through archival research in the voluminous *Notarile* of many Italian towns and cities and through literary analysis of the many extant letters and works of Salutati himself. The quality of scholarship reflected in the text and explicit in the rich scholarly apparatus provide a model for this kind of monograph. Witt deserves our gratitude and our respect.

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LUCA TOSCHI. *Si dia un padre a Lucia. Studio sugli autografi manzoniani*. Padova: Liviana Editrice, 1983. Pp. 144.

In the past, critics have tended to study *Fermo e Lucia* as a preliminary to the 1827 and 1840 editions of *I Promessi Sposi*, at least from 1921, the year of publication of N. Busetto's *La genesi e la formazione dei Promessi Sposi*. A branch of stylistic criticism in Italy has addressed itself to the examination of the creative process as evidenced in succeeding progressive versions of a work, a procedure condemned by Croce as "critica degli scartafacci," but which aims to devote itself to the scientific study of concrete evidence rather than indulging in personal, unverifiable reactions. Gianfranco Contini and Lanfranco Caretti have been notable in this sector.

Toschi's book is original in that it concentrates on *Fermo e Lucia* and the manuscript evidence relating to it. His method is not stylistic but investigates the building up of the structure of the work, especially the union of historical and imaginary events and the ordering of narrative events that results from it — the production, in brief, of a new type of novel in Italy. At this early stage, Manzoni had not yet decided precisely which historical events were to be included and thus the place in the history of the period of the adventures of Fermo and Lucia. The structural demands of the story tended to change Manzoni's concept of the mingling of history and invention. It would be impossible to follow all of Toschi's detailed treatment of the various aspects of his subject, but some references will indicate the nature of his work.

In the first of his three sections, Toschi shows how Manzoni came to realize the advantages of implicating Fermo in the riot of S. Martino, a move which necessitated the inclusion of previous references and the omission of other details. This move marked a real turning point, the creation of a different system. Subsequently, too, the plague was made to play a role. Fermo and Lucia are no longer isolated from history. Manzoni must now adhere to history. The inclusion of the war and the descent of the German mercenaries also afforded Manzoni the opportunity of speaking again of private characters. In fact, as in the later eighteenth-century novel, he now saw historical reality as a social phenomenon, involving everybody. The union of historical and invented events resulted in a continuous narrative in opposition to the preceding construction in separate blocks. Fermo is affected most of all by this development and acquires a definitive identity. All of these points are carefully documented by Toschi on the basis of manuscript and text.

In the second part of his work, under the title *Verso un "annottar tempestoso,"* Toschi continues to trace history and fiction: the omission of the episode of the "Colonna Infame," Fermo and the plague, including his visit to the lazzeretto and meeting with Padre Cristoforo. Toschi discusses the importance of Manzoni's corrections and assesses the role of Ermes Visconti. As he points out, what is at issue is Manzoni's whole concept of the historical novel, together with the novelty he brought to it — the point of view of the humble. At issue also, however, is Manzoni's invention of a storm to clear the air literally and metaphorically and end the plague — the moralist against the historian.

In his third and shortest section, *Tele di ragno*, Toschi begins by remarking that, for Manzoni, a person who knows the right but acts otherwise does so by choice not through some necessity shared by others. With the question of the Colonna Infame as his starting point, Manzoni indicates that the false judgements of one century are not always corrected by an impartial and infallible posterity; he reconstructs opinions regarding the facts of the anointings and of the punishments. The judgement of posterity may be motivated by new passions. In any case, it is difficult to identify the motives that cause men to act. In this particular instance, judgement is both useful and consoling, however. In the opening pages of his *Appendice*, Manzoni clarifies the terms of relationship between the two humble anointers and the socially superior Padilla. The latter published a considerable extract from the trial. Thus the two humble men relive only because chance involved them in the actions, and so in the papers, of the great. Consequently, even after death, the powerful possess the historiographic and narrative keys to the possible rebirth of the humble. When we seek to restore a voice to the humble, we are like spiders weaving their web in nothingness. Accordingly, in *I Promessi Sposi*, Manzoni sought to remedy this situation with a solid link between history and invention. An invented character like Renzo is developed through historical events. Independent sections are replaced by a fusion of what occurred and what could have occurred, despite the quotation of documents. Data are incomplete, however, and so it is impossible to go back to Man: History itself becomes fiction, a narrative expedient. Here, ends Toschi, begins the other story, Manzoni's "seconda minuta."

Toschi's book, through its careful analysis of the material in question, deepens our knowledge and understanding of Manzoni's intellectual positions and their development in his narrative art.

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AA.VV. *La semiotica letteraria italiana*, a cura di Marin Mincu. Milano: Feltrinelli, 1982. Pp. 207.

Condurre un'inchiesta sulla semiotica letteraria italiana adottando come procedimento il genere dell'intervista sembrerebbe in un primo momento compito relativamente facile. Poi ci si accorge invece che è vero proprio il contrario: infatti, tale inchiesta presuppone oltre ad una solida cono-