my religion teacher who always believed in me. I thank the man who at 15 years took care of me, and became a dad to me, him who made me listen to and share thoughts and emotions with others, him who is always present whenever I need comfort. I thank my mother for having put me on this world, all my friends and all those who in these years continue to be

patient with me. I end with a phrase from the book entitled “In the sea there are corcodiles” by Fabrizio Geda: “My Mother decided that to know that I was in danger, far away from her, but on a journey towards a different future, was better than to know that I was in danger close to her, but in the mud of the eternal fear”.

Lara.

BUTTERFLIES

Like mutilated butterflies
What sense has this life?
Like mutilated butterflies
What does this life mean?
Like chameleon butterflies
With time, with love, with the wings.

THE NOSTALGIA OF LEAVES

I would like ...
To walk without a destination
Without giving reassurances, they are not necessary.
With fear ...
To be taken and followed for where ...

FOR

For me I find you
I find you for me,
Together,
We lose each other in us
In us we lose each other together
I only experience pleasure
At the thought of you
At the thought of you
I only experience pleasure.

Vanessa Ardenghi.

3.2 / THE CONFLICTS INSIDE AND OUTSIDE OF US.

“A promotion at work takes a colleague, who up until yesterday was your equal, hierarchically on top of you. He changes attitude, he appears in suits, becomes pretentious and takes an aloof stance. Everything that is passed to him is ok even critics. This attitude makes you lose it and you start criticizing him, saying that no one can stand him, that he is arrogant, that he is an ambitious person who sold out to the authorities for the sake of the career and you outline all his shortcomings. It is the beginning of the end; in fact, it is the beginning of conflict.”

Truly there are so many conflicts that our time impose on us every day. These conflicts preoccupy our thoughts making our life very difficult, especially those of us who have a sensitive character. We end up feeling like slaves of these situations which create us a lot of disgust, anxiety and in more serious cases even psychosomatic diseases.

At work, in the community, in the family, in groups of friends or even in associations, in all these environments there can be created situations of interpersonal conflicts that threaten the serenity of the people involved. This may make it very difficult or even impossible to make progress in the work that should be done.

From an observation made at a camp, I noted two recurrent things; conflict is born when we perceive the other as a danger to us or when the other does not correspond any more to the projection of myself on him or better that which I expect them to be.

The other person becomes a danger to us not only when they take something away from us: a responsibility, some kind of prestige, money etc. but also when they change in an unexpected way and especially if the change is not communicated. There are so many expectations that we have of other people. The things they should or should never do. If a colleague violates the protocol of the laws that we project on them, then they automatically become enemies and there conflict starts.

This gets into a real negative relational spiral, a vortex without end that leads to a total rupture of the relationship, to an extent that we get to a direct or even violent conflict be it verbal or physical. Worse still, it can end up leading to a total indifference that leads to not even recognizing in the other person any value. One of the strategies employed in such cases is that of making the other person look bad in everything. This is achieved by creating a very negative network of relations around the person, all his capacities are watered down, all his weak points are highlighted and every activity is made suspect. It is obvious that the victim also using the same tactics tries to defend themselves. The result of all this work is an environment that is hell like, full of anxiety,

nervousness and hours on end of work channelled only at destruction as opposed to creating something good and positive. So, to whose benefit is all this waste of time and energy? Non one! All the protagonists spend very unpleasant time, their colleagues live badly, even their friends who have to listen to the stories discrediting others. Sometimes these friends suffer when hit by stray bullets(of words) meant for the adversary. In the end the organization, or the company falls a part because time is spent fighting instead of producing something that can build the society.

3.3 / THE RESOLUTION OF THE CONFLICTS: A THESIS.

So, what to do in front of this desolate panorama? How do we resolve these conflicts. I wish we had a magic recipe for resolving this problem. Certainly, we can always do something starting with ourselves and not always with the other person as we always try to do. I think that as a first thing, it is important to be conscience of the undesirable situation in which we find ourselves. We should not cheat ourselves by claiming that ‘am ok’ ... ‘it is the other person who should feel guilty’. The truth is that we all feel bad so long as we are tied in a relationship.

The second thing to do is to recover the esteem of the other person by trying to understand that they do not just do what they do to despise us. And then restart

dialogue between the two of you in the presence of a mediator who is able to make both parties see and understand their wrong judgements.

Dialogue is founded, first and foremost, on the capacity to listen to (and not only to hear) what the other has to say and understand why they arrived at such an idea. Then it is important to consider the fact that the other could be right and therefore the need to get an understanding to meet each other halfway and be able to integrate both ideas.

Those unification meetings are useless if none of the parties is not ready to reconsider their position. It is better to accept the past and the project oneself to the future focussing on new goals to be achieved.

The spirit of service must be adopted, where one works hard, not to affirm oneself, but for the achievement of a good far much bigger than oneself and that is the good for all. The ultimate end is to better the lives of everyone in the relationship by creating moments of exchange and proper dialogue where we are all equal. Exercising to say good of the other person is a perfect thing to do in order to walk out of the dark tunnel of conflicts.

Can we try? Come on! We have nothing to lose! In fact, everyone would see the good intention, the spirit of service of an intellectual honesty. Lets try!

3.4 / HAPPINESS AS A STYLE OF LIFE.

Beppe, one of those men who sticks in your head. Always satisfied, smiling, unkempt beard, sportive wear, northern accent, small and penetrating eyes. This is how I remember him, my friend Beppe; as one who spent his life for his Colombian brothers. Up to now, always in service at Marialabaja in Colombia.

Having come back to Italy in the 90's, he spent some time at Fano given that he was staying at Santa Maria a Mare, Marina Palmense in the province of Fermo. His adventure started among the peasants, poor and impoverished, forced by the markets to cultivate coca, yes coca, the plant from which cocaine is extracted. This was also because the other cultivations were not paying. Coca is a little shrub from which the peasants collect small leaves from which, after a long chemical process, cocaine is extracted.

Together with other confreres, Beppe initiated a project that aimed at eliminating slowly the plantations of coca. They did this by helping the peasants to convert the coca plantations to cocoa and cashew nut plantations. A very arduous task for two main reasons; the first is that cocoa takes a number of years before it can start producing fruits and the second is that the very big profits made by the drug traffickers allow them to move the markets as they wish!

The wealth made from cocaine is in the hands of a few, certainly not in the hands of the peasants. Fr.

Beppe, in one of his numerous presentations, showed one nice video entitled, “from the leaf of coca to cocaine” in which the whole process of making cocaine and the problems that surround it is explained.

Cement, caustic soda and petrol are just but a few of the products that are used to treat the leaves in the process of extracting cocaine. The end product is then exported to all possible places in the world to cloud or offer false happiness to the men and women of today.

Fr. Beppe, faced by this wound that enslaves the producers and the consumers while enriching only the commercialists and the unscrupulous bosses of the mafia, always repeated this; “the problems of the world are so many, but we are always serene”. A serenity of his own which is the foundation of peace, a serenity which comes from above, from faith and from the certainty of being loved by God. What a great man, Beppe! Every now and then, he calls me from Colombia just to know how we are, to know if our serenity is still alive in us. For me Beppe is a master of happiness, a happiness that for him and for us is a style of life to be attained.

By the way, if you wish, it is possible to go visit Fr. Beppe in Colombia. You need to contact him, and I can provide his address if you call me. Dear Pinocchio, maybe even you are looking for happiness, maybe the story of Beppe may be of help to you and may suggest to you a way to the happiness square.

But to reach the goal, it is necessary first to walk the way of serenity to the end.

3.5 / IN WORK ... THEY ARE “CHEATING US” AND WE BELIEVE.

After having created everything and every living thing, God leaves everything in the hands of man. To him the homework of continuing in the creative work of God through the management of the earthly paradise so that man may not lack a thing. Today, we are taking everything from nature, transferring resources from one pole of the planet to the other. From the ground beneath us and from the seas, we are impoverishing the zones south of the planet and enriching in an exponential way the zones north of the planet. All this is done imposing on other men laws and norms based on profit making, on the increase always of PIL of our ‘developed’ nations.

We force man to dedicate a big part of his time to this development, imposing a hierarchy of inter personal relationships whereby for one to feel satisfied, they have to emerge above the other. For the inner happiness that comes from the same level relationships amongst people, we have chosen material goods and in order to attain such goods in big numbers, we must produce more and emerge in the name of “meritocracy” that awards him who produces more while introducing a perverse mechanism that in my view creates conflict in the

work environment.

Basing all on this system, the other becomes for me a competitor to eliminate, overtake, subdue, a danger for my career that permits me to have more and more that goes a long way to satisfy my temporary desire of happiness.

Curious thing is that almost everyone has regulated themselves to this kind of system, but even worse is the fact that we truly believe that this system can actually give us that which we need.

It seems to me that apart from the giver of work, those who benefit(and not even much as such since a lot of time and money is wasted in conflicts fiat docet) are advocates and pharmacists, first because they deal with the controversies and second because they offer us (at a cost) pills and drops to calm our boiling spirits and to keep at bay the anxieties and the psychosomatic diseases generated by the system. I do not even want to think of the extreme gestures of those who take their own lives because they are forced by the system to produce and they can no longer do so or they have run into debts just in order to have more.

I truly think that the light of reason is really lost, that they have brainwashed us, the mind, the heart and the conscience. For sure this was never the plan of God in his industry, in his local entity. He is the employer who paid in the same way the workers who came early and those who came later on, a salary that was

sufficient for each one. How long can such a system last? Many, too many, complain of the injustices, of the incapacity to evaluate the productivity of each one and then at the end there lacks money for running the entire system.

How much energy is wasted in destroying, separating and mining the interpersonal relationships among colleagues ...and do you truly think that this will increase the productivity?

In my view, in order to come out of the abyss of the meritocratic profit, we need to go back to the common cooperation which considers the other like myself, equal dignity and equal responsibility to achieve the one and only objective: “ the good of the other in respect of all” in this one feels satisfied and gratified!

Co-responsibility, honesty and the anticipation of trust are the stages of this course that elevates the employee to the dignity of man and not of ‘a thing’. If the rules of the game are these and they do not change...I want to be the last on the cue.

CHAPTER 4

THE STORY OF XXX

4.1 / FROM A PUPPET TO A PERSON.

To live free from social and economic conditioning! What is it that makes us feel alive? To have a passion. To look for a kind of life that is attentive to the relations and the environment constitutes my passion.

An itinerary that started when, just above our adolescence, one literature teacher started asking us questions that did not only speak about important authors, but that were bordering on the exploration of the world that surrounded us.

Then I approached the diocesan missionary centre that immediately proved to be an optimum point of observation on the dynamics that govern the world and on some initiatives that try to better it, and to this, I was able to participate from the equal and solidarity commercial to the ethical bank.

These experiences, the direct testimonies of people like Gesualdi and Zanutelli, continued to insert in me the seeds of curiosity and a small but with doubt awareness that a better world for all was possible and that of this change each one of us could be a protagonist.

Then came the time to register at the university, I chose Forlì, the land of cooperatives but also and above of co-corporation, and specifically the baccalaureate course in industrial economy and of the no profit organizations. Not only the university lessons but also my colleagues, my very same

roommates, contributed in feeding a personal inclination that consolidated in time. They were the years of lessons of civil economy, of the first approaches with a GAS that used to meet in the student resident where I used to live, of the GAN, a group for non-violent action, of the knowledge of the committee for the fight against hunger in the world founded also by Annalena Tonelli, of the commitment in the association of students in my own degree course, of the first big fairs close to this world: Civitas at Padua and Terra Futura in Florence.

All that was confirming to me that all of us could contribute to the betterment of the world in which we live. Having reached that kind of awareness, the need to contribute in person to the daily life of the society with concrete gestures, by finding a job that could address at least a part of this desire became very strong. I graduated in the full scale economic crisis in march of 2009, I left Forli and went back home.

Then followed the social service in the social centre, the voluntary work at the Bottega del Mondo, the coming to know of the inter-diocesan network of the new styles of life and in the group of the active associates at the Ethical bank. The proximity to the Rees Marche, the frequenting the Acli circle of Orciano and only in the last few years, the participation in GAS of the millers who gather tens of families from the municipalities of Orciano, Mondavio and San Giorgio.

It was getting clearer by the day from these experiences that the social injustices and poverty, at one time felt very far from our daily lives, were presenting themselves as consequences of unjust rules on which the economic system and our co-responsibility is based.

In which way, I continued asking myself, are we the artisans of disaster? Every time we deliberately chose to participate in an economic system that is destructive to man and the environment just because it is profitable, we are artisans of disaster! But the profit also in better economic realities where the welfare of the society is more important than the welfare of a single person.

The desired change was not for me only a waiver but also a gain, for my relations and also for the environment that surrounded me. Still, with even more force I convinced myself that all should start from me, from every single individual, from a personal style of consumption and above all from life, without always waiting for the others: the society, the politicians, the place of work. For me, living according to these principles meant and still means, to respect my neighbour and whoever will come after me.

“To offer oneself” and not “to receive”, “to better the society” and “to better oneself” are the keys, for sure difficult to find in the daily life of the society, that can for sure give a boost to big processes.

How much do our relationships mean to us? How much time are we ready to dedicate to them? Still: do we only consider important the time spent in work? Does this work suffice only for the salary or do I, with this work, strive to create a more just society?

These are the questions that I put to myself, that have carried me to this point and that will guide me in future. I am super curious to discover where they will guide me to.

Tatyana Cinquino

4.2 / TO GROW.

To grow is like buttoning a shirt: there are those who do it fast and there are those who never make it in time. Immediately you are born, you cant wait to learn how to speak, to walk, to eat on your own, to go to the toilet on your own etc. How many falls and how many wails! How much “pup” to fill the napkins!

Then, at the best of it all when you have just learnt these things, comes the time of maternal school, the time of games with friends. All over again we start with the cries because so and so hit you or the other one stole your favourite toy. The mistresses, who will never be as sweet as your mom, are always ready to tell you, “do this! Do that! Colour the picture! Do not quarrel! Eat everything on your plate!” Little joys, those days spent at the maternal school and so much

sadness when, once attained the school going age, you remember how free you were.

Now you have homework after homework, you have to learn to read, to write and to count. You must know that the capital city of Italy is Rome, that $2+2$ is always 4, etc. you must learn a thousand things, you must learn and remember what Gianni Rodari wrote. And the nursery rhymes, how many nursery rhymes learnt by heart and how many poems! “ the fog to the steep hills/drizzling salt/ And under the mistral/shouts and shimmers the sea”

Very few things, if I remember the high school. The very first pimples, the first infatuations, the afternoons spent doing research for the teachers and the mood swings. The adolescence is an ugly stage. You wake up in the morning happy and perky, but once to set foot outside the house, you only need to have forgotten your snack and the whole day is turned into hell. You are never sure whether to trust that which you think and feel. Sometimes at a certain wall you look and see white and at times you look and see it as black. You only know that there is a wall. Sometimes. On many others you hit your head thinking that it is a dream! I challenge anyone to tell me that 14years old is the best age. For every observation that an adult makes, you never know whether to respond or not. “But I am still a child” or “I am old enough, I’ll do it myself”. Never, not even once, does the word “Thanks” come from your mouth. You are constantly inconstant, ungrateful and

moody. You know, it is a beautiful responsibility to start deciding and hear oneself say no to the older ones. In addition, you must also think of the future, the school you would like to attend and the kind of job you deem best for you.

Adolescence is a mixture of changes: inside you, outside of you and around you. You must know how to look back, remember not to swear, when you are scorbatic, to those who have always loved you. But at the same time you must look at the future, at your dreams, and at your friends in order not to remain alone.

Then finally you choose, you decide to go to a school in the city, to learn the secrets of mathematics, of electronics and of the kitchen. The big city becomes a big opportunity for big company and new friendships. This is the age at which the t-shirt with puppets becomes a “grownup’s” shirt. The attire changes but the music in the family remains the same. The time of “you must” is not over yet: you pay attention to the thousands of temptations that are proposed to you, you must say no the older ones who offer you sweets. Practically, you must constantly remain guarded in order not to end up in the village of Playthings (Balocchi) with the cat and the fox.

In this time of doubt, the things that taught you counts a lot. They can make a difference between a thug and a good boy. The limit between having it all wrong and remaining on the right path is very thin. Sometimes a

big change hides behind something very small, like a cigarette puff, or a drink with friends. From a very small even everything changes.

In order to feel older, you decide to transgress (who wouldn't like to try the thrill of a transgression!?). You may not even obtain a lot of taste from the first transgression. It is only a way of showing yourself as big or older. But immediately you think of yourself for a moment, of what you have really done, you realize that it doesn't add up. Sometimes because you told one lie to many to your parents, sometimes you don't even understand what must have happened to your mind that you said yes to your companions (I do not call them friends those who demand from you a certain acts just to see you do things that you shouldn't). The fact is that you find yourself there with a thousand doubts and apparently no one who knows how to understand you.

Growing up is like buttoning a shirt: you miss one button and the rest do not add up. I do not mean that every button is a mistake. Simply put, it's enough to make one small mistake and the rest is a consequence. They are not mistaken those who say that, " that boy changed after having encountered that company of people". We are the sum of our experiences and every encounter conditions us in one way or another. For this reason growing up is not a game. Whoever put us on the earth knows it very well: that is why he works everyday to make sure that we do not lack a thing, to remind us of his presence in whatever moment.

Missing a button is a question of a moment. That is why I think it is important to take the right time and not to hurry things. To unbutton and the re-button a shirt requires more than just a moment.

Mirko Santini.

4.3/ THE FAITH

I majorly approached faith during a dark moment of adolescence. I was feeling a great emptiness in me; on the one side, anger towards Christ and on the other side a strong desire for fullness that eventually came during a pilgrimage. I had set out with a great heaviness of spirit and against my will.

Despite all, (exactly when I would have never expected it) that week of silence and prayer brought to light that which was tormenting me: what was I looking for? What was I missing? Thanks to the testimonies of those who were with me, the serenity that they were transmitting to me, I sensed that there must be something different and beautiful and that brought back in me a great desire for God, so much that I desired his authentic and live presence in me. That is how it was.

Coming back home with a healthy fear of losing the peace that I had found, I started a vocational journey together with other youths more or less of my age.

The desire to find myself again and to know God was great and having put myself in question and started going deep into it, bigger and new horizons were opened to me. Slowly I learned to appreciate and to enter in prayer, to share my life and the experiences of my daily life with others.

At a certain point however, I felt a great need to touch by hand the faith that was becoming too reasoned and abstract. I wanted to meet God in my daily life, lower that which I was learning of him from the mind to the heart. Therefore, I accepted to live in 'casa famiglia' for one year in order to dedicate myself to the service of the less fortunate people and more. Being in very close contact with those who carry big life crosses put me to a tough test.

There were moments of confusion and the more I tried to understand, the lesser I did. There were moments of discouragement when I was not ok with myself and with others because of the difficulty, I had in accepting my own limits. I retraced my whole life from when I was a kid, touched my wounds and analysed particularly the family relations. By the grace of God, they emerged, even if painful , but oh, how they enriched me! They made me grow and take notice of that which I am in good and bad. During these moments, to be in malaise required from me a lot of trust, patience and prayer.

Further on I understood that right in my weaknesses God incarnates himself and liberates me from the

thousand chains that keep me chained. Putting life tother with the “small ones” of whom Jesus speaks, permitted me to know my own smallness and to taste the beauty of a life donated taking care of the other, helping each other to sustain each others’ cross and there discover the presence of God which reaches there where we with our own strength cannot reach.

I had experience of a God who asks each one to do their part according to their ability and that does not uncover anything that we are especially that which we are trying to hide because we think that it is ugly and that it is not worthy of his love.

It is not always that I have confidence and trust in the Lord because I am afraid or I would like to face things on my own and in my own way, but I am happy to follow Jesus because slowly he reveals to me the profound sense of living and he gives me always an occasion to grow in the love to lose. I like saying that the secret is to get involved seriously, keep the eyes wide open and a ready heart.

Flavia.

CONCLUDING...

Our walk together alongside the Puppet ends here, even Pinocchio at some point became man, he abandoned all the external conditions and he decided to be himself. This is the wish we would like to make to humanity and as my friend Enrico always narrates (citing Cardinal Martini) remember that, “every one of us has in them a believer and a non-believer who question each other” ... good dialogue

Marco



**Marco
Gasparini**

Journalist, vice director of the social communications office of the diocese of Fano, Fossombrone, Cagli and Pergola, (ITALY) collaborates with “Il nuovo amico” a weekly journal, with fanodiocesitv.it a diocesan web tv, where he conducts the weekly TG and with the Giornale del Metauro. Always with the passion for communication he started his journey in the radio in the youth programme of Radio Esmeralda (Fano – PU- ITALY) where first as a programmer and later on a presenter, he created two programmes dedicated to the youth and to the comparison between generations. He collaborated with other tv houses like FANOTV, E’TV Marche deepening the knowledge of the media and their potentialities. Also edited by him is his book “Da 25 anni facciamo centro”, published by Banca del Gratuito, where he narrates a piece of his story kneaded of “mission” and of Africa that he always carries in his heart.

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