

# Reading the urban historical sedimentation throughout the eyes of a novelist. A digital tool to raise tourists awareness of cultural heritage.

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**ABSTRACT:** The urban structure that a tourist explores during a tour is the result of a historical evolution where spaces have been shaped by events, planned activities and every day life. The identity of the place is a mixed brand composed by material objects, symbolic values and social experience layered on the physical environment. The risk for mass-tourism is to remain on the surface of this historical sedimentation unable to discover, recognize and appreciate the inner soul – the genius loci – of the place in itself. On the other hand, visual artists, writers, novelist, musicians and other cultural protagonists can give a powerful and deep insight of a city life and personality. The paper proposes an experimental project that tries to read the secret life of Milan through the eyes of one of its most famous novelist and intellectual leader of the XIX century, the well-known author Alessandro Manzoni. The time machine, a features of the mobile app The Betrothed 2.0, presents the evolution of the city following the itineraries made by one of the main character of the novel. That allows to show different periods (XVII, XIX centuries and the contemporaneity) and places geo-referenced on historical maps using a multimodal and augmented reality story telling approach. The app, tested with real people among tourists, city-users and inhabitants, is the driver to discover the urban space and its intimate soul.

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