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### **Title**

The Crowd and Manzoni's Conception of Cultural Unification

### **Permalink**

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/5nd9x6ds>

### **Journal**

Carte Italiane, 2(8)

### **ISSN**

0737-9412

### **Author**

Sottong, Heather R

### **Publication Date**

2012

### **DOI**

10.5070/C928012001

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# The Crowd and Manzoni's Conception of Cultural Unification

Heather Sottong

University of California, Los Angeles

Not only is Alessandro Manzoni's *I Promessi Sposi* considered, by common consensus, to be one of the greatest books in the history of Italian Literature, it could also be considered the work which most contributed to the rise of Italian nationalism leading to the unification. Manzoni's role in forging an Italian national conscious is undeniable, as his socio-political ideas transmitted through the novel produced historically significant ideological codes. Critics have since scoured the pages of Manzoni's writings in attempts to determine the ideological biases underlying the novel's conception. Of these biases or determinants, the one that has received the most attention, ever since Antonio Gramsci's comments on *I Promessi Sposi*, regards Manzoni's "aristocratic" attitude towards the lower classes. In the opinion of Gramsci, "questo atteggiamento è nettamente di casta pur nella forma religiosa cattolica; i popolani, per il Manzoni, non hanno vita interiore, non hanno personalità morale profonda; essi sono animali, e il Manzoni è benevolo verso di loro proprio della benevolenza di una cattolica società di protezione degli animali."<sup>1</sup> Although Manzoni at times undoubtedly takes on a tone of beneficent condescension and does not attribute any political competence to the lower classes, was he really so prejudiced against them as to consider them animals? His Christian individualism would seem to allow for the social advancement of single isolated individuals, regardless of class. But what Manzoni describes as an animalesque mob, prey to passion and inaccessible to reason, mired in superstition and incapable of discriminating between right and wrong, is not strictly synonymous with members of the lower classes, but with crowds in general.

The aim of this article is to read Manzoni's *I Promessi Sposi* in light of modern crowd psychology. Social scientists have developed different theories for explaining the ways in which the behavior of a crowd differs significantly from the psychology of the individuals within it. Perhaps the most influential theory of crowd psychology is Gustave Le Bon's *The Crowd: A Study of the Popular Mind* (1895).<sup>2</sup> Le Bon's definition of the key characteristics of crowds is remarkably consistent with Manzoni's descriptions of the irascible, unpredictable, and irrational Milanese masses. While Manzoni's understanding of crowds is conveyed through a historical novel, Le Bon examines the problems presented by crowds in a purely "scientific" manner: that is to say, "by making an effort to proceed with

method, and without being influenced by opinions, theories, and doctrines.”<sup>3</sup> I intend to compare this self-proclaimed scientific work with Manzoni’s literary work in order to analyze the episodes in *I Promessi Sposi* in which the Milanese, whom Manzoni had previously established to be “buoni figliuoli, nominati per la bontà in tutto il mondo,” suddenly “imbestiali.”<sup>4</sup> More importantly, how did Manzoni’s ideas regarding crowds inform his conception of how unification should come about?

My analysis will concentrate on chapters XII and XIII, which tell of Renzo’s arrival in Milan, where he suddenly finds himself amid a violent uprising of the masses. The Milanese have been suffering from famine, and their difficult situation is aggravated by the faulty politics of Antonio Ferrer, the vice governor, who fixes the price of bread at “metà,” thus throwing off the equilibrium of supply and demand and obligating the bakeries to work at a loss, without however, resolving the situation. The price raise results in an uproar, and the population begins to pillage the bakeries, destroy property, and even attempt murder.

When Renzo arrives in Milan, the streets and piazzas “brulicavano d’uomini, che trasportati da una *rabbia comune*, predominati da un *pensiero comune*, conoscenti o estranei, si riunivano in crocchi, senza essersi dati l’intesa, quasi senza avvedersene, come goccioline sparse sullo stesso pendio” [my emphasis].<sup>5</sup> According to Le Bon, under certain circumstances, the sentiments and ideas of all the persons in a gathering take the same direction, and a collective mind forms, while their individual consciousness vanishes. When this happens, the crowd becomes a psychological crowd (as opposed to a mere agglomeration of individuals) and forms a single being subject to the *law of the mental unity of crowds*. For the crowd to be considered psychological, the isolated individuals must be under the influence of certain violent emotions, such as those in Manzoni’s description, who, in a communal fury, have already acquired mental unity.

Le Bon describes the crowd as a body, composed of heterogeneous elements which he likens to cells, and which then function as a united whole.<sup>6</sup> The intellectual capacity of the individuals present in the crowd may vary enormously, but men most unlike in the matter of intelligence still possess instincts, passions, and feelings that are very similar. It is precisely these general qualities of character governed by forces of which we are unconscious that swamp the heterogeneous. Thus, a crowd composed of individuals of different social ranks and educational backgrounds, such as the Milanese crowd in question, can only exhibit common mediocre qualities, which are the birthright of every average individual, regardless of profession or class.

One of the key characteristics of crowds is their credulity. The improbable does not exist for a crowd, and events commonly undergo perversions in the imagination of a throng. A crowd thinks in images, and the image itself calls up a series of other images, having no logical connection with the first. One would think, given the various imaginations and temperaments of the individuals that

compose a crowd, that they could contort events in myriad ways, all different from one another; however, the perversions are all of the same nature. Le Bon terms the uniform perversions of crowds “collective hallucinations.”<sup>7</sup>

In the case of our story, the collective hallucination regards the existence of reserves of bread, despite the fact that the Milanese have already anticipated a famine (due to a scarce harvest) and suffered from it:

Nasce un’opinione ne’ molti, che non ne sia cagione la scarsezza. Si dimentica d’averla temuta, predetta; si suppone tutt’a un tratto che ci sia grano abbastanza, e che il male venga dal non vendermene abbastanza per il consumo: supposizioni che non stanno né in cielo, né in terra; ma che lusingano a un tempo la collera e la speranza.<sup>8</sup>

The formation of this illogical idea, which stimulates both anger and hope in the collective imagination of the crowd, is at the root of the violence that follows.

As a rule, a crowd is always in a state of expectant attention, which renders suggestion easy: “The first suggestion formulated which arises implants itself immediately by a process of contagion in the brains of all assembled, and the identical bent of the sentiments of the crowd is immediately an accomplished fact.”<sup>9</sup> The idea transforms itself quickly into the act.

Le Bon divides the ideas of crowds into two categories: 1) accidental and passing ideas created by the influences of the moment, and 2) fundamental ideas. The fundamental ideas “resemble the volume of the water of a stream slowly pursuing its course; the transitory ideas are like the small waves, forever changing, which agitate its surface, and are more visible than the progress of the stream itself although without real importance.”<sup>10</sup>

Le Bon claims that the great upheavals that precede changes of civilization are caused by a profound modification in the ideas of the peoples. In other words, the gradual altering of their fundamental ideas is followed by violent manifestations of this idea through accidental ideas leading to actions:

The memorable events of history are the visible effects of the invisible changes of human thought (. . .) The present epoch is one of these critical moments in which the thought of mankind is undergoing a process of transformation. We are about to enter into the era of crowds. The entry of the popular classes into political life is one of the most striking characteristics of our epoch of transition.<sup>11</sup>

In the case of our story, it could be theorized that the fundamental idea (which exists as an un-germinated seed in the minds of the *popolo*) is the equality of rights regardless of class. This underlying concept gives rise to the accidental ideas that the upper-classes are hoarding bread, that it should be distributed evenly, and

that the sack and destruction of the bakeries will bring about the resolution of these injustices.

Manzoni, of course, was no stranger to the idea that fundamental notions instilled within a population give rise to action. In an 1806 letter to Claude Fauriel he notes that actions derive from universal notions.<sup>12</sup> Particularly dangerous, in his opinion, were the notions of social and political equality, which led to the French Revolution. In his essay *La rivoluzione francese del 1789 e la rivoluzione italiana del 1859*, Manzoni makes several telling comparative observations regarding the two events. The Italian Revolution is seen as positive (as a rising of independence and of unity) because it is connected to the theory of the principle of nationality and because Manzoni sees it as a moment of the intervention of Providence in history. The French Revolution, which is characterized by internal social contrast and which resulted in the instability of government, numerous constitutions, violent and bloody dealings, and the Terror, is seen as negative. Furthermore, he argues, the Italian Revolution put an end to century-long problems in Italy such as the constant fight between Italians due to division in multiple states and the problems of foreign domination. It was legitimate precisely because it had avoided the usurpation of power that had taken place in France. The essay is a forthright condemnation of the 1789 revolutionaries. Their unprecedented audacity had shown the world that a crowd could overthrow a king. What the crowd had done in the name of liberty had led essentially only to instability. Manzoni's own concept of liberty is as follows:

La libertà davvero, che consiste nell'essere il cittadino, per mezzo di giuste leggi e di stabili istituzioni, assicurato, e contro violenze private, e contro ordini tirannici del potere, e nell'essere il potere stesso immune dal predominio di società oligarchiche, e non sopraffatto dalla pressione di turbe, sia avventizie, sia arrolate.<sup>13</sup>

At a certain point in the essay Manzoni compares the American Revolution to the French Revolution. The former, like the Italian Revolution, is justified in that it was a revolution in function of national independence, the latter unjustified in that it was a social upheaval.<sup>14</sup> Furthermore, he notes, "il congresso di Filadelfia parlava di uguaglianza di diritti tra i diversi popoli; non già, come l'Assemblea di Versailles, di eguaglianza tra gli uomini componenti uno stesso popolo."<sup>15</sup> These reflections indicate that Manzoni intended nationalism as an internal unity, which takes social contrasts into account. His vision was fundamentally opposed to the ideas of intellectuals who felt that political changes should be brought about through a consciousness of class. For Manzoni, equality in front of God makes social and political equality unnecessary. Democratic and socialist ideals were, for Manzoni, the logical development of a liberal doctrine and utilitarian system, founded solely on a natural ethic rather than the transcendence of religion. The

new systems speaking of social justice were none other than “una nova fase del sistema utilitario, nove applicazioni di quel così detto principio (. . .) Essi parlano di *giustizia*; ma cosa intendono per giustizia? Null’altro che il godimento de’ beni temporali ugualmente diviso.”<sup>16</sup> As Augusto Simonini explains in his book, *L’ideologia di Alessandro Manzoni*, for Manzoni, the only way to avoid the dangerous chain of logic departing from the idea of *utilità* is to “bloccare il tutto all’inizio, dirottando l’intero discorso su un altro orizzonte, fondandolo cioè diversamente. Dal piedistallo va rimosso il concetto di *utilità* per reintegrarvi quello di *bene*; il principio *umano* va sostituito con quello *divino*; la *giustizia* con la *Giustizia*.”<sup>17</sup>

Perhaps Manzoni’s knowledge of the terrors of the French Revolution and the violence of crowds added to his sense of the social dangers of a secular morality independent of religion. Although a child of the Enlightenment, he was well aware of the limits of reason: “Il raziocinio è un lume che uno può accendere quando vuole obligare gli altri a vedere, e può soffiarci quando non vuol più veder lui.”<sup>18</sup> Although Manzoni is a great advocate of logic, he recognizes that it is to be used with caution: “il vizio naturale della logica” is that it can “condurre avanti l’uomo nella strada che ha preso.”<sup>19</sup> Thus, without a moral conscious to hold oneself in check, it would be all too easy for man to abandon or stubbornly adhere to a principal uniquely to avoid immediate negative consequences. Perhaps the work which best illustrates this idea is *La colonna infame*, an essay originally conceived as a chapter of *I Promessi Sposi* and later elaborated and included in 1842 as a separate work in the definitive edition. The essay deals with the various trials that took place in Milan from 1630–32 to prosecute the alleged *untori*: trials in which the accused (obviously innocent) were barbarously tortured and put to death. The judges of the trial were guilty of unthinkable atrocities, lies, and an abuse of power. Manzoni examines the proceedings with a fine-toothed comb, logically analyzing each conclusion made by the authorities. The responsibility was in the hands of the judges, and these individuals, “se non seppero quello che facevano fu per non volerlo sapere, fu per quell’ignoranza che l’uomo assume e perde a suo piacere, e non è una scusa ma una colpa.”<sup>20</sup> Here, it is not the lower classes who are animalesque, but the educated judges who are acting in a bestial manner and without reason.

Although they were individually responsible for this atrocity and are individually guilty, the crowd is partially to blame for their actions. Only God, Manzoni remarks, has the power to distinguish which pressures most influenced their murderous actions: the impatience to find a solution or the fear of failing to fulfill the expectations of the *folla*, “di voltar contro di sé le grida della moltitudine col non ascoltarla.”<sup>21</sup> Once they have tortured and condemned innocents, however, they are applauded “da un’ autorità sempre potente, benché spesso fallace (. . .): voglio dire l’ autorità del pubblico che li proclamava sapienti, zelanti, forti, vendicatori e difensori della patria.”<sup>22</sup> Had they not been influenced by the angry

masses who wanted at all costs to find a scapegoat to punish for their suffering, these judges, we are lead to believe, would have reacted very differently in the face of the evidence, or rather lack thereof.

Manzoni points out that the victims of torture who did not resort to lies were the faithful: those concerned more with the fate of their souls than the fate of their bodies. After three hours of torture, one good Christian refused to resort to lies, responding only “l’ho già detto; voglio salvar l’anima. Dico che non voglio graver la coscienza mia.”<sup>23</sup> If the judges had prioritized the destiny of their souls in the afterlife, perhaps they would have thought twice before condemning innocent men. The crowd influencing the judges is described as “accecata, non dall’ignoranza, ma dalla malignità e dal furore, violava con quelle grida i precetti piú positivi della legge divina, di cui si vantava seguace.”<sup>24</sup> The judges too, then, are blinded and without remorse, as “le grida d’un pubblico hanno la funesta forza (. . .) di soffogare i rimorsi; anche d’impedirli.”<sup>25</sup>

The authorities mentioned in *I Promessi Sposi* are no less subjected to the influence of the crowd. The few who dare to contradict the masses immediately become victims. The hatred falls primarily on two doctors of the Tribunale della Sanità who gave the orders (the only good ones at that) for the sequester and quarantine of the sick: “a tal segno che ormai non potevan attraversare le piazza senza essere assaliti da parolacce, quando non eran sassi.”<sup>26</sup> In all the aforementioned instances, Manzoni demonstrates that not only are crowds unreasonable, but they also have the power to corrupt the thoughts of educated individuals and authorities on the higher end of the social scale who are not even part of the crowd themselves: “il buon senso c’era; ma se ne stava nascosto per paura del senso commune.”<sup>27</sup>

In addition to the incapacity to reason, other key characteristics of crowds include impulsiveness, irritability, the absence of judgment and of the critical spirit, and an exaggeration of sentiments. Impulsive crowds are at the mercy of all external exciting causes. All that is needed for action is a spark: “Non mancava altro che un’occasione, una spinta, un avviamento qualunque, per ridurre le parole a fatti.”<sup>28</sup> In the case of our story, this spark happens to be a boy with a basket loaded with bread that he is taking out to sell. The first boy that passes by the crowd “fu come il cadere d’un salterello acceso in una polveriera.” Comparing the crowd to a powder keg demonstrates just how dangerous and explosive it can be when given the proper catalyst. The crowd takes the apparition of the boy to be the confirmation that there is bread to be had after all, and that it is only to be sniffed out from its hiding places among the rich. Someone decides to take a closer look in his basket, and this results in the cries of “giù quella gerla.” One man even takes a piece of bread and, showing it to the crowd, bites into it proclaiming “Siam cristiani anche noi: dobbiamo mangiar pane anche noi.” This gesture further establishes a unity amongst the crowd as the “cristiani poveri oppressi” versus the oppressor, who is, as of yet, unidentified.<sup>29</sup>

Since not everyone was able to get their piece of bread, the empty-handed are left bitter, and the situation escalates to an attack on all bread boys, which in turn leads to the raid of the bakeries. At this point the crowd is under the power of suggestion, which is different from imitation or contagion. Le Bon describes physiological phenomena, such as the fact that by various processes an individual may be brought into such a condition that, having entirely lost his conscious personality, he obeys all the suggestions of the operator who has deprived him of it and commits acts in contradiction with his character and habits. An individual in a crowd, under what Le Bon calls a “magnetic influence,” enters a special state, which resembles the hypnotized individual who is at the mercy of the hypnotizer. Under the influence of a suggestion, he will undertake otherwise unthinkable acts without hesitation.

The passage in which Manzoni describes the savage sack of the *fornaio* deserves to be quoted at length, as the rhythm reflects the tempest-like fury of the crowd:

Si slanciano ai cassoni; il pane è messo a ruba. Qualcheduno invece corre al banco, butta giù la serratura, agguanta le ciotole, piglia a manate, intasca, ed esce carico di quattrini, per tornar poi a rubar pane, se ne rimarrà. La folla si sparge ne' magazzini. Metton mano ai sacchi, li strascicano, li rovesciano: chi se ne caccia uno tra le gambe, gli scioglie la bocca, e per ridurlo a un carico da potersi portare, butta via una parte della farina (. . .) chi va, chi viene: uomini, donne, fanciulli, spinte, rispinte, urli, e un bianco polverìo che per tutto si posa, per tutto si solleva, e tutto vela e annebbia.<sup>30</sup>

The crowd appears as a horde of primitives in search of prey, which is exactly what Le Bon likens crowds to. According to Le Bon, an individual in a crowd “descends several rungs in the ladder of civilization. Isolated, he may be a cultivated individual; in a crowd, he is a barbarian—that is, a creature acting by instinct.”<sup>31</sup> In fact, he possesses characteristics of primitive beings, such as violence, ferocity, and enthusiasm. The degree to which he allows himself to be impressed by words and images, and thus to be induced to commit acts contrary to his character, also demonstrates that he has become a primitive being: “An individual in a crowd is a grain of sand amid other grains of sand, which the wind stirs up at will.”<sup>32</sup>

Throughout his description of the bread riots, Manzoni frequently reminds his readers just how illogical the crowd's bread bonfire really is: “Veramente, la distruzione de' frulloni e delle madie, la devastazione de' forni, e lo scompiglio de' fornai, non sono i mezzi più spicci per far vivere il pane; ma questa è una di quelle sottigliezze metafisiche, che una moltitudine non ci arriva.”



On their way to Cordusio, the crowd passes through Piazza de' Mercanti and the imposing statue of Filippo II, the former king of Spain who had become a symbol of tyranny.<sup>33</sup> Here Manzoni cannot resist informing his readers about a singular event that would take place in the piazza 170 years after the events of our story. On the 7th of July, 1797, the head of the statue and the scepter were removed and were replaced with a new head and a fist. The statue became Brutus, the assassin of Caesar, who was regarded at the time of the French Revolution as the heroic over-thrower of a tyrant. The modified statue, charged with an altogether different signification, remained for a few years until a crowd hostile towards Brutus removed the statue and proceeded to mutilate it into unrecognizable fragments. Manzoni includes this anecdote precisely because of the relevance it holds regarding the psychology of crowds. Over a century later, the masses have acquired new ideas, which motivate the same manifestations of brutality. Furthermore, the fact that the exaltation of Brutus is synonymous with the ideas of the French Revolution shows that those ideas do not last. Any political symbol put in its place would sooner or later fall out of fashion. But is the same true of the monuments of the Church? One need not look far in any Italian city to realize that those are still standing.

The digression encapsulates the sense and tone of the entire chapter and demonstrates that the actions of the Milanese crowd in 1628 are not an isolated exception, but an example of the eternal aspects of bestiality, violence, and blind fury that arise in crowds of all peoples, nations, and epochs. While the political beliefs throughout Europe were changing, Manzoni must have seen faith as a constant: "La verità è dalla parte di quella Religione che diciotto secoli fa disse al mondo: Io non mi cangerò mai; e non si è mai cangiata."<sup>34</sup> The Truth of the Church had remained unaltered due to the strong tradition, reiterated canons, and the discreet counsels of the popes who had made the Church a stable institution despite the fluctuating and mobile ideas of man.<sup>35</sup> The Church is a body which "non essendo stato istituito dagli uomini, non può essere né abolito né surrogato."<sup>36</sup> Manzoni did not believe that any natural moral could, autonomously, compete with religious morality which is transcendent, for such a law would have to foresee all of the possible consequences, immediate and in the distant future, and such an enterprise is accorded only to God.

In *I Promessi Sposi*, famine and pestilence, natural occurrences which man could not foresee, result in the collapse of secular institutions: hence the need for an absolute moral code based on Revelation. Clearly Manzoni has his doubts about mankind's ability to withstand the uncertainty of his destiny, the uncertainty of modernity, the frantic grasping for an ideological system that does not give way under pressure. As Remo Bodei explains in his book *Destini personali: L'età della colonizzazione delle coscienze*, Christianity's response to our preoccupations regarding our destiny are twofold – Providence and the immortality of the soul:

Poggiavano su die robusti pilastri, incessantemente consolidate e difesi contro ogni forma di miscredenza e di eterodossia, su due idee sistematicamente instillate nelle menti e nei cuori: l'immortalità dell'anima e la Provvidenza (. . .) Quando la fede nell'anima immortale e nel soccorso divino diventa incerta e implausibile, questi sostegni della coscienza e della società vengono faticosamente sostituiti con altre nozioni portanti, quali identità personale e storia fatta dagli uomini.<sup>37</sup>

This is, in essence, the root of the problem and the reason why Manzoni (who feared “storia fatta dagli uomini” and desired national identity above personal identity) set about the herculean task of uprighting the falling pillars.

In *I Promessi Sposi*, Lucia's passive conduct and steadfast faith serve as the exemplary model of behavior in the midst of social turmoil. Furthermore, the only characters who carry out their social responsibilities in the heat of crisis are those who are guided by a superior transcendent power due to their faith. The Cardinal, the Cappuccini, and the Church in general are those who restore unity in the face of the disintegration of society. While the Cappuccini are exalted for their efforts at Lazzaretto, the public authorities are described as being more preoccupied with the war than the plague and more concerned with their own prestige and honor than with human life. While the faithful are moved to action, the faithless are either paralyzed by the apparent futility of action, or flailing desperately to pin responsibility on someone or something.

Manzoni himself was no stranger to the furies of crowds, and he no doubt drew from his experiences when composing the chapters on the bread riots. Critics of *I Promessi Sposi* unanimously consent that when writing the description of the assault on the house of the “sventurato vicario di provvisione,” Manzoni had in mind the lynching of Giuseppe Prina that took place on the 20<sup>th</sup> of April, 1814, just outside his house in via del Morone, which was very close to Palazzo Marino, the residence of the minister.<sup>38</sup>

The degree to which Manzoni's literary treatment of a crowd corresponds to Le Bon's scientific study can be attributed not only to Manzoni's personal experiences with crowds but also to the fact that his description of the tumult of San Martino is based on the first-hand testimony of Giuseppe Ripamonti. It is clear that Manzoni followed Ripamonti's historical account with utmost precision, incorporating Ripamonti's description of how the crowd robbed, stole, and destroyed every element of the bakery, from the counters down to the account books. Ripamonti conjectures that they would have killed the bakers themselves if they had been able to get their hands on them. “Delirante and “furibondo” are the adjectives he uses to refer to the masses, and he specifies that the vicario di provvisione was an upstanding individual clearly undeserving of the crowd's wrath.<sup>39</sup>

Manzoni's narration of the bread riots demonstrates his profound intuitions regarding the psychology of crowds, notions that would later be developed by social psychologists such as Le Bon. The mental inferiority and bestiality exhibited in Manzoni's descriptions of the masses is not intended to reflect the mental capabilities of the individuals that compose the crowd, but of the crowd itself, which functions as a collective unit. Regardless of social rank and educational background, individuals, including judges and authorities, when under the hypnotic influence of a crowd, descend several rungs on the ladder of civilization. Like Le Bon, Manzoni envisioned his current age as an era of crowds. As György Lukács writes in *Romanzo Storico*, the experience of the French Revolution and the Napoleonic regime contributed decisively to making history "un'esperienza vissuta dalle masse, e su scala europea" [my emphasis].<sup>40</sup> Manzoni's terror of the irrationality and brutality of the masses, born of his personal experience as well as his understanding of the French Revolution, informed his conception of how the unification of Italy should be undertaken. His particular vision of cultural unification involved the cultivation of nationalism as an ethical-religious value and promoted a peaceable and patient submission to Divine Providence on the part of the Italians. Underlying *I Promessi Sposi* is Manzoni's ideological project for unification destined to take place in the church, and not in the piazza.

## Notes

1. Antonio Gramsci, *Letteratura e vita nazionale* (Rome: Editori Riuniti, 1971), 100.
2. Modern crowd psychology emerged in the wake of the World Exhibition of 1889 in Paris, commemorating the centenary of the French Revolution. During the first half of the 1890s there was an ever-increasing interest in the subject. Scipio Sighele's *La folla delinquente* (1891) was followed by Henri Fournial's *La psychologie des foules* (1892), and Gabriel Tarde's *L'opinion et la foule* (1901). Le Bon's study, published in 1895, became an international bestseller and proved to be the most enduring and influential of these studies.
3. Gustave Le Bon, *The Crowd: A study of the Popular Mind* (Marietta, GA: Larlin Corporation, 1982), v.
4. Alessandro Manzoni, *I Promessi Sposi*, ed. Isabella Gherarducci and Enrico Ghidetti (Florence: La Nuova Italia Editrice, 1990), 278.
5. Manzoni, 278.
6. Le Bon, 6.
7. *Ibid.*, 23.
8. Manzoni, 276.
9. Le Bon, 21.
10. *Ibid.*, 46.
11. *Ibid.*, xiv.

12. “le *nozioni* dell’universale (. . .) sono il principio delle *azioni* dell’universale.” Alessandro Manzoni, *Lettere*, I., in *Tutte le opere*, VII ed. by A. Chiari and F. Ghisalberti (Milan: Mondadori, 1954), 19-20.

13. Manzoni, *La rivoluzione francese del 1789 e la rivoluzione italiana del 1859*, (Milan: Fratelli Rechiedei Editori, 1889), *Introduzione*, 3.

14. *Ibid.*, 328-329; Cfr. Augusto Simonini, *L’ideologia di Alessandro Manzoni*, (Ravenna: Longo Editore, 1978), 134.

15. *Ibid.*, 326-328; Cfr. Simonini, 134.

16. Manzoni, *Del sistema che fonda la morale sull’utilità. Appendice al cap. III delle Osservazioni sulla Morale cattolica*, in *Opere Varie* (Milan: Stabilimento Redaelli dei Fratelli Rechiedei, 1870), 753; Cfr. Simonini, 98.

17. Augusto Simonini, *L’ideologia di Alessandro Manzoni* (Ravenna: Longo Editore, 1978), 98.

18. Manzoni, *Dell’invenzione*, in *Tutte le opere*, II , 1589.

19. *Del sistema che fonda la morale sull’utilità. Appendice al cap. III delle Osservazioni sulla Morale cattolica*, in *Opere Varie*, 748.

20. Manzoni, *La colonna infame* (Milan: Cappelli Editore, 1973), 28.

21. *Ibid.*, 27.

22. *Ibid.*

23. *Ibid.*, 104.

24. *Ibid.*, 27.

25. *Ibid.*, 58.

26. Manzoni, *I promessi sposi*, 689.

27. *Ibid.*, 720.

28. *Ibid.*, 279.

29. *Ibid.*, 279.

30. *Ibid.*, 282.

31. *Le Bon*, 12.

32. *Ibid.*, 13.

33. See Alfieri’s *Filippo* and Schiller’s *Don Carlos*.

34. *Morale Cattolica*, in *Tutte le Opere*, frammenti della seconda parte, II, p. 1509-10.

35. Cfr. Simonini, 77.

36. *La colonna infame*, 121.

37. Remo Bodei, *Destini personali: L’età della colonizzazione delle coscienze* (Milan: Feltrinelli, 2002), 8.

38. See S. Marche, *Dalla realtà al romanzo: il ministro Prina e il vicario di provvisione*, in *I Promessi Sposi* (Scandicci: La Nuova Italia Editrice, 1990), 312.

39. See D.G. Ripamonti, “L’assalto alla casa del vicario di provvisione” in *L’officina del romanzo* (Scandicci: La Nuova Italia Editrice, 1990), 311.

40. György Lukács, *Romanzo storico*; Quoted in the preface to *I Promessi Sposi*, a cura di Isabella Gerarducci and Enrico Ghidetti, p. vii.

