ABSTRACT

RAISING ITALY: NATIONAL CHARACTER AND PUBLIC EDUCATION DURING THE
LIBERAL ERA (1876-1888)

by Joseph Sebastian Passaro

In an effort to produce a social and economic regeneration of the Italian national character in post-unification Italy, Center-Left nationalist intellectuals—more anticlerical and democratic than their Center-Right opponents—sought to adapt basic Catholic moral instruction within children’s experience, introducing them not only to concepts of the nation but also to moral responsibilities toward the patria. Popular pedagogical thought, school books, and children’s literature all reflect this effort to insert the patria as morally sacrosanct, thereby uniting the Italian people.
RAISING ITALY:
NATIONAL CHARACTER AND PUBLIC EDUCATION DURING THE LIBERAL ERA
(1876-1888)

A Thesis

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“Keep your children away from the education of priests; if not, you will be responsible for the creation of vile and false children and liars instead of strong and brave children, inclined to be good and honest and averse to insults as the Italian youth should be. If you see your sons sickly, bent, hunchbacked, indifferent to national dishonor, it is due to the lying tutor which you have given them.”

- Giuseppe Garibaldi, *Cantoni il Volontario*

After numerous attempts to bring political change to Rome since 1848, Giuseppe Garibaldi became disillusioned with the moral character of the Italian people. He believed centuries of clerical manipulation and control produced a weak people perpetually reliant upon the courage and virtue of a rare few. Drawing on the rhetoric of many early-nineteenth-century nationalists, Garibaldi wrote a children's novel in 1869 to address this perceived problem. Published the following year as Italy completed its conquest of Rome, Garibaldi’s *Cantoni il Volontario* (Cantoni the Volunteer) is a vitriolic condemnation of the Papacy and its wicked minions, the clerics. At the same time, it is also a criticism of the Italian people and their dichotomous nature. On the one hand, they are the direct descendants of Rome and its honor and virtue. On the other, the moral misguidance of the Church has made them weak and cowardly. Only a few Italians had preserved the “noble blood” of Rome. This group contained the selfless virtue to fight for others voluntarily. Garibaldi stresses the virtue—and necessity—of voluntary action in contrast to that of a normal army soldier who is often paid. Hailing from the Romagna, Cantoni is one such volunteer. Purportedly based on an actual volunteer in Garibaldi’s defending army during the Roman Republic of 1848, Cantoni is an example that the Italian youth should emulate. Meanwhile, the various priests in the novel—depicted as lecherous and fornicating criminals—are duplicitous, abusive of their spiritual power through licentious behavior. The criticism of the Church could not be more direct.

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1 Giuseppe Garibaldi, *Cantoni il Volontario: Romanzo storico di Giuseppe Garibaldi* (Milan: Enrico Politti, 1870), 62. “Togliete i vostri figli dall’educazione del prete, se no, avrete la colpa voi d’aver dei figli vili, falsi, e mentitori, non dei forti, coraggiosi, propensi al bello ed all’onesto, insopportanti di oltraggio, come dev’essere la gioventù italiana. Se voi vedete i vostri figli malaticci, curvi, gobbi, indifferenti al disonore nazionale, ne fu causa il bugiardo precettore che avete dato ad essi.” (In this thesis all translations are mine unless otherwise noted.)

2 “Soldato” or “soldier” implies the combatant is paid for his services: “soldi” means “money” in Italian. In this regard, Garibaldi was perhaps influenced by the writings of Machiavelli and his criticism of the historically Italian custom of hiring mercenaries to fight their wars.
Italy’s most famous national hero died in his island home on Caprera on June 2, 1882—forcing the national celebration of the republic to be postponed to a few days later. The death of Garibaldi was an enormous loss for all Italians. Though very influential in the ideological development of many patriotic intellectuals, his role in the construction of the nation is traditionally treated as primarily political. The Expedition of the Thousand is his most well-known feat, allowing Garibaldi to wrest control of Sicily (and, later, the whole kingdom) from the Bourbon King Ferdinand II. However, his part in the creation of Italians is conventionally less studied. Recently, Lucy Riall’s study has shown how he cultivated an image of a worldly, masculine, brave, and selfless Italian, as an example worthy of emulation.\(^3\) His patriotism, though, often conflicted with the plans of the ruling class throughout the unification years and beyond. As Garibaldi was a fierce proponent of republicanism, his open criticisms of the Italian monarchy resonated with many ardent nationalists who slowly became disillusioned with the result of Italian unity. Perhaps most clearly illustrating this point was the Roman Question. As part of a complete unification shrouded in a heroic mythology, the recapture of Rome and the dissolution of the Papal States were two objectives called for by Garibaldi and other patriots. However, the issue was both politically and culturally a delicate matter. Many patriots shared Garibaldi’s nationalist fervor. Others were reluctant to adopt his anticlerical overtones. Freedom of religion was a major tenet of liberal ideology then guiding State policy—not its restriction.\(^4\) More, the institutional dissolution of the Church would alienate millions of newly-made Italians. In the end, however, even the moderates in government were unable to find a conciliatory approach to the acquisition of Rome.

Following the political annexation of the Papal States in 1870, Pope Pius IX imprisoned himself in the Vatican and declared the Papacy infallible. Tension between the Church and the Italian State continued to rise throughout the 1870s—especially in the realm of education. The Italian government acknowledged Catholicism’s influence in the cultural composition of its citizenry, but liberal ideology required the freedom of religion.\(^5\) As a manifestation of the

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\(^3\) Lucy Riall discusses how both Garibaldi and the State separately used his image for often contrasting objectives and ideologies. See Lucy Riall, *Garibaldi: Invention of a Hero* (2007).

\(^4\) By liberal or liberalism, I refer to the nineteenth-century understanding in which governments and politicians promoted free-trade, participation in government by a land-owning and educated populace, and the basic workings of capitalism. Many politicians, however, did not follow this ideology completely but rather altered it to suit the climate or their own personal beliefs.

Liberal State, public schools therefore could not offer religious education without infringing on official state policy. Ousting the conservative moderates from power in 1876, the Center-Left was able to implement this policy.\(^6\) To this end, the Coppino Law omitted the requirement for religious education within public schools. Many education reformers, though, realized the potential of religious symbolism and a form of ethics so far propagated by the Church as a vehicle for the nationalization of the youth.\(^7\) As Alberto Banti has argued, religious symbolism—particularly a “Christology”—permeated nationalist language and imagery since the inception of the *Risorgimento* during the Napoleonic era.\(^8\) While patriots criticized the role of the Church in preventing Italian unification they simultaneously incorporated Catholic symbolism in the national project. This contradiction reveals a distinction between religion and religious institutions in the development of the Italian nation. For comparatively more radical patriots like Garibaldi, both were considered inherent impediments to the full potential of the Italian people. For others, religion could be transformed into a strong ally. Garibaldi’s experience was one premise of unification but was quickly superseded once the nation was in existence. The issue of education—including its goal of creating a strong national “character”—continued to concern nationalists but was addressed very differently from how Garibaldi had envisioned it. Thus, the tone of Garibaldi’s venture into children’s literature in 1869 differed quite considerably from more famous authors of the 1880s: Carlo Collodi and Edmondo de Amicis.\(^9\)

In 1861, Vittorio Emmanuele II of the Kingdom of Sardinia became the first king of Italy in the modern era. Aspiring to bring the peninsula into an age of national glory and modernization on a similar level to that of other European nations, the new government—initially led by moderate politicians like Count Camillo di Cavour—inherited a country riddled

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\(^6\) The establishment of a parliamentary monarchy with very limited male suffrage disillusioned many patriots including Garibaldi, Giuseppe Mazzini, Carlo Collodi, and Edmondo De Amicis. These individuals were part of a larger coalition that would be called the historical Center-Left, opposing the moderates and the Center-Right who represented the landed elite.

\(^7\) Ibid. Duggan notes that as early as the 1830s Giuseppe Mazzini and other political voices believed that the success of the nationalist movement required the appropriation of the language and practices of the Church, re-articulating them toward the national project. This “interpenetration of religion and politics” was not limited to the *Risorgimento* but characterized much of Italian history well into the twentieth century, appearing not only in textbooks but in children’s literature as well.

\(^8\) Alberto M. Banti, *Sublime madre nostra: la nazione italiana dal Risorgimento al fascismo* (Roma: Laterza, 2011), VII.

\(^9\) Garibaldi’s novel serves as an example of children’s literature from an earlier period in Italy’s unification process. It will not be the focus of discussion here since. In contrast, Collodi and De Amicis include almost no reference to the Church—much less any passionate criticisms as found in *Cantoni*. However, I highly recommend readers to peruse Garibaldi’s less-studied work for further research or clarification.
with political, economic, social, regional, and cultural problems that characterized (and perhaps continue to characterize) much of modern Italian history. Many of the contemporary intellectuals and patriots, as well as current scholars, blamed foreign interference and domination of the Italian regions for centuries after the collapse of the Western Roman Empire. The result was political and cultural disunity and endemic interregional conflict. The lack of cohesiveness has led some to characterize the peninsula as a country of a hundred cities, highlighting the development of numerous political, economic, and cultural identities. Furthermore, as Garibaldi exemplified, many nationalists believed Italians to be in need of moral improvement after centuries of Church abuse. A common perception of the individualistic and immoral nature of Italians was prevalent not only in northern European countries, such as England, France, and parts of the German states, but also amongst Italians themselves.

Throughout the nineteenth century and, indeed, in the twentieth century as well, a national regeneration was thought necessary to bind all Italians together in a sense of common identity and shared responsibility to pull Italy into the age of science, progress, and modernity. Although some politicians thought military service would be the key to “making Italians,” the new Italian government placed public education at the center of its efforts to create a civic-minded and obedient populace. However, education was already the highly-protected and traditional domain of the Catholic Church, whose temporal power quickly gave way to the expanding state. The formation of the Italian State and its efforts at legitimacy thus necessitated two objectives for public education: the indoctrination of the young to create a shared, imagined community which would supersede local and regional ties, and the effective opposition and even appropriation of the moral authority of the Catholic Church. The government assumed an enormously difficult task and would not begin to see significant results until the end of the nineteenth century—and even then found it difficult to maintain popular legitimacy. The period immediately after Italian unification can be characterized as a struggle between the State and the Church for the hearts and minds of young Italians.

Children thus enter the political and social landscape of the nation-building process as historical agents. Recent scholarship has begun to examine the methods with which the State
sought to reinforce its ideological control over Italian children.\textsuperscript{10} As part of a process to “make Italians,” public school manuals are increasingly recognized as a rich source to discover how the nation was first introduced to young Italians. Additionally, recent insight into the efficacy of communication between national educational policy and local implementation is essential to determine how State pedagogy spread throughout the peninsula. One aspect that remains largely unexplored, however, is the role of religion in this development. Following unification, the conflict between the State and the Church became far more complex than the simple rhetoric of anticlericalism as appears in Garibaldi’s \textit{Cantoni}. The realm of popular education was perhaps most emblematic of this relationship. Much work has been done on Church education in the nineteenth century; but this scholarship has mostly limited discussion to changes within Catholic society in response to the problems posed by modernity. More recently, historians of children’s education have begun to link the Catholic world to the greater project of the Italian nation, such as the Salesian School of Don Giovanni Bosco. Situating the roles of education and Church-State competition in the context of the formation of the Italian nation, however, first requires a discussion on how that nation came to be.

\textbf{Constructing the Nation}

There are, of course, the major figures of Garibaldi, Count Camillo di Cavour, Giuseppe Mazzini, and King Vittorio Emmanuele II. The pragmatic incentives for moderate politicians such as Cavour or the altruistic mentalities of Garibaldi and Mazzini have been thoroughly analyzed and incorporated into explaining the beginnings of the Italian \textit{Risorgimento}. However, they were not alone. Though these individuals were essential to the political construction of the new kingdom, recent historiography has privileged the problem of its cultural construction: how did the idea of the nation first develop? Why did young Italians become patriots in the early years of the nineteenth century, embracing new geopolitical ideas—to the point of being willing to die for them?\textsuperscript{11} Alberto Banti places the beginnings of this national discourse during the

\textsuperscript{10} This effort was not limited to the Italian case but represents a more global development towards incorporating children into the national project, especially as future citizens.

\textsuperscript{11} Alberto M. Banti, \textit{La nazione del Risorgimento: parentela, santità e onore alle origini dell’Italia unita} (Torino: Einaudi, 2000). The impact of this work on Risorgimento scholarship can be seen in the recent work edited by
Napoleonic era as a "single idea of the nation." The creation of a network between young men (intellectuals and literati) and "young men of good families" (elites) only became a kind of community when they began incorporating and utilizing the same vocabulary, images, and discourse in describing the nation. Furthermore, in creating new ideas of what the nation should be, writers and intellectuals had borrowed terms and images from Catholic teachings and doctrine, such as the depiction of dying patriots during the Wars for Unification as martyrs sacrificing themselves for the salvation of the community—an idea Banti refers to as "cristologia" or “Christology.” Lastly, the gendered nature of these imaginings portrayed Italy as an imprisoned mother calling on the filial devotion of her "sons" to unite as brothers and free her from foreign tyranny. The consistent use of gendered metaphors tied to a discourse on morality and character is most clearly portrayed in the description of a perceived foreign threat: "threat against [Italian] women’s purity was a threat against national honor.” However, this national discourse was not limited to the Risorgimento period. Rather, it continued to influence the development of the nation far into the twentieth century.

The depiction of the nation shared by the young literati and patriots of the Risorgimento slowly penetrated the rest of Italian society over many decades. This national discourse mutated from the early years of a unified Italy to the ultra-nationalistic decades of fascism. Though changed, the discourse retained three fundamental characteristics in the portrayal of the nation: 1) as a family or kinship group, 2) as a sacrificial community, and 3) as a society framed within gendered terms allocating hierarchical roles based on sex. During this process of nationalization, “amor di patria” or “love of the homeland” began to enter into the vocabulary of the bourgeoisie and, later, of the lower classes. The presentation of the patria as a “mother in pain” encapsulates this discourse, calling on young Italian “sons” to defend their “mother’s” freedom and honor. Thus the discourse created by young patriots in the early years of the nineteenth century grew to include the moral duties and responsibilities of the (male) citizen toward the patria. However, as Garibaldi’s earlier condemnation of Italian character reveals,


12 Ibid., 53: “pensiero unico della nazione.”
13 Ibid.
14 Ibid., 183: “la minaccia alla purezza delle donne era una minaccia all'onore della nazione.”
15 Banti, *Sublime madre nostra*, VII.
many politicians and intellectuals were concerned with the moral makeup of the Italian people—a facet of national identity which was foundational to the national project.

Concern over national “character” was as much a part of the national project as the political construction of the nation itself. Intellectuals and politicians focused on commonly perceived "Italian" vices in order to promote a certain idea of what the Italian nation and the Italian citizen should be.\textsuperscript{16} Because Italian character was originally part of the intellectual and rhetorical conversation on nationalism, the writings of intellectuals are essential to analyze the moral regeneration that was at the heart of patriotism throughout modern Italian history.\textsuperscript{17}

Additionally, the idea of moral regeneration was framed in highly gendered terms, such as the weak, duplicitous, and effeminate Italian as compared to the strong, honest, and masculine northern Europeans. Though these characterizations of Italians have roots going as far back as the sixteenth century—to become prevalent during the eighteenth century—they were later adopted, altered, and embellished by the very same nineteenth-century Italian patriots at the beginning of the \textit{Risorgimento}.\textsuperscript{18} Their criticisms were not constant but rather depended on the political climate. For example, the characterization of the Italian as effeminate in nature dwindled in emphasis near the end of the nineteenth century as mass emigration and economic stagnation prompted criticism of the corrupt, individualistic, and barbaric nature of Italians—especially of the country’s southern regions. The weak and effeminate nature of Italians became prominent once again during the First World War and, later, as part of fascist efforts to reinvigorate Italy’s connection to a Roman military heritage. In the decades immediately after unification, emphasis was placed on indolence, which was considered an inherent trait in Italian character. Influenced by northern European examples, such as Great Britain and the self-help genre of literature, moderate Italian politicians believed in a liberal ideology wherein the individual is celebrated for his industriousness and civic and moral virtue. As a liberal government, however, there remained the problem of implementation: how could a government who wished for an autonomous, civic-minded citizenry instill liberal ideology without

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{16} Silvana Patriarca, \textit{Italian Vices: Nation and Character from the Risorgimento to the Republic} (Cambridge, UK; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010).
  \item \textsuperscript{17} Ibid., 7, 16.
  \item \textsuperscript{18} Ibid., 49. The eighteenth century was of particular significance to the growth in racial and regional stereotypes as many northern Europeans traveled south through Italy along the so-called "Grand Tour."
\end{itemize}
contradicting itself? Thus, a major paradox emerged during Italy’s Liberal period, inhibiting efforts toward the improvement of national “character.”

Historians have long known that the implementation of government policy was deeply problematic. As Romanelli’s landmark study of 1988, Il comando impossibile, has shown, the government of Liberal Italy seemed ineffective, and was even viewed by contemporaries as a failure.\(^{19}\) Although there were competing paths to what was considered a modern nation, the central ideology of the Italian State—like that of many European countries at the time—placed emphasis on the individual's political and economic freedoms, promoting a level of civic-mindedness with limited interference from the State. Much of this ideology can be traced to the influences of Enlightenment thought which Italian intellectuals adapted to the national project;\(^{20}\) however, in the case of Italy, Liberal ideology contradicted the State's need to "make Italians." The main paradox was the government’s attempt to forge a common identity within a liberal ideology and a decentralized framework—a government that supported autonomy but simultaneously obsessed over creating a united populace. Romanelli puts it quite succinctly: “... rather than a centralism of ‘control,’ we have a centralism of ‘impulse’... a weak control with a strong impulse.”\(^{21}\) This paradox is best illustrated by looking at the periodic increase in male suffrage from unification until World War I. Suffrage began with very specific criteria determining who was able to vote—land ownership, education, etc.—which excluded 98-99% of the population. The rationale was that only educated and well-to-do Italians had the capacity to vote intelligently. Indoctrinating liberal ideology in the creation of “modern” and “moral” Italians was a central concern of the government. However, the ruling elite only gradually grew to trust the rest of Italian society, as reflected by the slow increase in male suffrage throughout the Liberal period.

The authority and legitimacy of the Italian government were two concerns that have preoccupied the new state in its efforts to "make Italians" throughout the Liberal period. These

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\(^{19}\) Raffaele Romanelli, Il comando impossibile: Stato e società nell'Italia liberale (Bologna, Italy: Il Mulino, 1988). In Italy, the application of liberalism was much softer than was the case elsewhere and perhaps sets it apart from similar efforts in other countries both during this time period and into the twentieth century. The physical violence that erupted between secular liberals and Catholics in Belgium, for instance, never occurred in Italy precisely due to the more conciliatory nature of Italian liberalism.

\(^{20}\) The models of France and Great Britain were especially influential in the case of Italy in the first half of the nineteenth century. Later, intellectuals would also look to Germany as an example.

\(^{21}\) Romanelli, Il comando impossibile, 75-76: “...invece di un centralismo 'di controllo,' abbiamo un centralismo 'd'impatto'...un controllo debole con un impulso forte.”
issues have found renewed attention: Banti, for example, has noted the continued problem of policy implementation. He argues that the idea of the nation had a central framework but was littered with political and ideological fractures, with no unanimous group in charge.22 The issue of authority—specifically, who has it—continued to be central in Italian society and politics. In addition to the internal obstacles to a united and effective government, were its own ideological paradox and the open hostility of the Catholic Church. The Church’s problematic role in the creation and sustainment of the Italian nation has long been acknowledged. However, only recently has scholarship applied the work of Benedict Anderson in articulating how Catholicism related to the national project.

1. Church-State Relationship

Adapting Anderson's concept of the nation as an imagined community to the Italian case, Christopher Duggan has recently characterized Catholicism as both a cultural and an institutional force in binding Italians—a force which has been influential both in creating and in separating Italians on a national scale.23 The idea of an "Italian nation" spread from intellectuals to politicians and finally to the masses over the course of modern Italian history.24 As discussed earlier, these groups incorporated religious imagery and language as a vehicle in the nationalization of the country. Beginning with the French Revolution, the Catholic Church—along with many of the ancien régimes of Europe—faced numerous threats to its authority throughout the nineteenth century. Though initially on the same side in the quest for a united, Catholic Italy, Pope Pius IX became frightened by the patriotic rhetoric and intentions after the violence of the revolutions of 1848. With the interchangeable support of both the French and the Austrians, the Papacy managed to delay complete conquest of its lands until 1870. The temporal control of the Pope, manifested geographically as the Papal States, was an obstacle unique in the case of Italian unification. Although the Church faced attacks from secular movements in this period—especially in Germany under Bismarck’s Kulturkampf—the physical center of power rested in Rome. Even before the annexation of Rome in 1870, Pius IX forbade Catholic collaboration with the secular Italian government. Many articles and cartoons published in the

22 Banti, La nazione del Risorgimento, 204: “…chi poteva parlare in nome della comunità nazionale? Chi era in grado di vedere qual era il bene collettivo?” (“…who could speak in the name of the national community? Who was on a level to see what was best for the whole?”)
23 Duggan, The Force of Destiny, xviii.
24 Ibid., xvii.
new Catholic newspaper, *La civiltà cattolica*—beginning in 1855—depicted Italian patriots and nationalists as devils trying to destroy the Church. Relations between the Church and the State deteriorated from 1870 on, shifting substantially from politics to the realm of culture. The central question became: which institution would hold moral authority over the new nation?

The fiercest rhetoric stemmed largely from Pope Pius IX and intransigent Catholics who perceived modernity as an attack on the Church and traditional institutions. Catholic Italy was not uniform in this regard, however. Many liberal Catholics believed the Church could play a strong role in the modern world. Their conciliatory approach to the Church-State conflict ran counter to official papal policy but received more support under Pope Leo XIII, the successor to Pius IX in 1878. This movement of conciliation was very gradual, originating in the *Risorgimento* and continuing especially after unification. In a way similar to Duggan’s argument concerning Catholicism’s role in national development, Francesco Traniello notes the importance of Catholic morals in the creation of a “common ethical foundation of the national State.”

In opposition to models of capitalist and industrial development offered by protestant nations, liberal Catholics believed the ethical basis of Catholicism would serve as a fundamental necessity to create and control an orderly and productive society—all in the name of progress. An example is the popularity of self-help books in Italy, such as Samuel Smile’s *Self-Help*. These works were reconfigured to promote the strong religious underpinnings of Italian society. Liberal Catholics were therefore not entirely opposed to the direction of the national project. They differed from secular nationalists specifically in the influence of the Church. The secular State required the freedom of religion and the creation of a national identity exclusive of Church oversight. The Church’s purpose was the moral and spiritual welfare of its flock. How could a moral identity exist outside of its guidance? In this sense, Catholicism entered the

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26 Ibid., 198.
27 Traniello supports this notion by pointing to the Italian translation of Smile’s *Self-Help* in 1865 as *Chi si aiuta Dio l’aiuta* or *God Helps Those Who Help Themselves*.
28 The freedom of religion was a main tenet of liberal ideology, which is one reason many Italian Jews became devoted patriots who participated in the Wars of Unification from 1848 on. It is not surprising then that such Jewish-owned publishing houses as Treves and F. Paggi—the publishers of *Cuore* and *Pinocchio*, respectively—encouraged the writing of more nationalistic works. Though the investigation of minority religious communities is beyond the scope of this project, it would be a fascinating avenue to pursue regarding the relationship between religion and nationalism.
discourse on national “character” discussed by Patriarca as well as the growing concern on Italy’s youth, the future subjects of both institutions.

Both the Italian State and the Catholic Church viewed Italy’s youth as central to making good citizens and good Christians, respectively.29 The general rise in concern over Italian children was extended to all sectors of children’s care. Such problems as Italian child labor abroad—a major problem for Italy as millions emigrated to France, England, and the Americas—but also juvenile delinquency, vagrancy, abandonment, and general immorality were primary preoccupations of both the Church and the State.30 Influenced by international models for national improvement, as well as concerned with its own image abroad, the Italian State enacted numerous laws and programs aimed at caring for Italy’s young.31 As part of a larger international dialogue on the role of society in caring for those underprivileged children, the Italian case reflects similar movements in contemporary France, Britain, and the United States.32 What makes Italy a peculiar case, however, are the numerous and particular obstacles that the new country had to face. The inadequacy of Italy’s economy and ineffective economic reforms pushed many Italians across its borders to seek work elsewhere. Along with this demographic exodus, the constant struggle with the Catholic Church and political disagreements over paths to modernization undermined the State’s popular legitimacy.33 As Italy’s economy began to grow in the 1890s, the bourgeois public was finally able to care financially for the marginalized children—a “luxury of caring.”34 Indeed, not only marginalized children, but all of Italy’s youth received stronger government support at the beginning of the twentieth century.

**Educating the Nation**

The prosperity of the nation’s children became a major focus of the Italian State only over many decades. At the base of this concern was the aforementioned desire to “make Italians.” Education was viewed as an ideal path to pursue this project. Prior to unification, most schools

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29 Ibid., 280.
31 Ibid., 4.
33 Ipsen, 6.
34 Ibid., 7.
throughout the peninsula were run by the Church. Even then, most education was communicated within the family, from parents to children. After unification, however, this situation began to change. Italian national education originated in Piedmont but expanded to the rest of Italy following unification. The Casati Law of 1859 became the framework for the future public school system, receiving numerous changes throughout the Liberal period such as the Coppino Law of 1877. Increasing government support for the school system over the next forty years led to a substantial rise in the number of schools, teachers, and students (see Table 1) as well as improved literacy rates (see Table 2), mostly in the north. This progress was possible due to a growing economy and an increase in State spending on education, which more than tripled from 1862 to 1900 (see Table 3).  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total Students</th>
<th>No. of Female Students</th>
<th>Teachers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1861-62</td>
<td>1,008,674</td>
<td>429,124</td>
<td>28,173</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1871-72</td>
<td>1,722,947</td>
<td>762,460</td>
<td>43,423</td>
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<td>1881-82</td>
<td>1,976,135</td>
<td>922,218</td>
<td>48,155</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1901-02</td>
<td>2,733,349</td>
<td>1,298,505</td>
<td>65,739</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Table 1 Public Elementary Schools


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<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1861</td>
<td>7,889,238</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>9,110,463</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>16,999,701</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1871</td>
<td>9,031,836</td>
<td>67.04</td>
<td>10,521,956</td>
<td>78.94</td>
<td>19,553,792</td>
<td>72.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1881</td>
<td>8,706,125</td>
<td>61.03</td>
<td>10,435,032</td>
<td>73.51</td>
<td>19,141,157</td>
<td>67.26</td>
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<tr>
<td>1901</td>
<td>8,259,704</td>
<td>51.13</td>
<td>9,926,649</td>
<td>60.82</td>
<td>18,186,353</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2 Illiteracy Levels of Italian Population from 1861 to 1901


35 Private schools, on the other hand, retained a much smaller percentage of the country’s educational responsibility, mainly because traditional Catholic education occurred within the household or within the church building itself. See Giuseppe Talamo, “Istruzione obbligatoria ed estensione del suffragio,” in *Scuola e società nell’Italia unita*, ed. Luciano Pazzaglia and Roberto Sani (Brescia, Italy: Editrice La Scuola, 2001), 72.

36 The increase in total illiteracy levels increased from 1861 to 1871 due to additional wars of unification, adding parts of northern and central Italy to the kingdom. Even so, the overall percentages decreased as public education became more effective.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Lire of time period (millions)</th>
<th>1984 Lire Equivalent (millions)</th>
<th>Percentage of Total Spending</th>
<th>Average spent per person (1984 Lire)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1862</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>51,644</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>2,320</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1872</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>55,014</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>2,009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1882</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>97,404</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3,352</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1899-00</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>167,845</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5,118</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Education reformers and politicians both believed in the need for more schooling as education was considered the first site of civic transformation. Schooling was meant to realize a “moral regeneration” as well as to create a strong middle-class. Another reason revolved around the conflict between the Church and the State for moral legitimacy. Education thus became the core place of competition in which an increasingly aggressive secular state began to insert itself within the daily lives of Italians, both young and old. The Coppino Law of 1877 and the Educational Programs of 1888 in particular mark a turning point in this rivalry, leading to a substantially more successful school system by 1900.

The Coppino Law was approved in 1876 but was implemented July 15 of the following year. It was considered to be a much needed improvement on the older Casati Law of 1859 (from pre-unification Piedmont) which seemed to be failing in its overarching goals. Under the Casati Law, families had to pay for education, which focused on traditional subjects such as literature and religion. The minimal demand and need for such an education throughout Italy, including the more industrialized north, contributed to the school system’s limited impact. One response to this was the Coppino Law of 1877, which made education free but also compulsory for all Italian children up to the age of nine and omitted any requirement for religious education. Rather, it included a text exclusively focused on civic and national responsibilities: *The First Notions on the Duties of Men and Citizens*. The implementation of the Coppino Law, however, varied.

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37 Ibid., 201. Note: there is an important discrepancy in scholarship on the stipulations of the Coppino Law. Many scholars have stated that the Coppino Law explicitly prohibited religious education in public schools; however, Silvana Patriarca and Gaetano Bonetta contend that it in fact did not. A closer examination of the law reveals that religious education was simply omitted and replaced by the above document. This change remained a sore subject between the State and the Church legally but many local schools continued to offer religious education well into the twentieth century.
from region to region as many local governments retained significant power. The central government’s authority continued to be limited throughout the peninsula, especially in the countryside. Furthermore, minimal funding allocated to schools to pay for materials and compensate teachers adequately restricted the efficacy of the public educational system. Even with increased spending, as indicated in Table 3, illiteracy and truancy levels continued to remain rather high. From 1876 on, however, there was a shift in educational reform. In addition to the Coppino Law, pedagogues such as Francesco De Sanctis and Aristide Gabelli began discussing new systems of learning based on positivist thinking. No longer was the student expected simply to memorize and repeat lessons. Rather, the teacher was instructed to foster a development of the individual conscience, so that students could become the autonomous citizens desired by the Liberal State. Furthermore, official school curricula were changed in the Programs of 1888 so that science, math, and morality (Duties toward the Patria) were fundamental subjects in all public schools. The period from 1876 to 1888 was thus crucial to the success of the school system in the following decades. Although it is only by the twentieth century that the public school system flourishes, its inception as children’s first introduction to the State came in the previous century.

Beginning during the Napoleonic era, the public school originated as a fundamental part of the State. According to Giovanni Genovesi, there are two main reasons why this relationship developed: 1) the use of the school as an instrument of political hegemony and control, and 2) the effectiveness of the school as a structure supporting the stability of the State. Thus, the school is both part of the dispersed power of the State, in the sense of Foucault’s theory on modern forms of social control, as well as an integral facet in sustaining the legitimacy of the government. Genovesi further lists ten features that (according to its backers) were to differentiate public schooling from traditional educational institutions, such as ecclesiastic schools and private tutors. Among the most important were the promotion of the idea of progress, a cosmopolitan outlook, the school as a free service exclusive of Church and other non-State influences, and the teaching of practical truth rather than metaphysical truths, in the sense of

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39 Aristide Gabelli and other positivist pedagogues were the primary writers of this amendment to official education policy. They believed the current school system failed to educate Italian children effectively and added more practical instruction such as gymnastics and mathematics.
41 Ibid., ix.
theology and religion. State educational policy reflected a transnational movement in which the
public school became a site of national economic and social improvement based on a scientific
and Enlightenment rationale. At the same time, this movement advocated the promotion of
national sentiment in school curricula as the nation-state developed into an ideological concept.
Thus the issue of identity took its place at the heart of the public school.

The foundation for this idea in Italy lies in pre-unification Piedmont. During the earliest
phases of public education development in Piedmont, the ruling powers desired a particular civic
and national identity among the popular classes, inclusive of the entire peninsula and not simply
the Kingdom of Sardinia in the northwest region of Italy. The significance of this objective is
that education was integrally tied to national unification from the beginning and played a
prominent role in the creation of the Italian State. Specifically, textbooks on history and
geography from both pre- and post-unification Piedmont illustrate the government’s effort to
inculcate a strong civic character tied closely to the national project. Beginning with the
Boncompagni Law of 1848 which established the public school system in the kingdom, history
and geography were organized to include not only that of the Kingdom of Sardinia but of the
whole peninsula. The liberal ideology of the Piedmontese government—even before
unification—required the creation of autonomous citizens, free from the overbearing control of
the State apparatus. However, the Piedmontese government intervened directly in the
administrative system and the pedagogical-didactic policies of local, municipal governments due
to the needs of the national project. At a time when the unification of the peninsula became a
real possibility, education was considered an exception to the Liberal policy of the government
in order to foster national sentiment among “future Italians.” The vocabulary found in textbooks
and school manuals depicts an expansion of such terms as “nation” and “motherland” to
reference the whole peninsula and not just the boundaries of the Kingdom of Sardinia
(Piedmont). Even during the proto-formation of the Italian State, education became
fundamental to the nation-building process; it remained a cornerstone in the “creation” of Italian
citizens well after unification in 1861.

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42 Maria Cristina Morandini, Scuola e nazione: Maestri e istruzione popolare nella costruzione dello Stato unitario
(1848-1861) (Milan: Vita e Pensiero, 2003), xii.
43 Ibid., xiii.
44 Ibid., xi.
As we move into the post-unification period, similar questions remain about the involvement of the State in national public education. As part of the construction and extension of the Piedmontese school system, post-unification Italy came to promote grand pedagogical and political goals. The government thus played an active role in the selection of school manuals and textbooks from unification up until the Gentile Reform of 1923. However, the intensity of this involvement was not constant; rather, it oscillated throughout the Liberal era (1861-1919), so that provincial administrators often retained considerable power in the choice of textbooks, which the central government ultimately approved. Nonetheless, the selection of school materials mostly coincided with national objectives, especially the fostering of a national sentiment within the school system. In particular, regionally-printed pedagogy in the form of textbooks and school manuals incorporated national educational policy in their pages. For instance, an epic version of the Risorgimento itself is the core of a larger historical narrative of the Italian nation found in many textbooks in post-unification Italy. Furthermore, this Risorgimento epic became sacralized, portraying the event as a spiritual destiny tied intrinsically to the heroics of the nation’s founding fathers. Thus the State appropriated religious symbolism to depict the nation as sacrosanct, continuing a pre-unification discursive tradition Banti has termed “Christological.” The legitimacy of the State rested on convincing the Italian people that the nation was as much a part of their heritage as the Catholic tradition it sought to incorporate. This objective became especially poignant as relations between the Church and the State reached their crisis point after the conquest of Rome in 1870. It can be seen as a response to criticism made by the Church, from the emergence of the nation in 1861, suggesting that it lacked a moral foundation.

Thus the problem came down to this: the two institutions competed for the same crown—that of authority. According to Donatella Palomba, this struggle to attain full sovereignty and

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47 Ibid., 474.
49 Ibid., Education and the Metamorphoses of Citizenship in Contemporary Italy (Macerata, Italy: EUM, 2009), 41.
50 The portrayal of nationalists as devils in La civiltà cattolica illustrates a common criticism of the nation as amoral and threatening to the spiritual welfare of Italian Catholics.
legitimacy was really a constant throughout Italian history.\textsuperscript{51} Within the history of Italian public education it led to the active promotion of a national sentiment in classrooms.\textsuperscript{52} As the State’s involvement in the personal lives of Italian families increased, tension between the government and the Church escalated. The notion that the national education system was the primary institution of citizens’ education subverted the Church’s view of education as a “natural right of families which, however, must be enlightened and guided by straight [read: Catholic] faith.”\textsuperscript{53} Thus, the family and education were inextricably linked to the spiritual and moral guidance of the Church. Any deviance from this monopoly threatened not only the Church’s authority but the moral integrity of the family itself. The period immediately following the Center-Left’s rise to power in 1876 can be described as the increasing secularization of the public school system—much to the displeasure of the Catholic Church. However, during the first years following unification the State also relied on the very same clerics who made up a significant portion of the teaching staff in public schools.\textsuperscript{54}

Prior to the Coppino Law, religious education was considered essential to school curricula. Gaetano Bonetta argues that religious education was central to the national project and the State’s desire to make Italians “strong, religious, [and] civil” to guarantee the “future freedom and greatness of Italy.”\textsuperscript{55} Even after the Coppino Law, religious education—primarily the Catechism—continued to be taught in public schools throughout Italy—especially in the countryside and the South.\textsuperscript{56} This fact suggests that central government mandates were intentionally ignored by local communities and reveals the weakness of the Italian State in many rural parts of the country. Thus, the continued influence the Church maintained even after the annexation of Rome is clear, further evidenced by the flourishing of Catholic publications and especially by changes in pedagogy in Catholic schools and organizations.

Recent scholarship on Catholic education in post-unification Italy has highlighted the role Catholics played in the promotion and direction of both Catholic education and the nation. Giorgio Chiosso argues that Catholic pedagogy was not as uniform in theoretical perspective as

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{52} Ibid., 195.
\textsuperscript{53} Ibid., 197.
\textsuperscript{54} Ibid., 200.
\textsuperscript{56} Ibid., 40.
\end{flushleft}
many historians have characterized it; rather, it was composed of multiple schools of thought that reflected political, economic, and social changes brought on by modernization.\textsuperscript{57} Specifically in opposition to proponents of secular education, Catholic pedagogues attempted to reposition their theoretical underpinnings in response to these demands.\textsuperscript{58} Such educators are often referred to as liberal or moderate Catholics as they attempted to embrace the nation and modernity through Catholic understanding. Thus in addition to the religious doctrine, practical instruction, such as reading and writing, was deemed necessary both to defend and promote the “Christian society” as a pillar of the Italian nation.\textsuperscript{59} This movement became more fully accepted by the Church after the death of Pius IX and the accession of Pope Leo XIII in 1878.

One example was the Salesian School of Don Bosco—a Catholic school system which was influential in the development of modern Italian society.\textsuperscript{60} The educational goal of the Salesian School was a policy of prevention: keeping young boys and girls from immoral acts. Three fundamental intuitions were at the base of this pedagogy: 1) the perception that the dangers and social malaise associated with secular and economic modernization would exponentially increase, 2) the impression that the method which the Catholic Church had historically employed to “save souls” needed reform, and 3) the awareness that traditional forms of Christian charity no longer sufficed and should be replaced by education—an “eminent form of charity.”\textsuperscript{61} Thus by keeping orphaned and poor children in school, educating them not only in Catholic doctrine but also practical instruction, the Salesian School offered an alternative to State-run public education, which they perceived as inadequate to address the spiritual and economic dangers that accompanied modernization. Roberto Sani and others have argued that professional training was nationally neglected by public education for many decades following the passage of the Casati Law in 1859.\textsuperscript{62} Though the Salesians were only one group within the Catholic camp in Italy, it is clear that efforts by religious organizations paralleled those of the

\textsuperscript{57} Giorgio Chiosso, \textit{Profilo storico della pedagogia cristiana in Italia (XIX e XX secolo)} (Brescia: La Scuola, 2001).
\textsuperscript{58} Ibid., 6.
\textsuperscript{59} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{60} Roberto Sani, “Honest Citizens and Good Christians”: Don Bosco and Salesian education in the 150-year history of united Italy.” in \textit{History of Education & Children’s Literature VI}, No. 1 (2001), 478. The Salesians were very popular both throughout the peninsula and abroad, expanding to other Catholic societies around the world including the United States.
\textsuperscript{61} Ibid., 480-481.
\textsuperscript{62} Ibid., 484.
secular State in the promotion of a moral regeneration through children’s education. Distinct from secular education reformers, though, these groups believed the nation needed to be spiritually and morally Catholic in its character and moral development. Although scholarship on Catholic education has largely been internally focused, presenting Catholic schools in opposition to the growing hegemony of the State, recent work by historians such as Traniello and Sani suggests that the relationship between the Church and the State was more dynamic than previously thought. On an official level, tension characterized much of the rapport between Church and State. On the ground, however, various groups within each party worked towards a similar purpose of creating a strong nation composed of moral citizens. Thus, the competition between the two school systems can be viewed as mutually influential in the goal of “making Italians.”

Post-unification Italy, as many have noted, was a transformative period for the Italian peninsula. It was a time of war, famine, industry, mass migration, empire, urbanization, modernization, and mass education—all the benefits and drawbacks of modern nation-building. The newly-consolidated State had considerable obstacles to its viability as a nation and was undermined by grand schemes to place Italy among the industrialized powers. Many thought education was the surest path to that end, and, as has been discussed, education became central to the government’s Liberal ideology. The struggle between the Church and the State over the future of Italy’s “little” citizens characterized much of the Liberal period and would have a major impact on Italian political and social events until the Gentile Reform of 1923 and the Lateran Pacts of 1929. However, much is still unknown about this effort. In particular, the competition between the Church and the State requires further investigation. Some vital questions remain: how was moral instruction central to pedagogy in public schools to serve the national project of “making Italians”? Additionally, how did the Church-State competition inform this pedagogy?

I wish to suggest that, just as Banti argues that political ideology appropriated religious language and symbolism, public educators integrated a basic form of religiously-inspired moral instruction in their pedagogy in an effort to create a national “character.” The next chapter will examine the work of one key figure, Felice Garelli, a member of a group of intellectuals in Piedmont. Born in Mondovì in the region of Piedmont, Garelli was part of a regional group of educational reformers who included Michele Coppino and Giovanni Giolitti, the creators of the
Coppino Law in 1877. This group represents a larger movement promoting an increased role of the State in the daily lives of its citizens; particularly, it saw moral and practical instruction as essential to modernizing the nation. Thus a large part of Garelli’s texts are taken up by moral instruction, including lessons based on the Ten Commandments and the Capital Sins. This moral improvement was explicitly to serve the greater cause of instilling obedience and promoting service toward the State. The fact that these texts were intended for the entire Italian countryside—and spanned all of the country’s regions—suggests that these efforts were in response to a national problem. At the forefront of public pedagogical thought, these texts reflect the “nationalization” of Piedmontese educational policy with the specific intent to “make Italians” across the new nation, including its long-resistant and deeply Catholic countryside.

This process was not limited to the creation of textbooks but found its way into popular literature as well. As Chapter III will show, the development of children’s literature as a new literary genre in the nineteenth century included a strong moral element designed toward the proper upbringing of children as responsible, obedient citizens. The novels Pinocchio by Carlo Collodi and Cuore by Edmondo De Amicis were the most famous children’s stories in Italy at the time and underline the importance of education in the development of a child’s moral compass and the nation-building project. Both demonstrate a transition in the lived experience of childhood and the growing importance of the public school in children’s daily lives. Furthermore,

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63 Coppino, Giolitti, and Garelli all served on local education committees in the province of Cuneo (northwest Italy) during the 1880s. Garelli later became an Italian senator during Giolitti’s first administration in 1892. Coppino served as the Minister of Education multiple times throughout the end of the nineteenth century and is considered to be one of the most important reformers of public education in modern Italian history. Giolitti became Prime Minister so often at the beginning of the twentieth century that this period is often called the “Giolitti Age.” The substantial increase in literacy rates and the overall effectiveness of public education are credited to Giolitti’s efforts to support and reform public schools through larger State funding. See the following chapter for a more detailed discussion.

64 Similar initiatives existed in other European nations. For a detailed and seminal case study on rural France during the same time period, see Eugen Weber, Peasants into Frenchmen: The Modernization of Rural France, 1870-1914 (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1976). However, this project can also be viewed as a sort of “imperializing” project. Many scholars have argued that the unification process—especially in southern Italy—was more of an imperial conquest. The implementation of Piedmontese government structures, education policy, land reforms, and increased taxes alienated many southern Italians throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. At the same time, many northerners viewed (and continue to view) the South as a barbaric place more akin to Africa than Italy. For more on this, see Jane Schneider, Italy’s "Southern Question": Orientalism in One Country (Oxford: Berg, 1998) and Nelson Moe, The View from Vesuvius Italian Culture and the Southern Question (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002).

65 It is difficult to differentiate independent intellectuals from the State apparatus. Many of these intellectuals participated directly in the government as officials, bureaucrats, soldiers, and simple clerks. Their role in determining the manifestation of government initiatives, however, is paramount. These individuals worked both inside and outside the State to communicate their own particular idea of the nation to the rest of Italy. Thus, this project focuses on the areas in which their ideas converge.
the trajectory of religious language found in Garelli’s texts and the two novels represented an effort to appropriate religious moral instruction within the context of the secular State.
Chapter Two: The Textbooks of Felice Garelli

“Hence it must logically be argued that increasing the moral and physical valor of a man increases the valor of the land he cultivates.”

- Felice Garelli, *Il giovinetto campagnuolo*

With these words Felice Garelli, writing in 1880, described the moral underpinnings of education, work, and national character. He was not alone. In 1869, Francesco De Sanctis made a similar connection: “It is not ingenuity, but character or a strong temperament that saves nations.” Even though Garelli made his point in a textbook about agriculture, his words represented a widely shared view. The correlation between the moral make-up of Italy’s citizenry and its “resurgence” as a rich and powerful country were discussed in political and intellectual circles in Italy at least since the beginning of the nineteenth century. The connection became even more relevant once the country was unified in 1861. As many scholars have acknowledged, the *Risorgimento* was the work of a relatively narrow coalition of intellectuals, politicians, and soldiers. Popular insurrection strove for predominantly local objectives, voicing discontent that lacked a national sentiment. Since the many cities and regions of Italy were composed of different dialects, cultures, and social structures, the country’s new elite saw an urgent need to create “Italians.” Intellectuals attributed the peninsula’s political disunity and economic weaknesses to centuries of foreign domination as well as the stifling hand of the Catholic Church. According to them, both factors also caused a general moral depravity that “required a work of moral regeneration.” Such notions as the effeminate and duplicitous nature of the Italian dominated the discourse on national character. As Silvana Patriarca has shown, the popularity of self-help books in Italy—as well as in other European countries—in the middle of the nineteenth century is one example that reflects the intellectuals’ concern with improving national

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66 Felice Garelli, *Il giovinetto campagnuolo: Prime nozioni di morale, di igiene e d'agricoltura per le scuole primarie rurali* (Turin: V. Bona, 1880), V: “Donde logicamente si deve argomentare che, crescendo il valore morale e fisico d’un uomo, s’accresce d’altrettanto il valore della terra che esso coltiva.”


“character.” For the Italian government—as for many others in the modern era—education was the first site of this kind of ethical transformation: it was essential to making civic-minded, obedient, and moral Italian citizens, and thus to bringing Italy into the modern world.

During this period, however, education was the traditional and highly-protected domain of the Catholic Church, which taught in local dialects, respected local cultures and traditions, and held spiritual authority over all of Italy. Dominant Catholic pedagogy focused on the instruction of the Catholic Catechism and the classic works of major Church Fathers such as St. Augustine. Practical or scientific education was relegated to private tutors and apprenticeships. Furthermore, the annexation of the Papal States opened up a further intense conflict between the Church and the government that was perhaps unique in the birth of modern states. The Conquest of Rome exacerbated the new nation’s fragile relationship to its recently-acquired populace and left the project of moral regeneration in a precarious state: if the Italian government was in direct conflict with the Catholic Church, and the Church was the moral and spiritual authority, how could a moral regeneration begin? To this end, the Italian nationalists adopted and adapted Catholic moral teachings and symbolism not only in an effort to “improve” the moral character of its future citizens but also to promote a civic-mindedness and loyalty towards the Italian State, inserting the nation as sacrosanct and parallel to Catholicism—not in opposition to it. Thus, the struggle between State and Church was not simply a temporal battle but a spiritual one: each fought for the hearts and minds of young Italian children.

Risorgimento scholars have long been aware of this particular arena of conflict. Its outlines are evident in the major educational legislation of the Risorgimento era. Thus the Piedmontese Casati Law of 1859 laid out the basic necessities and intentions of public education while also explicitly requiring religious education. As noted before, the national Coppino Law of 1877 made children’s education compulsory up to the age of nine and omitted any requirement

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69 See Patriarca, Italian Vices, beginning on page 60; and Traniello, Religione cattolica e stato nazionale (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2007), beginning on page 198. Both Traniello and Patriarca offer excellent discussions on the influence of self-help books.
71 During the nineteenth-century, the Catholic Church faced strong attack from secularist camps in numerous countries, though the sentiment was reciprocal. The arena of education and public schools was particularly crucial and, in Belgium, was the source of violent protests and clashes between supporters of each side. See Els Witte, “The Battle for Monasteries, Cemeteries, and Schools: Belgium,” in Culture Wars: Secular-Catholic Conflict in Nineteenth-Century Europe, ed. Christopher Clark and Wolfram Kaiser (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 122-128.
for religious education. Interestingly, the Coppino Law did require the education of morals, ethics, and “rights and duties” throughout the kingdom. Both steps drew the ire of the Church and Catholic patriots who believed Catholicism to be a necessary element in Italian identity and children’s education. The consequences of these steps were obviously major, but only recently have historians begun to examine them, and then only partially.

One of the most fascinating facets of this inquiry revolves around the manifestation of politically-influenced pedagogy within the classroom: schoolbooks. The study of schoolbooks is a promising, and largely unexplored, avenue to gain insight in the local implementation of education reform. Anna Ascenzi and Maria Cristina Morandini have found history textbooks to be a major vehicle for the promotion of civil obedience and a national identity. Such books aimed to achieve this goal through the narrative of a common Italian past, culminating in a sacralized Risorgimento epic and Italian unification. Annunziata Marciano has examined the relationship between the political concern over general conditions of the lower classes and the impact of positivist pedagogy on children’s literature and school textbooks in the second half of the nineteenth-century. Pedagogical writings, textbooks, and children’s literature all reflected a strong national concern for increasing literacy rates aimed at a “social and cultural emancipation” of the masses. This particular facet of the national project developed with the intent to form young adults as obedient, hard-working, civic-minded, and respectful of the patria. This paradox continues Raffaele Romanelli’s argument that the Liberal State desired both obedience and autonomy from its citizenry. The contradiction combined enlightenment thought with a pessimistic view on the moral character of the citizenry.

Like other modernizing states in the nineteenth century, the new government began to involve itself more in people’s lives than had ever been the case before. Unlike other nations, however, Italy’s confrontation with religion in this arena was compromised by a fragile unity and the proximity of the Papal States: the lack of a strong central government and the annexation of Rome undermined efforts to establish State authority. Furthermore, the papacy was intimately tied to the history of the peninsula beginning with the fall of the Western Roman Empire—a fact

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73 See Ascenzi, Tra educazione etico-civile, and Morandini, Scuola e nazione.
76 Romanelli, Il comando impossibile.
both anticlericals and Catholic patriots interpreted differently. However, Italy’s youth was one avenue in which the government—along with the Catholic Church—sought to extend its influence and sustain its existence.\textsuperscript{77} The abundance of pedagogical writings and textbooks, along with the creation of children’s literature as a new genre, reflect the general increase in concern for children’s well-being by both institutions.\textsuperscript{78} Textbooks were especially necessary in the new public school system, serving as the manifestation of national education policy in the farthest regions of the country. Just as there were different schools of secular pedagogical thought, there were also variations in Catholic pedagogy. As Giorgio Chiosso has shown, Catholic pedagogy was neither as uniform nor as traditional as past historians have presented it.\textsuperscript{79} In addition, recent scholarship on the Church’s responses to modernization and secularization has presented the institution as particularly adaptive to the changing circumstances.\textsuperscript{80} Though mainstream Catholic education focused exclusively on humanism and religious instruction, some peripheral groups began to embrace the realities of a modernizing society, opting to include math, science, and professional training within its curriculum.

The Salesian School of Don Giovanni Bosco is a prime example of this variance in Catholic pedagogy. Don Bosco and his followers offered an alternative to State-run public education while filling a gap in its educational policy. In this sense, Roberto Sani and others argue that Don Bosco and the Salesians went beyond the Casati and Coppino Laws by offering professional training.\textsuperscript{81} Viewing Catholic religion and ethics as fundamental to an ordered and progressive Italy, liberal Catholics such as the Salesians set out to modernize the nation through Catholic education.\textsuperscript{82} However, secular education reformers also went beyond official educational policy. Regardless of specific requirements of either the Casati Law or the Coppino

\textsuperscript{77} Duggan, \textit{The Force of Destiny}, 280.
\textsuperscript{79} See Chiosso, \textit{Profilo storico della pedagogia cristiana}.
\textsuperscript{80} See Clark and Kaiser, \textit{Culture Wars}.
\textsuperscript{81} Roberto Sani, “‘Honest Citizens and Good Christians’,” 484. NOTE: mainstream Catholic curricula excluded practical instruction. The Salesians were a (relatively minor) aberration.
\textsuperscript{82} Traniello, \textit{Religione cattolica e stato nazionale}, 198-199. Traniello notes this also had a transnational framework. Hostile towards protestant models of industrialization and capitalist development, liberal Catholics argued that a Catholic society could achieve the same level of economic and political power.
Law, nationalist textbook writers such as Felice Garelli believed the inclusion of moral education in public school curricula was a priority for the future of the Italian nation.

Garelli, born in 1831 in Mondovì (a small town south of Turin), was a teacher and professor of Chemistry and Physics and eventually became an Italian senator in 1892 under the first Giolittian administration. Though Garelli wrote other books on agriculture, he wrote two specifically for elementary school children, *Il giovinetto campagnuolo* and *La giovinetta campagnuola*. Published in 1880—three years after the implementation of the Coppino Law—these textbooks represent Garelli’s concern for both moral and practical instruction. It was not simply a matter of educating the children for the children’s sake but for national economic improvement. In the preface of the book for boys, Garelli addresses primary school teachers in stressing the importance of teaching rural students the first notions of proper agricultural practice, citing the inclusion of agricultural instruction in other countries: France introduced it in 28,000 schools in 1874; Austria in over 2,000; and in Germany agricultural instruction became more popular than any other instruction because farming—like in Italy—was a primary occupation. The international influences on the pedagogical thought of these textbooks not only correspond to the transnational context of positivist thought but reveal that similar concerns on the economic role of education were present in many other European countries in this time period. Furthermore, small-scale Italian farmers were often ignorant of the latest agricultural practices and were ill-prepared to compete with international production as the nation’s economy was quickly inserted into a global marketplace. Garelli advocated a similar program of agricultural education throughout the peninsula, revealing a dearth of texts directed at this specific sort of instruction. Setting his works apart from simple practical education, however, Garelli includes moral instruction at the beginning of his textbooks to address a problem perceived as particular to the Italian case: “The worth of a man equals the worth of the land; man makes the land and the land

83 Mondovi was also the birthplace of Giovanni Giolitti.
85 Ibid., III. Note: this is just in the book for boys.
87 Garelli, *Il giovinetto campagnuolo*, IV. The author says as much in his preface: “…perché…ancora la mancanza di un libro di lettura fatto aposta…combatta gli errori e i pregiudizi, che sono tuttora radicati e diffusi nel ceto campagnuolo.”
makes the man.” 88 In short, Garelli and others in Italy believed the moral character of the citizenry determined the prosperity of the nation. Though this sentiment was common in other European societies—especially in the British Empire—it was particularly fundamental to Italy’s need for a “moral regeneration” and for strengthening the State’s presence throughout the peninsula.

Furthermore, the existence of two separate textbooks—one for boys and one for girls—illustrates a perceived difference in moral responsibilities and concepts of citizenship based on gender. Both texts include sections on morality and hygiene. The book for boys focuses on agricultural labor while the book for girls includes a section on domestic economy. Although the primary lessons on morality are nearly identical, the inclusion of a national connection in the book for boys distinguishes it from that for girls. In its stead, the girls’ edition includes lessons on motherhood and the moral duties of a housewife, complementing the focus on domestic economy—the female counterpart to male household duties. This key contrast reveals a strict understanding of gender roles within the family as well as the nation: the political realm was exclusively male. However, since most of the lessons in each volume are similar, much of my analysis will apply to both texts until I move on to discuss the connection between morality and the nation.

These texts reflect a growing development in education reform and the national discourse on Italian “character.” Garelli was not simply another textbook writer. His career parallels that of other proponents of public education’s uses in improving the political and economic conditions of the Italian people. Elected to local education committees in the province of Cuneo, Garelli was a colleague of Giovanni Giolitti and Michele Coppino, each of whom sat on different committees within the province throughout the 1880s. All three were originally of the Center-Left party, which came to power for the first time in 1876 and maintained a strong influence in government for the next few decades. At this time, public education was still in its early development, plagued by poor funding and scattered student attendance. The creation of the Coppino Law—named after the primary architect, Michele Coppino—was the beginning of greater government attention towards the school system and the expansion of State power—especially in the countryside. Coppino continued to serve intermittently as the Minister of

88 Garelli, *Il giovinetto campagnuolo*, V.
Education for the next two decades and was instrumental in the legal development of national education. Giolitti was equally important in the prosperity of the public school system. Participating in local politics in Mondovi in the 1880s, he managed to become the Prime Minister of the country in 1892—the same year Garelli became senator. It is not coincidental that all three figures, hailing from the same province, played such important roles in the direction of education: they were part of a regional group intimately associated with each other and in agreement on the direction of the school and of the nation. However, Giolitti’s first administration achieved little due to a major financial crisis from 1887 to 1893. Unable to serve again in government following the collapse of Giolitti’s administration in 1893, Garelli died ten years later—the same year Giolitti was returned to power. Still, this group’s overall objectives continued well into the twentieth century during the so-called “Giolitti age” as public education received full financial and political support by the government.\textsuperscript{89} Thus, the period between 1876 and 1888 was, as many have suggested, a watershed moment in the history of public education in Italy.

Like other secular governments in the modern period, the Italian State struggled to assert its authority across its diverse regions. Even in more urban areas, local politics and interests subverted national policies. This complication also influenced the public school system. The inherent weakness of the Casati Law and the decentralized administration of public schools were blamed for local corruption and incompetency. After winning control of the government in 1876, the Center-Left sought to extend the State’s influence not just in urban areas but, more importantly, in the countryside. Though scholars have noted the minimal impact of the Coppino Law due to limited enforcement,\textsuperscript{90} it marks a shift in ideological objectives: the expansion of the State in individual lives. Garelli’s textbooks not only reflect this change but reveal a specific direction in which the government turned. The creation of textbooks specifically written for farmers and the lower classes in rural Italy suggests an expanded scope of the moral regeneration


\textsuperscript{90} Duggan, \textit{The Force of Destiny}, 276-277. The government sought to enforce school attendance by fining families who did not send their children to school without proper excuse. Mostly in the countryside, these families were unable to afford the fine, and local officials were reluctant to enforce it. Still, a gradual increase in student enrollment was augmented by additional financial support by the government and a growing middle class.
called for by intellectuals and the liberal elite. Their objectives were not just directed towards the urban middle and lower classes associated with industrialization and factories but also towards farmers and agricultural output, which Garelli calls Italy’s “greatest wealth.” However, the intended audience of these texts was traditionally and contemporarily the bedrock of the Catholic Church’s support. Mostly illiterate and poor, the rural masses—by far the majority of the Italian populace—were ideologically entrenched in local traditions, familism, and the influence of the Church. These textbooks thus represent an attempt to convey nationalist sentiment and State goals through familiar language and symbolism in the most resistant parts of the country. We might surmise that the author frames each moral lesson within Catholic teachings and traditional proverbs in order to legitimize his overall objective: the improvement of the moral character of the rural youth not to become good Christians but rather good Italians. 

Morality and Religion: The Catholic Catechism

The problem of how to implement a program of moral improvement remained, however. Economic constraints, a highly-entrenched devotion to the family, and the opposition of the Church, contributed to public education’s marginal role in the daily experience of most Italian children—especially in the countryside. Mandatory school attendance stipulated by the Coppino Law did strengthen the State’s influence across Italian society. Yet enforcement continued to pose a problem. Attempts were made to fine those unable to provide an adequate excuse. Most violators, however, either could not afford the fine (many were poor tenant farmers) or simply ignored them. Furthermore, many in the countryside were distrustful of the Piedmontese State, angry at the newly-imposed high taxes, and the perceived attack on traditional lifestyles and

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91 Because the public school system was still in its early stages, textbooks were geared toward a universal audience. Furthermore, as discussed by Ascenzi and Morandini, the intended goal of textbooks included a unifying presentation of Italian history in an attempt to instill an emotional connection to the nation. The school system was designed to be nationally uniform. Garelli’s texts depart from this objective and anticipate the Education Programs of 1888, which express curricula tailored to the realities of rural schoolchildren.

92 Garelli, Il giovinetto campagnuolo, 57. Although Garelli was not a part of the Italian government at this time, he remained a part of the “Cuneo group” in these early years and reflects a broader movement in education reform.

93 Particularly peasants, but also women and many of the older generation. See Giuseppe Garibaldi, Cantoni il volontario (1870). Garibaldi calls on the (male) youth of Italy to save the nation from the “evil” clutches of the priests.

94 Though scholars such as Anna Ascenzi and Maria Morandini have examined the historical element of textbooks in their promotion of nationalistic language and symbolism, the moral component remains a largely unexplored segment in the history of Italian nationalism.
beliefs. Garelli devised a solution that would address two of the major inhibiting factors: the Church and the family. By framing lessons on morality within an implicitly Catholic framework, Garelli promotes a development of one’s moral conscience not only in agreement with Church authorities but also in the recognizable language of proverb and familial attachment. Using basic religious ideas and moral lessons, such as the Ten Commandments, Garelli effectively incorporates the national project of a moral regeneration into the common understanding and upbringing of a rural Italian child.

1. Basic Religious Framework: God, Devotion, Church

Since the Coppino Law advocated more secular curricula three years prior to the publication of the Garelli textbooks, it is not surprising to find in these works almost no direct reference to the Catholic Church or, indeed, to Christianity in general. However, the religious framework of morality is implicitly Catholic in substance and focus. Garelli’s books include a remarkable emphasis on the main tenets of Church education in the nineteenth century: devotion and obedience, respect for parents and family, Christian charity, and good Christian manners. However, rather than directing their meaning towards being good Christians, Garelli placed such values at the service of the national project.

The organization of the moral lessons found in Garelli’s textbooks follows an instructional narrative that roughly resembles that of the Catholic Catechism. Each one leads quite naturally into the next, such as a lesson on honoring one’s parents followed by one on obedience. While devotion to God and the spiritual role of the Church are addressed at the beginning of the Catechism, Garelli’s textbooks begin with one’s conscience. The conscience knows instinctively good from bad, virtue from vice, and right from wrong, since it was created by God as a guide for one’s actions. In order to be good, virtuous, and happy, the child must follow his or her conscience. Discussion of the conscience does not appear in the Catechism until much later, but Garelli’s placement of this lesson at the beginning suggests an emphasis on the individual and the moral fabric inherent in each person. The development of the individual’s conscience is a major tenet of the Liberal State and reflects a general promotion of moral

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95 For instance, neither Jesus Christ nor the Virgin Mary are referenced anywhere in the text. Rather, religious references are non-denominational in presentation.
responsibility to the wider community. Nonetheless, the parallel lesson found in the Catholic Catechism is clear: "We are internally warned to refrain from sin by the voice of our conscience, which incites us to do good and to refuse evil...Our conscience praises us when we have done good (peace of conscience), and it reproves us when we commit evil (remorse of conscience)."

There follow lessons instructing the student to praise God and to pray to Him—especially in a church. According to Garelli, the church is the best place to pray because “in a church it seems as though we are closer to God, our trust in Him stronger, and prayer more fervent.” In the Catholic Catechism, the same depiction of the church building is present: “The parish church is the house of God, the place of sermon and the gateway to heaven.” The promotion of prayer—especially in a church—echoes earlier religious education in public schools during the 1860s. However, with the increasingly secularized State, the reference to church attendance within a public school setting is notable. For Garelli, it is not simply a matter of attendance, however: praying in a church reinforces the notion that “we are all siblings, all children of the same Father...poor and rich, servants and patrons, young and old, all united in a single affection.” This image depicts the church building as a unifying symbol equalizing socioeconomic differences and binding everyone in a common belief—much like the nation, which Garelli discusses later. The support of church attendance is further amplified in the following chapter called “Sunday”. In this lesson, Garelli discusses the sanctity of Sunday, which should be devoted to rest and to prayer. One should put on their best clothes and attend mass and the vespers. Here, Garelli makes direct reference to Catholic services—one of the few times throughout the document—and reveals an assumed understanding of rural children’s Catholic upbringing. Furthering the book’s validation as part of the rural and Catholic experience, Garelli then includes lessons on many of the Ten Commandments and the Cardinal Sins.

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97 Giovanni Fedele Battaglia, *Catechismo della dottrina cattolica* (Freiburg im Breisgau, Germany: B. Herder, 1895), 111: “Noi veniamo internamente ammoniti di fuggire il peccato dalla voce della coscienza, che ci stimola a fare il bene ed a fuggire il male...La coscienza ci loda, quando abbiamo fatto del bene (pace della coscienza), e ci rimprovera, quando abbiamo fatto del male (rimorso della coscienza).”
99 Battaglia, *Catechismo della dottrina cattolica*, 110: “La chiesa parrocchiale è la casa di Dio, il luogo dell’orazione e la porta del cielo.”
102 For parallel representations of the church and the public school classroom, see Chapter 3 and my discussion of Collodi’s *Le avventure di Pinocchio* and De Amicis’s *Cuore*.
2. **Ten Commandments**

After establishing the section on morality within a basic religious framework, Garelli shifts to a very specific focus echoing State objectives. Though discussing most of the Ten Commandments and Cardinal Sins, the author stresses obedience and responsibility to one’s parents and the evils of indolence, or “Honor your parents” and “Sloth.” Herein exists a contradiction to State goals. By promoting the family as a moral unit, Garelli unintentionally reinforces the integrity of the family as a barrier against the nationalization in the countryside. In the following decades, this social defense-mechanism continued to pose a major problem for the Italian State, even during Mussolini’s campaigns to uphold the farmer as an Italian ideal. Nonetheless, Garelli’s presentation of morality places Catholic teachings within a hierarchy of importance directed not at the spiritual health of a Christian but—as we will see—the reinforcement of a national sentiment and moral improvement.

The importance of the family was central to the moral tenets of Catholic education, and children’s obedience to and respect for their parents is paramount. After the chapter on the importance of rest on Sundays, Garelli includes three chapters on the moral position of parents. Comparing respect for one’s parents and the respect and love for God is clearly placed at the beginning: “Parents are the image of God on earth; we must love them, honor them, and obey them. Whoever honors their parents, honors God; whoever loves them, loves God; whoever obeys them, obeys God.”

The parallel in moral obligations and the religious symbolism of parents reflect a Catholic interpretation of the Fourth Commandment: “Children must respect, love, and obey their parents because: 1) parents are the image of God for children, and 2) after God, parents are children’s greatest benefactor.”

The last chapter on the moral position of parents provides a lesson on obedience—to one’s parents and to one’s teacher: “Come here…quick-tempered boys who become peeved at the corrections of your father, mother, and

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103 For discussion of Mussolini’s efforts to include the countryside in the fascist project, see Victoria de Grazia, *The Culture of Consent: Mass Organization of Leisure in Fascist Italy* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1981).
105 Battaglia, *Catechismo della dottrina cattolica*, 93: “I figli devono portar rispetto, amore ed obbedienza ai genitori: 1) perché i genitori tengono verso i figli il luogo di Dio; 2) perché, dopo Dio, i genitori sono i loro più grandi benefattori.”
teacher: learn submission and obedience from [the example of] the dog.” The insertion of the public school teacher alongside the parent offers a glimpse at Garelli’s socioeconomic and political agenda: by coupling the teacher with the parent, Garelli attaches similar moral responsibilities to the State. The State’s efforts to promote the welfare of children and their obligations to the family are clearly reflected here. The number of lessons Garelli devotes to this concern also speaks to the importance of maintaining the family structure for both social and political ends.

The next lessons are tied to the youth’s moral obligation to those around him or her: one’s siblings, relatives, neighbors, and those in need. Though the first chapter on siblings and relatives is fairly straightforward and reflects, in part, the chapters on parents, the chapters on one’s obligations to neighbors and to the needy expands the notion of family to a wider community. Siblings are not limited to the immediate family: school companions, neighbors, acquaintances, everyone on the earth are also siblings. The youth must love not only their parents and their family but everyone, including his or her enemies. In the Catechism, this is intrinsic to devotion to God: “We must love our neighbor—whether friend or enemy—because: 1) God commands it, and 2) every person is a child of God, redeemed by Jesus Christ.” The notion of moral obligation towards all of humanity is a major theme in Christianity. However, Garelli’s emphasis on la carità or charity as the “most beautiful, the most holy, and the most divine of virtues” reflects a central tenet of the Catholic obligation to do good acts and as well as the expansion of familial morality to the wider community—the socialization of children.

The importance of charity in Catholic doctrine relates to one’s conscience and, thus, free will. For, though in our conscience exist the temptations of sin, “in our hearts God’s charity has been spread through the vehicle of the Holy Spirit...of these [three divine virtues] charity is the greatest.” Garelli also stresses the importance of charity for it “gives the sweetest consolations in this life and it rewards you in the next,” which again highlights the Catholic basis of these

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106 Garelli, Il giovinetto campagnuolo, 9; ibid., La giovinetta campagnuola, 9. Garelli uses the example of the “good” dog who respects his master to communicate the same level of obedience expected of children to their parents and teachers.
107 Ibid., 14; ibid., 11.
108 Battaglia, Catechismo della dottrina cattolica, 84.
109 Garelli, Il giovinetto campagnuolo, 15; ibid., La giovinetta campagnuola, 12.
110 Battaglia, Catechismo della dottrina cattolica, 115-116: “La carità di Dio è stata diffusa nei nostri cuori per mezzo dello Spirito Santo...la più grande però di queste è la carità.”
lessons on morality.\textsuperscript{111} Garelli adopts the notion of Catholic charity in order to expand the child’s understanding of community and obligation begun in the lessons on relatives and neighbors. By using Catholic charity, the author alludes to moral responsibility outside of the family unit, socializing the child within the wider community. His later lesson on moral obligation to the patria adapts these fundamental responsibilities towards a grander purpose.\textsuperscript{112}

These lessons are not only pertinent to the spiritual well-being of a good Catholic but are also relevant to the political and social foundation of the Liberal State, articulated within the debate on national “character.” For Garelli, lying is one of the ugliest and most dreadful of vices, which “stains the soul with a mark darker than ink.”\textsuperscript{113} It is not only lying that is abhorrent, however, but tattle-telling as well. The only time one should do so is under interrogation at a trial, when one’s conscience obliges to tell the truth as if to God.\textsuperscript{114} The parallel in the Catechism is the Eighth Commandment: “To lie is to speak false on purpose to mislead others…There are playful lies, officious lies, and damaging lies…We must watch out for any kind of lie, because lying derives from Satan, and displeases God [emphasis in original].”\textsuperscript{115} For the State and the debate on national “character,” dishonesty—especially within an apparatus of the State—was a principal concern particularly regarding the rural classes. According to Patriarca, the notion that Italians were “duplicitous”\textsuperscript{116} and “excessively individualistic”\textsuperscript{117} was inherited and internalized by Italian intellectuals since the Middle Ages.\textsuperscript{118} By the nineteenth century, this character flaw had become a “national vice,” portrayed perhaps most famously through the various adventures of Pinocchio, whose nose grows at every lie.\textsuperscript{119}

\begin{footnotesize}
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\item \textsuperscript{111} Garelli, Il giovinetto campagnuolo, 16; ibid., La giovinetta campagnuola, 12.
\item \textsuperscript{112} The final lesson Garelli includes is a list of maxims titled “The Maxims of Carlambrogio” (“Le massime di Carlambrogio). Essentially a summary of all of the lessons, this section especially shows the correlation between the individual, the family, the wider community, and the nation—all fundamentally tied to religiously-inspired morality. Garelli, Il giovinetto campagnuolo, 60-62.
\item \textsuperscript{113} Ibid., 19; ibid., La giovinetta campagnuola, 17: “La bugia è un vizio brutto e schifoso, che fa nell’anima una macchia più nera dell’inchiostro.”
\item \textsuperscript{114} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{115} Battaglia, Catechismo della dottrina cattolica, 102: “La bugia è il dire appositamente il falso per indurre altri in errore. Vi sono bugie giose, officiose e dannose…Noi dobbiamo guardarcì da qualsiasi bugia, perché la bugia deriva dal demonio, e dispiace a Dio.”
\item \textsuperscript{116} Patriarca, Italian Vices, 46.
\item \textsuperscript{117} Ibid., 83.
\item \textsuperscript{118} Ibid., 46, 83.
\item \textsuperscript{119} See my discussion of Pinocchio in Chapter Three.
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3. Cardinal Sins

Following the parallels to the Ten Commandments, there are twenty lessons on vice which constitute the bulk of the section on morality. Much like the Catechism, the author discusses the temptations and the uncivil qualities of various vices—especially the capital sins of pride, anger, envy, greed, and sloth. However, other than sloth, Garelli does not title these lessons explicitly as “vices”, “sins” or “capital sins.” Rather, he combines biblical verses with traditional Italian proverbs, such as “Chi è pronto all’ira è facile al male” or “He who is easily angered is quick to do evil.”120 This line—the title of the lesson on anger—is taken from the biblical verse in Proverbs 14:17: “Chi è pronto all’ira commette follia” or “He who is easily angered commits folly.” By combining traditional proverbs with religious moral education, Garelli places the book within a Catholic and cultural language familiar in the countryside. This validation is essential in order to introduce the author’s main objectives in the later lessons. Even so, Garelli utilizes this section to address the concern over the perceived indolence of the Italian people.

Reflecting the enormity of this concern, Garelli devotes one third of all the lessons on morality to the particular issues associated with sloth and the necessity of work. Though sloth is one of the Cardinal Sins, the number of lessons on work—the “duty of work,” the “joy of work,” the “rewards of work”—point to the prominence of this vice in the debate on national “character.” In the first two decades following unification, perceptions of Italians as indolent and lazy grew to dominate discussions on the need for a moral regeneration.121 Promoting a strong work ethic among the middle and lower classes was not only the pursuit of the government, however.122 Don Bosco and his followers in the Salesian School also viewed work as a way to instill moral character among poor and marginalized children: education and work were essential to making good Christians and good citizens. The connection between Catholic morals and work is also apparent in the lessons found in Garelli’s textbooks. The need to work is described as a natural

121 Scholarship on this particular topic has begun to examine the transnational context of these national discussions. See Silvana Patriarca, Italian Vices, and Francesco Traniello, Religione cattolica e stato nazionale. Patriarca analyzes the role of the stereotype within debates on national “character”, originally based in the Middle Ages and subsequently internalized by Italian intellectuals. Traniello, on the other hand, looks more at the contemporary discussions on religious differences between Protestant and Catholic nations and their respective modernizing developments.
122 Traniello, Religione cattolica e stato nazionale, 198-200.
duty and obligation, placed within each person by God: “Work sustains the world, which is why God imbued man with it as a duty, as a necessity.”

The perception that Italians were indolent is not explicitly stated in the textbooks by Garelli. Rather, it is the emphasis on hard work and saving which reflects this specific concern regarding national “character.” Much like a child’s responsibilities to his or her parents and to the community, in general, work is not only a necessity but a virtue as well. The work of a child is to go to school, to help around the house, and to carry out his or her work on the farm. The emphasis on family, school, and work is also present in much of children’s literature during these years, such as Collodi’s *Le avventure di Pinocchio* and De Amicis’s *Cuore*. Even Garelli draws on children’s literature to make his case to the reader.

Garelli narrates a parable on Carlambrogio, the famous and virtuous gentleman depicted in the stories by Cesare Cantù in the first half of the nineteenth century, resembling the presentation of moral lessons through example found in self-help literature. Garelli compares Carlambrogio, the richest and most respected man in his town, to the rural youths. Just like them, Carlambrogio also started off poor. He did not win his fortune by accident but by hard work and by taking care of those dear to him: sending his children to school and looking after his parents. Garelli follows this lesson with a cautionary tale on sloth. Whereas Carlambrogio was hardworking and selfless, Tonio—another character—never worked. Instead, he bought things he did not need, stayed out at the local bar with other loafers instead of at home, accrued large debts, and impoverished his family. He did this all because of indolence. Poverty is presented not as a consequence of bad fortune but as a result of bad morals. This explanation marks a departure from Catholic teachings. In the Church, poverty is often considered a virtue, reflecting an abstention from materialism towards spiritual growth. The example of St. Francis of Assisi is perhaps the most illustrative. However, Garelli reverses this emphasis to communicate positivist and Liberal doctrine: through education and hard work one can become a prosperous citizen. Work brings both moral and material gain to the individual as well as the nation. However, this desire rests on the development of the individual conscience. The similarity to self-help books,

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124 See later discussion of work and national improvement.
125 See Chapter 3 and the discussion of morality embedded within children’s literature.
such as Samuel Smiles’ *Self-Help* (1865)—translated into Italian as *Chi si aiuta Dio l’aiuta* or *God Helps Those who Help Themselves*—is quite clear. However, Garelli frames the lesson on hard work within an Italian cultural legacy and Catholic morals, which characterize much of the Italian literature on morality.

Following unification and the redistribution of land in the countryside, many farmers were forced to sell their holdings due to inefficient farming techniques and international competition. Another problem, however, was ignorance about saving and investment most prevalent in the countryside. Thus it is not enough simply to work hard. One must also know how to save and spend economically. Lessons on money and saving introduce the students to the basic moral principles of fiscal management. Much like the parable of Carlambrogio, Garelli relates the story of Lafitte, a poor youth who left his town in Italy to work in Paris. This youth was unable to find work but, while walking through the courtyard of a rich banker, found a pin on the floor and picked it up. The banker, having seen Lafitte, decided to hire him because he required someone with an eye for detail. Lafitte excelled at his job and eventually became successful. The point of the story is summed up at the end with a proverb: “Chi vuole il molto curi il poco” or “He who wants a lot, let him care for the little things.”

By saving, Garelli argues, the student can eventually become successful and, thus, help bring prosperity and prestige to the entire nation. At this point, Garelli introduces the student to the concept of saving money in a bank (as opposed to in the house). Not only does the bank offer a small interest on one’s deposit, but it also removes the temptation to squander that money. Thus, one’s moral obligations regarding money—saving, spending, and earning—are all tied to the wellbeing of the family. Indolence is an overarching category in which consuming, lack of saving, and minor vices are all expressions of this “Latin” characteristic. The lessons on money and saving reflect a part of Garelli’s morality specific to an urban middle-class. These “virtues” are absent in typical Catholic instruction because of the materialistic association. They were, however, central to

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127 The Italian government sold a significant portion of Church and State-owned land to peasants in an effort to build a civic, land-owning citizenry adhering to liberal ideology. However, this program was largely a failure and many poor farmers migrated to the cities and overseas.

128 The nationalization of Church property after unification was intended to be sold to the public in small units so as to improve economic conditions for many poor farmers. However, the absence of credit facilities for peasants—or proper education of these institutions—meant that much of this land was snatched up by the land-holding upper classes (Duggan 262).

129 Garelli, *Il giovinetto campagnuolo*, 42-43. Note: the lessons on money and saving are not included in the schoolbook for girls.
Liberal ideology and the State’s desire for a strong middle-class. Garelli thus inserts this “bourgeois” virtue within the religiously-inspired obligation to the family.

4. The Creanza

Though not emphasized quite as much as the other moral obligations, proper manners are presented as constituting the finer details of being a moral youth. The instruction of these manners—the Galateo and the creanza—had often been included in traditional Catholic education since the sixteenth century. The Galateo, originally published in 1558 by the Tuscan bishop and poet Giovanni della Casa, had been popular both in Italy and abroad since its first publication and had served as the basis of the Christian creanza, which drew religious connections to della Casa’s work. The Italian terms “educato” and “maleducato”—translated as “well-mannered” and “poorly-mannered”, respectively—share the same root as the Italian word for education (“educazione”). Therefore, education was intrinsically tied to proper manners—the icing on the “moral” cake, so to speak. Nonetheless, secular adaptations of the Galateo were common among Italian publications aimed at the improvement of moral character throughout the nineteenth century. According to Silvana Patriarca and others, these texts were created with a new purpose tied to equality between socioeconomic classes. In fact, Garelli’s presentation of the creanza alludes to the universal application of good manners. If a boy or girl has rude, coarse, and impolite manners, no one would want to associate with him or her: it is, in fact, more of a shame that such a good boy or girl, who loves his or her parents and is obedient and virtuous, does not know how to comport himself or herself in society. Garelli’s primary focus is on the other lessons for “one can still be a gentleman without [the Galateo].” The instruction in proper manners concludes the moral lessons associated with traditional Catholic education. The remaining lessons allude to wider political and economic concerns.

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130 Patriarca, Italian Vices, 73. For more in-depth examination of these texts, see Inge Botteri, Galateo e galatei: la creanza e l’istituzione della società nella trattatistica italiana tra antico regime e Stato liberale (Rome: Bulzoni, 1999).
131 Garelli, Il giovinetto campagnuolo, 44-45; ibid., La giovinetta campagnuola, 34.
132 Ibid. In the book for girls, this is communicated as a warning: “…remember that the gentility of manners requires the goodness of the heart.” “Ma ricordati ancora che la gentilezza delle maniere vuole avere acompagna la bontà del cuore” (La giovinetta campagnuola 34).
Morality and Politics: In Service of the Nation

In short, the majority of Garelli’s lessons center on the creation of upstanding, moral, and well-behaved children. In part, the intent is the establishment of basic moral obligations rooted within an assumed Catholic and family-centered upbringing. After producing a framework familiar to children’s experience, Garelli introduces his socio-economic and political agenda. Thus his lessons are directly associated with the promotion of a connection and obligation to the patria and to the State.\(^{133}\) In these early years of the Italian nation, it is apparent that few Italians actually understood themselves to be part of a larger community.\(^{134}\) Though regionalism and religion played a role in nationalization programs in other European countries, the Italian case is characterized by a long history of political and cultural fragmentation.\(^{135}\) Centuries of disunity allowed for the development of diverse languages, cultures, and customs—problems accentuated in the Italian case. For authors such as Garelli, overcoming regional differences was a primary objective of education: “You are Italian [emphasis in original], and Italians, your compatriots, are the Piedmontese, the Lombards, the Venetians, the Ligurians, the Parmans, the Modenese, the Tuscani, the Romagnolans, the Neapolitans, the Sardinians, and the Sicilians: nearly twenty-seven million people make up one single, grand family.”\(^{136}\) In addition to education, the Italian government addressed the problem of regionalism through various methods. Influenced by the work of nationalist historians such as Eric Hobsbawm, Ernest Gellner, George L. Mosse, and more recently Benedict Anderson, scholars have noted the role of legislation, literature, and military service in attempts to mitigate regionalist loyalty and to create a national sentiment. In particular, Alberto M. Banti’s work on the development of the Risorgimento as a national discourse in the nineteenth century, employing the arguments made by Mosse and Anderson in

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\(^{133}\) This component is entirely absent in the book for girls. See section titled “Gender.”

\(^{134}\) Duggan, The Force of Destiny, xviii.

\(^{135}\) Germany is often a useful comparative case due to its similar fragmentation and contemporaneous unification process. The “Kulturkampf” associated with the administration of Bismarck in the 1870s influenced secularization projects in Italy. While numerous branches of Christianity held sway in Germany, however, Catholicism was by far the dominant religion in Italy. Whether or not this difference allowed the German State more legitimacy in the quest for secularization is difficult to ascertain. See Clark and Kaiser, Culture Wars.

\(^{136}\) Garelli, Il giovinetto campagnuolo, 55. “Tu sei Italiano, e Italiani, tuoi compatrioti, sono i Piemontesi, i Lombardi, i Veneti, i Liguri, i Parmensi, i Modenesi, i Toscani, i Romagnoli, i Napoletani, i Sardi e i Siciliani. Son circa 27 milioni d’uomini, che formano una sola e grande famiglia.”
particular, has garnered significant attention by historians of Modern Italy. Banti argued that using the symbolism and vocabulary of family, brotherhood, and martyrdom, young Italian intellectuals and writers created an image of and connection to the nation through blood and sacrifice. However, this discourse altered in focus after unification but continued to permeate debates on the encouragement of a national sentiment, which Banti discusses in his more recent work. According to his argument, there were three fundamental depictions of the nation that are present throughout modern Italian history: familial, sacrificial, and gendered. Representing the nation as such was not limited to creating a national sentiment but also appeared in efforts to define a national “character.” The textbooks by Garelli reflect this discourse.

1. Family

The patria was not simply the place where one was born. Rather, it was something much greater: Italy. It is here that Garelli first introduces the students to the nation. Garelli gives a brief account of the nation’s history, citing the barbarian invasions and the later domination by the French, the Spanish, and the Austrians as the causes of its historical disunity and shame. The Wars of Independence, though, shook off the “yoke of slavery,” and the nation could finally be called one family, under the glorious flag of the “Cross of Savoy.” The portrayal of the nation’s shameful past leading up to the glorious Risorgimento was commonly found in other textbooks and pedagogical literature in the second half of the nineteenth century. The depiction of the nation as an enslaved “mother” who required her “sons” to free her from foreign tyranny is also present in much of Risorgimento literature. As Banti argues, the use of family symbolism in the discourse of the nation—both visually and rhetorically—continued to serve the national project well into the twentieth century. Metaphoric representation of the patria as a mother with an emotional attachment to her “sons” and their reciprocal obligation to defend her through work and sacrifice dominates Garelli’s lesson on “Duties toward the Patria,” the most significant lesson found in the text for boys.

137 Banti, La nazione del Risorgimento. For the impact of Banti’s work, see Silvana Patriarca and Lucy Riall (eds.), The Risorgimento Revisited: Nationalism and Culture in Nineteenth-Century Italy (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire ; New York : Palgrave Macmillan, 2012).
138 See Banti, Sublime madre nostra.
139 Ibid., VII.
140 See Ascenzi, Tra educazione etico-civile, and Morandini, Scuola e nazione.
141 Banti, La nazione del Risorgimento, p. 155. See especially Chapter Four.
The discussion of civic responsibilities to the State—directly connected to national concerns—is framed within the moral lessons on obligation towards one’s parents. The duties of a boy to the patria are clearly stated to be identical to the duties of a son towards his parents:

You know the duties of sons towards their fathers and mothers. Well, we all have the same duties towards the patria. She is our common mother; we must therefore love her, honor her, obey her, and through our deeds be worthy of her. No one can be a good citizen if first he is not a good son. The patria is embarrassed by wicked citizens, just as families cry over sons who turn out badly. Therefore your first duty is to be honest and virtuous.\textsuperscript{142}

By presenting the patria as one’s mother, Garelli unites obligations toward one’s parents with obligations toward the nation. The gendered and familial depiction of the nation—what Banti refers to as “mater dolorosa”—transfers the very real and profound emotion of the family towards the patria.\textsuperscript{143} Thus the adoption of a virtue deeply embedded in Catholic morality is repurposed for the creation of a good Italian “son.” Ultimately, the desired inference is that if the youth were to disobey or disrespect the patria—the mother—he would be committing a cardinal sin and breaking one of the Ten Commandments. Through this, the nation, like the family and the Church, becomes a sacrosanct institution.

2. Work and Sacrifice

Garelli emphasizes two specific responsibilities that reflect larger political and economic concerns: work and sacrifice. Part of being a citizen of the patria is to work and enrich the greater community. Another major obligation is military service. The ultimate goal of work is not only the improvement of the youth’s life and family but also the prosperity of the patria. The predominance of the role of work is reflected in my earlier discussion of indolence in the debate on national “character.” Indeed, the patria relies on the improved work ethic of its populace, for a “country becomes rich and prosperous if everyone works; otherwise it goes to ruin if it is full

\textsuperscript{142} Garelli, Il giovinetto campagnuolo, pp. 56-57: “Tu conosci i doveri dei figliuoli verso il padre e la madre. Ebbene, gli stessi doveri abbiamo tutti verso la patria. Essa è la nostra madre comune e noi dobbiamo quindi amarla, onorarla, obbedirla, e con le opere farci degni di lei. Niuno può essere buon cittadino, se prima non è buon figliuolo. La patria si vergogna dei cattivi cittadini, come la famiglia piange pei figliuoli che riescono male. Dunque tuo prime dovere è quello di essere onesto, e virtuoso.”

\textsuperscript{143} Banti, Sublime madre nostra, 77, 79. Note: this is also a religious reference to Mary, the grieving mother of Christ.
of idlers.”

Garelli offers the rural youth an opportunity to participate in a grand project, laying the future of the patria in his hands: “for, if you learn how to cultivate the land well, you will improve your situation and make the patria successful…This will make [the patria] the richest nation in the world, just as it is the most beautiful.”

It is not just hard work, however, that will save the patria. She is also in need of strong and willing sons to defend her freedom from foreign and enemy powers: “When it is your turn, run willingly to the call and pay your debt to the patria.”

The connotation of military service as a debt owed to the patria is commonly found in textbooks in this period. Particularly, sacrifice is presented as a patriotic and noble virtue through the narration of profound deeds performed by the heroes of the Risorgimento—what Banti calls the “pedagogy of martyrdom.”

Though Garelli does not explicitly call on the youth to sacrifice himself, he does describe the heroics of King Umberto and his “immortal” father, Victor Emmanuel: “The glorious King Umberto who governs us…fought on the fields of Lombardy…for Italy’s independence…He dedicated his life for the welfare of the patria; he, a Gentleman [sic] like his father, respected and enforced the fundamental laws of the State. Thus he deserves all the respect and affection of Italians.”

To be clear, Garelli’s presentation of military duty is exclusively related to worries over high desertion rates rather than the later preoccupation with the nation’s military weakness as national debates shifted to the discussion of Italy’s Roman heritage. Although much scholarship has observed the perceived role of the army as the true “school of the nation,” military desertion—much like high truancy rates for schools—remained a large problem for the Liberal State. Garelli addresses this dilemma, calling deserters cowards and traitors. By transforming the emotional and spiritual significance of the family toward the patria, Garelli implies that desertion of the patria is like deserting one’s mother and, by association, deserting God. Rather, military service should be seen as an honor as well as a duty: “Military life with its hard work,
discipline, devotion to duty, community of people from every town, will return you to your family better than before—stronger, better educated, better mannered.” Thus, military service, like school, is one of the fundamental responsibilities of a good son and a good Italian.

3. Gender

Most of the discussion thus far can be applied to both the textbook for boys and the one for girls since the core lessons on morality adapted from Catholic education are mostly consistent between the two. However, the connection to and defense of the patria—much like the defense of the family—are reserved solely for boys. This contrast is not very surprising considering the time period and intended audience. In addition, certain moral lessons are either completely absent in one of the books, such as the need for girls to “speak little,” or are discussed at length over numerous chapters, such as the lesson for boys on how to use and conserve money properly. The gendered differences between the two books become more apparent simply by comparing the table of contents. The most obvious is the contrast in daily responsibilities: the boys must learn how to be excellent cultivators and the girls must learn how to be excellent mothers and housewives. Although this distinction is rather common for the period and for other European societies more generally, the specifics regarding moral and civic obligation are much more illuminating. Women were hardly the subject of the political discourse on national “character.” Their role in the nation was to be housewives, mothers, and educators. Thus, obligations toward the State—constituting a quarter of the whole section on morality for boys—are almost entirely absent in the book for girls. The only reference to the nation is in the preface, which is addressed to the (female) teachers, and states that the goal of school is to educate and instruct girls to be mothers of families and good housewives, which the nation requires. This absence signifies an entirely different understanding of the role of girls—at least in the countryside—in the patria, excluding them from the “grand family” espoused by patriotic writers and politicians alike. However, the creation of a textbook exclusively for rural girls does suggest a growing national concern over the wellbeing of women, albeit within a patriarchal prejudice shared by the State,

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151 Garelli, Il giovinetto campagnuolo, 58. “la vita militare con le sue fatiche, la disciplina, la devozione al dovere, la comunanza di gente d’ogni paese, ti restituisce alla famiglia migliore di prima, più robusto, più istruito, più educato.”
152 Patriarca, Italian Vices, 75.
153 Garelli, La giovinetta campagnuola, III.
the Church, and others. The eventual inclusion of *The First Rights and Duties* in textbooks for girls in the 1890s speaks to this shift to encompass both boys and girls within the national project. 

**Conclusion**

As a newly created country, both the government and the people faced enormous challenges to their stability and future as a unified entity. This period can be seen as a response to modernity and the modernizing process not only by the Catholic Church, as Christopher Clark has argued, but also by the Italian State. In order to be “resurrected” from centuries of shame, Italy needed to become politically and economically competitive with the other major European—and predominantly Protestant—nations. Many saw education—both for adults and for children—as the primary means to this end. Some believed traditional Catholic education, under the guiding hand of the Church, would lead to a moral Italian citizenry. Combining Catholicism with practical instruction would advance Italian competitiveness on par with the other European nations. However, many in government believed the Church was partially (or completely) responsible for the moral depravity and backwardness of the country, as evidenced by the high illiteracy rates and impoverishment of the former papal territories. Moderates advocated a separation of spheres between the two institutions, while more radical political groups like the democrats and republicans desired complete elimination of Papal influence on society. In its place, a morality of the laity would encompass enlightened thought. The problem of communicating this morality to the people—especially in the countryside—remained. For educators like Garelli, using the basic framework of the Catholic education, stripped of most of its doctrinal content, could be an ideal vehicle within which to instill a pseudo-secularized morality. As his textbooks reveal, this was especially important for public education in the countryside, where the Church’s influence had a powerful hold.

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154 For an excellent discussion on the State’s perception of women in Liberal Italy, see Mary Gibson, *Prostitution and the State in Italy, 1860-1915* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1986).

155 See Giuseppe A. Silvestri, *Prime nozioni sui doveri e diritti ad uso delle alunne della classe 3a elementare* (Turin: G.B. Paravia, 1894?). The trajectory of a morality distinct for girls deserves further investigation but is beyond the scope of the current project.


157 Republican and democratic patriots originated in the Napoleonic era in Italy and believed in a government more inclusive of popular participation. They were part of the Center-Left.
Only recently have scholars begun to examine the vast outpouring of literature on morality—both secular and religious—in post-unification Italy in relation to the political and economic concerns of the day. While only two examples, these two schoolbooks by Garelli are critical to understanding the changing objectives of the ruling elite. Specifically, they are a reflection of what was being discussed by Garelli, Coppino, Giolitti, and other nationalist reformers from Cuneo in the 1880s. As I have discussed, the issue of indolence was central to debates on moral improvement during these years and how the State tried to define the nation’s “character.” Religious language and content became an instrumental medium nationalists incorporated into the national project aimed particularly at the nation’s children. Understanding these efforts is important to determine the significance of political decisions and social developments in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. The State’s preoccupation with improving Italy’s prestige abroad, for instance, partially led to the beginnings of Italy’s imperial chapter. Initiatives aimed at the improvement of national character foreshadowed attempts to “civilize” and “Italianize” peoples in Africa. Additionally, the growing problem of migration—which appears as a significant concern in Garelli’s textbook for boys—was perceived as a failure on the part of the government to reform Italians’ character and provide for their children. By guiding children at an early age, the State hoped to train industrious citizens loyal to the patria. Indeed, children increasingly played a role in the construction of “character,” as the State took ever-greater command of their upbringing.

The intention of this chapter is not to measure the efficacy of these efforts by the government and its proponents in the late nineteenth-century Italian classroom. Rather, it is an attempt to understand how politicians, intellectuals, and teachers—some of whom were devout Catholics, some of whom were anticlerical, and many in-between—attempted to respond to the

158 *Il giovinetto campagnuolo* was reprinted and edited ninety-three times by 1894, and *La giovinetta campagnuola* was reprinted and edited seventy-seven times by 1892. Both incorporated the latest education reforms of 1888 and, later, of 1894. Furthermore, each text developed to address particular grade levels (second and third grades). Their popularity parallels the Cuneo group’s rise to political power in 1892. See Felice Garelli, *Il giovinetto campagnuolo educato ed istruito: libro di lettura per la seconda classe o sezione rurale, riordinato e ampliato in conformità dei programmi governativi* (Turin: Stamp. reale della ditta G. B. Paravia e C. edit., 1894), and Felice Garelli, *La giovinetta campagnuola educata ed istruita: libro di lettura per la seconda classe o sezione rurale, riordinato ed ampliato in conformità dei programmi governativi* (Turin: Stamp. reale della ditta G. B. Paravia e C. edit., 1892). Note: I have been unable to find any further reprints after 1894, which might be explained by the end of Giolitti’s administration or by the outpouring of similar textbooks in the 1890s.

159 Though, as Patriarca has noted, the fact that this debate continued well after the nineteenth century suggests that these efforts had minimal impact towards their intended goal.
growing pangs of a new nation made up of disparate communities. It is particularly difficult to
determine the impact of such texts on their intended audience without the benefit of such
evidence as notebooks and diaries. However, it remains a useful attempt to represent and analyze
what a young Italian child was exposed to and how this might have affected his or her role in
society. Perhaps equally or even more influential than school books, children’s literature became
a primary vehicle to communicate lessons on morality by captivating both child and adult readers.
Edmondo De Amicis’s *Cuore (Heart): An Italian Schoolboy’s Journal* and Carlo Collodi’s *The
Adventures of Pinocchio* are nineteenth-century Italy’s most famous examples. To these we turn
in the next chapter.
Chapter Three: A Culture of the School in Cuore and Pinocchio

“Respect, love, your master, my son…And always pronounce with reverence that name of "teacher," which, after that of your father, is the noblest, the sweetest name which one man can apply to another man.”

- Enrico’s Father, Cuore

The most famous example of children’s literature connected to Italian nationalism is not Garibaldi’s Cantoni but Edmondo De Amicis’s Cuore. The above quote illustrates an emotional tone absent in Garibaldi’s criticism of the Italian people and of the Church. This distinction exemplifies an overall re-articulation of the nation within the Church-State conflict. Immediately popular both at home and abroad, Cuore centers on the moral development of a nine-year-old boy set in a newly created country at the threshold of modernity. In addition to its entertaining appeal, its moral message resonated with readers. Even though De Amicis’s Cuore contained similar stories to those found in Garibaldi’s Cantoni, the former was substantially more successful. The most obvious reason is De Amicis’s superior writing and endearing imagination. However, there remains a more subtle distinction: the absence of anticlerical language. Cuore lacks any criticism of the Church and in fact contains few references to the Church at all. Instead it incorporates religious imagery and ethics to convey a moral story that found positive reception among literate Italians. The use of religious language served as validation for ulterior motives in a largely Catholic society. Anticlericals such as De Amicis believed religion was essential to the establishment of a moral conscience among Italian children—and of women, especially. Additionally, the school classroom—and education in general—is presented as the most obvious path to become a moral and accepted person in society—much like the church. This literature follows a larger movement within national education reform tied closely to a political discourse on national “character.”

In the 1870s, as noted before, the Liberal State experienced a political shift as the Center-Left party took up the reins of power for the first time since unification. No longer relegating the moral improvement of the populace to the “natural forces” of progress, the new government set

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161 Bruno Traversetti, Introduzione a De Amicis (Rome: Editori Laterza, 1991), 89; Patriarca, Italian Vices, 74.
out to ensure a concerted effort towards a moral regeneration. The Coppino Law was one such landmark change in government policy. The national education of the Italian people under a common curriculum and uniform morality supported by positivist ideals would produce a strong and united Italian people. This perspective reflects a growing concern with Italy’s social and economic woes as millions of rural Italians began to migrate from the countryside to the cities. A rising urban population with minimal economic growth resulted in a largely unemployed and unproductive segment of the population. Although the situation in part derived from the opening of Italy’s agricultural economy to international competition and inefficient land reform, some nationalist reformers believed it was a consequence of a general moral degeneracy of the Italian people. The strong work ethic of the British and northern European “races” seemed to be absent in the Latin peoples of the peninsula. Thus, alongside the inculcation of obedience, nationalist reformers also sought to eliminate the indolent nature of the population, inherited over centuries of immoral guidance.

Along with Cuore, Pinocchio is the definitive children’s novel of nineteenth-century Italy. Both illustrate a major change in pedagogical thought where classical education was considered to be inadequate in addressing the social and economic realities of the Italian populace. No longer could education be mere instruction—as something “imported and repeated in parrot-like fashion.” Rather, it required the development of the individual conscience through children’s experience. For leading pedagogues like Francesco De Sanctis, the school must therefore create a moral environment to bind students to the school and to the nation. Both Collodi and De Amicis, influenced by education reformers like De Sanctis, wrote their works with this pedagogical change in mind. Whereas Pinocchio became the “embodiment

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164 In one of his university lectures in Naples in 1873, Francesco De Sanctis called on writers to produce new books that would interest children with the capacity to teach history: “The problem of school books is to give children a drove of useful knowledge, which they learn pleasantly almost without even realizing it.” (“Il problema d’un libro d’istruzione è di dare al giovane una folla di cognizioni utili, si che impari piacevolmente, quasi senza accorgersene.”) (Toni Iermano, *Da Parravicini a De Amicis*, 354).
166 Ibid., 18-19.
of the De Sanctian education project” in the development of the individual conscience outside the classroom, in Cuore the school becomes the preeminent and all-encompassing location of moral development. This period is thus a crucial turning point in the early growth of Italian public education not simply for its pedagogical transition but also for its popularization within Italian cultural production. Similar to Garelli’s textbooks, these popular children’s novels reflect the intellectual discourse on national “character” and the call for a moral regeneration. Furthermore, the contemporaneous publications of the textbooks and novels (1880-1886) reflect the political situation of the 1880s and the growing relevance of positivist pedagogy in children’s education. Whereas textbooks invited children to participate in the national project within the classroom, Pinocchio and Cuore invoked their imagination beyond scholastic dogma.

Cuore: The School

Edmondo De Amicis was born in Oneglia in 1846 but in 1848 moved with his family to Cuneo. Cuneo became his childhood home, where he developed a strong desire to become a writer during his high school years.168 He transferred to Turin to attend college for a short time before his father died.169 In order to help the family, he quit his studies and decided to enroll himself in the military academy in Modena. He participated in the War of 1866 against Austria and thereafter pursued a literary career, collaborating in magazines focused on the military. His experience in and appreciation of the military led him to consider it a symbol for a united nation. Along with other intellectuals who described the army as the “school of the nation,” De Amicis perceived the military as a pedagogical tool to imbue the populace with moral character.170 Upon leaving the military in 1871 after the Third War of Independence, he wrote for various magazines, newspapers, and reviews as well as his own novels. Although he did not participate directly in government, his patriotism soon became a boon to the national project. By the early 1870s, he had already become established in the literary world and initiated a strong

167 Ibid., 19.
168 Traversetti, Introduzione a De Amicis, 14.
169 Michele Coppino was currently teaching at the same university. By this point Coppino was already well involved in politics in Piedmont. Whether or not they crossed paths is difficult to determine. However, their similar backgrounds, pedagogical goals, and political affiliations point to a membership within a common social network. Both were also part of Masonic societies in Turin. De Amicis eventually departs from this group in 1891 by officially joining the Socialist Party, which became a serious issue for the Liberal State in the 1890s.
rapport with the publishing house E. Treves of Milan. This relationship eventually led to the publication of *Cuore* (1886).

*Cuore* was originally conceived in 1878, as De Amicis proposed it in a letter to his editor at E. Treves of Milan: “...I said to myself: to write a new and strong book requires that I write it with the part of me which is superior to the others: my heart. The subject took to my heart. The book is titled “Cuore.”” His excitement resonated with the changing climate following the political shift in government as well as the promulgation of the Coppino Law the previous year. De Amicis himself claimed that the book was based on his own observations of his sons during their time in public school and thus reflected the current changes in public education in Turin. The author worked on the novel intermittently over the next eight years. He was able to produce an early section of the work, which Treves published in 1883, titled: *Cuore. Parte prima. Gli Amici.* The full novel was delayed due to his desire to travel overseas to South America to observe the miserable conditions of Italian emigrants both on the transport ship and in Montevideo. The immediate success of the book speaks to the appeal not only of its writing style but also of its message: it embraced a national culture promoting education, the family, and moral standards exclusive of Church oversight. Thus, *Cuore* reflected a national project as well as a national sentiment already widespread among literate Italians. At its heart was the new endeavor to educate Italy’s young: significantly, the life of the book’s protagonist Enrico revolves around the school, developing his moral compass within the school year. *Cuore* shows how the school became intimately tied to childhood and reflects the final outcome desired by education reformers like Coppino, Giolitti, and Garelli.

171 Traversetti, *Introduzione a De Amicis*, 70: “…Mi son detto: per fare un libro nuovo e forte bisogna che lo faccia colla facoltà nelle quale mi sento superiore agli altri: col cuore. Il soggetto preso nel mio cuore. Il libro intitolato *Cuore.*”


174 This experience led him to write the novel *Sull’oceano* in 1889, which described emigrants’ journey across the Atlantic and their lives in the Americas. Immigration was a major problem plaguing the new country since the 1870s. Beginning in 1886, the imperial project in Africa was one perceived solution to provide cheap land for poor Italians. In addition to designs of international prestige, this rationale differs considerably from the intent of the major imperial powers of Great Britain and France.

175 Traversetti, *Introduzione a De Amicis*, 71.

176 Nicolas J. Perella, “An Essay on *Pinocchio*,” in *The Adventures of Pinocchio: Story of a Puppet*, by Carlo Collodi (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), 15. Perella argues that De Amicis propagated the idea of school—along with the home—of being the place where Italians were to be formed. De Amicis was therefore in line with education reformers and nationalists of the time who believed the school was the site where national character was to be formed.
The setting of Cuore is very significant to the overall intent of the author. Set in the large city of Turin in the region of the Italian monarchy originated, Cuore reflects the educational project emanating from Piedmont. Even though there is one “outsider”—simply known as the “the Calabrian Boy”—the focus is largely urban and northern. The sentiment offered is of a culture based on primarily Piedmontese guidance, which should serve as the model for the nation. An early example of this sentiment found in Cuore is when the Calabrian Boy first enters the class. The teacher tells the other Turinese students to “treat him [the Calabrian Boy] well, so that he shall not perceive that he is far away from the city in which he was born; make him see that an Italian boy, in whatever Italian school he sets his foot, will find brothers there.”

Immediately, connections between education and morality, the unifying nature of the school, and the familial symbolism used by the teacher are clear. The diary entries and monthly stories illustrate a direct link between the school and the moral and socioeconomic salvation of all Italians, rich and poor, northern and southern, urban and rural. For De Amicis, the Turinese school was meant to be a model for the nation, communicating middle-class values to the rest of the country. Cuore thus reflects the changing landscape of Italian childhood where the school became a major facet of a child’s moral upbringing.

Morality and Education: The School as Moral Authority

Enrico Bottini, the protagonist of Cuore, represents the bourgeoisie and its common perception of society. The son of an engineer, Enrico is obliged to attend school, study diligently, and obey his parents. The book features his diary entries, letters from his parents, and the monthly stories he learns in school are all presentations of a moral development intertwined with common childhood experiences. He is not, however, the focus of the novel. Rather, it is Enrico’s interpretation of multiple events, characters, and lessons that come his way. De Amicis’s intent is to transfer the boy’s understanding to the reader. In this sense, the child-reader mirrors Enrico but his attention is drawn to the lessons gleaned from others’ stories. These lessons are implicitly

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177 Traversetti notes that nineteenth-century Italian literature never really accepted the metropolitan theme. Cuore is therefore very unusual especially because it was so popular. See Traversetti, Introduzione a De Amicis, 84.

178 De Amicis, Cuore, 7.

179 Traversetti, Introduzione a De Amicis, 24.

Catholic in meaning and relevance to an Italian child’s social understanding.\textsuperscript{181} This is remarkable considering that this time period also saw the most violent confrontation between clerics and anticlericals not only in the realm of education but in Italian society in general.\textsuperscript{182} The aggressive anticlericalism of Garibaldi was shared by many Italian nationalists, including De Amicis. No mention of the Church or the priests exists in \textit{Cuore}, though. There is no vitriolic condemnation of clerical immorality as found in \textit{Cantoni}. Nor is there a clear support of the Church’s role in Italian society.\textsuperscript{183} De Amicis is rather silent on the topic. This absence can be interpreted as a shift in the socio-political role of religion in Italian society, much in the same manner as the omission of religious education in the Coppino Law. Religious instruction was relegated to local authorities. Thus in the textbooks by Garelli, the importance of church attendance and adherence to basic Catholic doctrine are presented near the beginning. His intent, as argued earlier, was to validate his ulterior motives of promoting a moral connection to the nation among rural children. De Amicis presents his moral lessons in similarly religious language but avoids direct mention of religion: his emphasis is on the school’s unifying and equalizing power, the need to obey and respect one’s parents, and the dangers of specific vices perceived as common among Italian children. Thus \textit{Cuore} shares with Garelli’s textbooks, albeit less explicitly, the same appropriation of Catholic lessons and insertion of national objectives. In \textit{Cuore} the school becomes the place where children develop their moral compass.

\section{1. Basic Religious Framework in a School Environment}

By 1886, the public school was still a relatively new building in most Italian towns. Still underfunded, its presence established the Italian government in local society distinctly from the other visual representations of the State: municipal buildings and the police station. Its role was not as administrator, tax collector, or enforcer. Instead, it offered a means to improve the conditions of the local populace, especially the children. Focusing not only on basic literacy in official Italian, school curricula included arithmetic, geography, and lessons on morality. Other than the Salesians and other minor Catholic groups, the Church offered no alternative to

\begin{quote}
\textsuperscript{181} Ibid., 142-143.
\textsuperscript{183} In analyzing De Amicis’s poetry, Traversetti notes that even as early as 1880 De Amicis’s writing reflected his devotion to the national and ideological reconciliation between the anticlericalism of the Risorgimento and the Catholic traditions dominant in the peninsula. See Traversetti, \textit{Introduzione a De Amicis}, 66.
\end{quote}
positivist-influenced instruction. Its primary function was as moral and spiritual guardian, a role in which neither literacy nor arithmetic would bring spiritual salvation. While the public school did offer these subjects, it still required validation and obedience from the populace. Education reformers like Garelli considered moral instruction a potent means through which to instill national sentiment and correct a perceived moral degeneracy. An important part of these efforts was the intentional depiction of the school and its teachers as authorities of morality, comparative to the Church and the clergy.

In *Cuore*, De Amicis describes the school building as a place where social status and regional differences are conflated—much like in the church as described by Garelli: “You see, we have here sons of workingmen and of gentlemen, of the rich and the poor, and all love each other and treat each other like brothers, as they are.”

The sentiment advanced is that the building itself is a refuge from the realities of social inequality. All are equal and are judged based on the merits of their character and their actions. Towards the end of the school year, Enrico’s mother likens the school to a mother of a great family: “School is a mother, my Enrico. It took you from my arms when you could barely speak, and now it returns you to me, strong, good, studious…” For De Amicis, the school replaces the church. In the Catholic Catechism, the Church is depicted as the “mother” while God is the “father”: “He who does not have the Church for a mother cannot have God for a father.” The child’s rearing transitions from the family to the State through the school. The school’s role as the place of moral development is clear.

The parallel between school and church, while implicit, was not casual. In fact, De Amicis describes school ceremonies as nearly religious in presentation. In the awards ceremony, Enrico notes how the children sing together just like in church. Much like Catholic mass, the mayor and public officials seated on stage resemble priests offering benediction as they give a kiss on the forehead of each student who walks past to receive his award. Other than Enrico’s

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184 De Amicis, *Cuore*, 115.
185 Ibid., 318.
187 Battaglia, *Catechismo della dottrina cattolica*, 33: “Chi non ha la Chiesa per madre, nemmeno può aver Dio per padre.”
188 De Amicis, *Cuore*, 168.
189 Ibid., 169.
description of the choir, De Amicis does not reference the church. As Banti and Duggan argue, however, nationalistic writers embraced religious imagery to inculcate a spiritual ethos needed to bind Italians to the *patria*. De Amicis follows this trend by framing the school ceremony within a familiar ecclesiastic experience.

In the same vein, the school teacher in many ways resembles a town priest: he or she is part of a professional hierarchy and is responsible for the individual development of the students’ character. In this regard, the teacher is justified and in fact required to discipline those students who fail academically and morally: “Your father will tell you that you are in the wrong...And besides that, it is the teacher alone who has the right to judge and punish in school.” The teacher’s power within the classroom is thus similar to that of a priest within a church. The case of Franti is the most obvious example of the teacher’s use of punishment to correct the moral character of students, yet he remains the lone educational failure throughout *Cuore*. The teacher’s resemblance to a priest is not limited to punishment, however. In the chapter “Prisoner,” the teacher of Enrico’s father relates his story of how he helped prisoner no. 78—a man who seemed beyond redemption—slowly to learn to read and write. Six years later, the same prisoner is freed from prison, redeemed and determined to become a better person. Prisoner no.78 turns out to be the father of Crossi—one of Enrico’s poor classmates—who had told everyone his father had emigrated for America. The lesson inferred is that through the moral guidance of the teacher and education one can become an upstanding citizen and can be welcomed back into society.

Thus the school is depicted as an alternative to the church or at least as a parallel institution. The building’s role as a socially equalizing force as well as comparisons to church ceremony and authority reflect contemporary political thought on education and the increasingly invasive activity of the State in society. Primary education was considered so important for the continued existence of the State that Agostino Depretis—prime minister of Italy in multiple governments during this period—proclaimed the school to be the “church of modern times.”

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190 Banti, *Sublime madre nostra*, 79.
191 De Amicis, *Cuore*, 115.
192 Franti is punished throughout the school year for his inappropriate behavior—beating up students, disrupting the classroom, etc. He remains the only student who fails to improve morally.
The similarities were included the strong moral imperative driving pedagogical thought. As Garelli’s texts demonstrate, certain Christian commandments were incorporated into moral instruction in the public school curricula, such as respect and obedience toward parents and honesty. Although not as explicitly connected to Catechistic doctrine as in Garelli’s texts, the same emphasis appears in *Cuore*.

### 2. Ten Commandments

As we have seen, Garelli presented moral lessons that clearly reflected the Ten Commandments and were foundational to his moral objectives. He directly connected respect for one’s parents and respect for God. In *Cuore*, the association is less explicit but still present. Enrico continually feels obliged to thank and respect his parents throughout the school year. In particular, he thanks his mother, who is his “beloved and blessed guardian angel, who has tasted all my joys, and suffered all my bitternesses…with me, with one hand caressing my brow, and with the other pointing me to heaven.”

The depiction and imagination of Enrico’s parents as his personal and temporal saints resonate with the connection made by Garelli in his lessons on obedience towards one’s parents. The notion that Enrico must appreciate and worship his parents almost as religious and spiritual figures is revealed further when Enrico writes that he should “kneel before” them and thank them for all the tenderness which they have instilled into his mind through “twelve years of sacrifices and of love.” The severity of this moral obligation is so great that Enrico’s father would rather see him dead than have Enrico be ungrateful to his mother.

The adoption of religious language to venerate Enrico’s parents is intended to establish a spiritual connection to the family, the foundation of moral development. Some scholars, however, have dismissed this aspect of De Amicis’s writing as a simple repertoire of “little moral commandments” and as a formulaic system of a secular liturgy. The use of religious imagery and language serves only as irony and satire, reflecting De Amicis’s agnostic beliefs. This interpretation belies the fundamental significance of the entire novel: the encouragement of a spiritual morality tied not only to the family but to the patria. As De Amicis was part of the Center-Left, he most likely would have agreed with Agostino Depretis’s earlier

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194 De Amicis, *Cuore*, 309.
195 Ibid.
196 Ibid., 31.
declaration that the school is the new church of the modern age. Furthermore, the spiritual message is not limited to Enrico but is in fact promoted throughout the book in various monthly stories and events described in Enrico’s diary. During the awards ceremony, after all of the students receive their prizes, the public officials tell the students to turn around and salute their parents and teachers who “toil so hard” for them, who have consecrated to them all the “strength of their intelligence and of their hearts,” who “live and die” for them.”198 Much like the emphasis given in Garelli’s texts, a child’s obedience to his parents is paramount in the development of his moral character. Tied closely to obedience is the need to be honest, as the Seventh Commandment stipulates. Willingness to tell the truth—especially to one’s parents—is essential to the moral development of a proper child. Lying—one of the ugliest habits a child could have—emanates from Satan, and displeases God.199

Enrico’s moral development does not rely on the pleasure of God but rather the pleasure of his parents and those around him. His duty to his parents—to be obedient and loving—hinges on the integrity of his character. If he is not truthful, how can he be expected to respect his parents? Although Enrico is never directly tested in this matter, his classmate Garoffi is. During a snowball fight, a wayward snowball thrown by Garoffi seriously injures an old man. Encouraged by the ever-virtuous Garrone, Garoffi confesses his sin to the old man as an angry crowd gathers. Eventually Garoffi is vindicated by the school headmaster who saw the ordeal and praised the schoolboy for his courage and honesty. Enrico’s father, though, pulls Enrico aside and asks him if he would have the courage to do his duty and confess his fault if he were in Garoffi’s place. Enrico responds affirmatively and even promises as a “lad of heart and honor” that he would.200 Though a relatively minor incident, the significance of honesty and confessing one’s sin in the face of certain reprobation is tied to a child’s duty to his father.

3. Moral Responsibility and the Problem of Sloth

The emphasis on hard work and studiousness is found throughout Cuore. They are essential ingredients to an ideal bourgeois society, as described by Enrico’s teacher: “The smiling sky, a singing mother, an honest man at work, and boys at study,—these are beautiful

198 De Amicis, Cuore, 172.
199 Battaglia, Catechismo della dottrina cattolica, 102.
200 De Amicis, Cuore, 62.
The emphasis on this particular virtue—industriousness—is connected to general concerns about indolence inherent in the Italian character. Work is thus presented as an honorable obligation based on familial duty and connected to one’s happiness, as evidenced by Enrico’s admiration for his friend Coretti: “Ah, no, Coretti, no; you are the happier, because you study and work too; because you are of use to your father and your mother; because you are better—a hundred times better—and more courageous than I, my dear schoolmate.” Moreover, industriousness was considered the necessary foundation of a strong nation. Enrico’s father relates to him the importance of workers to the nation: “reflect that from the veins of laborers in the shops and in the country issues nearly all that blessed blood which has redeemed your country.” Thus the Christian metaphor of blood sacrifice and the redemption of others are invoked to reinforce the necessity of work. That lesson is confirmed at the end of the book when Enrico’s mother advises him to cherish his schoolmates after their year together as they may never see each other again: “…many will become brave and honest workmen, the fathers of honest and industrious workmen like themselves; and who knows whether there may not also be among them one who will render great services to his country and make his name glorious.”

Even with these similarities to Christian moral lessons and religious framework, the Catholic Church is nearly absent in Cuore. There is no lesson on church attendance as found in Garelli’s texts, nor is there any direct reference to a Christian god. In fact, De Amicis received much criticism from Catholic writers inquiring as to why Cuore excluded any reference to religion. De Amicis’s membership in a Masonic society as well as the moral purpose of Cuore to bind Italian children to the nation explain this absence. Nonetheless, he incorporates religious language and symbols to communicate ulterior objectives of creating moral Italians and not moral Christians.

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201 Ibid., 190.
202 Ibid., 35.
203 Ibid., 218.
204 Ibid., 317. There is a possible mistranslation from the Italian, as the Italian is presented ambiguously. In the Italian, this last line is written as “…chi sa che non ce ne sia qualcuno pure, che renderà dei grandi servigi al suo paese e farà il suo nome glorioso.” The last phrase can technically be translated as “…who will render great services to his country and make its name glorious.” The difference is significant.
Morality and Politics: A National Ethos

The presentation of lessons on morality is significantly different in *Cuore* than in Garelli’s textbooks. In *Il giovinetto campagnuolo* and *La giovinetta campagnuola*, Garelli organizes his lessons in a well-ordered and flowing narrative, beginning with the individual and expanding outward towards the national community. In *Cuore*, the lessons on morality do not follow a well-ordered narrative but instead appear in various forms and stories throughout the school year. Similarly to Garelli’s textbooks, however, emphasis on a child’s moral responsibilities towards his parents correlates to his duty towards the nation. The use of familial symbolism and emotion to form a connection to the nation appears often in *Cuore*. Furthermore, the depiction of the school teacher—the most direct presence of the State in a child’s life—as similar to a parent and in need of a child’s love, respect, and obedience corresponds to the encouragement of filial responsibility towards the patria given in Garelli’s texts. Reflecting the national concern on indolence and the growing importance of the country’s military prowess, work and sacrifice are common themes found throughout *Cuore*—often in conjunction with duty towards one’s parents. The pedagogy in *Cuore* is one of individual development centered on the construction of a public conscience. The incorporation of moral lessons in a basic religious framework maintains the ulterior objective of promoting a strong connection to the nation through the improvement of children’s moral character.

1. Familial Symbolism and the Nation

The interchangeability of the nation with one’s parents characterizes much of the moral lessons found in *Cuore*. In particular, the depiction of the school teacher as quite nearly parental in responsibility and emotion is remarkably similar to Garelli’s texts. As a representative of the State, the public school teacher serves as the child’s foremost and earliest interaction with the government. In this context, comparisons with the family are significant. In the beginning we see this association immediately as Enrico introduces his new teacher who asks his students to be his family:

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I have no family; you are my family… I have no one but you in all the world; I have no other affection, no other thought than you: you must be my sons, I wish you well, and you must like me too. I do not wish to be obliged to punish anyone. Show me that you are boys of heart: our school shall be a family, and you shall be my consolation and my pride. I do not ask you to give me a promise on your word of honor; I am sure that in your hearts you have already answered me 'yes,' and I thank you.\(^{207}\)

Of course, the teacher is not actually the students’ father. His request alludes to a relationship more aligned with that of a step-father than a biological parent. He does however ask for the same emotional and moral sentiment and respect. It is not only the teacher who wishes for their affection. Enrico’s father himself tells Enrico to “respect, love, your master…and always pronounce with reverence that name of ‘teacher,’ which, after that of your father, is the noblest, the sweetest name which one man can apply to another man.”\(^{208}\) The school—in particular, the teacher—represents the continued and completed education begun within the family and expanded to introduce children to the larger society.\(^{209}\) This transition from child to student marks the educational contrast between parent and teacher, between family and society. In this sense, the child is no longer simply a family member but enters into the national community once he becomes a student.\(^{210}\) If Enrico desires to be a good son, he must follow his father’s instructions and treat his teacher with similar affection and respect. Thus by describing the school as a continuation of the family De Amicis transfers the emotional attachment of the family to the school and, by association, to the State. The author’s belief is that this level of obedience will transform the child into an industrious and civic-minded Italian citizen once grown up. The family therefore serves not only as a moral foundation for child development leading into the public school system but also as an educational institution responsible for the earliest stages of producing future civic-minded Italians.\(^{211}\)

As discussed earlier, the moral obligation of an Italian child towards the patria was framed in explicitly gendered terms: the patria was a mother who required the love, obedience,
and sacrifice of her sons. Thus in addition to the depiction of the school teacher as parent, the nation itself takes on maternal qualities commonly found in the rhetoric of *Risorgimento* intellectuals and patriots. Near the end of the school year, Enrico’s father writes him about Italy, the “august mother of three hundred cities, and thirty millions of sons.”\(^{212}\) As a “son of Italy,” Enrico is meant to repeat this salute to the nation on days of festival. As a child, Enrico does not yet understand “her” fully but promises to “venerate and love [her] with all [his] soul.”\(^{213}\) More, he is proud to have been “born” of her and to call himself her son. He thus applies the same affection he has for his own mother to an abstract idea dressed in a majestic and emotionally gendered metaphor. Originally conceived by patriots fighting for the freedom of Italy, this powerful metaphor of the mother “enslaved” by foreign powers called forth a powerful emotion and spirituality, which Banti argues drove thousands to fight for Italian independence. Now, the same metaphor was invoked to strengthen young Italians’ love for the new nation.\(^{214}\) As described by Enrico’s father, this love for country is in the blood that flows through his family’s veins and in the soil of the land, representing a seemingly natural connection to an idea.\(^{215}\) Later in the novel, Enrico’s father encourages him to be a good son not only to his family but to the *patria* by repeating this religiously-inspired vow to Italy, the mother:

> …I will be an industrious and honest citizen, constantly intent on ennobling myself, in order to render myself worthy of thee [Italy], to assist with my small powers in causing misery, ignorance, injustice, crime, to disappear one day from thy face, so that thou mayest live and expand tranquilly in the majesty of thy right and of thy strength. I swear that I will serve thee, as it may be granted to me, with my mind, with my arm, with my heart, humbly, ardently; and that, if the day should dawn in which I should be called on to give my blood for thee and my life, I will give my blood, and I will die, crying thy holy name to heaven, and wafting my last kiss to thy blessed banner.\(^{216}\)

De Amicis constructs the nation through familial descent rooted in the land itself.\(^{217}\) Enrico’s duties to the *patria* are therefore synonymous with his local experience and obligations. In

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\(^{212}\) De Amicis, *Cuore*, 293.
\(^{213}\) Ibid.
\(^{216}\) Ibid., 293-294.
addition to loving the nation, De Amicis focuses on two specific duties of a good “son” of Italy: work and sacrifice. These virtues—originally taken from Catholic symbolism and morality—were considered essential to the moral development of a young Italian boy in the 1880s.

2. Work and Sacrifice

The relationship between hard work and sacrifice is one of selfless action. The notion is that one works hard not for individual prosperity but for the improvement of those around him. To this end, the patria is the implied larger community one must work and, if necessary, die for. This relationship also finds its way into the pages of Cuore as De Amicis desired the formation of a strong Italian youth dedicated to the improvement of the nation. As L. Gigli notes, work is presented as an accepted duty propped up as a heroic act comparable to the virtues and honor of military service. Furthermore, work and sacrifice are articulated within Enrico’s immediate familial experiences and obligations. Enrico continuously positions himself as morally inferior by comparing himself to his schoolmates. When helping his friend Coretti, he refuses his classmate’s praise and instead returns the compliment: “Ah, no, Coretti, no; you are the happier, because you study and work too; because you are of use to your father and your mother; because you are better — a hundred times better—and more courageous than I, my dear schoolmate.”

Through familial obligation, Coretti is depicted as morally superior due to his hard work, studiousness, and courage—three virtues necessary to become a good son and citizen. Indeed, industriousness—both at home and in the classroom—is a quality of a good character worthy of emulation. Echoing Garelli’s view on the importance of hard work in the prosperity of the nation, Enrico’s father tells Enrico to appreciate the workers whose “blessed blood” has redeemed the country. Enrico’s mother, too, advises him to appreciate his schoolmates as they leave for other schools near the end of the school year: “…many will become brave and honest workmen, the fathers of honest and industrious workmen like themselves…who will render great services to his country, and make his name glorious.” Thus, as part of attending school, Enrico must work as hard as his classmates not only for the welfare of his parents and family but also for the larger community of the nation.

219 De Amicis, Cuore, 37.
220 Ibid., 218.
221 Ibid., 317.
Associated with hard work is the notion of sacrifice. As in Garelli’s texts, the proximity of the need to work to the need for sacrifice and military service denotes a similar level of priority. Much like hard work, eventual military service will improve the child, his family, and his nation. The same alignment exists in *Cuore*. Numerous monthly stories as well as the letters Enrico receives from his parents encourage him to think of those around him and especially of the nation. The ultimate sacrifice of a child’s life is depicted numerous times throughout the novel as young patriots surrender their lives for the greater cause of family and nation. Scholars have long noted the militaristic overtones found in *Cuore*, citing the author’s career in the military before becoming a government official and writer. This period in Italian history also saw the growing concern over Italy’s military preparation as it began initial forays in imperial expansion. In *Cuore*, then, the ultimate sacrifice is invoked to create a spiritual and emotional attachment to the nation. Martyrdom is presented as a noble act expected of all moral and obedient sons. As Enrico’s father tells him, “to give one's life for one's country as the Lombard boy did, is a great virtue.” The context is that of a monthly story Enrico reads for school—“The Little Vidette of Lombardy”—in which a young Italian boy sacrifices himself either for his country. Even if a boy is immoral or at least misguided he can be redeemed by sacrificing himself for a greater good, as was the case of Ferruccio in “Blood of Romagna”: “The little hero, the saviour of the mother of his mother, stabbed by a blow from a knife in the back, had rendered up his beautiful and daring soul to God.” Indeed, much like the religious martyrdom found in Christianity, self-sacrifice is one of the noblest virtues a young Italian boy could achieve. By conflating familial martyrdom with patriotic martyrdom, De Amicis offers a sense of moral obligation towards the nation rooted in a child’s emotional attachment and assumed religious upbringing.

At the end of *Cuore*, it is difficult to determine whether Enrico actually improved morally. It is true that he learns lessons throughout the school year and writes about them in his diary. However, the reader does not receive the same validation of moral wisdom received from

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222 Silvana Patriarca argues that the discourse on national character began to shift towards a preoccupation with the military in the 1880s and 1890s. The period of 1876 to 1886 is therefore significant to understanding how political and international goals were reflected in the change in both education reform and cultural production. For a discussion on the “militarization” of the school system towards the end of the nineteenth century, see Chapter 4 in Patriarca, *Italian Vices*.

223 De Amicis, *Cuore*, 50.

224 Ibid., 184.
Enrico’s parents and teachers. The reader must rely on the authority of the author and the explanation given by adults to differentiate between what is right and what is wrong. Still, the audience includes parents and adults as much as children. As Giovanni Genovesi writes, 

_Cuore_ is not actually a book for children but is a book about children. Furthermore, it is about the school’s role in the introduction of children into the larger community after their early adolescence. It is a product of a particular social ideology emanating from Piedmont and the ruling class but it also espouses equality and fraternity more in line with the Center-Left and socialism. Its popularity both in Italy and abroad speak to its universality as a pedagogical model for similar educational initiatives.

**Pinocchio: The Road**

In 1881, Carlo Collodi (the literary pseudonym of Carlo Lorenzini) wrote the first story of what would later become _Le avventure di Pinocchio_ (The Adventures of Pinocchio). Initially titled _La storia di un burattino_ (The Story of a Puppet), Collodi’s masterpiece began as a weekly publication in Italy’s first children’s magazine, _Il giornale per i bambini_ (The Newspaper for Children). The good-natured little marionette was not Collodi’s first misguided character, however. Children’s schoolbooks such as _Giannettino_ and _Minuzzolo_ paved the way for Collodi to create Pinocchio and alter the pedagogical intent of children’s literature.

Collodi was born in Florence in 1826 to the former Angela Orzali and Domenico Lorenzini. The first of ten children, Collodi’s childhood experience was one of poverty. His parents did manage to give him some schooling, however, with the generosity of Marquis Ginori, whose house Collodi’s father worked in. In and out of school, Collodi spent some of his early years at the Val d’Elsa seminary to study divinity and later at the Padri Scolopi religious college.

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227 De Amicis later became a member of the socialist party. Many scholars have examined _Cuore_’s inclusion of socialist rhetoric within the moral framework of the school.

228 Lorenzo Gigli, “‘Cuore’: la sua illimitata fortuna,” in _Cuore nella letteratura per l’infanzia_, ed. Carlo Marini (Urbino, Italy: Quattroventi, 2004), 214. _Cuore_ was translated into multiple languages soon after its first publication and was especially popular in China and Mexico in the twentieth century.
to learn rhetoric and philosophy. He was then mentored under Professor Giuseppe Aiazzi, who encouraged him to pursue a literary career. Collodi was also a devout Italian patriot, volunteered in numerous battles beginning in 1848 and founded “Il Lampone,” a political-satire journal. His support for the Risorgimento and his close acquaintance with many local political figures led him to dedicate most of his career to government positions in Florence. He also took part in the creation of an Italian dictionary in 1868, based on the Tuscan dialect—the new nation’s official “Italian” language. This period marks his entrance into the literary world with his translations of Charles Perrault’s “Le novelle delle fate.” In 1876, he was asked by the publishing house Felice Paggi to write an updated version of Luigi Parravicini’s Giannetto, an early nineteenth-century schoolbook. The main plot of Collodi’s Giannettino is substantially different from its dated predecessor. Rather, it is quite similar to that of Pinocchio. Literary critics have noted its strong resemblance to and influence on the development of Pinocchio’s character. However, there are some major differences between the two: in Giannettino there are a house, a school, a family, patriotism, and a clearly religious presence for the protagonist to rely on for his moral development. In Pinocchio this support is absent. Pinocchio must learn through his adventures in a “liberal process of self-education” outside of the family and the school.

Following the success of Giannettino and additional adventures involving the protagonist and another major character, Collodi left Felice Paggi to work for Il giornale per i bambini, reflecting his discomfort with traditional schoolbooks and pedagogy. His criticism of the public education system—in particular, the Coppino Law’s requirement of mandatory attendance—appears throughout Pinocchio’s adventures, as illustrated by Geppetto’s poverty—

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230 Ibid., 27.
231 Ibid., 30.
232 For more discussion on the influence of Giannettino in the development of children’s literature in Italy, see Manuela Galli, “Giannettino nel pianeta dell’infanzia: fortuna e sfortuna di un testo scolastico,” Ponte 42, No. 6 (1986), 89-103.
234 Ibid. 163.
235 Collodi wrote other adventures involving Giannettino following him around Italy and the world. He also transformed one of the schoolbook’s characters—Minuzzolo—to become the protagonist of others stories.
the government preference for increased education over nourishment.236 As many scholars have noted, the road is the main site of learning and not the school.237 Pinocchio develops his moral compass outside of the school and not because of it. Collodi’s departure from the likes of De Amicis, Garelli, Coppino, et al, in this regard can possibly be explained by his geographic environment: he lived nearly his entire life in Florence. Not only his adult life, but his childhood diverged from those education reformers and intellectuals hailing from Piedmont. His understanding of the State’s role in ameliorating social malaise therefore differed, if only slightly.238 His criticism of the Coppino Law notwithstanding, the public school continues to be supported throughout Pinocchio’s adventures, rooted in his filial obligations to his “parents.”

**Morality and Education: The School versus the Road**

*The Adventures of Pinocchio* is a story of a boy searching for his moral compass. It is also a story about the growing appreciation of childhood by intellectuals as a stage in social development. Pinocchio’s entrance into the world unfolds into a comical scene in which Geppetto must chase the rambunctious marionette in the streets of a Tuscan town. The episode ends with a run-in with the carabinieri—a newly-introduced symbol of the Piedmontese state—and Geppetto is thrown in jail due to bad parenting. However, Geppetto was not at fault: Pinocchio had no ears and thus could not obey his father’s wishes. Although Pinocchio soon receives his all-important ears, his moral compass remains rather wayward. His efforts to be a good and obedient son are constantly sidetracked by distractions, temptations, and deceit. The puppet show of Fire-Eater (*Mangiafuoco*), Funland (*Paese dei Balocchi*), and the Cat and the Fox are all examples of immorality and danger that lead Pinocchio astray. Throughout these trials, there remains a powerful path in which Pinocchio can redeem himself and become a real boy: school. As children’s first official introduction to the State, the public school is presented as the source of both social and economic salvation. More, the school is a physical institution

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236 In an essay published later called “Pane e libri” (“Bread or Books”), Collodi openly criticizes the Coppino Law and the government’s inadequate programs to improve the nation solely through education. Scholars such as Perella and Stewart-Steinberg have correctly interpreted the various references to food in Pinocchio—the food painted on Geppetto’s wall, the food made of chalk given to Pinocchio by the fairy, etc.—as Collodi’s masked criticism of the government and its handling of Italy’s poor. See Perella, “An Essay on Pinocchio,” 36.
238 Ibid., 37. According to Perella, Collodi did not believe universal education to be a singular solution to the nation’s problems.
239 Ibid., 16. Perella notes that even with Collodi’s criticism, “school and home are values no less primary in Collodi’s tale than they are in Cuore.”
espousing the development of moral character. For, as the Fairy tells Pinocchio, one must go to
school in order to become a proper boy—un ragazzo per bene.\footnote{Collodi, \textit{Le avventure di Pinocchio}, 285} Education is integral to
morality. Those children who skip school are indolent vagabonds who achieve nothing but “end
up in jail or in the poorhouse.”\footnote{Ibid., 287.}

Although Collodi characterizes truants as immoral good-for-nothings, most children who
missed school had very reasonable excuses. Poverty, work, or familial obligations prevented
many from attending school. Even for those who could, education’s practical uses were either
not clearly communicated or not applicable. Until the end of the nineteenth century, the only
segments of Italian society that did seem to find education beneficial were the middle and upper
classes. In other words, urbanites and wealthy landowners in the countryside were the primary
recipients of State educational programs. However, these groups were not the intended target.
Although education reformers imagined a strong citizenry comprised of the middle class, they
were well aware of Italy’s predominantly rural population. Indeed, as the Coppino Law and the
textbooks by Garelli illustrate, the State’s educational policy required a reorientation of its
objectives to focus on the countryside. Additionally, the inculcation of a strong work-ethic was
paramount in education reformers’ priorities. The school was considered the best place to train
Italy’s youth to become productive citizens. The point was demonstrated through parable in
Garelli’s texts, emphasized in \textit{Pinocchio} in 1883, and it became the central lesson in \textit{Cuore} in
1886 as the school encompassed Enrico’s childhood experience. Nonetheless, Collodi’s
appreciation of street urchins appears in Pinocchio’s adventures as he experiences his moral
development firsthand outside of the school. In this setting, the school is purported to be the site
of moral instruction, yet Pinocchio learns to be good through his mistakes in the streets.

The connection between school and hard work is prevalent throughout Pinocchio’s
adventures. Collodi does not present school as a place of fun and entertainment. Instead, the
school is meant to train one to succeed in the adult world where hard work is required. Pinocchio
recognizes this purpose in chapter twenty-five when he learns that everyone has the “duty to do
something in this world, to keep busy, to work.”\footnote{Ibid.} This epiphany correlates to the lessons on
work found in Garelli’s textbooks. Opposite to hard work, laziness is depicted as a horrible
illness that must be cured during childhood. Indeed, Pinocchio concludes that he was not “born to work.” Still, he gradually learns to be good, go to school, and work hard for his family. Reflecting a general concern with a largely unemployed segment of the population, Collodi’s moral lesson frightens the reader into finding solace in the classroom. In fact, Pinocchio’s discipline and dedication to his education and to his family are nearly toppled when he lets his classmates trick him into skipping school, for he too must hate school, lessons and the teacher: their “three great enemies.” Jealous of Pinocchio’s virtue, his immoral companions attack him. Pinocchio is made of tougher stuff, however, and nearly kills one of his seven attackers—“like the seven deadly sins.” If only Pinocchio had stayed in school and been a good boy, he would have avoided these “deadly sins” and all the trouble they bring. It is not by accident that Collodi uses the religious symbolism of sin to illustrate the point of Pinocchio’s adventures. Just as the church is presented as a place of refuge from the temptations and evils of the world, so too is the school and the protective arms of the teacher. Some scholars have argued the school is depicted as an impossible path because Geppetto cannot even afford to feed Pinocchio, and must sell his coat for schoolbooks. However, Pinocchio does manage to do well at school, if for a time, and only falters when he allows himself to be distracted by temptation—not by poverty. Although it is true that Collodi was critical of the State priority of mandatory school attendance over physical nourishment, it would be inaccurate to interpret Pinocchio’s travails as a product of the school system and not of his individual moral choices. Thus the moral focus of Pinocchio is the development of a child’s conscience. As part of catechistic instruction, this objective is elementary to Catholic education and, as discussed earlier, appears in public school textbooks on morality as well.

Historically, Catholic education entailed the instruction of Christian morals exclusively through clerical guidance. As mediators between God and the laity, clerics held a crucial position in local society: spiritual and moral salvation rested both within the physical building and within the religious institution. A remarkable number of parallels between church and school are found

243 Ibid.
244 Ibid., 275.
245 Ibid., 301.
246 Ibid.
in Pinocchio’s adventures. Though the Church or its relevant manifestations are absent in *Pinocchio*, a thoroughly Catholic background is assumed. Therefore, comparisons between the school and the church are implicit. Furthermore, this subtle association is in fact more powerful than any tool of direct nationalist propaganda. By giving the child-reader control over interpretation and allusion, Collodi invites children to participate in the national project of a moral regeneration with more persuasion than the simple dogma of nationalist rhetoric would achieve. Because *Pinocchio* was not a required school text and was thus free to include more imaginative characters and plots, it elicits a voluntary fascination absent in school texts. Collodi humorously acknowledges this difference in chapter twenty-seven during Pinocchio’s fight with the “deadly sins” as Pinocchio’s schoolbooks—Giannettini, Minuzzoli, i Racconti del Thouar, il Pulcino della Baccini—are used as weapons thanks to their hefty (and dull) pages.249 Though *Pinocchio* is a cultural product exclusive of government control, its similarities to Garelli’s schoolbooks are revealing. Alongside representations of the school as a moral and socializing institution, lessons gleaned from Pinocchio’s trials resemble the very first tenets of Catholic education found in catechistic instruction.

1. Religious and Proverbial Framework

Lacking the formal succession of moral lessons organizing Garelli’s texts, *Pinocchio* nonetheless exhibits the same moral focus: on honesty, filial piety, and industriousness. Although not as explicitly narrated, these key lessons permeate all of Pinocchio’s adventures and rely on each other as part of a complete moral upbringing. Much like Garelli, Collodi appropriates basic Catholic education and proverbial wisdom in framing the moral lessons Pinocchio learns along the way. Obligations to his family and to his own wellbeing rely on the necessity of honesty and hard work. He cannot become a good son—*un ragazzo per bene*—without these three essential morals.

Pinocchio’s nasal troubles are perhaps the most emblematic image associated with the marionette. Every time Pinocchio lies, his nose grows longer. Though partially used for comedy and entertainment, the correlation between dishonesty and an elongated nose is rooted in

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249 Collodi, *Le avventure di Pinocchio*, 303. Collodi also pokes fun at himself here as he is the author or translator of all four works. Perella notes that Collodi resembles Charles Perrault in this instance as he “winks at his adult readers, the parents, counting on them as accomplices in a pedagogic strategy aimed at inculcating in children a particular behavior” (Perella 6-7).
proverbial wisdom. Much like Garelli’s lesson “Le bugie hanno le gambe corte,” Collodi borrows a traditional proverb to communicate a lesson on honesty.\textsuperscript{250} Collodi’s intent to use it as simple humor is one possibility. However, this interpretation would belie the significance of the other moral lessons. Each virtue is reliant on the others: Pinocchio cannot be a good son if he is dishonest or lazy. In fact, we see this relationship illustrated when Pinocchio lies to the Fairy about the four coins in his pocket: his nose continues to grow with each additional lie.\textsuperscript{251} Here, Collodi clearly reflects the place given to honesty in the Catholic moral universe. As one of the Ten Commandments—“do not give false testimony”—it is essential to being a good Christian.\textsuperscript{252} Originating within one’s conscience, the desire to lie is countered by the moral obligation to tell the truth. The weaker conscience gives in to the evil temptation while the stronger maintains self-discipline. Dishonesty results in personal humiliation and, worse, the suffering of his parents. Honesty is rooted not only in the individual conscience but also in familial obligation.

Pinocchio’s respect for and obedience to his “parents” are endlessly tested as sickness and ill fortune fall upon both Geppetto and the Fairy. It is not enough simply to love Geppetto and the Fairy. He must demonstrate his devotion through virtuous acts, such as attending school, working hard, caring for them when sick, and even sacrificing himself if need be. Thus, much like the Catholic requirement of good acts to achieve spiritual salvation, Pinocchio must do good in order to be good and eventually become a real boy. First and foremost, he must be a good son.

In order to be a good boy, Pinocchio must both love and obey his father Geppetto. His love is unquestionable. His level of obedience on the other hand remains inconsistent. From the earliest scene involving Geppetto’s chasing of Pinocchio through the town streets, Pinocchio gradually develops a veritable sense of obedience and responsibility towards his father. By the end of his adventures, he saves Geppetto and works diligently to help his father and eventually his “mother,” the Fairy.\textsuperscript{253} This moral lesson draws from the Ten Commandments and the

\textsuperscript{250} Cristina Mazzoni discusses the complexity of lying and their punitive results in \textit{Pinocchio}. She argues that \textit{Pinocchio} teaches the importance of learning to lie when one must and not allowing oneself to be duped by liars. This is an accurate argument but does not hold within Pinocchio’s obligations to his family. See Cristina Mazzoni, “The Short-Legged Fairy: Reading and Teaching \textit{Pinocchio} as a Feminist,” in \textit{Approaches to Teaching Collodi’s \textit{Pinocchio} and its Adaptations}, ed. Michael Sherberg (New York: Modern Language Association of America, 2006), 80-86.

\textsuperscript{251} The Fairy calls herself Pinocchio’s “sister” at this point in the novel.

\textsuperscript{252} GBattaglia, \textit{Catechismo della dottrina cattolica}, 102.

\textsuperscript{253} Christopher Duggan notes that Pinocchio does not grow morally by himself but relies on the love and guidance of “his father and surrogate mother.” See Duggan, \textit{The Force of Destiny}, 282.
requirement to respect and obey one’s parents. In a way similar to children’s first introduction to Catholic doctrine, *Pinocchio* emphasizes the child’s responsibilities towards his family. However, whereas both the Catechism and Garelli’s texts correlate obedience towards one’s parents with obedience towards God, Collodi excludes any spiritual connection. Collodi alludes to a basic Catholic framework while emphasizing specific social concerns of nationalist reformers like Garelli and others. In addition to the encouragement of familial obligation, a major component of the moral regeneration at this time was the encouragement of a strong work ethic. Pinocchio’s responsibilities to his father and mother/sister illustrate the need for hard work and diligence for him to become a good son and a real boy. As discussed before, nationalist reformers believed the school to be the surest way to eliminate the indolent nature of the population, inherited over centuries of moral misguidance by the Church.

It is not accidental that these concerns appear throughout *Pinocchio*. The lessons on fiscal responsibility learned by the marionette develop gradually as he grasps the basics of diligence and industriousness. Beginning with the selling of his primer (*abbecedario*) to see the puppet show of Fire Eater, Pinocchio learns successive lessons on the virtues of hard work. Perhaps the most illustrative example is his trip to the Busy-Bee Town (*Paese delle Api Industriose*) where every person who passes by the starving child offers food and drink in return for some manual labor.254 Being the lazy puppet he is, Pinocchio refuses to work and is only saved at the end by the Fairy, who in fact serves him false food to teach him a lesson. As we have already seen, the emphasis on industriousness may be connected with the national discourse on indolence, influenced by comparisons to European models such as Britain, France, and Germany. The prevalence of self-help books published in Italy at this time speaks to the primacy of hard work as a fundamental tenet of public education.255 However, an appropriate method was needed to convey this “virtue” among Italian children.

*Pinocchio* incorporates lessons derived from the Catechism to address this concern. Alluding to the capital sin of sloth, the Fairy admonishes Pinocchio for his immature behavior: “one has the duty to do something in this world, to keep busy, to work…Idleness is a horrible

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254 Although this case can be interpreted as an example of Collodi’s criticism of government expectations of productivity before nourishment, its role in the overall moral lesson is central: a child must learn to work if he is to survive.
disease, and it has to be cured early, in childhood.”\textsuperscript{256} Sloth is treated as a major blemish in Pinocchio’s character. To encourage Pinocchio to work, emphasis is given to his responsibilities not only to his “father” but to his “mother” as well: “until now I’ve been working to support my father; but from now on I’ll work…to support my good mother, too.”\textsuperscript{257} Thus the love he has for his “parents” serves to incite a level of industriousness embedded within his moral obligation to his family. Perhaps identifying with the trials and hardships experienced by Pinocchio, many of the child-readers may have shared similar notions of familial obligation. As opposed to the dry rhetoric found in the classroom, Pinocchio’s adventures depict the development of a child’s moral conscience through imaginative plots and characters, capable of eliciting the fascination of children. Though there is no reference to the nation (other than the carabinieri police at various points throughout the adventures), emphasis is placed on familial morality and an emotional attachment to one’s birthplace, which also appears both in Garelli’s textbooks and in \textit{Cuore}. By stressing these two moral objectives, Collodi directly participates in the effort to improve the national “character.”

\textbf{Morality and Politics: Familial Symbolism and the Nation}

Many literary scholars have gone further to interpret Pinocchio as a metaphor for the new Italian of unified Italy: a fabricated figure lodged within the liminal realm between tradition and modernity, between the individual and the nation.\textsuperscript{258} Others have inferred the marionette’s circumstances as reflective of Italy’s marginalized children: the poor, the orphaned, and the deformed.\textsuperscript{259} Indeed, as many rural families moved to the city, poverty-stricken children roamed the streets of Turin, Milan, and Rome, seemingly unable to work or go to school (much like Pinocchio). As a symbol of moral obligation, however, Pinocchio aligns closely with every child, rich or poor, rural or urban. Every boy’s love for his parents corresponds to his love for and duties toward his country. Although not explicitly associated with the nation, the symbolism of Pinocchio’s responsibilities to Geppetto and the Fairy nonetheless relate to an Italian child’s

\begin{footnotesize}
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  \item \textsuperscript{256} Collodi, \textit{Le avventure di Pinocchio}, 287.
  \item \textsuperscript{257} Ibid., 457.
  \item \textsuperscript{258} Stewart-Steinberg advances this notion further to argue Italian men were continuously infantilized by the State and intellectuals, treating them as perpetual children unable to become “real” men. Stewart-Steinberg, \textit{The Pinocchio Effect}, 3.
  \item \textsuperscript{259} At this time, a growing level of public concern for Italy’s street children mirrored movements within the government as well as Church efforts, such as the Salesian School. For more on Italy’s marginalized children and its connection to nationalism see Ipsen, \textit{Italy in the Age of Pinocchio}.
\end{itemize}
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familial experiences and his role in the national project. In Pinocchio, this project is manifested in the form of familial obligation and sacrifice rooted in religious doctrine.

As discussed earlier, representations of the Italian nation drew on religious symbolism since the earliest phases of the Risorgimento. This appropriation was an important method with which Italian patriots portrayed the nation as a spiritual charge encouraging a national insurrection against foreign powers and the papacy. Calling on the “sons of Italy” to free her from the chains of enslavement, the nation—or the patria—donned a female form, crowned by the hundred cities of the peninsula. The violent tone of this invocation persists throughout modern Italian history, culminating in Mussolini’s fascist regime. Thus, the allusion to Christian martyrdom is strongly felt in nationalist rhetoric, encouraging self-sacrifice for the greater good and salvation of the patria. Whereas Cuore exhibits a strong association with the military, in Pinocchio martyrdom is restricted to filial and social responsibility driven by love and the promise of redemption. At the end of his adventures, Pinocchio’s self-sacrifice to save Geppetto from the Shark perhaps illustrates the difference between the two novels the best. By putting himself in danger, Pinocchio manifests his devotion to his “father” in the most profound way, excluding the militaristic tone present in both Cuore and Garelli’s schoolbooks.

Nationalist reformers also looked to the family unit as a means to the nationalization and moral improvement of the masses. Clearly stated in Garelli’s schoolbooks, this effort is considerably more subtle in Pinocchio. A single, old, and poor carpenter desperately desirous of company, Geppetto bears a remarkable resemblance to the Italian State in the early decades following unification. Working with his hands, he lacks the technology and the wealth associated with more well-to-do enterprises, like banking. Rather, his “son,” an artificial and rambunctious puppet, is the solution to his financial and social woes. By sending Pinocchio to school, Geppetto hopes for a brighter future for his newly-fashioned boy. Indeed, the Italian government viewed mandatory education as the answer to its economic difficulties, as evidenced by Garelli’s focus on the latest agricultural practices. The goal of implementing a sense of nation is manifested as the Fairy. At first, the Fairy calls herself Pinocchio’s “sister,” eliciting the love and obligations of

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260 I use the masculine pronoun and possessive pronoun primarily due to the gendered focus of these works. Although girls were gradually incorporated into the national project, their role was secondary to that of boys. As discussed earlier on the gendered portrayal of moral responsibilities found in Garelli’s textbooks, both Pinocchio and Cuore lack a female nationalist voice. Rather, girls’ part in the national project remained within the household or as objects eliciting male patriotism, reflecting the gendered nature of nationalist rhetoric.
siblings. Later, the Fairy becomes his “mother,” drawing on a type of filial devotion absent in his relationship to Geppetto. Though a direct connection to the nation is absent, the Fairy’s need of love and obedience from her “son/brother” correlates to Banti’s argument on the gendered depiction of the nation. Both mother and sister are objects worthy of male rescue and protection. Thus, Pinocchio has two distinct moral responsibilities vis-à-vis his father and vis-à-vis his sister-mother.

Pinocchio’s responsibilities to his “parents” are tested over and over again as they accompany him along his excursions outside of his hometown. His trips to the Town of Catchafool (Acchiappa-citrulli), to Funland (Paese dei Balocchi), and to the Busy-Bee Town all pose serious perils that require hard work and a clever mind to circumvent. Stewart-Steinberg argues that Pinocchio does not learn anything of himself or of the world and that there is no moral progress. This interpretation betrays her previous argument that Pinocchio is the embodiment of De Sanctian pedagogy, finding knowledge within oneself. Furthermore, Pinocchio does learn gradually. His earlier self is an image of free-willed childhood—naïve, selfish, and gullible. His exclamation on how “silly” he was as a puppet denotes a sense of inner reflection, signifying a developed conscience alien to the Pinocchio without ears or with a long nose, or as a donkey. The moral lesson does depart from De Sanctian pedagogy in regards to the school, however. Pinocchio’s familial morality is learned not in school but in the streets. Collodi distinguishes the two arenas, separating the classroom from children’s—specifically boys’—daily experiences. Although disagreeing in complete faith in the school system, the gendered emphasis found in both Pinocchio and Cuore is one of the more subtle similarities

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261 Both Stewart-Steinberg and Mazzoni have noted that the Fairy and Geppetto never inhabit the same space because their personae are incompatible: the Fairy represents the middle-class work ethic as a stern educator, while Geppetto embodies the beggary of the lowest classes. Furthermore, scholars have interpreted the Fairy as a spiritual “mother,” similar to the Virgin Mary and the Church. Stewart-Steinberg, 56; Mazzoni, 82. It is possible that the three major characters could allude to Jesus, Mary, and Joseph. Pinocchio’s adventures before becoming a real boy depict a possible childhood strewn with temptation. Nicolas notes the biblical comparison at the beginning of his essay on Pinocchio by including I Corinthians 13:11: “When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child: when I became a man, I gave up childish ways.” Pinocchio maintains a similar desire throughout a good deal of his adventures so that by the end he looks at his former puppet-self and exclaims, “How funny I was when I was a puppet! And how glad I am now that I’ve become a proper boy!” (Collodi Pinocchio 461).

262 Banti, Sublime madre nostra, VII.

263 Stewart-Steinberg, The Pinocchio Effect, 45.

264 Duilio Sgreccia, “‘Cuore’: pregi, difetti e valore educativo,” in Cuore nella letteratura per l’infanzia, ed. Carlo Marini (Urbino, Italy: Quattroventi, 2004). 206. Sgreccia contrasts the moral development of Pinocchio with Enrico in Cuore. Whereas Pinocchio does become a real boy in the end, Enrico remains the same as before.
A Gendered Morality

The focus of both *Pinocchio* and *Cuore* is on the male experience. The only female characters in both works occupy the roles of mothers, sisters, or teachers. Their part in the stories is essential but mostly subservient to the male protagonists’ moral development. In *Cuore*, Enrico’s mother is his “guardian angel” and the recipient of his love. Although adults in general are relegated to the background, Enrico’s mother mainly serves to validate the moral authority of the school and as encouragement for Enrico.265 In *Pinocchio*, the Fairy occupies the same role as Enrico’s mother as representative of a bourgeois perspective, beseeching Pinocchio to be a good boy and to go to school. Women serve as counselors and symbols of affection in need of protection, lacking an autonomous voice with which to participate in the national project.266 Enrico must protect and love both of his mothers: biological and ideological, the home and the nation.267 Stewart-Steinberg argues that gender constructions were instrumental in defining what constituted a legitimate political realm.268 As Garelli’s texts and these novels illustrate, males held exclusive power in the direct political involvement in the nation—and even then only partially, as male suffrage was limited. The Catholic Church most understood this difference, however, and turned to women as the vehicle for political power after the annexation of the Papal States in 1870 by reinforcing their spiritual role within the family.269 Women—in particular, young girls—would not be included politically in the national project until the late nineteenth century, as evidenced by the inclusion of the same rights and duties towards the *patria* expected of males in textbooks on morality as well as children’s novels geared toward girls.270 Even with a new program aimed at the binding of women to the nation, their roles remained

265 Genovesi, “Leggendo Cuore,” 89.
266 As a magical character, the Fairy is an unusual female voice distinguishing *Pinocchio* from the other works. Though more powerful and resourceful than the male characters, her *role* as a woman remains the same: she guides Pinocchio’s moral development similarly to how Enrico’s mother encourages her son to be good, respectful, and hardworking.
269 Ibid., 3-4.
270 One example is the textbook by Giuseppe A. Silvestri, *Prime nozioni sui doveri e diritti ad uso delle alunne della classe 3a elementare* (Turin: G.B. Paravia, 1894?)
limited to serving as mothers, housewives, and passive participants.

**Conclusion**

*Pinocchio* is a collection of stories illustrating the early implementation of the public school within boys’ lives. Collodi captures a unique period in which Italian children first began to interact with a more invasive government and aggressive program of nationalization. Although critical of some aspects of the new nation and the Coppino Law, Collodi’s adherence to the ideals of the *Risorgimento* and the development of the individual conscience corresponds to growing changes in positivist pedagogy among other nationalist writers and education reformers, such as Felice Garelli. The Education Programs of 1888 addressed Collodi’s concerns illustrated in Pinocchio’s adventures. Though presented in a particularly imaginative way in *Pinocchio*, the themes of family, school, and morality appeared in other literary works for children such as *Cuore*. De Amicis’s work is perhaps most indicative of the permeation of educational policy and nationalist enthusiasm in popular culture. *Pinocchio*, though an immediate commercial success, was not considered an example of literary genius until the first half of the twentieth century.271 *Cuore*, on the other hand, was equally popular but also received instant critical acclaim. Their similarities nonetheless point to a larger initiative connected to Garelli’s textbooks and other educational objectives.

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Conclusion

The textbooks published by Garelli in 1880 most likely had no direct influence on the writing of either Pinocchio or Cuore. However, both the textbooks and these popular novels demonstrate how pedagogical thought was permeated by a national discourse on Italian character. They are all bound by one unifying objective: the moral and social improvement of Italy’s children through public education. As part of this project, Catholic and familial symbolism were essential to the promotion of national sentiment and moral instruction, although De Amicis and Garelli employ this aspect much more directly than Collodi. Virtues originally taken from Catholic symbolism and morality were considered essential to the moral development of a young Italian boy in the 1880s. This social ethos penetrated multiple levels of Italian culture, emphasizing particular points of good character, such as respect for one’s parents and industriousness.

In contrast to the primarily political conflicts between the Catholic Church and the Italian State, efforts by education reformers and nationalist writers incorporated a basic religious framework with the intent to insert the nation into the hearts and minds of young Italian children. In the case of Pinocchio, the nation is explicitly absent, but the moral responsibilities to one’s family retain a strong connection to national concerns on particular “vices.” The significant lesson on sacrificing oneself for others is presented in Garelli’s textbooks, Cuore, and Pinocchio as a noble act expected of all moral and obedient sons by offering spiritual redemption. Specifically focused thus on Italian boys and their formation into brave soldiers and industrious workers, such writers and education reformers simultaneously excluded girls from the national project, marginalizing them to the role of housewives and mothers. It is not by accident that the Catholic Church sought support from this segment of the population, who were viewed as the guardians of familial and moral integrity. While the State encouraged obedience to one’s mother, the Church warned mothers of the dangers associated with the secular state and participating in...

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272 It is possible that Garelli and De Amicis were in conversation with each other since they were a part of the same “Cuneo” network, though this possibility remains limited.

273 This effort was not entirely unique to Italy. In contemporaneous Mexico, national education was considered a promising path to inculcate a sense of nation among school children. Curricula included a national history, a national geography, and civic duties. Furthermore, education reformers viewed Catholicism as a useful tool to bind Mexicans to the nation. However, the Church-State conflict did not intensify until the Mexican Revolution in the early twentieth century. Nonetheless, comparisons between Italy, Mexico, and other Latin American countries might offer insights into a potentially transatlantic or transnational historical development. For more on the Mexican case, see Beatriz Zepeda, Enseñar la nación: la educación y la institucionalización de la idea de la nación en el México de la Reforma [1855-1876] (Mexico: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 2012).
the modern, national community. It was a critical paradox inhibited the State during Italy’s Liberal era.

Each of these works offers a different lens with which to examine this time period. Each author wrote his work to address a perceived problem in the national culture. For Garelli, the problem was inadequate education in the countryside where the vast majority of the population—and the “backbone” of the nation—lived. He believed school textbooks to be the most effective way to reach the rural youth since school attendance became mandatory, even if not uniformly enforced. The success of his textbooks along with their many subsequent editions points to their popularity—at least among pedagogues—and the perceived need for such tools of education.274 As Genovesi points out, De Amicis originally intended for Cuore to be a school textbook.275 He believed young Italian boys needed an emotional motive to learn and offered Enrico’s fictional life as a guide. Although parts of the book were used in schools, its greatest impact was on children outside of the classroom. Many children—and adults—came to appreciate and absorb De Amicis’s work and his moral message which resonated among the Italian middle classes. Equally popular, Pinocchio held a much longer influence on both Italian and international audiences, augmented by Walt Disney’s classic 1940 rendition of Collodi’s work. Related to his reservations about the efficacy of the school system, Collodi intended Pinocchio’s adventures to be endearing stories containing diluted moral lessons. As opposed to the unequivocal seriousness of the moral message found in Garelli’s textbooks and in Cuore, Pinocchio is initially deaf to the wisdom of his elders. His growth into a real boy at the end of this adventures is accompanied—and in fact made possible—by his comprehension and appreciation of this wisdom through familial morality. This responsibility—to one’s family—is the most significant connection between the four works (including Garelli’s book for girls). A child’s duties to his family were perceived as fundamental to his development into a proper Italian citizen. Excluding particularities in authorial intent, such as the intended audience, each writer was a patriot and desired the creation of a moral and upstanding Italian worthy of the

274 Both Il giovinetto campagnuolo and La giovinetta campagnuola received the silver medal from the Educational Congress of Agriculture in Rome. Although beyond the scope of this discussion, a comparison of each edition—both for boys and for girls—would be a potentially fruitful venture in discovering to what extent these works changed in the increasing positivist-influenced school curricula and the nascent imperial project.
virtues of the *Risorgimento*. They are only three examples; but the popularity of their works points to a similar sentiment already growing among literate Italians.

The period from 1876 to 1888 was a watershed moment in the history of education in Italy. The Center-Left’s rise to power was accompanied by a group from the province of Cuneo who all shared similar national goals based on the reinforcement of the school system. The 1880s were particularly important for this group’s ascent to national prominence. Although Giolitti’s first administration failed in 1893, his subsequent return to office in 1903 ushered in a long period of political influence for Giolitti and those around him. It was also in this early part of the twentieth century that the school system not only received an enormous increase in government support but also began to have a larger impact on literacy rates (see Table 4).

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1901</td>
<td>18,186,353a</td>
<td>56</td>
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<tr>
<td>1921</td>
<td>13,888,556b</td>
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a. Pre-World War I territories.

b. Following the acquisition of Alto-Adige, Trieste, Istria, et al.

Sani notes that it was during this time that the foundations for a redefinition of the Italian school were established to address the rapid changes then affecting society. Increasing industrialization, the shift in agricultural production, and the beginning of social secularization all had their roots during the Giolitti age. In addressing these changes, public education became of central importance among society in general, thanks to socialist and republican-democratic propaganda in what Sani has defined as a “culture of the school.” Particularly, the school was “indispensable…in the promotion of the national identity and the formation of civic values.” Although this is true, the real origins of this “culture of the school” lay not in the first two

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276 Sani, “School policy and teacher training in Italy in the Giolitti age,” 239. Sani argues that this period was critical in the history of education in post-unification Italy.

277 Ibid., 240.

278 Ibid.

279 Ibid., 241.
decades of the twentieth century but in fact were developed in part by a particular group from Cuneo in the last quarter of the previous century. It was during this timeframe—from 1876 to 1888—that the school was re-conceptualized to address the specific social, economic, and spiritual needs of the Italian masses. Unfortunately, Coppino, Garelli, and De Amicis died before the “culture of the school” came to dominate Italian society during the Giolitti age. Their role in this project, however, is clear. The central importance of children to the nationalization of the country was framed within the socialization of the child from the family to the nation. Using religious language and familial attachment, this group sought to propagate a national connection and a moral upbringing in line with Liberal ideology. Although it is difficult to ascertain the full impact of this initiative on the intended audience, the promotion of the school as an arbiter of childhood development found traction as the nation’s economy began to prosper in the 1890s. By the first two decades of the twentieth century, the “culture of the school” finally became national.

280 Though Collodi died in 1890, he does not seem to have been a part of this group or at least differed in particular aspects of the “culture of the school.”
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