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Democratization of Heroism in the Romantic Historical Novel: Manzoni, *The Betrothed*

Abstract: *The aim of the present study is to emphasize the idea that, in line with Walter Scott, Manzoni's novel is a typical synthesis of the Biedermeier Romanticism, illustrating the evolution of the heroic novel from Romantic to realistic patterns, from idealism to pragmatism. Manzoni's novel depicts the agony of medieval chivalric structures and the democratization of heroism. For Manzoni, making history means discovering the behaviour of common people who are described in credible situations; stylistically, this means giving up high rhetoric. The main characters, Renzo and Lucy, both of low origin, are expressions of moral heroism, complex natures with an obstinate desire of deromanticization. The purpose of the love plot is to capitalize on the author's ideas concerning social meliorism and the development of a national consciousness that is in the power of common people with great souls. The Christian symbolism of the book gives the main role in the ideology of the novel to a country girl, an anti-Dulcinea, but a terrestrial Madonna: Lucy, the "light". Consequently, Manzoni engages in an obvious polemic with Don-Quixotism, with capitalizing prominent individualities and any attitude that idealizes reality.*

Key words: *historical novel, chivalric structures, democratization of heroism, anti-Don-Quixotism, indirect socio-political message*

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