

*The Texts of the Convivium*

**CAN ONE REALLY SAY THAT A NARRATOR  
IS TO HIS CHARACTERS  
A BIT AS GOD IS TO HIS CREATURES?**

One of my all-time favourite books is *I promessi sposi* (*The Betrothed*.) every now and again I willingly re-read it and I always discover something new in the scope of a continual in-depth study. I am greatly interested in the personality of Alessandro Manzoni.

I noticed that the characters are extremely different as regards mentality and character. There are also those who are the complete opposite to others. I wonder for what psychological complexity could they all be likewise originated from the spirit of the author in such a way as to prove to be so incredibly alive, without exception, if many different souls were acting in the author.

There are, without a doubt, all human figures who have drawn from experiences met in life, experienced in substance (so to speak), assimilated in virtue of a unique receptivity and then, needless to say, re-elaborated by an inimitable imagination.

Manzoni was a man whose health was precarious, he was extremely sensitive and suffered with his nerves with limitations which he was more than aware of and which drove him to look after himself and protect his safety and certain essential comforts. I get the idea that he was very much like Don Abbondio, a character who had the air of being his most successful character.

However Manzoni was also a profoundly religious man and one who was extremely sensitive to the requests of a religious commitment in a heroic degree. Whether a priest or a monk, he would have most certainly aspired to being it at the level of a Fra Cristoforo or of a Bishop Federico Borromeo, nevertheless without being able to prove himself equal to them. Even the most simple nostalgia of saintliness could inhibit its imitation and yet prompt the narrator to give life to characters such as those: why not?

Acting in compliance could be the regret of not having had the gift of a strong character from Mother Nature, one that was not at all fearful, like that of the Innominato (the Unnamed), or perhaps of his mediocre imitator such as Don Rodrigo or Count Attilio.

Intermediate requests are expressed in the creation of a vast range of characters, each one placed into being in virtue of great spirit of observation united with an extreme versatility and ability to share other people's experiences and moods.

Each character, placed into being, acts in an independent manner, once the author has given him the initial impulse. And nevertheless the author continues to keep him alive and, on the contrary, live him from the inside.

In theatrical representations the primitives tend to identify each author with his role. Therefore he who plays the part of the good guy is appreciated, not so much for how he acts, as for his goodness, and everyone loves him and is a fan of his. Whereas the "bad guy" is insulted and even has bad fruit thrown at him. Evil is all for him whereas his rival is given all good.

So what role does the author play? If one rises up from the small world of that theatre to the great theatre of the universe then one could think of comparing the author to the representation of God Himself and His characters to the creatures of this world.

At this point the following question arises: who should be given the responsibility of good and evil that is committed both on stage as well as on the scene of the world?

What opens up here is a metaphysical-theological discourse: an attempt to make an extremely difficult explanation, perhaps destined to fail, to be postponed elsewhere.