Masters vs. Lee Masters:

Spoon River and Fiddler Jones in Translation

Celebrated and unknown,

the author of Spoon River.

Eugenio Montale (1950)[1]

Fabrizio De André's concept-album *Not of Money not of Love nor of Heaven* (Non al denaro non all'amore né al cielo) follows directly on the heels his *The Good News* album; they were released within a year of each other, in November of 1970 and November of 1971. In an interview included on the inside cover of the *Not of Money* album, which De André included as part of an effort to make the album less hermetic and more didactic,[2] the *cantautore*'s intentions are clear. He states that the themes of the album's nine songs are *scienza* and *invidia,* science and envy:[3]

> Envy […] is the human emotion that most reflects our climate of competition, man's desire to measure himself against others, to imitate them and to overcome them in order to possess that which he, himself, does not possess, but which he believes others do. Regarding science, [we chose it] because science is a classic product of progress, which unfortunately is still in the hands of the powers that create envy and because, in my opinion, science has not yet managed to resolve existential problems.[4]

In this last statement, that "science has not yet managed to resolve existential problems," it becomes clear that the goals of this album are an extension of the work done on *The Good News,* as discussed in the previous chapter, "Countercultural Christs."

In the same interview, De André describes himself as "more disenchanted, less romantic. Today I try to temper my old infantile enthusiasm with this cynicism that is crushing all sensitive souls above the age of thirty."[5] His self-reported cynicism evokes Roberto Dané's essay from the inside cover of *The Good News,* which discusses what he and De André saw as the overriding human problem: an "existential loss of faith (given that the only one who could have been God is dead)." *The Good News,* Dané says, is the highest degree of this "illusion - disillusion - loss of faith" and has as its goal to divulge and communicate something that, in this day and age, can only be communicated by the artist.[6] The previous chapter has argued that *The Good News,* with this goal of communication in mind, exposed what De André and Fo saw as the truly miraculous of the Christ story: irrational and universal love and compassion, as a path by which to go beyond the state of disillusionment highlighted by Dané as modern man's most pressing problem. *Not of Money* is, in the musicians' own words, a continuation of the same theme; it reveals the obverse side of the story of modern disenchantment, not a reconsideration of the Christian *illusion*, but of the violent act of *disillusionment* by science, which as De André explores it, is just another illusion.

The six characters that represent vice in the *Not of Money* concept album are divided, according to the LP cover text, by the themes of envy and science. "A Madman" (Un matto), "A Blasphemer" (Un blasfemo) and "A Judge" (Un giudice) represent envy on Side A, while "A Doctor" (Un medico), "A Chemist" (Un Chimico) and "An Optician" (Un ottico) represent the theme of science on Side B. There is, additionally, an introductory song, "The Hill" (La collina), and there are two heroes, the minor hero of Side A "A Man with Heart Disease" (Un malato di cuore) and album's central hero, "Musician Jones" (Suonatore Jones) at the album's end. Besides the introductory "The Hill", each song is an epitaph that recounts the essential aspect of a man's

life from where he lies dead and buried at the Spoon River Cemetery. The men of science in their epitaphs all demonstrate how science hasn't given them a better understanding of either the meaning of life or of death and how that lack of understanding somehow came to define their own lives and deaths. These men apply rational thought and the scientific method to the problems of death, love, and understanding. They attempt to overcome nature, acting as gods, yet their epitaphs are still all ruled by the unstoppable seasons and cycle of lives and a world that remains irrational and ineffable even in the face of their scientific attempts to rationalize and understand it.

Science, in fact, seems to hem in all of the album's men, rather than to liberate them or expand their understanding, and this is true even of the men who represent the theme of envy. "A Madman", for example, seeks the words to express the "world in his heart" and, in his effort, attempts to memorize the dictionary. However, the knowledge he gains in the dictionary is harmful rather than helpful, as he learns what people think of him when he comes across the word 'matto' or 'madman'. He learns that something is wrong with him, that he is deficient. Yet, he doesn't learn, as he says, "whom I owe my life to,"[7] which emphasizes the detrimental effects of the modern abundance of information that can fill one's mind with knowledge but that cannot explain one's own existence or purpose. Thus, in the end, he is further alienated by this new self-conception and gives up on communicating the world in his heart. Instead, he consigns himself to a mental hospital and stays there until he dies. The following song, "A Judge", similarly underlines science's insufficiency to answer certain spiritual and ethical questions previously resolved by religion. For, the judge reveals in his conflation of the courthouse and the church that in the absence of divine judgment, the human judge has become a god. Indeed, the judge has been a church goer and has become a lawyer, as he recalls, so as "to access that road / that from

the benches of the cathedral [*cattedrale*] / lead to the sacristy / then to the judge's bench [*cattedra*] of the courtroom / finally a judge / arbiter on earth of good and bad."[8] His use of the words *cattedrale* and *cattedra* demonstrate De André's view that modern man professes to substitute human judgment for divine judgment in the rationalized world. However, the judgment of "A Judge" turns out to be an egregiously inadequate replacement, as he is routinely prejudiced in his sentences, which are full of vengeance for those who have wronged or belittled him.

"A Doctor", meanwhile, is the first of the men-of-science songs and it deals with science's inability to treat aging and mortality. The physician in question believed, as a boy, that medicine would allow him to turn back time, that it would allow him to return living things to their youth, as he puts it, to turn fruit back into blossoms. However, he realizes as an adult that medicine doesn't have that sort of supernatural power, that it is just another job, and to make ends meet he resorts to selling a fake youth elixir for which he is imprisoned in a cell where he eventually dies. The following song, "A Chemist", goes on to deal with science's inability to fully explain love as the chemist proves himself to be a man who is wholly devoted to science and who has left all credence in the non-empirical behind him. Yet, he reveals the paucity of this understanding when, in a series of plays on words, he passes from a discussion of scientific chemistry to romantic chemistry, which he says was unfathomable to him, compared to chemical reactions: "As a chemist I had the power," he sings, "To marry elements and make them react / but men I never managed to understand." He ponders "why they combined by means of love," and states in the end that he refused to participate in the parts of the world he couldn't account for: "I was a chemist, no, I didn't want to get married. / I didn't know with whom, or who I would have created."[9] In the end, listeners understand that the chemist sought to live a wholly rational and predictable life, a life he could fully understand and control but, since human

understanding is so limited, it resulted in him drawing tight boundaries for himself and living isolated in his laboratory as if it were a jail cell.

De André's final man of science, "An Optician", recognizes that the rational view of the world in which the chemist and others delude themselves is not sufficient. He no longer seeks to normalize the sight of the "color-blind" and "far-sighted."[10] Rather, he believes it is more important to distort clear vision, in the hopes of showing men more than what is there in front of them. That is, he wants patients whose eyes see beyond the scope of 20/20 vision so that he can help them perceive, not this world, but worlds of their own invention. From an eye-doctor, he becomes a 'merchant of light' and then a *'spacciatore di lenti,'* which translates as a 'glasses-pusher' or 'glasses-dealer', in the sense of a drug dealer. The previous chapter argues that Fabrizio De André and Dario Fo sought to overcome a largely rational cultural shift by inviting man to experience reality and humanity as somehow divine; that is, to experience the world beyond the rational and empirical, and thus to overcome modern disenchantment. The chapter points out that this was a central concern in the 20th century and that in both the Weimar Republic of Walter Benjamin and the U.S. counterculture of Huxley and Leary, hallucinogens were experimented with as visionary agents. It notes, on the other hand, that in Italy the drug-based counterculture was derivative and artificial; thus, with this understanding, De André and Fo turn to the artist as an illuminating alternative to the theoretical illumination of hallucinogens. The final two songs of *Not of Money,* "An Optician" and "Musician Jones," summarize and underscore this entire movement.

As is stated in the album-cover text, the optician "would like to transform reality into light […] as a sort of hashish dealer, a sort of Timothy Leary or Aldous Huxley," but he is not a salvific character, while "the violin player is an alternative," and is, indeed, the hero of the

album.[11] The optician seeks a shortcut to transcendence and manages it. However, it's not a true experience but, rather, a false illumination: it is "light that transforms / the world into a toy."[12] The wording, in both Masters' and De André's versions, is highly evocative of the wordplay used by Dante throughout the *Divine Comedy,* especially in *Paradiso* as the Florentine poet moves towards the source of existence and a flash of total understanding. Dante-the-pilgrim's journey is a physical as well as a mental one that requires much suffering, learning, and contemplation. Throughout the journey, he is ascending toward light/knowledge, his world is increasingly illuminated/understood, but he risks being blinded by too much light if he does not learn how to first love properly and then 'see' properly. In Paradise XXII, Beatrice tells him: "'You are so close to the final salvation / […] that you must have your eyes / clear and sharp, / and therefore, before you enter it any further, / look back down, and see how much world I / have already placed beneath your feet." Dante turns around and says: "With my sight I returned through every one of / the seven spheres, and I saw this globe to be / such that I smiled at its base appearance; / […] The little threshing-floor that makes us so / ferocious, as I was turning with the eternal Twins, / appeared to me."[13] Dante sees a tiny, 'base' globe, silly like the optician's toy world, yet Dante's vision allows for no shortcuts, no tools for transcendence. When he sees the world as small, toylike, it conveys his sense that worldly concerns are small and trivial compared to the existential and cosmic concerns he is learning to see and understand. When the optician sees the world as a toy, he trivializes life itself, as something worth playing with and nothing more. It is for this that the optician fails. He may see but is blinded by that sight, as he has not learned to fully understand what he is seeing.

The critique of hallucinogenic drug use as a cheap trick, an escape, rather than a liberation, is emphasized in the song by the repetition of the verb 'to steal' as it opposes the sort

of illumination that Dante insists one must earn. The optician recounts: “I see myself rise up to steal the sun / so as not to have any more nights” and then how he sees his friends “steal happiness from sleep / a little night from the dawn.” Finally, it culminates in the theft of the transformative light as they steal “the light that transforms / the world into a toy.”[14] De André and his musical arranger for the album, Nicola Piovani, in turn, steal from the then-trendy prog rock, a genre associated with drug-related countercultures. When the speaker’s vision is altered suddenly, as his eyes “escape from the orbit,”[15] the melody changes and the prog rock mimicry signals the beginning of an LSD-type trip. The optician’s vision is furthermore revealed to be simply another illusion of science by the keyword ‘dream’, which signifies untrue sight, misunderstanding, and illusion throughout the album. The ‘merchant of light,’ the ‘glasses-pusher,’ beckons his patients to “follow these eyes with me as they dream,”[16] while in the final song, “Musician Jones” is introduced not as a dreamer but as one who sees his “liberty sleeping / in tilled fields” and sees her “wake up”[17] every time he plays.

The figure of Musician Jones will be examined later in the chapter but it’s worth noting here how crucial he is to De André’s central message, as the *cantautore* uses the album “to demonstrate science’s failure with regards to man,”[18] and then offers art—as song and as verse—as the means of overcoming it. Indeed, communication that overcomes alienation seems to be the very duty of the artist as De André elaborates it. This movement evokes the poet Giovanni Pascoli’s similar argument in his 1899 “The New Era” (L’era nuova). As Pascoli talks about the turn of the century, he comes to meditate on “human unhappiness”[19] and how many say, “Science has failed!”[20] In Pascoli’s view, modern man is confronted with the image science has given us of “our infinite smallness in relationship to the infinite size and multiplicity of the stars,” and the fear, the insignificance, our spirits feel in contemplating that smallness. It is left to

the poet alone, Pascoli argues, to help humanity understand itself in this new panorama.[21] He sums it up thus: "It is up to poets to turn *scienza* into *coscienza,"* science into consciousness (and conscience).[22] Like De André's Jones, Pascoli makes a salvific hero of the poet, who for De André, as we will see, is a musician (both himself and Jones), in the age of science.

As it has been elaborated thus far, *Not of Money* is a continuation of De André's treatment of disenchanted modernity, which began with *The Good News* and, like the other songs and albums examined in this book, in his *intended* goals for the album, De André disrupts certain assumptions his listeners may latently or actively hold in regards to the power of science and the promise of rational progress. *Not of Money,* however, is arguably much more important in terms, not of De André's deliberate didactic goals but, rather, in terms of the album's relationship to the book of poetry that inspired it, Edgar Lee Masters' *Spoon River Anthology.* From this very different starting point, the remainder of the chapter will consider some of the album's *unintended* consequences. While we have seen De André largely as an artist who rehistoricizes myths and mythical figures in order to parse their complex significations, in this case, the Genoese *cantautore* appends new meaning to the myth of Masters and *Spoon River,* and he, himself, becomes part of the myth as a shadow-image of the book's and album's hero, Fiddler Jones. To this end, the chapter will go on to consider the differing publication and reception histories of *Spoon River* in Italy and the U.S. to better understand why their legacies, as well as Masters', differ so greatly in the two countries. It will consider how the original Italian translation and publication of *Spoon River* have acted as a sort of transplant of the original that, as it has grown and evolved in Italy, has separated from its American roots and come to signify differently. Indeed, as the myth of Masters grew and evolved in Italy, it withered and died in the U.S., and it was none other than Fabrizio De André and his *Not of Money* album that added the

final layer of meaning to the Italian myth and finally cleaved the myth of *Spoon River* from the American original.

Edgar Lee Masters' Legacies between Illinois and Italy

Edgar Lee Masters' *Spoon River Anthology* was the best-selling book of poetry to date in the United States when it was first published in 1915.[23] It is a compilation of 244 free-verse poems, all of which, except the introductory "The Hill", are epitaphs told from the point of view of citizens of the imaginary village of Spoon River, Illinois, who lie dead and buried in the town cemetery. The book's success made Masters a sensation nationwide, but since then his name and works, including *Spoon River*, have largely faded into oblivion in the U.S. In fact, when his face was printed on the U.S. 6-cent stamp in 1970, most Americans could not identify him.[24] Yet, in Italy at that time, his name and work were still well-known, and Fabrizio De André was about to reignite Masters' popularity with his 1971 album inspired by nine of the original epitaphs. Masters' work has been called one of the most-read books of poetry in Italy,[25] and as of 2009, *Antologia di Spoon River* had gone through 72 editions there, with more than 500,000 copies sold and, in recognition of its centennial, in 2016 and 2018, two brand-new editions, including introductions, notes, and translations, were released by Mondadori and Feltrinelli.[26]

By contrast, as Jerome Loving points out in his 2008 Introduction to the Penguin Books edition, in the U.S. the work is no longer canonical and "today exists in the national memory as piecemeal poems."[27] The difference in the poet's two divergent legacies in the U.S. and Italy is largely a result of the very different mythologies the figure of Masters and his *Spoon River* have accrued. This is due, in great part, to Italian literary isolationism during Fascism and, later, to U.S. disinterest in Masters, which allowed Italian reception to grow as its own sapling, rather than as a branch of the U.S. tree. The disconnectedness between literary conversations at home

and abroad is evidenced by the very treatment of his name, as the title of this chapter suggests; beginning with his introduction to the Italian public via Cesare Pavese and Fernanda Pivano, Masters was referred to in Italy as 'Lee Masters', as his middle name (he was named after the Confederate Army general, Robert E. Lee) was interpreted as his last name. Slowly over the decades, in earnest by the 1990s, scholars have corrected the mistake. Yet, the tradition of referring to him as 'Lee Masters' is so strong that in popular culture, the poet is still referred to, largely, by the original moniker,[28] while in new editions, for example, 2005's *Corriere della Sera* and 2018's Feltrinelli editions, he continues to be listed as 'Lee Masters, Edgar' on both the cover and in the bibliographic information.

There are two additional elements to have furthered the poet's distinct legacies. Firstly, there is the absence of Italian translations and U.S. criticism of his later works, as those works are partially responsible for his loss of credibility in the U.S. and, secondly, there are the particularities of the *Spoon River* publication history and its adaptations in Italy, which tie *Spoon River* firmly to the antifascist and student-revolutionary traditions of the 1940s and 1970s. With John Hallwas's seminal 1992 critical edition of *Spoon River* and Herbert K. Russell's 2001 *Edgar Lee Masters: A Biography,* however, new Italian scholarship has necessarily included these, as well as other crucial texts from the 21st century, which highlight the various reasons for which Masters has come to be seen as an unviable voice in American poetry. New Italian editions have sought to render more accurate translations and root themselves in U.S. critical reception, yet, these editions apparently attempt to perform a dual task. On the one hand, the translations themselves are indeed more accurate but, on the other hand, the editors take great care in their introductions and notes to include American criticism and new details while, at the same, maintaining Masters' unspoiled status as a visionary and progressive poet.

This dual act is in line with what translation theorist Lawrence Venuti has argued: more than the accuracy of translations themselves, it is "the practices of circulation and reception by which the translation continues to accrue meanings and values that differ from those invested in the source text."[29] Italian scholars perform a nuanced curation—specifically in regards to Masters' later works, his Southern sympathy after the Civil War, his xenophobia, and the central message of *Spoon River* itself—in a way that renders new editions both more and less faithful to the source text. From an American perspective, the careful curation is dangerous, while from the perspective of Italian studies, it seems to miss the most valuable point. That is, this chapter contends that Masters' legacy in Italy need not be jeopardized by the poet's American reception, which is influenced by subtle political and historical realities that are so foreign to the Italian audience as to be entirely missed by readers. Rather, the contemporary deepening of research and thought around his work would do better to focus on *Spoon River* in the Italian context, as the Italian love affair with Masters may very well speak volumes about the amputated self-conception and estranged cultural memory in post-Fascist Italy.

With this argument in mind, this section of the chapter will go over the specifics of, and reasons behind, Edgar Lee Masters' very different legacies in the U.S. and Italy. It will consider polysemy, decontextualization, and the neutralization of criticism in recent editions. Finally, it will contend that a more faithful account in Italian scholarship of the central message of *Spoon River,* as put forth by John Hallwas and others, would really get to the heart of its impact on generations of readers who continue to deal with the lasting trauma of the Fascist regime and, particularly, Mussolini's rural policies and rhetoric. The chapter takes into consideration all available Italian editions that have introduced either a new translation, scholar's introduction, or notes/comments. It is most interested, however, in Fernanda Pivano's canonical, original

translation and writing that is associated with that translation (including Pivano's commentary and Cesare Pavese's articles on Masters), and with scholarly work that has come out after, and explicitly leaned on, the works of recent U.S. scholars like John Hallwas, Jerome Loving, Herbert K. Russell, and James Hurt. For that reason, the 2016 and 2018 Mondadori and Feltrinelli editions, with translations and notes by Luigi Ballerini and Enrico Terrinoni respectively, are particularly relevant.

Gianfranca Balestra, professor of American Literature at University of Siena, in a 2007 article on Masters and De André, calls Fascist Italy a suffocating atmosphere in which the exploration of American literature gave one an alternative cultural experience[30] and Cesare Pavese says, similarly, that Sinclair Lewis and his contemporaries, such as Masters, "made the first little hole in the wall to freedom, the first suspicion that not everything in the world's culture ended with the fasces."[31] It is, in fact, this inherent sense of glimpsed freedom through literature, together with the story of *Spoon River*'s arrival in Italy during those repressive years, that is most important to the mythology that has formed up around it.

The story goes that 26-year-old Fernanda Pivano, with the help of Cesare Pavese, subverted Fascist censors by requesting to publish *Antologia di S. River,* knowing that 'S. River' would be interpreted as an abbreviation of 'San River', which means 'Saint River' in English. Pavese's supposed ruse worked and Einaudi managed to get the book past the censors on March 9th, 1943,[32] and Pavese and Pivano became literary partisans in this way. That is, during the years of the most intense resistance to the Fascist regime, they were subverting the Fascist State and Fascist culture, with pens rather than swords. This story, though widely considered apocryphal, is retold in nearly every new edition of the anthology, as *Spoon River* and Italian partisanship become strictly correlated in the mythology surrounding the book. To name just one example, in

the Chronology of Masters' life and works in the 2015 Giunti Edition, the year 1943 is remembered for two things: "March: Einaudi publishes, thanks to Cesare Pavese, the *Anthology,* translated by Fernanda Pivano" and "March: during the fourth year of WWII, the Resistance begins with strikes in Milan and Turin."[33] Fernanda Pivano is remembered, furthermore, as a 'pioneer',[34] both as a woman and as a translator of American literature. This specific style of rhetoric, too, is important to the larger myth, as Masters' heroes are the American pioneers and homesteaders, and it allows the young Pivano to translate the very heroism of *Spoon River* to the contemporary Italian context.

Then in 1971 and 1974, two Italian *cantautori* added another layer of signification to Masters' myth in Italy. Firstly, Fabrizio De André, created his adaptation of *Spoon River* in his popular concept album *Not of Money not of Love nor of Heaven* (Non al denaro, non all'amore, né al cielo). On the inside cover he associates his work with Pivano by including a full-spread interview with her, and in so doing, he links Pivano's and Pavese's original partisanship with his own countercultural stance during the 1970s. He ends the interview thus, in a clear reminder of the historical and political stakes: "Fernanda Pivano is, for all of us, a writer. For me she is a 20-year-old girl who began her career translating the book of a libertarian while Italian society had entirely different leanings. This happened between '37 and '41 when this really meant being courageous."[35] Francesco Guccini, a few years later, wrote "Song for Piero" (Canzone per Piero) for his *Rooms of Daily Life* (Stanze di vita quotidiana) album, in which a reference to the premiere Italian Romantic poet of the 19th century, Giacomo Leopardi, is followed in the next stanza by a coupling reference to the American poet, Masters. Guccini recounts that he and Piero were the sort of young men who read poetry and discussed big ideas, like whether or not God exists. In this world of their youths, Masters seems to be an intellectual measuring stick, as

Guccini sings of a peer: “They’re intelligent, you know, they read Edgar Lee Masters.”[36] The line distinguishes readers of *Spoon River* as informed and discerning, a significant and influential judgment to come from a politicized singer-songwriter like Guccini.

Because of its unique history in Italy, *Spoon River*’s appearance on the scene is linked to the promise of a fresh start, a renewed vision for the future after Fascism and during the tumultuous cultural shift of the 1960-70s. Yet, as early as 1933, American critics saw *Spoon River*’s message in its original context as idealizing an old order (Jeffersonian agrarian democracy) without offering a clear path for the future. Critic Herbert Ellsworth Childs was one of the first to note that Masters’ epitaphs were “tarred with the brush of agrarianism, a defunct philosophy now” and one that was “no longer the answer for the problems that Masters raised, and he offered no other.”[37] According to Hallwas’s groundbreaking scholarship, this stunted vision, of a poet who feels “dispossessed” by change,[38] is key to *Spoon River.* It is key, in turn, to American intellectuals’ aversion to Masters, as his sense of dispossession revolves around changes incurred by the Civil War.

Masters’ nostalgia for a better and more truly ‘American’ past, is framed in *Spoon River* as (a) reverence for pioneer generations, such as “Aaron Hatfield” who calls out: “O pioneers, / With bowed heads breathing forth your sorrow / For the sons killed in battle and for daughters / And little children who vanished”;[39] and as (b) a reproach of Americans who came after, such as “Lucinda Matlock” and her condemnation: “What is this I hear of sorrow and weariness, / Anger, discontent and drooping hopes? / Degenerate sons and daughters, / Life is too strong for you.”[40] In successive works, however, it becomes an assault on any person who does not fit into Masters’ limited definition of Americanness. To name a single example from his sequel, *The New Spoon River*, as biographer Herbert Russel points out, Masters’ prejudices are in full view

as he directly attacks all non-descendants of pioneers: "I saw that the village names were changed; / And instead of Churchill, Spears and Rutledge, / It was Schoenwald and Stefanik, / And Berkowitz and Garnadello …, / And then I said with a sinking heart, Good-by Republic, old dear!"[41] In the Italian 1986 Rizzoli Libri edition, Viola Papetti contends that Americans have simply lost a taste for Masters' poetic voice.[42] Yet, the American public's dismissal of Masters has been much more active and reactive than Papetti's claim suggests. For, *Spoon River,* particularly in light of the poet's later works, reads to Americans as a call to restore a version of the country that offered absolute liberty, or individual freedoms, to a highly restricted group of Northern-European land-owning men whose ancestors had forged the frontier. Indeed, his rhetoric echoes that which one hears today in U.S. politics and media, in regard to immigration from Latin America, and which declaims new Americans as a threat to 'true Americans' and their traditions and values.

Rather than problematizing this view, Italian scholarship tends to bolster Masters' song-of-America styling by likening it to Walt Whitman's. Luigi Ballerini, for example, in the opening lines to his Notes in the 2016 Mondadori edition makes the claim: "[Masters'] only rivals, in terms of fame, were Walt Whitman's *Leaves of Grass,* with whom Masters has been at times, inappropriately, linked, and, perhaps, T.S. Eliot's *The Waste Land* and Ezra Pound's *Cantos*."[43] Ballerini's claim that Whitman, Eliot, and Pound are in any way Masters' poetic rivals is misleading in terms of the English-speaking public. Furthermore, and confusingly, Ballerini highlights the comparison between Whitman and Masters only to reveal, offhandedly, that the comparison isn't correct. This is the sort of acrobatic contention that one can see performed time and again by scholars who are attempting at once to make their analyses of Masters more accurate and, at the same time, to hold on to previous, more favorable conceptions. Enrico

Terrinoni, in a less nuanced comparison than Ballerini's, in his 2018 Introduction to the Feltrinelli edition, says Masters is "connected with a key vein of American literature and history […] by means of a Whitmanesque self-identification with the village, in the first place, and then with the nation."[44] Though Ballerini and Terrinoni both claim Hallwas as their cornerstone source, they crucially choose not to make the key distinction between Whitman's message and Masters', which Hallwas argues is essential to their differing legacies: "The poem's closest forerunner is Whitman's "Song of Myself," and like that great poet, Masters saw himself as a representative American, one who embodied the basic goodness of the new 'breed and clan.' Unfortunately, he did not view everyone else in America as spiritually equal and sharing in the same potential, as Whitman had."[45] This distinction is essential to Masters' American legacy, and it also begins to convey a sense of the careful elisions that seek to keep Masters' legacy untarnished in Italy.

Polysemy, Decontextualization, and Neutralization

One of the key elements to the different interpretation of Masters in Italy and in the U.S. has been the persistent polysemy of political and historical terms, which translation theorist André Lefevere calls the "universe of discourse features" in a text. Translations that do not resuscitate the original intent—through a loan translation, calque, footnote, or some combination therein—are unfaithful, Lefevere claims, as those features are "particular to a given culture and they are, almost by definition, untranslatable or at least very hard to translate."[46] Such crucial features in Masters include the seemingly straightforward terms *Democracy, Republicanism, Liberalism,* and *individual freedom,* which, to my knowledge, have never been properly glossed in footnotes, endnotes, or introductory comments in any Italian edition.[47]

Without any additional commentary from translators or editors, Masters' Democratic

stance, for one, was interpreted in 1940s Italy as FDR's New Deal version of the Democratic party, while in the 1970s his fierce hatred of 'Republicanism' was seen in opposition to Nixon's Republican presidency. In 2012's *Invitation to Spoon River,* Giovanni Romano, in his analysis of the epitaphs "John Hancock Otis" (democratic hero to Masters) and "Anthony Findlay" (republican villain) falls into this trap of dehistoricizing. Romano explains the epitaphs by stating that "they represent quite well one of the classic debates in American political culture: on one side the liberal and progressive wing, on the other the Republican wing, rigidly conservative and protectionist at the domestic level, isolationist and clinging to the Monroe Doctrine."[48] Yet, the relationship between the two parties, in 1915 when *Spoon River* was published, and even more so in the 1880s when *Spoon River* is staged, cannot be stated as the 'classic' American Democratic Liberal vs. Republican Conservative. For, Masters was vehemently opposed to Lincoln and to *his* brand of Republicanism, which was, in fact, the progressive party of its day, formed by Conscience Whigs and Free-Soil Democrats opposed to the 1854 Kansas-Nebraska Act, which sought to bring new territories into the Republic as 'free territories' where men could choose to hold slaves or not. After the Civil War, the term 'Conservative' referred to those, often Southern Democrats, who fought against 'Radical Republicans' who wanted full citizenship for freed slaves. Richard Nixon's 'Southern Strategy', which sought to increase political support among white voters in the South by appealing to racism against African Americans, was the political maneuver that finally transitioned Southern Democrats to modern Republicanism.

The modern judgment amongst intellectuals, which sees liberal Democrats as positive and conservative Republicans as negative, does not apply neatly to the shifting political sands of the early 20th century in the U.S. Still, it is this contemporary dichotomy that Italian scholars often apply back to define Masters' political ideology. So, when Gianfranca Balestra sums up Masters

in 2007 simply as "politically tied to the Democratic party and with populist inclinations, he is disgusted with riches obtained through immoral enterprises,"[49] it supports the mythical Italian image of Masters but is ultimately misleading. For, Masters was a Southern Democrat (also called a Jeffersonian Agrarian Democrat) who believed in the myth of idyllic agrarian democracy, based on slavery, which had been destroyed by the Civil War.[50] In this sense, Masters' liberalism and his democratic party affiliation, which are both based in his vehement belief in 'individual rights', must be understood in their historical context. This is perhaps best appreciated through the oppositional relationship between Petersburg and Lewiston, which combine to become the inspiration for the fictional village of Spoon River. They are the Illinois towns where Masters grew up, and the representatives of good and bad, respectively, in Masters' view of American life.

Nearly every Italian critic speaks of this dichotomy and it is generally around these towns that editors do the work, if they do it at all, of historicizing the book's socio-political context. It is clear that, for Masters, Petersburg has a positive connotation, representing Virginian Democrats and Lewiston has a negative one, as it represents New England Republicans. It is also clear that Masters personalizes this dichotomy in his mother (a New Englander) and in his hero-father (a Virginian). Luigi Ballerini states as much in his Introduction to the 2016 Mondadori edition:

> The citizens of Petersburg were all people who came from Kentucky and Virginia, pioneers who became farmers, people who had good sense, who were tolerant, if not curious about people different from themselves, and with very little inclination towards theological disputes as they were content with privileging the social and ethical aspects of the religious message. Or at least this is how Masters presents them to us. […] As

> opposed to the homogeneous Petersburg, Lewiston was torn apart by political conflicts: Republicans (almost all of whom came from New England) and Democrats (almost all of whom came from Virginia and Kentucky).[51]

He goes on in his notes section:

> Of utmost importance is [Masters'] declared disdain for 'Republicans, Calvinists, merchants and bankers' who highlight the radical split that divides Spoon River, and that actually divided Lewiston, between the liberal party, made up of people who came to Illinois from southern states, and from Virginia in particular, and the conservatives who came from New England, cradle of Puritanism.[52]

Petersburgians have 'good sense', are 'tolerant', and have 'little inclination towards theological disputes' but privilege religion's 'social and ethical message.' Meanwhile, Lewiston has warring factions. On the one hand there are the Republicans, who are New Englanders, moralizing conservatives, Calvinists, and capitalists. On the other side are Virginians who are vaguely described as liberal. This portrait is not an accurate one, and Ballerini seems to know it, as he hedges in his description of Petersburgian democrats by stating that they are as described or "Or at least this is how Masters presents them to us." Yet, he does not offer further clarification. Meanwhile, Enrico Terrinoni says in the 2018 Feltrinelli edition:

> [Masters'] father boasted a peculiar religious skepticism seasoned with an untamed love of whiskey, a strong sense of belonging and a morality that was, to say the least, relaxed. But he was also passionate about democratic and pre-revolutionary ideals and about a conception of America that maintained the 'purity' of the first pioneers. Consequently, he was disillusioned by the status quo and by the modernizing trend that had overrun his country in the years following the Civil War. His mother, on the other hand, was devoutly

> religious, ardently supported the Temperance movement, and observed a rigid morality that put her in conflict with his father's much more libertarian comportment. […] It's unquestionable that [Masters'] fascination with his father, with his free ways and democratic ideals, was far superior to his love for his mother.[53]

Terrinoni focuses on the same aspects of the dichotomy; Petersburgians (personified in the father) represent liberalism and the democratic party as we are left to conceive of them in the contemporary sense. The people of Lewiston (personified in the mother) are conservative, rigid, and religious. We are given to understand that Democrats wanted more freedom and Republicans wanted to restrain freedom, but that isn't quite right when it comes to the sort of freedom Masters and his father sought most fervently to maintain: that of individual liberties.

Indeed, Liberalism came to its modern definition in the U.S. only with Franklin Roosevelt and 'modern liberals.' Masters' brand of liberalism is more closely associated with modern libertarianism. Furthermore, and crucially, in Masters' day, Southern Democratic liberals saw the right of individual liberties/rights as applicable to a select few.[54] This precision can be seen in Hallwas's description of the two towns, which he portrays quite differently from the Italian presentations. Petersburgians do not come across as the neat heroes, nor are Lewistonians vilified. He says in regard to Petersburg:

> In the bottom half of the long state, settlers from Kentucky, Tennessee and Virginia predominated. They were Indian-fighting, game-hunting, story-telling, and whiskey-drinking frontier people who celebrated courage, stressed kinship, prized hospitality, opposed abolitionism, advocated individual rights, idolized Andrew Jackson, and supported the Democratic party […] They were 'agrarian traditionalist' […] They feared change and maintained intense loyalty to a narrow circle of people: family, kinsfolk, and

> others like themselves.

Then in regards to Lewiston:

> In the top half of Illinois, settlers from the East predominated. Always called 'Yankees' on the frontier, they were more apt to be community organizers, business founders, churchgoers, schoolteachers, and social reformers. They were modernizers […,] ambitious, self-confident, upwardly mobile people who advocated and enacted change. Opposed to drinking and slavery, they were not afraid to place limits on individual freedom in order to promote social improvement.[55]

Though it is not cited as coming from Hallwas, Terrinoni clearly lifts Hallwas's assessment, while subtly removing problematic terms:

> Petersburg […] was predominantly made up of settlers from southern states, Tennessee, Virginia and Kentucky principally. They were of a liberal nature, traditionalists who were tied to the agrarian world, they didn't disdain the lively world of saloons, they believed strongly in the value of hospitality and in individual rights. Lewiston, further north, […] was predominantly made up of people from the modernized east coast, Yankees, who were social reformers, businessmen, devout and ambitious, and more tied to the idea of change than to that of tradition.[56]

Gone from the Southern heroes is the Indian-fighting, anti-abolitionism, fear of change, and narrow loyalty while added is the term 'liberal'. From Hallwas's "prized hospitality, opposed abolitionism, advocated individual rights" Terrinoni carves out his own "they believed strongly in the value of hospitality and individual rights," from which the 'anti-abolitionism' has simply been pulled from the middle. Conversely, when describing Masters' New England villains, gone is the abolitionism and limiting of individual freedoms *in order to* secure larger social

improvement for all.

With these long citations I hope to have demonstrated the subtle muddying of terms and historical contexts that allows such relationships as Republican/Democratic, Conservative/Liberal, Yankee/Virginian, and Petersburg/Lewiston to maintain, in Italian criticism, a clear tendency to favor Masters' political and socio-cultural worldview. These terms will continue to be important here, as will the idea of Italian editors carefully recasting U.S. secondary literature to support claims that differ, only slightly but significantly, from the original claims of the U.S. scholars.

There are four key elements that work together to tarnish Masters' reputation in the U.S.: his troublesome view of Americanness (as previously discussed in terms of his dissimilarity to Whitman), his Confederate sympathies (present in *Spoon River* and increasing across the years), his xenophobia, and, finally, the quality and content of his later works, particularly, his 1931 biography of Lincoln. In tendencies similar to those seen above, which engage polysemy to neutralize universe of discourse features, recent Italian scholars interact with the overarching issues that disturb Masters' legacy in the U.S. while carefully framing the poet to survive any partial blows he may receive.

Confederate Sympathies

Take, for example, Enrico Terrinoni's assertion above that Edgar Lee Masters' father and hero, Hardin Masters, was "passionate about democratic and pre-revolutionary ideals" ("vantava […] la passione per gli ideali democratici pre-rivoluzionari). This vague declaration of "pre-revolutionary ideals" seems chosen precisely to de-signify and neutralize. The categorization of Hardin Masters as such encourages readers to interpret the revolution in question as the American Revolution, yet, Hardin Masters' ideals concern the Civil War, not the Revolutionary

War. In fact, it would be accurate to state his ideals as 'pre-Civil War'. For, indeed, he was a Jeffersonian Democratic who did not completely oppose an economic model based on slave-aided farming.

Ballerini obfuscates in the same sort of way when he cites Jerome Loving's 2008 Introduction to the Penguin Books *Spoon River* in his notes to the epitaph "Sexsmith the Dentist." In reference to the verses in the poem "Do you think that the 'Battle Hymn of the Republic' / Would have been heard if the chattel slave / Had crowned the dominant dollar, / In spite of Whitney's cotton gin," Jerome Loving clarifies Masters' opinion:

> [Masters believe that] the Northern song of victory in the Civil War would not have been heard and the war would not have been waged if slavery had been economically viable outside the South. Here Masters expresses his *neo-Confederate* [emphasis added] belief that Lincoln ruined the Jeffersonian spirit of the country, selling out its individuality to corporate and trust interests.[57]

Ballerini cites Loving in Italian:

> Non ci sarebbe stato nessun canto della vittoria nordista, e nessuna guerra si sarebbe combattuta, se la schiavitù non avesse avuto un peso economico anche fuori dagli Stati del Sud. Qui, Masters dichiara il suo credo politico *neofederale* [emphasis added], sostenendo implicitamente che Lincoln avrebbe distrutto lo spirito jeffersoniano della nazione, facendosi complice dei banchieri e degli interessi privati.[58]

There are a couple of differences between the translation and the original, but the most glaring is the choice to translate 'neo-Confederate' as 'neofederale' or 'neo-federal' in English. This small change allows Italian readers to understand Masters' stance as simply one that believed in States' rights, rather than as specifically one associated with the Confederates' fight for the freedom to

own slaves.

Masters was of the belief, still popular amongst Confederate sympathizers today, that the Civil War was waged with slavery merely as an excuse; this belief is clear enough in *Spoon River,* as seen above in "Sexsmith the Dentist" as well as "Jacob Goodpasture" and others. While American writers are careful to call into question Masters' stance (as we will see when discussing *Lincoln, The Man*), Luigi Ballerini backs it up as, not only a commonly held belief, but a historical fact. In his accompanying note to the opening lines of "Jacob Goodpasture" ("When Fort Sumter fell and the war came I cried out in bitterness of soul: / "O glorious republic now no more!" When they buried my soldier son / […] I cried: / "Oh, son who died in a cause unjust! In the strife of Freedom slain!"), Ballerini explains that Fort Sumter saw the first battle of the Civil War and that "The 'cause unjust' referenced in v. 7 is the conservation at all costs (millions dead) of the Union of the United States. Only in 1863 was the emancipation of slaves officially added to the list of motives for the conflict."[59] Ballerini's claim jumps out to the American eye, not only because about 620,000 to 750,000 died during the Civil War (not millions), but also because it flattens the issue of slavery as a cause and relies on rhetoric used in the U.S. by Confederate-apologists.

The 'slavery question' had, indeed, been a hot debate and central in American politics for some fifteen years before the Civil War, as new territories were added to the Union and northern politicians sought to secure their status as non-slaving holding lands, while southern politicians wanted to guarantee 'individual freedoms' (N.B. the use of this key term) to future Americans in those territories to buy, sell, and own slaves. The Compromise of 1850 was a set of legislation meant to defuse four years of heated altercations between free and slave States regarding, specifically, slave ownership in territories acquired during the Mexican-American War.

Furthermore, the Republican Party emerged as a direct response to the slavery question; in 1854 it was formed to combat an act that allowed slave or free status to be decided in the territories by popular sovereignty. The party, unsurprisingly, had almost no presence in the Southern United States.

Claims that the Civil War was waged for purely economic reasons and that slavery was merely an excuse fall apart when scrutinized in light of historical particulars; those who support the theory have been seen across the 20th-century as Confederate and slave-holding apologists, often called 'Revisionists.' It was and still is a rhetorical and ideological technique used by revisionist groups, as historian Matthew Norman points out, to "downplay slavery as a cause of the war and place blame on fanatical abolitions and a 'blundering generation' of politicians."[60] And it was precisely these Revisionists that Masters was associated with 15 years after *Spoon River,* when he wrote his biography, *Lincoln, the Man,* which Carl Sandburg called "a long sustained Copperhead[61] hymn of hate," and which Claude Feuss thought sounded like it was written by "an unrecognized and still bitter veteran of Lee's army."[62] American critics saw the biography as the peak of an anti-Lincoln revival, spurred on by the economic difficulties of the Great Depression, which was led by unreconstructed Confederate Revisionists like Mildred Lewis Rutherford,[63] a southern educator who was pro-slavery and against women's suffrage.

Lincoln, the Man

Much Italian scholarship of the past did not deal with *Lincoln, the Man;* for some of that time it was lost in relative obscurity in the U.S. and it was unknown abroad or, at least, its views were unknown. Today, however, American critiques are plentiful in new editions of *Spoon River* as well as in scholarly articles about the biography itself. Italian commentary, however, elides accurate treatment of the book. For example, in Einaudi's new edition of Pivano's translation,

Guido Davico Bonino, in his Introduction, does not mention the biography, only citing it without comment in the critical bibliography. Similarly, the 2015 Giunti edition of Alessandro Quattrone's translation, states only in a timeline at the end of the book: "1931-1938 [Masters] writes a few biographies on Lincoln, Whitman and Twain."[64] In the Rizzoli edition, Viola Papetti mentions the biography in the Chronology of Masters' life, noting only that it is an "anti-lincolnesque biography, unfavorably received by critics,"[65] while, in her Introduction, she chooses to talk about Carl Sandburg's favorable presidential biography rather than Masters' own and, in the Essential Bibliography, Masters' book is mistitled as *Lincoln, the Man of the People,* lending it a positive tone. In the notes to the edition, Papetti arrives closer to the truth, stating: "M's love/hate for Lincoln is expressed, aside from in his biography (*Lincoln, the Man*), in frequent offhand remarks as well."[66] Yet, Papetti's summary does not go far enough, as the biography is not an ambiguous love/hate or, as Papetti puts it, 'amoreodio.' Rather, *Lincoln, the Man* was called by one historian "an incoherent diatribe" made up of "a series of immoderate, absurd, and extreme statements which are neither founded on fact nor in harmony with reason."[67]

Walter Mauro's commentary in the 2018 Newton Compton edition toes the same line, skipping it in the Introduction, and saying in the Bio-bibliographic Note only that Masters wrote a few "polemic biographical studies like 1931's *Lincoln, the Man,* which set itself up as a pointed criticism of the mythical figure of the statesman and 1938's *Mark Twain, a Portrait,* which presented the writer as a genius and victim of a public that misunderstood him."[68] Far from presenting Twain simply as a 'genius' and 'victim', Masters' biography makes claims that ring with a violent racial rhetoric. He argued, for example, that the Mississippi-born Twain did not represent his southern origins in post-Civil War America well-enough. U.S. critics remember that Masters "hurled against Twain the charge of being desouthernized;"[69] that he "berated

Twain for not continuing his service in the Confederate army […] instead abandoning his post;"[70] and that he said it was inexplicable that "Twain in the dark days of Reconstruction voted for Grant and the Republican party when he ought to have spoken out vehemently for the common decency and the forces of light."[71] That is all to say, Masters admonishes Twain for certain choices he made in life, namely, that he deserted after two weeks in the Confederate army and later married a New Englander from an abolitionist family and joined the ranks, himself, of Lincoln's Republican party.

Now, to return to Lincoln's biography, Luigi Ballerini deals much more than others with Masters' opinion of Lincoln, both in *Spoon River* and after. He clarifies that Masters disliked the president by stating it numerous times, yet he still carefully neutralizes. For example, in his Introduction, Ballerini makes sure to couch Masters' anger with Lincoln (described as quite singular by American critics) within a larger nebulous national sentiment, saying, "disappointment surfaces, in regard to what Masters and others considered an out-and-out betrayal (on the part of Lincoln) of Thomas Jefferson's political legacy."[72] In regards to *Lincoln, the Man,* specifically, Ballerini oddly focuses on the word 'love' (amore) to talk about Masters' hatred. "Masters," he says, "did not love [Lincoln]. This lack of love is testified to by *Lincoln: The Man.*"[73] He points out that the biography "sparked a frenzy," then chooses to cite only the "rare voice in favor" of the book, significantly a non-American voice, "that of the English writer, John Cowper Powy who asserted: 'Masters is a historian of vast and precise erudition."[74] This claim, that Masters is acting as a historian in *Lincoln, the Man*, is particularly frustrating, as American scholars have pointed out time and again that the biography was completed in 47 days[75] and contains, as Matthew Norman puts it, "little original research, while Masters' thesis is both presentist and simplistic to the point of being *reductio and absurdum.*"[76] Masters, rather,

based the majority of his claims on personal family lore, but did not make that clear to his readers, in a desire to make his writing appear objective.[77] Enrico Terrinoni's 2018 edition does not make any mention of the ruinous biography, but chooses instead to include various of Masters' poems as an appendix to *Spoon River,* the first three of which present a neutral view of Lincoln.

Besides Russell, whom I've already cited, other U.S. critics central to new Italian editions, such as Jerome Loving and James Hurt, have much to say about the biography as well. Loving cites Russell's point that the book is largely based on local oral tradition and says that Masters "blames Lincoln for starting the Civil War, suggesting he was a closet abolitionist all along."[78] Hurt argues that Masters' biography was largely an ode to Lincoln's opponent, Stephen Douglas, and that his opinion of Lincoln may not be "new and not necessarily irrational, but the vehemence and extremism with which Masters advances it makes us suspect motivations rooted in personal associations." He summarizes the work by stating:

> Lincoln ultimately stood with the North, the city, and the future, while for Masters, Douglas stood with the South, the country, and the past. And once he has classified them, the categories harden for Masters, and he can pour into them the displaced energies of his own personal position. This also seems to be the strategy behind Masters' other political and social attitudes, his xenophobia and racism, for example.[79]

There are many more examples of American opinions of *Lincoln, the Man*, but it should be clear by now that these critiques are plain and plentiful, and that their exclusion in Italian editions shows a careful curation process that eliminates Masters' regressive conservativism and racism.

Racism

In *Spoon River,* Masters' opposition to the Civil War is framed in terms of the centralization of

the government and introduction of big-business interests to the frontier in the postwar years. The war itself is seen as incurring those changes. While that belief may be truly felt by the poet, it obscures a latent defense of slavery—and, in turn, racism—that exposes itself across the years. In *Spoon River,* we see strains of this in Masters' defense of Southern Democracy, his critique of abolitionists, like Robert G. Ingersoll in "W. Lloyd Garrison Standard," and his denunciation of the Civil War as a "cause unjust" in "George Trimble" and again in "Jefferson Howard." A few years later, in his 1922 *Children of the Marketplace,* Masters' protagonist believes that "trusts are much worse than any ante-bellum slave owner,"[80] while in his 1931 article in *American Mercury,* titled "Stephen A. Douglas," Masters says that Republicanism ultimately led to "Prohibition, bureaucracy, the trusts, imperialism, and the loftiness of a Christian Republic free of slavery, polygamy and drink!"[81] Lincoln and his Party, Masters claims, "were getting ready to do worse things against slavery than slavery had ever done."[82] As we will see, since American critics have almost always chosen to address these opinions head on, Italians who choose to rely heavily on U.S. scholarship have had to cherry-pick citations.

Ballerini, in his version of the epitaph "George Trimble," improves the translation of the English "free silver" as "l'idea di mettere in circolazione monete d'argento" (the idea of putting in circulation silver coins),[83] which all of his predecessors had left as the direct but ambiguous "libero argento." In the notes to the epitaph, he cites Masters' speech about 'Bimetallism', as mentioned in a letter from Burgess to Hallwas, which he most likely took from Hallwas's own mention of it in his notes to the epitaph. Ballerini also points out, like Hallwas, that the 'Peerless Leader' in the epitaph was the historical William Jennings Bryan. Hallwas, significantly, reveals Bryan as the Peerless Leader on page 41 of his Introduction. Ballerini's historical summation of Bryan and free silver follow Hallwas's, yet nowhere in his editorial gloss does Ballerini choose

to include Hallwas's larger point from that same page:

> Between the Civil War and the turn of the century America had been transformed from an agrarian republic with a fairly homogenous northern European ethnic background to an industrialized, urbanized nation, filled with business entrepreneurs devoted to capitalistic growth and immigrants clinging to Old World traditions. […] No American writer was more deeply troubled by the change than the author of *Spoon River Anthology,* who fused his awareness of it with his memories […] and his idealized recollections of the Petersburg area to create his mythic view of conflicting social groups and cultural decline.

Hallwas goes on on that page to say that Masters' "Philosophical determinism prompted him to regard human character as substantially fixed by heredity and environment."[84] To Masters, only the descendants of the pioneers were "real Americans," while newcomers were "not apt to share the American vision—and they were on the increase."[85] Hallwas finishes his assessment of Masters' fear of immigration and subsequent cultural decline by citing the 1920 "The Great Race Passes": "Crackers and negroes in the South, / Methodists and prohibitionists, / Mongrels and pigmies / Possess the land."[86] This historical contextualization is not optional for American scholars, as readers can parse the tension themselves when they read the entire *Spoon River,* but to Italian readers there exists no inherent tensions in the translated text, thus scholars can indulge in a generous avoidance.

This flexibility to avoid dealing with racially charged poetic moments is apparent again in Terrinoni's choice to include Masters' 1941 poem "The Old Salem Mill: Petersburg" in the selected poetry appendix. He does so without controversy and without gloss, even though the poem refers to Shack Dye, the one Black speaker in *Spoon River,* as "Nigger Dick."[87] This word

is widely considered the most inflammatory and racist term in American history, since at least the 1800s and still today. Coming from the mouth of an apparent racist in 1941, it loses even the ambiguity some allow in Mark Twain's contextualized 19th-century use of it. Yet, Terrinoni, without problematizing it, simply translates it as the English equivalent of 'negro': "Dick il Negro."[88] 'Negro' is a politically incorrect term in Italy and the U.S., but it does not carry the same cultural baggage, nor does Terrinoni elucidate the immense weight of the original racist slur, either in Masters' day or today.

The flexibility to be generous with Masters is clear, once again, in Ballerini's note to the opening lines of the Union-soldier epitaph, "Knowlt Holheimer": "I was the first fruits of the battle of Missionary Ridge. / When I felt the bullet enter my heart."[89] Ballerini says it calls to mind the same sacrifice as Billie Holiday's lynching ballad "Strange Fruit": "The idea of sacrifice (first fruits) can also be superimposed, diachronically, with that of lynchings (strange fruits) as is clear in a song made famous by Billie Holiday: "Southern trees bear a strange fruit, / Blood on the leaves and blood at the root, / Black bodies swingin' in the Southern breeze, / Strange fruit hangin' from the poplar trees…"[90] To compare the death of Knowlt Holheimer's (who enlisted in the army only to avoid prosecution for theft, as we learn in "Lydia Puckett") to a sacrifice equal to the long history of African American lynching in the south after the Civil War is ill-conceived. As it is to further imply that the slavery-apologist's intentions, diachronically, share something with Holiday's accusations against people like Masters, himself. Masters' problematic worldview, and the careful Italian treatment of it, underpin this chapter's claim that the poet's legacy in Italy can, in an academically honest sense, only continue if scholars stop attempting to authenticate their own analyses through connection with the U.S. context and U.S. scholarship.

Rereading *Spoon River* Through the Lens of Mussolini's Traumatic Rural Rhetoric

As stated previously, the legacy of *Spoon River* in Italy is largely tied to its revolutionary roots there. The risky publication of the first edition and Cesare Pavese's involvement have been important to the book's antifascist ties, as Pavese was one of Italy's foremost antifascist writers in the immediate postwar period. During the 1970s' Strategy of Tension (also known as the Years of Lead), it once again came to represent resistance. For example, as Luigi Ballerini points out, Pivano's translation of the epitaph "Carl Hamblin" was carved on the anarchist Giuseppe Pinelli's tombstone.[91] It seems likely due to the work's antifascist legacy that its agrarian sympathies have been continually under-emphasized by Italian critics, while, in reality, agrarianism and ruralism are central to the work and to Masters' worldview.

John Hallwas allows that *Spoon River* was first seen as a revolt against the village, but he argues that, in reality, it is a mythic, nationalistic "champion of agrarian America,"[92] which, taken as a complete work, reflects a central tenet: that the Adamic early Americans had been pure and true, while the Civil War ruined idyllic agrarian democracy.[93] Hallwas is not alone in this sort of claim, nearly all American critics stress similar messages, and even Cesare Pavese ultimately agrees. While in 1931, in an article for *La Cultura*, he wrote that "the great merit of Lee Masters is to have begun, in his country, the merciless description of provincial people, villagers, Puritans,"[94] by 1943, his opinion had changed and rather than calling the book a revolt against traditional, rural culture, he says that it can be defined as *a ballade du temps jadis,* a ballad to times past.[95] When he writes a eulogy for Masters in 1950, his assessment, in part, sounds remarkably like Hallwas's. *Spoon River*, he states, is a "humiliated celebration of the

energy and the youth of great past. […] A heroic dream of 'the republic', of 'giant hands [who] from the womb of the world tore the republic,' the real 'pioneers' who loved and fought with courage. To this dream Lee Masters gave a name, 'Jeffersonian democracy.'"[96] Jeffersonian democracy is agrarian democracy, an ideological model in which the farmer best exemplifies civic virtue and independence from corrupting city influences.

Masters' stance vis-à-vis agrarianism is clear in American scholarship today, yet Ballerini cites an antiquated U.S. secondary source (from 1922) in his Introduction and maintains the old claim that Masters was a part of the revolt-against-the-village movement in literature:

> Masters [is] the forefather of a new breed of American narrators […] who fall under the heading of "Revolt against the village", a title that meant to signify that these writers exposed the hypocrisies that dominated provincial life – that same world that previous generations of writers had portrayed as ideal, pure, idyllic, genuine, etc., contrasting it to the inevitably corrupt lives of people who lived in big cities.[97]

Ballerini does point out that some disagree with this claim, but his prevailing point is still that Masters is to be considered anti-provincial. I see this desire to adhere to an earlier 'revolt against the village' assessment of Masters as having much to do with rural and provincial associations with Fascist political rhetoric. Indeed, Mussolini's construction of a myth of rural life was partially founded on disdain for the city and, like Masters' brand of ruralism, Mussolini's was retrograde, palingenetic, and nationalistic. One may point out that Mussolini was pro-rural and anti-agrarian, while Masters was pro-agrarian, but the distinction falls apart in context. To Mussolini, *gli agrari* are rich landowners, while *i rurali* are *mezzadri*, or sharecroppers, and small-plot owners.[98] This contrast does not exist for Masters for whom the ideal agrarian dream allowed all men (slaves and the native people on the land are significantly excluded) to own

swaths of frontier land.

Mussolini used the figure of the *contadino,* or farmer-peasant, as a national and heroic figure, a virile, fertile/productive and frugal figure, whose values represented the new fascist man.[99] At the same time, he discouraged Italians from moving to the unhealthy and corrupt metropolis, creating a polemic between the two worlds that he tied into the long history of the peninsula. As the fascist economist, Arrigo Serpieri, wrote in in 1929: "Often human history has been none other than the contrast between rural societies and industrial or commercial societies. Rome—rustic and humble Rome—defeats rich, commercial, plutocratic Carthage."[100] So, perhaps, for a modern Italian audience—for whom ruralism still rings of the Fascist rhetoric that spawned the *strapaese* intellectual movement—to classify Masters' *Spoon River* as an ode to ruralism, would mean to risk its revolutionary stance. Or perhaps it would seem to be admitting, in the reader, latent sympathies with Fascism, even though ruralism and fascism have never been strictly correlated, except by Mussolini himself. Indeed, Mussolini chose to rally Italians around the figure of the *contadino* precisely because of its extant and inherent potency. The provincial hero is not a Fascist myth, it is rather a myth that was usurped and manipulated by Fascism in a way that stripped it from the hearts and minds of Italians and returned it to them stained with ideology that is not inherent to it.

Spoon River was read in Italy in 1943 as a satire and exposé of the village, of Fascist ruralism; as such, it was subversive of Mussolini's regime and of Mussolini, himself, who proclaimed in 1927 "I will explain to you, therefore, that I will help agriculture, that you may proclaim that I am rural; I will explain to you, therefore, that I want no industry around Rome; I will explain to you, therefore, how I will not allow in Italy anything but healthy industries, and by healthy industries I mean those that find one working in agriculture or at sea."[101] Thus to

reread *Spoon River*, critically, as an ode to the pastoral appears to be judged too risky by scholars today; yet, the pastoral promise in the text is not rendered invisible by this editorial choice. Rather, rural heroism exists in the translated *Spoon River* at a sentimental instead of intellectual level, just below the critical surface. The original socio-political issues are so foreign as to dissolve away, neutralizing the objective and historical to render the text personal and emotional; it is an idyllic dream set in a far-off place, safe from associations with the *ventennio fascista. Spoon River'*s very foreignness is perhaps, too, part of its favor*,* as Italy since the second postwar period has often preferred nonnatives as its popular heroes (consider, in the case of comic books, Tex Willer, Corto Maltese, and Dylan Dog), whose stories carry readers away from their own local history, and toward much-safer foreign 'memories'.

In 1943, Cesare Pavese wrote provocatively of *Spoon River*: "Some of these poems seem little by little to have become Italian, before the act of translation, in the insistent recurrences of the memory"[102] and he claims that Pivano's translation "put us once again face to face with this lost image of ourselves."[103] In other words, it transports Italians back to April 1915, and the publication of *Spoon River,* before the U.S. or Italy had joined WWI, before Mussolini had marched on Rome, during a moment when western individuals and nations were struggling to come to terms with modernity and its effects. Italian modernity/modernism began as part of the European avant-garde in art and literature, but it was interrupted by Fascism. Fascism, at first, allowed for experiments in modernisms, and presented itself as a third way for dealing with modernity. Yet, as Mussolini's regime settled into an economic depression and coalition with Germany in the 1930s, Fascism sought less and less a means towards reconciling Italy with modernity, focusing evermore on a solution for the future that returned Italy to a mythic past, and in so doing, it confounded local mythic traditions with the 20th-century regime. Masters' vision,

rather, while ultimately similar to Mussolini's, exists in a realm that is safe from Fascism.

Luigi Ballerini says of "Jacob Goodpasture," one of the central hero-epitaphs of *Spoon River,* that "In the last name of Goodpasture are reflected the character's (and the author's) sympathies with the agricultural way of life [*la civiltà agricola*] of the American South, mortally wounded by the North's victory in the Civil War."[104] For an American reader, Ballerini's apparently simple claim is thorny and demands heavy unpacking. Yet, for the Italian reader, "Jacob Goodpasture" might represent an opportunity to indulge in a foreign, and thus uncomplicated, nostalgia for *la civiltà agricola,* which if written in the Italian context in 1915, would need its own unpacking and problematizing in light of Fascist rhetoric to come. The Illinois of 1915, decontextualized from the local historical setting, is a guilt-free space where Italian readers can breathe in the idyllic pre-modern world, representative of a vast and ambiguous 'before'. It is both the personal 'before' of childhood and the universal 'before' of the pre-modern, but it is not, crucially, the specific national 'before' of the early 20th-century Italy that was heading straight for the *ventennio fascista.*

The nostalgia for a lost past that I suggest is so appealing to Italian readers is, in translation, already altered from that which presents itself to American readers and then it undergoes another drastic evolution in 1971 with De André's *Not of Money.* His album doesn't just present an altogether different sense of nostalgia in the music, it goes so far as to change the tone and emotional drive of the *Spoon River Anthology* itself, as the anthology is read today by Italians whose first impact with *Spoon River* is most likely with De André not Masters. In this sense, we can begin to see the myth of *Spoon River* in Italy as undergoing a fundamental shift across the 20th century, and particularly after 1971. With this shift in mind, we must begin to ask ourselves who the preeminent or foundational figure is when it comes to Masters' mythical

village cemetery. Whether one should understand the preeminent *historical* mythical figure of Spoon River in Italy to be Masters-the-poet, Pavese-the-antifascist, Pivano-the-translator, or De André-the-*cantautore* depends most likely on perspective, age, interests, etc. However, a related question is clear: De André's album has cemented who the *fictional* mythical hero of *Spoon River* is. Out of Masters' 244 epitaphs, Fiddler Jones has revealed himself, through *Not of Money*, to be the arch-hero of the *Anthology*, as he is associated with freedom and non-conformity and as he is associated with the musician, himself, who, in turn, reveals himself as the modern-day artist *par excellence* and usurper of the poet's throne in the hearts and minds of youths.

The Double Life of Fiddler Jones[i]

In Luigi Ballerini's 2016 translation of *Spoon River,* the *Fiddler Jones* epitaph is translated as "Jones il violinista" (Jones the Violinist) and the line "And if the people find you can fiddle, / Why, fiddle you must, for all your life"[105] becomes "Se la gente / sa che sei bravo col violino, non hai scampo: / suonerai il violino per il resto dei tuoi giorni."[106] Ballerini's translation, of both title and verse, is technically more precise than Fernanda Pivano's original 1943 translation of the epitaph, which had been titled "Il suonatore Jones" (Musician Jones), and those lines translated as "E se la gente sa che sai suonare, / suonare ti tocca per tutta la vita."[107] However, while Pivano's version is less exact—from a 'fiddler' Jones transitions to the broad category of 'musician' in both the title and line in question—Ballerini's translation somehow reads as

[i] Please note: to cite the original English verses in the following close readings of the various translations, I will refer to the English-Italian edition of *Spoon River* first published in Italy (trans. Pivano, 2014).

discordant and as not only not-more-exact, but even as wrong. This is due, in part, to the long history and renown of the Pivano translation in Italy, but it is arguably more expressly due to Fabrizio De André's extremely popular 1971 musical rendition, his concept album *Not of Money not of Love nor of Heaven*, which leans on Pivano's translation in both the title and lyrics.

In his song, De André takes many liberties, but the lines in question come across nearly verbatim: "E poi se la gente sa / E la gente lo sa che sai suonare / Suonare ti tocca / Per tutta la vita."[108] The aural dissonance of Ballerini's translation is perhaps most apparent in Masters' introductory epitaph "The Hill", in which the line asking of the whereabouts of Fiddler Jones—he who was "thinking neither of wife nor kin, / Nor gold, nor love, nor heaven"[109]—is translated by Ballerini as "senza mai pensare né a farsi / una famiglia, né ai soldi, né all'amore, né al paradiso."[110] Here the translation seems, in its insistent choice of synonyms that differ from Pivano's, to desire expressly to subvert expectations.[111] Pivano's own translation is "non pensando né a moglie né a parenti, / né al denaro, né all'amore, né al cielo"[112] and, as in the previous example, it acts as the lexical basis for De André's version of "The Hill" ("La collina") as well as the metonymic title for the entire concept album, *Non al denaro non all'amore né al cielo.* The sense that Ballerini's translation is somehow incorrect has much to do with readers' expectations of recognition and a sentimental longing that goes unfulfilled in the new translation as it disrupts the nostalgic affective power of the lines.

It is precisely the nature of nostalgia in *Spoon River,* and "Fiddler Jones" specifically, that this section of the chapter is concerned with as I suggest that it goes a long way towards explaining the differing legacies of Masters and his work between Italy and the U.S. Through the lens of nostalgia, particularly as it is considered by Svetlana Boym in her 2001 *The Future of Nostalgia,*[113] as she distinguishes nostalgic trends she calls "restorative" and "reflective", this

final section of the chapter seeks to understand how the "Fiddler Jones" poem and its hero change across language, form, and decade. The section investigates various Fiddlers Jones, but it focuses on the original 1915 Masters epitaph, "Fiddler Jones", Pivano's 1943 translation, "Il suonatore Jones", and Fabrizio De André's 1971 song of the same name.[114] As we will see, Jones is an ideal character through which to investigate the larger change in tone in *Spoon River*, as he has arisen from De André's album as the anthology's central hero and representative character. Finally, essential to this discussion and key to Jones's own heroism, is the revolutionary role that music, the musical instrument, and the musician, himself, plays in postwar Italian culture.

As stated previously in this chapter, Masters' original *Spoon River Anthology* is considered by interested U.S. scholars today to be a lament for the loss of a mythical, national utopian past in the wake of the Civil War, industrialization, and increased immigration to growing urban centers, like Chicago, in landscapes that had recently been considered the frontier. As a Southern, agrarian-traditionalist Democrat (on the wrong side of history) in post-Civil War America, Masters certainly had reason to subscribe to the sort of nostalgic memorializing that Boym cites in her introduction to *The Future of Nostalgia* via the cultural historian, Michael Kammen, who says that nostalgia is "essentially history without guilt. Heritage is something that suffuses us with pride rather than with shame. […] Nostalgia in this sense is an abdication of personal responsibility, a guilt-free homecoming."[115] As seen in the previous section, *Spoon River* is just this in Italy, 'history without guilt', and Kammen's elaboration adds weight to the idea of why the poetry was particularly inviting to the Italian readership near the end of WWII. That is, like Masters, many Italians sought a guilt-free homecoming after the *ventennio fascista*, and *Antologia di Spoon River* proffered a foreign, but somehow familiar, mythology of a utopian past, in which Italian readers could situate memory somewhere safe, not in defense of the past,

but, rather, free from recent historical trauma. This foreign, geographically estranged nostalgia may appear paradoxical, but it is in fact predictable within Boym's discussion of the sentiment, as she argues that "at first glance, nostalgia is a longing for a place, but actually it is a yearning for a different time—the time of our childhood"[116] and that a danger of all types of nostalgia is "that it tends to confuse the actual home with an imaginary one."[117] Aspects do change, however, between the local and the foreign contexts and the rest of this section will deal with precisely those changes: why they exist and just how they alter the emotional drive of the poetry.

To begin with, one must account for the difference in the experience of nostalgia when it is 'remembered' as compared to 'imagined'. While Boym claims that all nostalgia risks confusing the imagined home for the real one, there is an essential difference between Masters' poems in the American context, where *Spoon River* is read as an attempt to recover and memorialize what had disappeared from Masters' life and American culture more broadly,[118] and in the Italian context, where the 'memories' become necessarily personal rather than communal, individual rather than national, as far as they are imagined rather than experienced. This opens the way for the vision of utopia to present, immediately, as less reactionary, less retrospective, and more open to the idea of improvement through change in the future rather than improvement through regression into a traditional past.

This distinction between national/individual and lost-past/potential-future prefigures a distinction Svetlana Boym makes in her treatment of nostalgia, as she discusses two tendencies she calls "restorative" and "reflective":

> Restorative nostalgia stresses *nostos* and attempts a transhistorical reconstruction of the lost home. Reflective nostalgia thrives in *algia*, the longing itself, and delays the homecoming - wistfully, ironically, desperately. Restorative nostalgia does not think of

> itself as nostalgia, but rather as truth and tradition. Reflective nostalgia dwells on the ambivalences of human longing and belonging and does not shy away from the contradictions of modernity. Restorative nostalgia protects the absolute truth, while reflective nostalgia calls it into doubt.[119]

That is to say, at least in part, restorative nostalgia reads as conservative and reactionary, while reflective nostalgia reminisces but, at the same time, remains critical of the past and open to the future: "Reflection suggests new flexibility, not the reestablishment of stasis."[120] In this discussion of closed vs. open nostalgic modes, lies an aspect of nostalgia that is of particular importance in *Spoon River*; namely, that the promise of the future lies in *inclusion* for reflective nostalgics, while for restorative nostalgics, as Boym states, the "imagined community [is] based on exclusion more than affection, a union of those who are not with us, but against us."[121] This restorative framework for memorializing through exclusion is key to Masters' anthology, as he structures the entire work around an Us vs. Them narrative that pits heroic southern frontiersmen against antagonistic, moralizing New Englanders. The heroes of Masters' narrative, like John Wasson, Rebecca Wasson, Aaron Hatfield, Lucinda Matlock, and Fiddler Jones, himself, are all old-timers who were pioneers on the land and who express a traditional, antebellum way of life. They are, significantly, not absolute heroes but, rather, their valor is presented as a condemnation of those who are different from them and, not only different, but in their difference, morally inferior.

Fiddler Jones is introduced by Masters in the introductory "The Hill" as a representative hero of the old ways, the ways of the "Aunts" and "Uncles."[122] While Jones may read to the modern eye as rebellious or subversive, the characteristics overtly depict, not a new wave, but the old traditional "Us" in Masters' mythology, whom we've seen Hallwas describe as Virginian

pioneers who advocated individual rights, who loved to fight, hunt, and drink, and who prized kinship:[123]

> Where is Old Fiddler Jones
> Who played with life all his ninety years,
> Braving the sleet with bared breast,
> Drinking, rioting, thinking neither of wife nor kin,
> Nor gold, nor love, nor heaven?
> Lo! he babbles of the fish-frys of long ago,
> Of the horse-races of long ago at Clary's Grove,
> Of what Abe Lincoln said
> One time at Springfield.[124]

As discussed previously, Jones and his clan were agrarian traditionalists and their way of life was effectively challenged (beginning with the Civil War) by the New Englanders who, after the war, increasingly populated Midwestern towns and dominated the political landscape. This group, who is framed by Masters as the antagonistic "Them", were called Yankees and were seen as modernizers and reformers, they prized education, opposed drinking and slavery, and were willing to put limits on individual freedoms for the benefit of society.[125] As previously elaborated, these specific historical details, which underlie the entire community landscape portrayed in *Spoon River,* are largely the reason for the work's relative obscurity in the U.S. For, Masters' nostalgic tone is founded in a desire for a return of a society structured on the possibility of slave-labor and Northern-European racial stock and culture. According to scholars like John Hallwas and Herbert K. Russell, Masters, himself, dangerously considered that era, not as something individually longed for, but, rather, as a "truth and tradition", akin to Boym's

definition above, something morally and universally superior. The hero Fiddler Jones plays a key role in the memorializing of this 'truth', as he becomes a personification of communal memory.

Jones is introduced as one who was known to "babble" about memories from "long ago"[126] and his tendency to reminisce continues in his own epitaph, as the wind reminds him of the "rustle of skirts" at dances[127] and the "whirling leaves" of a friend dancing to "Toor-a-Loor."[128] In his reminiscing about "fish-frys,"[129] community dances and picnics[130] and the pristine Illinois landscape (between rural, agricultural, and wild), Fiddler Jones acts as a personification of local memory itself. As Hallwas points out, "Masters regarded Jones and other old-time fiddlers—who were also dance-callers and tale-tellers—as bardic figures who expressed and interpreted American culture. That is why the fiddler Blind Jack is portrayed in the *Anthology* as seated at the feet of Homer. He is a kind of American Homer."[131] However, this memory, this communal tale and American myth, which Fiddler Jones carried for his ninety years, is inaccessible to us now—as predicted by Boym's theory of modern nostalgia[132]—, as his final lines allude to a definitive rupture between his time and ours: "I ended up with a broken fiddle— / And a broken laugh, and a thousand memories."[133] The instruments through which he communicates (both his fiddle and his voice) are broken, and thus too the line of communication between himself and his listeners.

The breaking of Jones's instrument becomes less tragic in Fernanda Pivano's translation, due in large part to the distance between the communal memory of the original readership in 1915 and the readership in Italy in 1943 and afterwards, which alters the hue of the nostalgia evoked in Jones's memories. Indeed, the very significance of the instrument, itself, changes for Italian readers, as is apparent in Pivano's decision to render the hero as 'Il suonatore Jones', or 'Musician Jones', rather than 'Fiddler Jones'.[134] This choice has probably to do with the insight,

likely Pavese's,[135] that "fiddle" translates into Italian necessarily as 'violino', but 'violino' is reminiscent in Italy of a classical tradition that has had its roots in Cremona since the 16th century and that has since been associated around the world, to a great degree, with the cultural elite.[136] The fiddle, on the other hand, is associated with Irish and English folk music and with American roots music in Folk, Bluegrass, Blues, Country-Western, Cajun, and Appalachian traditions. Thus, to translate Jones as a simple 'musician' allows him to represent more readily the countryside and common folk (music as well as people). Only at the end of the poem, and in terms that remind the reader of Jones's status as non-elite, does Pivano risk mentioning the instrument specifically, "Finì con un violino spaccato - / un ridere rauco."[137] This is a moment which also serves, in the translation of the second "broken" as "rauco" (hoarse), to mend slightly the rupture in communication between Jones and his listeners.

The inability to translate the full cultural weight of the term "fiddler" into the Italian context[138] is an illustrative example of the sorts of changes in tone *Spoon River* underwent in translation. In fact, Howard Wight Marshall introduces the term "fiddle" in his exploration of traditional fiddle music, *Play Me Something Quick and Devilish: Old-Time Fiddlers in Missouri*,[139] by underlining the difference between the definitions given to 'fiddle' and 'violin' in Noah Webster's 1806 first American dictionary of English. To 'fiddle' as a verb is "to play on a fiddle, trifle, do little, idle" and a 'fiddler' is "one who plays upon a fiddle, a trifler", while the 'violin' is stated to be "a sweet musical instrument, a fiddle." Marshall points out that the different definitions for the same instrument show "the paradoxes and emotions borne by fiddlers and fiddle music."[140] He goes on to say that much of the weight of the term has to do with the role the instrument has played across the history of the United States, saying that it has been a musical instrument central to American community life since the beginning of America itself.[141]

Its early central role, he suggests, has something to do with its physical weight, which allowed it to be carried easily by colonists/pioneers and early immigrants.

Marshall's discussion of the central place of the fiddle in American cultural heritage underlines just how squarely Masters' Fiddler Jones was placed within the constructs of this heritage. Marshall writes: "Whether it is played at a fish fry, in a classroom, or for a new generation of square dancers, the violin[142] has been part and parcel of our lives for hundreds of years."[143] This mention of the fish fry and square dance (Marshall discusses horse races as well in the chapter "Horse Races and Fiddle Tunes") are just the places Jones was constantly asked to play, as we see in both "The Hill" and "Fiddler Jones". Yet, they are also the terms that translate with difficulty, due to their extra-lexical, cultural meaning. Indeed, Pivano translates "fish-frys" as "fritture,"[144] while other translators attempt with "pesce fritto" (L. Ballerini,[145]; L. Ciotti Miller[146]; A. Porta[147]; E. Terrinoni[148]). Alessandro Quattrone's 2006 translation gets closer with "mangiate di pesce fritto"[149] as he locates the importance of the term in an event rather than a food, and Alberto Rossatti's 1986 translation comes nearest, as he emphasizes the festive nature of a fish fry with "sagre di pesce fritto."[150] 'Sagre' is not a perfect translation, as fish frys were not stable, annual events specific to a certain town at a certain time, but it gets at the local, annual, convivial nature of the fish fry in American culture, particularly until the later 20th century. The idea of the "dance" as a generic "ballo" in Italian translations likewise signifies differently in readers' imaginations. In the old Midwest, or the Kentucky tradition Fiddler Jones comes out of,[151] a 'dance' was quite specifically an outdoor or barn event, sometimes called a 'square-dance' or 'hoedown' or simply a 'picnic', and the dancing, itself, was variously folk-styled from immigrant and pioneer traditions.

These community events, which are personified and remembered in the person of Fiddler

Jones, play into Masters' Us vs. Them narrative for his immediate readership, as raucous fiddling and dancing would have been associated with traditional Virginia and Kentucky families,[152] while progressive newcomers from New England may well have, as Howard Wight Marshall points out, seen the fiddle as "Satan's tool", declaring that "the rhythms and emotions of social dancing and fiddling lead people to break taboos and sample forbidden fruit."[153] It also would have been redolent, as it still is for American readers today, of a tradition that was already beginning to be lost in 1915 and that continued to disappear in subsequent decades. In this sense, the heroism of Fiddler Jones is evocative of Boym's claim of restorative nostalgia that "attempts a transhistorical reconstruction of the lost home."[154] *Spoon River* is indeed Masters' attempt to bring about a return of a mythical pre-modern past, and as Hallwas points out, the myth of America as "New World Eden" is evident in the *Anthology.*[155] In fact, the contemporary mood in the industrializing and modernizing Midwest was in line with Boym's larger argument for tendencies in modern nostalgia, which she says have "a utopian dimension, only it is no longer directed at the future."[156] As Hallwas writes: "As time passed and America changed, that vision of a pastoral utopia shifted its location from the future to the past,"[157] and in this modern moment, many contemporary writers struggled to conceive of the future and relinquish the past, yet "no American writer was so troubled by those changes"[158] as Masters was and none, like him, focused on its return rather than its loss.[159] The recalcitrance and opposition to change that Jones's fiddling evoked for American readers in 1915, however, falls easily away in Italy in the postwar, and particularly in the 1960s and 70s, when music and dancing became symbolic of youth, rebellion, progress and the desire for change.

A Changing Jones for a Changing Generation

Indeed, in the Italian context, much of what sets *Spoon River* up as a locus for restorative

nostalgia evaporates: the problematic political implications of Masters' idyllic landscape, the bitter Us vs. Them / Old vs. New narrative, the nationalistic memorializing. Thus, the translated work opens up to a different sort of nostalgia, which is at once necessarily more personal, as *Spoon River* doesn't evoke a shared communal past for its Italian readership and, at the same time, is less strictly backwards looking, as its presentation of the past is imagined, thus it can be read more easily within the context of potentiality, as something new or future. The change is conceived of here as allowing the poetry to present as less restorative and more reflective in its nostalgic tone and, additionally, helping to more completely understand how *Spoon River* came to be read as revolutionary in Italy, rather than nostalgically reactionary, as it reads in the U.S. context. Regarding Fiddler Jones's revolutionary status, specifically, the controversy around music and dance that Howard Wight Marshall references, returns in a highly relevant key in the second postwar period. As early as the 1950s, with the rise of Elvis Presley in the U.S., and especially in the 1960s and early 1970s, precisely when De André releases his *Spoon River* album, music was regarded by youth generations across the West as potentially revolutionary and musicians, themselves, were often seen as implicitly subversive personages. At the same time, even before the music revolution began, *Spoon River* had already become synonymous with political subversion in Italy, and thus it was well-positioned in 1971 to transition into an artistic work that was not just regarded as culturally subversive (subverting normativity), but as *impegnato,* that is, as politically engaged, and thus as even more critically revolutionary.

As mentioned in more detail in the previous section, the revolutionary character of *Antologia di Spoon River* in Italy has much to do with the myth around its original publication, which Fernanda Pivano claimed was accomplished by Cesare Pavese sneaking it past censors with the title *Antologia di S. River*.[160] It has to do, as well, with its association with Pavese,

himself, one of the great anti-fascist writers, and with Fernanda Pivano, who later became a leading translator of the Lost and Beat generations in Italy. This origin story has created a subversive aura around Masters and *Spoon River,* which in 1971 was transferred to Fiddler Jones, as he became the most well-known character and greatest hero of the work due to De André's album. Jones's arch-heroism, in fact, arises quite naturally in the wake of De André's album, as musicians in Italy since at least 1957 (when the Cantacronache, a musical group out of Turin, established an alternative music scene) had become the voices of youth culture and revolutionary attitudes. Ten years before Cantacronache came onto the scene, however, there were already signs of the role the musician would play in revolutionary culture and an early intimation came, interestingly, from none other than Pavese.

Cesare Pavese's 1947 novel, *The Comrade* (Il compagno), tells the story of a young man in Fascist Turin who leaves his home and his family's tobacco shop to move to Rome where he becomes politically active and ends up imprisoned for his engagement. The novel is tagged on the cover of the 1990 Einaudi edition as "The most politically engaged Pavese novel"[161] and begins with the line "They called me Pablo because I played the guitar,"[162] continuing:

> The night that Amelio broke his back on Avigliana Street, I had gone with three or four others to a picnic [*merenda*] on a hill—it wasn't far, you could see the bridge—and we had drunk and joked around under the September moon, until it got too chilly and we had to go sing inside. Then the girls started dancing. I played—Pablo here, Pablo there—but I wasn't content, I always liked to play for people who understood, but that group only wanted to shout louder.[163]

This beginning is highly evocative of Jones; he too begins his tale on "a hill" (*una collina*) where he, in both the original English and Pivano's Italian translation, was called away to "a picnic"

(*una merenda*);[164] he remembers "the girls when dancing" (*ballano le ragazze*),[165] and he lived a life in which he was known for "drinking" and "rioting" (*bevendo, facendo chiasso*) as it sounds like Pablo and his crew do.[166] Pablo, furthermore, gives the sense throughout the novel, as in this citation with his "Pablo here, Pablo there" (*Pablo qui, Pablo là*) that, as was the case for Jones, "if the people find you fiddle, / why fiddle you must, for all of your life" (*se la gente sa che sai suonare, / suonare ti tocca, per tutta la vita*).[167]

However, the stakes of music for Pablo are already posited as greater than a mere diversion for dancing, and this will, indeed, increasingly be the case for music in Italy. Pablo enjoys playing for those who understand the music, not for just amusement. He muses near the beginning of the novel: "Is it worth it to use the guitar to amuse a few idiots who are out and about in the fields in the evening? They party, they act wild, what's the guitar have to do with that?"[168] At play in the work is the tension between a meaningful and meaningless life and what it means to make 'significant' choices. It seems the guitar, which is at center stage throughout the first half of the novel, has the potential to create meaning and to instigate change, but it is used inevitably to amuse and distract. It is stuck in a strict relationship—"guitar and *canzonetta*"[169]—in Pavese's Turin, and both the city and instrument must be left behind, traded for Rome and political literature, in order to truly live meaningfully.

The term *canzonetta* is a complicated one to translate into English as it has a complex significance in Italy. In his Preface to the 1964 book, *Songs of a Guilty Conscience,* Umberto Eco says of the *canzonetta*: it is "music for consumption […] produced by an industry of song"; it is "not-serious, […] music for entertainment and escape, for comfort and for play."[170] Notably, this acts as the Preface to a book of essays produced by members of the Cantacronache, a music group out of Turin who, between 1957 and 1963, sought to provide a new model for folk and

popular music in Italy; a model unrelated to the music industry and *canzonette.* The Cantacronache, which translates loosely as 'Sing Stories' or 'Sing Histories', wanted to create, like Pablo, politically and culturally engaged songs. They worked with well-known writers like Italo Calvino and Franco Fortini and sought to reinvent a folklore around the antifascist Resistance during WWII while, at the same time, resisting conformity around contemporary norms in culture and music.[171] In their outspoken anti-*canzonetta* stance and politically and culturally engaged musical style, the Cantacronache laid the groundwork for the *cantautori* to come a few years later. Umberto Eco points out that behind De André's and Guccini's music revolution, there was, indeed, the Cantacronache.[172]

Pavese's Pablo, and his resistance to the "guitar and *canzonetta*" corollary, appears to prefigure changes to come in the Italian music scene, as *The Comrade* was published a decade before the Cantacronache started the music revolution in Italy. Furthermore, Pavese appears, whether consciously or not, to found central aspects of his engaged Turinese musician on the Fiddler Jones character, whom he had recently been translating and whom he had been thinking and writing about in scholarly essays since 1931.[173] In Pablo, in his relationship to music and song as well as his proto-revolutionary status, we get an early intuition of the taxonomy of youth heroes who will surface in the following twenty years, and often, like Pablo, the two (political revolutionaries and musicians) will merge in historical and fictional characters.[174] Fabrizio De André will make the relationship between Jones and modern musical revolutionaries much more straightforward and he will complete the transition from old 'Jones', Masters' last exemplar of the antiquated, lost ways, to new 'Jones', Italy's harbinger of change. De André, building on the quasi-biographical image of Jones, will also disrupt the contemporary image of the musician-as-liberated/liberator when he creates a sort of sequel to "Il suonatore Jones" in his autobiographical

song “Amico fragile”, which is read here as marking a break in De André’s own life between the old and new.

The change in tone (away from nostalgia) and perspective (away from the past) that had begun with Pivano’s translation of *Spoon River* is completed in De André’s 1971 concept album *Not of Money.* In nine songs (eight epitaphs and the introductory “La collina”), De André re-proposes Masters’ original tale for a new generation. While Masters acts as inspiration for the work, De André’s interpretations are loose ones in which the Genoese *cantautore*’s unfamiliarity with the nuances of the American context and with Masters’ original intent play a part in allowing the singer to re-elaborate the emotional character of the work. Furthermore, the very fact that only nine of the original 244 poems are included, suggests from the outset an inevitable divergence in tone and meaning between Masters’ and De André’s creations. Indeed, since Masters’ epitaphs are largely inter-referential, the Us. vs. Them rivalry, much of which is created in the anthology through webs of connecting tales, simply disappears in De André’s album.

Fiddler Jones, for example, speaks of his neighbor (and neighboring epitaph) when he says “To Cooney Potter a pillar of dust / Or whirling leaves meant ruinous drouth; / They looked to me like Red-Head Sammy / Stepping it off, to Toor-a-Loor.”[175] In absolute terms, Jones seems to make an innocent remark about priorities; Potter is a diligent farmer while Jones is too distracted by music to farm successfully. Jones asks: “How could I till my forty acres / Not to speak of getting more?”[176] Potter, we presume, tills successfully, and indeed we find out as much in the opening lines of the “Cooney Potter” epitaph: “I inherited forty acres from my Father / And, by working my wife, my two sons and two daughters / From dawn to dusk, I acquired / A thousand acres.”[177] We also learn, however, that Potter was not content from this gain and continued to drive himself and his family to the grave through hard work and avarice. When we

read “Fiddler Jones”, we may understand in absolute terms that Jones prefers music to farming, and Potter prefers farming to music. However, when we read the two epitaphs together, it is clear that Jones represents the side of community sharing, while Potter represents individualistic greed, as the latter thinks only of profits and acreage, and isn’t afraid to deny himself and his family joy to gain it. De André’s “Il suonatore Jones” does not mention Potter, nor does Potter have his own song. Thus, by virtue of his speech’s absolute rather than relative position vis-à-vis other speakers, De André’s Jones takes on a much more open and positive tone. His is no longer a denunciation of others’ lives but, rather, a simple proclamation of his own way of living. This alone changes the tone of his song, relieving it of the original’s hints of recrimination.

De André, furthermore, changes much of the text of the original poem, apparently to express his own sense of that which is freeing in Jones’s life-affirming verses. Most crucial, perhaps, is his change of instrument, for the original Fiddler Jones—who for Pivano had become Musician Jones, a violinist—becomes a flautist in De André’s song. The *cantautore* claimed on the LP’s inside-cover interview with Pivano that he changed the instrument due to “a question of meter.”[178] Yet, some scholars have found this explanation less than convincing, as the formal elements alone do not seem urgent enough to warrant a change of this central element of Jones’s story.[179] Or, to put it conversely, the consequence of the instrument must have appeared rather less than central to De André if he was willing to sacrifice it instead of manipulating the verse in order to salvage it. Rather, additional implications can be found in De André’s choice of instrument. Namely, the change erases the ambiguity of the fiddle/violin, which may have caused Pavese and Pivano to change the title of the poem in the first place, and it replaces the mythical instrument, specifically symbolic of the birth and early years of the United States, with the mythical instrument of Pan, a more universal myth in the West. The replacement of the fiddle

with the flute allows Jones, in fact, to symbolize nature, and the eternal return of Spring, as Pan in Greek mythology is associated with the season. It furthermore allows an opening up of the idyllic landscape of Illinois as it is presented by Masters, to situate Jones in Pan's homeland, Arcadia, which has come down to the West as a pastoral utopia, untouched by progress and modernity. Through this small change, the significance of Jones's status as an important repository of local community memory is universalized to make his memory both abstracted, almost timeless, and expanded to include not only the local American experience, but any potential personal experience of the West.

Whether it was De André's express intention or not, the effect of the substitution of the fiddle for the flute is, additionally, the mending of communication that remains broken at the end of Masters' poem. Masters' Jones's strings are broken, and his listeners can no longer hear Jones's songs. On the other hand, De André's Jones's flute is broken, in the narrative, while the musician's own strings, in the song, are still playing. Thus, the musical tale can still be told to the listening public, through De André himself, and his guitar.[180] Indeed, the central message of the album has to do with communication, those who can and those who cannot make themselves heard in the modern world, as De André says explicitly in his interview with Pivano on the album's inside cover.[181] It is probable that De André, like Pivano herself, did not understand the inherent sense of lost traditions represented in Masters' Fiddler Jones. Yet, despite this unawareness, or rather, perhaps, because of it, De André's Jones's song, ultimately, reverses the tone. His is not a lament for something lost, instead, it is an affirmation of the continued power of music to gather people to listen. In the album's first song, "A Madman" (Un matto), the speaker is searching for a means of communication: "You [listener] try to have a world in your heart / And not manage to express it with words," the Madman begins in his song. He goes on:

"You too would go looking for / The words certain to make yourself heard."[182] While in Jones's song, the last on the album, that "make yourself heard" or "make them listen to you" (*farti ascoltare*) becomes "let yourself be heard" or "let them listen to you" (*lasciarti ascoltare*) when Jones describes why he plays: "you like to let them listen to you."[183] Thus De André's Jones suggests that in the modern world musicians exist in a unique position; they do not have to fight to be heard, listened to, understood, but rather they have the pleasure of people seeking them out to listen. That is to say, musicians act as a space of communication for a modern community that struggles to find it.

Fabrizio De André's Jones is neutralized, as he is removed from his polemical position in *Spoon River,* he is universalized through his change in instrument, and his role as musician in 1971 makes him implicitly revolutionary, in line with the mood of the youth generation and revolutionary movement in Italy. At the same time that he is universalized, however, he is also personalized, as De André's wife at the time, Enrica (Puny) Rignon, said in an interview in 1972, "This Jones […] is Fabrizio himself. Or better he's a projection of what Fabrizio sees in himself."[184] Masters' Jones had babbled of community fish frys and dances, while De André's Jones is remembered as much less romantic and representing less communal experiences: "Yes, it seems we can hear him," the disembodied community on the hill sings, "chatting about junk food / eaten on the street at the most inopportune hours." As the song ends, the voices on the hill don't remember him reminiscing about Abe Lincoln's speech in Springfield as in Masters' poem but, rather, about him asking: "the liquor merchant / 'You sell this stuff, what do you buy yourself that's better?'"[185] This irreverent alteration of the original memories sounds like an experience De André would have remembered from his own life, during much of which he experienced alcoholism.[186] Yet, it also reflects a change in tone and point of view that is

consistent with what Boym predicts of reflective nostalgia, which can be "ironic and humorous"[187] and which presents "an ethical and creative challenge."[188] De André, indeed, appears to challenge Jones's original memories and their utopian aspect. That is not to say that De André directly challenges Masters' lament for the loss of the antebellum way of life, rather, he appears to question the very logic of utopia or communal paradise, preferring as a solution, instead, the delirium of intoxication. In the final verse of "La collina," Jones's question to the liquor merchant, "You sell this stuff, what do you buy yourself that's better?", is not only utterly ironic,[189] it also hints at that which is anarchical, subversive, and anti-authoritarian at the heart of De André's Jones, who does not look back at any utopia, or forward to one either. Rather, he cannot conceive of one at all and seems to be in search, like Dionysus, the sometimes-father of Pan, of Nietzsche's revelation through bacchanal.[190]

Conclusion

This association of Jones with De André was not only noted by his wife at the time; many scholars and fans have come to the same conclusion. From Fernanda Pivano in her interview of De André on the 1971 album cover, to the 2001 *La Stampa* article that declares him: "De André, 1968's Fiddler Jones."[191] This association of the fictional narrator with the historical *cantautore* in 1971 meant that Jones was implicitly politicized in a contemporary key. As he had symbolized antifascism through Pivano and Pavese, so he came to symbolize at least some aspects of the student and worker revolution in the late 1960s and early 70s.[192] And there were few public figures who would have more effectively lent that weight to Jones than De André, of whom Americanist scholar, Mauro Vizzaccaro, states: "For the ex-youths of that generation, De André represented *the* undisputed maestro of those tumultuous years—as regards society, politics, religion, and social mores."[193] Indeed, it is precisely via association with De André that Jones

takes on his most anarchical and revolutionary aspect. Surprisingly, however, it is not through any political or ideological message but, rather, in De André-Jones's subversion of the myth of the musician himself, which begins in 1971's "Il suonatore Jones" and is completed in 1972's "My Fragile Friend" (Amico fragile),[194] then in his own life, as De André resolves his libertarian message of 'freedom' or 'libertà'.

"My Fragile Friend"[195] is reminiscent of "Il suonatore Jones" in its opening line—"Evaporated in a cloud of red"[196] as compared to "In a whirlwind of dust"[197]—and both go on to describe a musician who drinks too much, who is raucous, and whose music is demanded by his community. In 1971, De André's Jones chose to leave his fields to be run over by nettles because freedom, for him, was awakened when he played music for his community: "I saw freedom wake up / each time that I played."[198] Yet, De André himself is the first-person narrator of 1972's "My Fragile Friend" and he self-describes as a slave to this music,[199] which he no longer feels has the power to truly communicate, and he refers to his songs as "my children / [who] continue to insult me loudly."[200] He goes on to sing: "I could exchange my guitar and its helm / for a wooden box that says we will lose,"[201] suggesting that he has given up on his instrument, that it is as good as useless. Indeed, the status of the guitar in this song is reminiscent of Jones's fiddle in the original epitaph. Masters' Jones's broken strings had been recuperated in De André's 1971 song, but the narrator of "My Fragile Friend" breaks the line of communication again, as he gives up on playing in the end, choosing, after considering many options, to leave the social gathering rather than continue to play.[202] The music stops for the narrator of "My Fragile Friend" as it had for Jones, although their instruments are broken for different reasons and although in his own life a few years later, De André makes precisely the opposite choice to Jones.

De André, in fact, chooses to take a step back from music and to take up farming, stating:

"I am traumatized by songs: I have chased my daily bread through songs. For me, to write a song and to enter into neurosis is the same thing. Making songs is a job for me. Rather, it's not for money that I raise cattle."[203] This claim brings to mind an important aspect of the choice, for both De André and for the hero of his *Not of Money* album. It fully illustrates that, far from Masters' prescriptive delineation of "freedom", for De André, music is not equal to freedom. De André's choice to reject music as a 'calling' or 'passion' manages to be a rejection of both Masters' and the original Jones's old ways, as well as the youth generation's and counterculture's new ways. De André appears to propose, in the juxtaposition between Jones's and his own choice that each man's conception of freedom will necessarily be individual.

Because of Jones's association with De André, he is now at once a hero who can sing: *Freedom, I saw you sleeping in those cultivated fields, freedom I saw you wake up every time I played*, as well as its uncanny opposite, *Freedom I saw you sleeping every time I played, freedom I saw you wake up in those cultivated fields.* In either case, it seems, Jones will remain forever "without any regrets" (senza rimpianti), as he sums himself up at the song's end. For, he has come to emblematize in Italy, through his many transformations, an absolute devotion to personal freedom. While Masters' "Fiddler Jones" is a nostalgic epitaph, yearning for a national utopia lost in an irrecoverable past, the translated "Il suonatore Jones", which includes the accrued meaning of De André's song, is a reminder in Italy that in radical free choice there is still the promise of future happiness.

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[1] "l'autenticità ma anche il limite di Spoon River: un libro insostituibile ma legato a un'epoca che parve oscura e che oggi a noi sembra più felice della nostra" Eugenio Montale, "Celebre e sconosciuto l'autore di *Spoon River*," *Corriere della Sera*, March 8, 1950.

[2] In 1972 an interviewer asks him if he thinks the mass audience can understand his arguments in his albums, he replies by saying that if he continues to do 'didactic work', like he did with Masters, he will make work that his audience can interpret. "Ritengo di sì, soprattutto se farò un lavoro didascalico come nel caso di Masters. Crete da parte mia esisteva la tendenza a scrivere con un vocabolario difficile, e da parte del pubblico esisteva il rifiuto di spaccarsi la testa per riuscire a capire determinati argomenti. Ora ci siamo avvicinati." Claudio Sassi and Walter Pistarini, eds., *De André talk: Le interviste e gli articoli della stampa d'epoca* (Roma: Coniglio, 2008), 132.

[3] "Dal libro hai preso nove poesie, scegliendole tra le più adatte a spiegare due temi che sembravano le più insistenti costanti della vita della provincia: l'invidia (come molla del potere esercitata sugli individui e come ignoranza nei confronti degli altri) e la scienza (come contrasto tra l'aspirazione del ricercatore e la repressione del sistema." Sassi and Pistarini, *De André talk*, 122.

[4] "Invidia […] è il sentimento umano in cui si rispecchia maggiormente il clima di competitività, il tentativo dell'uomo a misurarsi continuamente con gli altri, di imitarli e addirittura superarli per possedere quello che lui non possiede e crede che gli altri posseggano. Per quanto riguarda la scienza, perché la scienza è un classico prodotto del progresso, che purtroppo è ancora nelle mani di quel potere che crea l'invidia e, secondo me, la scienza non è ancora riuscita a risolvere problemi esistenziali." Sassi and Pistarini, *De André talk*, 122.

[5] "Sì, sono più disincantato, meno romantico. Oggi cerco di temperare quello che era un entusiasmo di tipo infantile con questo cinismo che sta rovinando addosso a tutte le persone sensibili che hanno passato i trent'anni." Sassi and Pistarini, *De André talk,*133.

[6] “Parallelamente a questa sfiducia esistenziale (anche l'unico che poteva essere Dio è morto) c'è, ben chiara, quella propriamente politica. […] Il lavoro di questo disco […] nasce dalla necessità di divulgare e *comunicare e dalla convinzione che l'argomento è lungi dall'essere superato: semmai, oggi, l'interesse si sposta, finalmente, dallo studioso alla gente, attraverso l'unico tramite ancora possibile, l’artista.” Roberto Dané “Inside Cover Text” in Fabrizio De André, *La buona novella*, Vinyl (Produttori Associati – PA/LPS 34, 1970).

[7] “un mondo nel cuore” and “a chi dovessi la vita” Fabrizio De André and Giuseppe Bentivoglio, lyrics, “Un matto (dietro ogni scemo c’è un villaggio)”, in *Come un’anomalia: Tutte le canzoni,* ed. Roberto Cotroneo (Turin: Einaudi, 1999), 115, lines 1, 13.

[8] “Per imboccar la strada / che dalle panche d'una cattedrale / porta alla sacrestia / quindi alla cattedra d'un tribunale, / giudice finalmente, / arbitro in terra del bene e del male.” Fabrizio De André and Giuseppe Bentivoglio, lyrics, “Un giudice”, in *Come un’anomalia: Tutte le canzoni,* ed. Roberto Cotroneo (Turin: Einaudi, 1999), 117-118, lines 29-34.

[9] “Di sposar gli elementi e farli reagire / ma gli uomini mai mi riuscì a capire”; “Perché si combinassero attraverso l’amore”; “Fui chimico e, no, non mi volli sposare. / Non sapevo con chi e chi avrei generato.” Fabrizio De André and Giuseppe Bentivoglio, lyrics, “Un chimico”, in *Come un’anomalia: Tutte le canzoni,* ed. Roberto Cotroneo (Turin: Einaudi, 1999), 125-126, lines 7-8, 10, 31-32.

[10] “Daltonici”; “presbiti”; Fabrizio De André and Giuseppe Bentivoglio, lyrics, “Un ottico”, in *Come un’anomalia: Tutte le canzoni,* ed. Roberto Cotroneo (Turin: Einaudi, 1999), 127-128, line 1.

[11] Fernanda Pivano: “L’ottico vorrebbe trasformare la realtà in luce e nel quale hai visto una specie di spacciatore di hashish, una specie di Timothy Leary o Aldous Huxley. In che modo il

suonatore di violino è un'alternativa?" De André: "Il suonatore di violino (che è diventato per ragioni metriche di flauto) è uno che i problemi esistenziali se li risolve, e se li risolve perché, ancora, è disponibile. È disponibile perché il suo clima non è quello del tentativo di arricchirsi ma del tentativo di fare quello che gli piace: è uno che sceglie sempre il gioco, e per questo muore senza rimpianti. Non ti pare perché ha fatto una scelta? La scelta di non seppellire la libertà?" Sassi and Pistarini, *De André talk,* 123.

[12] "E poi la luce, luce che trasforma / il mondo in un giocattolo." De André and Bentivoglio, "Un ottico", *Come un'anomalia,* lines 33-34.

[13] Dante Alighieri, *The Divine Comedy of Dante Alighieri, Volume 3: Paradiso*, ed. Robert M. Durling and Ronald L. Martinez, trans. Robert M. Durling (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), Paradiso XXII. ll. 124-130, 133-135, 151-153.

[14] "Vedo che salgo a rubare il sole / per non avere più notti"; "rubano ancora al sonno l'allegria / all'alba un po' di notte" in De André and Bentivoglio, "Un ottico", *Come un'anomalia,* lines 11-12, 31-32.

[15] De André and Bentivoglio, "Un ottico", *Come un'anomalia,* lines 10.

[16] De André and Bentivoglio, "Un ottico", *Come un'anomalia,* lines 9.

[17] Fabrizio De André and Giuseppe Bentivoglio, lyrics, "Il suonatore Jones", in *Come un'anomalia: Tutte le canzoni,* ed. Roberto Cotroneo (Turin: Einaudi, 1999), 129-130, lines 10, 15.

[18] "cercherò di mostrare […] il fallimento della scienza nei confronti dell'uomo" Sassi and Pistarini, *De André talk,* 126.

[19] "infelicità umana" Giovanni Pascoli, "L'era nuova," in *Pensieri e discorsi di Giovanni Pascoli, 1895-1906*. (Bologna: Zanichelli, 1907), 109–26, 113.

[20] "La scienza ha fallito!" Pascoli, "L'era nuovo", 114.

[21] "Ricordo un punto sul quale si esercita la poesia: la infinita piccolezza nostra a confronto dell'infinita grandezza e moltitudine degli astri. Tuttavia sulle nostre anime quella spaventevole proporzione, non ostante che i poeti nuovi fossero aiutati, nel segnalarla allo spirito, dai poeti della prima èra, quella spaventevole proporzione non è ancora entrata nella nostra coscienza." Pascoli, "L'era nuovo", 122.

[22] "il poeta è quello e la poesia è ciò che della scienza fa coscienza." Pascoli, "L'era nuovo", 113.

[23] Herbert K. Russell, *Edgar Lee Masters: A Biography* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2001), 83.

[24] J.T. Flanagan, *Edgar Lee Masters: The Spoon River Poet and His Critics* (Metuchen, N.J.: Scarecrow Press, 1974), iii.

[25] "Non sappiamo con certezza quale sia il libro di poesia più letto in Italia, al di là degli obblighi scolastici. Tuttavia *Antologia di Spoon River* del poeta statunitense Edgar Lee Masters (1868-1950), con le sue oltre sessanta edizioni in italiano, è certamente uno dei più noti, se non proprio il libro che ha avuto più lettori di qualsiasi altro libro di poesia moderna e contemporanea." Antonio Spadaro, "Il poeta dei destini: E. L. Masters *Antologia di Spoon River*", in *Civiltà Cattolica: Indice Decennale 1991-2000*, 230–41 (Rome: La civiltà cattolica, 2004), 230.

[26] Guido Davico Bonino, "Nota Introduttiva", in *Antologia Di Spoon River* (Torino: Einaudi, 2014), Location 181-182, Kindle.

[27] Jerome Loving, "Introduction", in *Spoon River Anthology* (Penguin Books, 2008), Location 430-432, Kindle.

[28] See, for example, the Twitter hashtag #LeeMasters, which is overwhelmingly populated by Italian tweets about the poet and his anthology.

[29] Lawrence Venuti, ed. *The Translation Studies Reader.* 2nd ed. (Routledge, 2004), 5.

[30] Gianfranca Balestra, "*Spoon River* e Fabrizio De André: miti a confronto" in *Volammo davvero: un dialogo ininterrotto*, ed. Elena Valdini (Milano: BUR, 2007), 109.

[31] Cesare Pavese, *American Literature: Essays and Opinions*, ed. and trans. Edwin S. Fussell (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 2010), 197.

[32] "Per ottenere l'autorizzazione dalle censure del tempo venne richiesto il permesso di pubblicazione per un *Antologia di S. River,* e all'antologia di questo nuovo santo il permesso venne accordato (o almeno così mi raccontò Pavese […] e il libro uscì in pieno guerra, poco prima che la casa editrice venisse confiscata […] pochi giorni dopo le autorità lo [the book] avrebbero sequestrato" Fernanda Pivano, "Prefazione", in *Antologia di Spoon River* (Torino: Einaudi, 2014), Kindle location 208-217, Kindle.

[33] "Marzo: esce da Einaudi, grazie a Cesare Pavese, l*'Antologia,* tradotta da Fernanda Pivano." "Marzo: al quarto anno della Seconda guerra, inizio della Resistenza con gli scioperi a Milano e Torino." Edgar Lee Masters, *Antologia di Spoon River*, trans. Alessandro Quattrone (Milano: Giunti, 2015), 251.

[34] Balestra, "*Spoon River* e Fabrizio De André", 111.

[35] "Fernanda Pivano per tutti è una scrittrice. Per me è una ragazza di venti anni che inizia la sua professione traducendo il libro di un libertario mentre la società italiana ha tutt'altra tendenza. È successo tra il '37 e il '41: quando questo ha significato coraggio." Sassi and Pistarini, *De André talk*, 125-6.

[36] "È in gamba sai, legge Edgar Lee Masters." Francesco Guccini, lyrics, "La canzone di Piero", Francesco Guccini. Il sito ufficiale, https://www.francescoguccini.it/discografia/stanze-di-vita-quotidiana/.

[37] Flanagan, *Edgar Lee Masters*, 41.

[38] John Hallwas, "Introduction", in *Spoon River Anthology, An Annotated Edition*(Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1992), 4.

[39] Edgar Lee Masters, *Spoon River Anthology*, ed. John Hallwas (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1992), 329.

[40] Masters, *Spoon River Anthology*, ed. Hallwas, 295.

[41] Russell, *Edgar Lee Masters*, 221-222.

[42] "la voce del Masters, più personale degli altri, serba ancora un accento che seppure i connazionali hanno smesso di gustare, riesce indicativo, per noi europei, d'un particolare e singolare atteggiamento naturalista di timbro così americano che non può fare a meno di invitarci e commuoverci." Edgar Lee Masters, *Antologia di Spoon River*, ed. Viola Papetti, trans. Alberto Rossatti, (Milano: Rizzoli, 2007), Kindle location 281-283, Kindle.

[43] "Uniche rivali, in fatto di notorietà, le *Foglie d'erba* di Walt Whitman, a cui Masters è stato a volte, impropriamente, avvicinato, e forse, *The Waste Land* di T.S. Eliot o i *Cantos* di Ezra Pound." Luigi Ballerini, "Note", in *Antologia di Spoon River* (Milano: Mondadori, 2016), 561.

[44] "legato a un filone chiave della letteratura e della storia americane […] tramite il whitmaniano identificarsi del sé prima col villaggio e poi con la nazione." Enrico Terrinoni, "La vita pullula di morte… Il globo stesso è un unico vasto cimitero" in *Antologia di Spoon River* (Milano: Feltrinelli, 2018), Kindle location 107-110, Kindle.

[45] Hallwas, "Introduction", 42.

[46] André Lefevere, "Why Waste Our Time on Rewrites: The Trouble with Interpretation and the Role of Rewriting in an Alternative Paradigm", in *Translation - Theory and Practice: A Historical Reader,* eds. Daniel Weissbort and Astradur Eysteinsson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 438.

[47] Antonio Porta, in his 1986 translation, is aware of previous translators' inability to '*sdoganare'* the difficult language of the source text; he chooses to keep some terms in English, such as 'leader', 'Sunday-school,' 'bulldog'; yet he does not gloss these terms, nor does he work to *sdoganare* the more important political terms and context. Pietro Montorfani, "Nota al testo: breve storia di una storica traduzione", in *Antologia di Spoon River* (Il Saggiatore, 2016), 620-21.

[48] "rappresentano molto bene uno dei più classici dibattiti della cultura politica americana: da una parte l'ala progressista e liberale, dall'altra l'ala repubblicana rigidamente conservatrice e protezionista sul piano interno, isolazionista e abbarbicata alla dottrina di Monroe." Giovanni Romano, *Invito a Spoon River* (Borgomanero: Giuliano Landolfi Editore, 2012), 64.

[49] politicamente legato al partito democratico e con inclinazioni populiste, è disgustato dalla ricchezza ottenuta attraverso attività immorali" Balestra, "*Spoon River* e Fabrizio De André", 107.

[50] Hallwas, "Introduction", 40.

[51] "A Petersburg abita gente venuta dal Kentucky e dalla Virginia, pionieri divenuti agricoltori e allevatori, persone di buon senso, tolleranti, se non curiosi del diverso, e tanto poco inclini alle dispute teologiche quanto sereni nel privilegiare l'aspetto sociale ed etico del messaggio religioso. Così almeno ce la presenta Masters. […] al contrario della omogenea Petersburg, Lewistown è dilaniata da conflitti politici: repubblicani (quasi tutti provenienti dalla Nuova

Inghilterra) e democratici (quasi tutti provenienti dalla Virginia e dal Kentucky).” Luigi Ballerini, “Note”, in *Antologia di Spoon River* (Milano: Mondadori, 2016), xxx-xxxi.

[52] “Sommamente conta la dichiarazione del suo disprezzo per ‘repubblicani, calvinisti, mercanti e banchieri’ che segnala lo spacco radicale che divide a Spoon River, e realmente divise a Lewistown, il partito dei liberali, gente venuta nell’Illinois dagli Stati del Sud e della Virginia in particolare, da quello dei conservatori provenienti dalla Nuova Inghilterra, culla del puritanesimo.” Ballerini, “Note”, 611-2.

[53] “Il padre vantava un peculiare scetticismo religioso condito da un indomito amore per il whiskey, un forte senso di appartenenza e una morale a dir poco rilassata, ma anche la passione per gli ideali democratici pre-rivoluzionari, e per un’idea di America che guardasse alla “purezza” dei primi pionieri. Di conseguenza, nutriva disillusione per lo status quo e per il trend modernizzatore che aveva investito il suo paese negli anni dopo la Guerra civile. La madre, al contrario, era molto religiosa e devota, sosteneva strenuamente il movimento per l’astinenza dall’alcol, e osservava una rigida morale che non poteva non farla entrare in conflitto con i comportamenti molto più libertari del padre. […] è indubbio che su di [Masters] il fascino del padre, con i suoi modi liberi e gli ideali democratici, si dimostrò superiore all’amore per la madre.” Terrinoni, “La vita pullula di morte”, Kindle location 152-156, 160-161.

[54] Gianfranca Balestra, speaking of Masters’s influence in the 1970s when Fabrizio De André released his album inspired by *Spoon River,* said that his libertarianism was “contro il proibizionismo e contro tutte le ipocrisie, a favore dei diritti delle donne, della libertà di opinione, per l’amore libero. Tutti temi controversi del suo tempo e che continuano a essere di attualità nel dibattito politico americans.” Balestra, “*Spoon River* e Fabrizio De André”, 106.

[55] Hallwas, “Introduction”, 3.

[56] "A Petersburg […] la parte predominante della popolazione era composta da coloni degli stati del Sud, Tennessee, Virginia e Kentucky principalmente. Di indole liberale, tradizionalisti legati al mondo agrario, non disdegnavano il colorito mondo dei saloon, e credevano fortemente nei valori dell'ospitalità e nei diritti individuali. A Lewistown, più a nord […] il predominio era delle genti provenienti dall'Est modernizzato, gli Yankee, riformatori sociali e uomini d'affari, devoti e ambiziosi, legati più all'idea di cambiamento che al mantenimento delle tradizioni." Terrinoni, "La vita pullula di morte", Kindle location 140-145.

[57] Jerome Loving, "Explanatory Notes" in *Anthology of Spoon River* (Penguin Books, 2008), Kindle location 2585-2587, Kindle.

[58] Ballerini, "Note", 599.

[59] "La 'causa ingiusta' di cui si parla al v. 7 è il mantenimento a tutti i costi (milioni di morti) dell'Unione degli Stati americani. Solo nel 1863 la causa dell'emancipazione degli schiavi viene ufficialmente elencata tra i motivi del conflitto." Ballerini, "Note", 590.

[60] Matthew Norman, "An Illinois Iconoclast: Edgar Lee Masters and the Anti-Lincoln Tradition", *Journal of the Abraham Lincoln Association* 24, no. 1 (2003): 54.

[61] In the 1860s, Copperheads were a faction of Democrats in the Union-North who opposed the Civil War and wanted to compromise with the Confederates.

[62] Norman, "An Illinois Iconoclast", 43.

[63] Norman, "An Illinois Iconoclast", 43-44.

[64] "1931-1938 [Masters] scrive alcune biografie su Lincoln, Whitman e Twain." Masters, *Antologia di Spoon River*, trans. Quattrone, 251.

[65] "biografia antilincolniana, accolta sfavorevolmente dalla critica." Masters, *Antologia di Spoon River,* trans. Rossatti, Kindle location 71-72.

[66] "L'amoreodio di M. per Lincoln si espresse oltre che nella biografia (*Lincoln, the Man*) anche nei frequenti riferimenti occasionali." Viola Papetti in Edgar Lee Masters, *Antologia di Spoon River*, ed. Viola Papetti, trans. Alberto Rossatti (Milano: Rizzoli, 2007), Kindle location 8947-8949, Kindle.

[67] Norman, "An Illinois Iconoclast", 53.

[68] "polemici studi biografici come il *Lincoln, the Man* del 1931 che voleva essere una critica serrata alla mitica figura dello statista e il *Mark Twain, a Portrait* nel 1938 che presentava quello scrittore come un genio vittima dell'incomprensione pubblica." Walter Mauro in Edgar Lee Masters, *Antologia di Spoon River*, ed. Walter Mauro, trans. Letizia Ciotti Miller (Roma: Newton Compton editori, 2018), 13.

[69] Flanagan, *Edgar Lee Masters*, 233.

[70] Loving, "Introduction", Kindle location 419-420.

[71] Flanagan, *Edgar Lee Masters*, 233.

[72] "quando emerge il disappunto per quello che non solo Masters riteneva un vero e proprio tradimento (da parte di Lincoln) dell'eredità politica di Thomas Jefferson," Ballerini, "Introduzione", xvi.

[73] "non amava [Lincoln]. Tale disamore è testimoniato dal suo *Lincoln: The Man.*" Ballerini, "Note", 563.

[74] "suscitò un vespaio"; "rara voce a favore"; "quella dello scrittore inglese John Cowper Powy che affermò: 'Masters è uno storico di vasta e precisa erudizione." Ballerini, "Introduzione", xxxvi.

[75] Russell, *Edgar Lee Masters*, 274.

[76] Norman, "An Illinois Iconoclast", 54.

[77] Russell, *Edgar Lee Masters*, 274-275.

[78] Loving, "Introduction", Kindle location 389-393.

[79] James Hurt, "The Sources of the Spoon: Edgar Lee Masters and the 'Spoon River Anthology.'" *The Centennial Review* 24(4) (1980): 418.

[80] Norman, "An Illinois Iconoclast", 46.

[81] Norman, "An Illinois Iconoclast", 48.

[82] Norman, "An Illinois Iconoclast", 51.

[83] Edgar Lee Masters, *Antologia di Spoon River*, ed. and trans. Luigi Ballerini (Milano: Mondadori, 2016), 99.

[84] Hallwas, "Introduction", 41-42.

[85] Hallwas, "Introduction", 41.

[86] Hallwas, "Introduction", 42.

[87] Terrinoni, *Spoon River Anthology,* trans. Terrinoni, Kindle location 8536-8537.

[88] Terrinoni, *Spoon River Anthology,* trans. Terrinoni, Kindle location 8501.

[89] Masters, *Antologia di Spoon River*, trans. Ballerini, 54.

[90] "All'idea di sacrificio (first fruits) si sovrappone inoltre, diacronicamente, quella delle impiccagioni (strange fruits) come si evince da una canzone resa famosa da Billie Holiday: "Southern trees bear a strange fruit, / Blood on the leaves and blood at the root, / Black bodies swingin' in the Southern breeze, / Strange fruit hangin' from the poplar trees…" Ballerini, "Note", 579.

[91] Ballerini, "Note", 628.

[92] Hallwas, "Introduction", 40.

[93] Hallwas, "Introduction", 39.

[94] Pavese, *American Literature*, 42-43.

[95] Pavese, *American Literature*,171.

[96] Pavese, *American Literature*, 201.

[97] "Masters [è] il capostipite di una nuova razza di narratori americani […] La rubrica nella quale li iscrive, 'La rivolta del villaggio', titolo con cui intendeva significare che questi scrittori mettevano a nudo le ipocrisie che permeavano la vita di provincia – quella stessa vita che generazioni precedenti di scrittori avevano dipinto come ideale, pura, idillica, genuina, ecc., contrapponendola alla vita inevitabilmente corrotta degli abitanti delle grandi città." Ballerini, "Introduzione", ix.

[98] Gustavo Alares López, "Ruralismo, fascismo y regeneración. Italia y España en perspectiva comparada", *Ayer* 83 (2011): 130.

[99] Alares López, "Ruralismo, fascismo y regeneración", 130.

[100] "Spesso la storia umana è stato null'altro che contrasto fra società rurali e società industriali o commerciali. Roma—la rustica e povera Roma—vince la ricca, la commerciale, la plutocratica Cartagine." Alares López, "Ruralismo, fascismo y regeneración",132.

[101] "Vi spiegherete quindi che io aiuti l'agricoltura, che mi proclami rurale; vi spiegherete quindi che io non voglia industrie intorno a Roma; vi spiegherete quindi come io non ammetta in Italia che le industrie sane, le quali industrie sane sono quelle che trovano da lavorare nell'agricoltura e nel mare." Benito Mussolini, "Il discorso dell'ascensione alla Camera dei deputati", 26 May 1927. Quoted in Alares López, "Ruralismo, fascismo y regeneración", 131.

[102] Pavese, *American Literature*, 168.

[103] Pavese, *American Literature*, 169.

[104] "nel cognome Buonpascolo si riflettono anche le simpatie di questo personaggio (e dell'autore di *Spoon River*) per la civiltà agricola degli Stati del Sud, mortalmente ferita dalla vittoria nordista nella Guerra civile." Ballerini, "Introduzione", xxx.

[105] Edgar Lee Masters, *Antologia di Spoon River*, trans. Fernanda Pivano (Torino: Einaudi, 2014), 122.

[106] Masters, *Antologia di Spoon River*, trans. Ballerini, 123.

[107] Masters, *Antologia di Spoon River,* trans. Pivano, 123.

[108] De André and Bentivoglio, "Il suonatore Jones", in *Come un'anomalia,* lines 21-24.

[109] Masters, *Antologia di Spoon River,* trans. Pivano, 4.

[110] Masters, *Antologia di Spoon River,* trans. Ballerini, 5.

[111] The lexical substitutions of 'soldi' and 'paradiso' for 'denaro' and 'cielo' respectively, do not seem objectively more precise as translations of 'gold' and 'heaven'. The substitution of 'farsi una famiglia' for 'moglie' and 'parenti', as a translation of 'wife' and 'kin' is arguably less precise, as 'kin' is a term, used particularly often in the south, to refer to one's familial relationships, not specifically to one's children.

[112] Masters, *Antologia di Spoon River,* trans. Pivano, 5.

[113] Svetlana Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia,* (New York: Basic Books, 2001).

[114] For the sake of brevity, I refer here to the album's author singularly. However, it should be noted that De André worked with Giuseppe Bentivoglio on the lyrics and with Nicola Piovani on the musical arrangement.

[115] Michael Kammen, *Mystic Chords of Memory* (New York: Vintage, 1991), xiv.

[116] Boym, *Future of Nostalgia,* xv.

[117] Boym, *Future of Nostalgia,* xvi.

[118] Hallwas, “Introduction”, 7.

[119] Boym, *Future of Nostalgia,* xviii.

[120] Boym, *Future of Nostalgia,* 49.

[121] Boym, *Future of Nostalgia,* 43.

[122] Masters, *Antologia di Spoon River,* trans. Pivano, 2, line 20.

[123] Hallwas, “Introduction”, 3.

[124] Masters, *Antologia di Spoon River,* trans. Pivano, 4, lines 29-37.

[125] Hallwas, “Introduction”, 3-4.

[126] Masters, *Antologia di Spoon River,* trans. Pivano, 4, lines 34, 35.

[127] Masters, *Antologia di Spoon River,* trans. Pivano, 122, line 9.

[128] Masters, *Antologia di Spoon River,* trans. Pivano, 122, lines 12-14.

[129] Masters, *Antologia di Spoon River,* trans. Pivano, 4, lines 34.

[130] Masters, *Antologia di Spoon River,* trans. Pivano, 4, lines 10, 14, 22.

[131] Hallwas, “Introduction”, 54.

[132] “Modern nostalgia is a mourning for the impossibility of mythical return, for the loss of an enchanted world” Boym, *Future of Nostalgia,* 8.

[133] Masters, *Antologia di Spoon River,* trans. Pivano, 122, lines 35-36.

[134] Scholar of American literature, Daniela Fargione talks about this, arguing that the necessary use of ‘violino’ as a translation of ‘fiddle’ is “trascendendo del tutto le differenze sonore, culturali, persino di casta che l’uno dei due lemmi implica.” Guido Michelone, *Morgan De André Lee Masters: Una Spoon River tutta italiana* (Siena: Barbera Editore, 2009), 70.

[135] In his first article published on *Spoon River* in Italy (*L’*Antologia di Spoon River in *La Cultura*, November 1931), Pavese discusses the epitaph and refers to it as *Il suonatore Jones*.

Cesare Pavese, “Tre scritti di Cesare Pavese”, in *Antologia di Spoon River* (Torino: Einaudi, 2014), xxxix.

[136] That is not to say that the ‘violino’ is not used to play Italian folk music in traditions across the peninsula. However, it does not, as the fiddle does, immediately distinguish between the classical and folk traditions, and the broader translation would allow Italian readers to imagine Jones playing any number of local instruments, the *zampogna*, *ciaramedda* or *mandolino*, before fixing the instrument as a ‘violino’ in the third to last line of the poem.

[137] Masters, *Antologia di Spoon River,* trans. Pivano, 123, lines 24-25.

[138] This especially in 1943 when information was not so readily available for simple technological reasons as well as the specific effects of Fascist isolations and disruptions in international contact due to WWII.

[139] *Spoon River* is set in Illinois not Missouri, however, the two states border each other and experienced the frontier quite similarly. Sangamon County, which is the inspiration for much of Masters’ work, is just about 100 miles from the Missouri border.

[140] H. W. Marshall, *Play Me Something Quick and Devilish: Old-Time Fiddlers in Missouri* (Columbia (MO): University of Missouri Press, 2013), 1.

[141] Marshall, *Play Me Something*, 1.

[142] Marshall’s book uses the term ‘violin’ to denote the instrument so that the verb ‘fiddle’ can more clearly indicate the playing of the instrument “in a vernacular musical performance” (p. 1). However, his use of the term ‘violin’ to denote the instrument is nearly always in the context of ‘fiddling’ rather than the more general ‘playing’.

[143] Marshall, *Play Me Something*, 9.

[144] Masters, *Antologia di Spoon River,* trans. Pivano, 5, line 34.

[145] Masters, *Antologia di Spoon River,* trans. Ballerini, 5, line 34.

[146] Edgar Lee Masters, *Antologia di Spoon River,* ed. Walter Mauro, trans. Letizia Ciotti Miller (Roma: Newton Compton editori, 2018), 21, line 34.

[147] Edgar Lee Masters, *Antologia di Spoon River*, ed. Pietro Montorfani, trans. Antonio Porta (Milano: Il Saggiatore, 2016), 55, line 34.

[148] Edgar Lee Masters, *Antologia di Spoon River*, ed. and trans. Enrico Terrinoni, (Milano: Feltrinelli, 2018), Kindle location 260, Kindle.

[149] Edgar Lee Masters, *Antologia di Spoon River*, trans. Alessandro Quattrone (Milano: Giunti, 2015), 33, line 34.

[150] Edgar Lee Masters, *Antologia di Spoon River*, ed. Viola Papetti, trans. Alberto Rossatti, Edizione Kindle (Milano: Rizzoli, 2007), Kindle location 577.

[151] In 1921, Josephine Craven Chandler identified Fiddler Jones as John Armstrong, called "Fid" or "Fiddler." She states that in his family and others prominent settler families the "boys were typical sons of the frontier; fond of drinking, hard riding, horseracing, dancing, fiddling and all rude sports." She goes on to say that his family came from Kentucky (p. 265). J. S. Chandler, "The Spoon River Country", *The Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society* XIV, 3-4, October 1921 – January 1922: 249-329.

[152] Marshall says of the people who brought fiddlers to Missouri (as they had to Illinois): they were "British American settlers from Virginia, Kentucky, Tennessee, and the Carolinas" Marshall, *Play Me Something,* 2.

[153] Marshall, *Play Me Something,* 2.

[154] Boym, *Future of Nostalgia,* xviii.

[155] Hallwas, "Introduction", 48.

[156] Boym, *Future of Nostalgia,* xiv.

[157] Hallwas, "Introduction", 48.

[158] Hallwas, "Introduction", 42.

[159] Hallwas, "Introduction", 69.

[160] From the most recent edition of Einaudi's *Antologia di Spoon River*: "Convinse Einaudi a pubblicarlo: giorni felici, ma già tormentati dall'inizio della guerra. Per ottenere l'autorizzazione dalle censure del tempo venne richiesto il permesso di pubblicazione per una Antologia di S. River, e all'antologia di questo nuovo Santo il permesso venne accordato (o almeno così mi raccontò Pavese; come capire se parlava sul serio?) E il libro uscì, in piena guerra, poco prima che la casa editrice venisse confiscata." Bonino, "Nota Introduttiva", Kindle location 209.

[161] "Il romanzo più politicamente impegnato di Pavese"

[162] This is likely a reference to Pablo Picasso and his *The Old Guitarist*, but it is also reminiscent of the struggle against Franco in Spain, which saw the height of its guerrilla action with Spanish Maquis between 1945 and 1947. Similarly, Visconti's *Lo spagnolo* character from 1943's *Ossessione* is understood, implicitly, as subversive, since Spain was an isolationist nation during much of the 1940s and any Spaniard abroad would have been there either in exile, refuge, or partisanship. Pavese continued in the opening lines of his novel.

[163] "Mi dicevano Pablo perché suonavo la chitarra"; "La notte che Amelio si ruppe la schiena sulla strada di Avigliana, ero andato con tre o quattro a una merenda in collina–mica lontano, si vedeva il ponte–e avevamo bevuto e scherzato sotto la luna di settembre, finché per via del fresco ci toccò cantare al chiuso. Allora le ragazze si erano messe a ballare. Io suonavo – Pablo qui, Pablo là – ma non ero contento, mi è sempre piaciuto suonare con qualcuno che capisca, invece quelli non volevano che gridare più forte." Cesare Pavese, *Il compagno* (Torino: Einaudi,

1990), Kindle location 44-48, Kindle.

[164] Masters "Fiddler Jones" line 22; Pivano trans., "Il suonatore Jones", line 22.

[165] Masters "Fiddler Jones" line 10; Pivano trans., "Il suonatore Jones", line 10.

[166] Masters "Fiddler Jones" line 32; Pivano trans., "Il suonatore Jones", line 32.

[167] Masters "Fiddler Jones" lines 3-4; Pivano trans., "Il suonatore Jones", lines 3-4.

[168] "Vale la pena la chitarra per divertire quattro stupidi che si fanno trovare la sera nei prati? Fanno baccano, fanno i matti, cosa c'entra la chitarra?" Pavese, *Il compagno,* Kindle location 86.

[169] Pavese, *Il compagno,* Kindle location 1153.

[170] "La canzone di consumo […] da una industria della canzone"; "Verso la 'canzonetta', verso la musica non 'seria' (non da concerto, non sperimentale), verso […] la musica di intrattenimento e di evasione, di gioco e di ristoro." Umberto Eco, "Preface" to *Le canzoni di una cattiva coscienza,* by Michele L. Straniero, Sergio Liberovici, Emilio Jona, and Giorgio De Maria (Milano: Bompiani, 1964), 5, 10.

[171] Eco, "Preface", 10.

[172] "Se non ci fossero stati i Cantacronache […] la storia della canzone italiana sarebbe stata diversa. Poi, Michele [Straniero] non è stato famoso come De André o Guccini, ma dietro questa rivoluzione c'è stata l'opera di Michele." Giovanni Straniero and Carlo Rovello, *Cantacronache, i 50 anni della canzone ribelle* (Milano: Editrice Zona, 2008), 8.

[173] Pavese's article "*L'*Antologia di Spoon River" in *La Cultura*, November 1931, discusses "Fiddler Jones." Pavese, *Tre scritti*, xxxix.

[174] Luigi Tenco's 1967 suicide at San Remo sets the tone for this revolutionary-musician hero, and later artists struggle to defend themselves when they are accused of producing non-revolutionary songs or partaking in the music industry too heavily (see for example Marco

Santoro's treatment of the ideological trial of Francesco De Gregori at Milan's Palalido on April 2, 1976. Marco Santoro, *Effetto Tenco: Genealogia della canzone d'autore* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2010).

In fiction, there is, for one, the notable example of Sergio Leone's hero, Harmonica, from 1968's *C'era una volta il West.*

[175] Masters, *Antologia di Spoon River,* trans. Pivano, 122-123, 11-14.

[176] Masters, *Antologia di Spoon River,* trans. Pivano, 122-123, 15-16.

[177] Masters, *Antologia di Spoon River,* trans. Pivano, 120-121, 1-4.

[178] "per ragioni di metriche." Sassi and Pistarini, *De André talk*, 123.

[179] Media scholar Ugo Ceria, aware of De André's claim about meter, argues rather that the change was a nod to the George Brassens' song "Le petit jouer de flûteau." Michelone, *Morgan, De André*, 48.

[180] The song itself incorporates the flute along with the guitar, but the latter was the symbolic instrument of youth music in 1971, so the breaking of the accompanying instrument, the flute, would have been experienced as a much less traumatic loss, and one which was not immediately associated with the breaking of the means of contemporary musical communication. Rather, the fiddle in the original Jones's day and the guitar in De Andre's day, are the crucial instruments. Marshall, *Play Me Something,* 1.

[181] Sassi and Pistarini, *De André talk*, 121-122.

[182] "Tu prova ad avere un mondo nel cuore / E non riesci ad esprimerlo con le parole […] anche tu andresti a cercare / Le parole sicure per farti ascoltare." Fabrizio De André and Giuseppe Bentivoglio, lyrics, "Un matto (dietro ogni scemo c'è un villaggio)", in *Come un'anomalia: Tutte le canzoni,* ed. Roberto Cotroneo (Turin: Einaudi, 1999), 115, lines 1-2, 7.

[183] "ti piace lasciarti ascoltare" De André and Bentivoglio, "Il suonatore Jones" in *Come un'anomalia,* 129, line 23.

[184] "Questo Jones […] è Fabrizio stesso. O meglio la proiezione che Fabrizio vede in se stesso." Sassi and Pistarini, *De André talk,* 135.

[185] "Sì, sembra di sentirlo / cianciare ancora delle porcate / mangiate in strada nelle ore sbagliate / sembra di sentirlo ancora / dire al mercante di liquore / 'Tu che lo vendi cosa ti compri di migliore?'" De André and Bentivoglio, "Il suonatore Jones" in *Come un'anomalia,* 129, lines 40-45.

[186] When asked in January of 1974 if it's true that he drinks a lot, De André responds: "Credo di bere molto di più di una persona che beve normalmente. Per me è uno stimolante, una forza che mi aiuta a lavorare e a pensare meglio. Alle volte, invece, mi aiuta a non pensare. Ma tu che mi domandi perché bevo, tu ci hai mai provato?" Sassi and Pistarini, *De André talk,* 143.

[187] Boym, *Future of Nostalgia,* 49.

[188] Boym, *Future of Nostalgia,* xviii.

[189] As Massimo Vizzaccaro points out as well in "Esplorando 'Spoon River' sulla rotta Masters-Pivano-De André, Fabrizio De André: fra traduzione e creazione letteraria"*, Atti della giornata di studio, Libera Università Degli Studi 'San Pio V', Roma, 12 gennaio 2009*, ed. Giovanni Dotoli e Mario Selvaggio (Brindisi: Schena, 2009), 81.

[190] F. W. Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy* [1872], Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000.

[191] "De André, il suonatore Jones del Sessantotto" Mauro Orlando, "*Alla riscoperta di* Non al denaro non all'amore né al cielo", in *Volammo davvero: un dialogo ininterrotto*, ed. Elena Valdini (Edizione Kindle, BUR, 2007), Kindle location 1767.

[192] Gianfranca Balestra has stated as much: "in Italia […] il successo è stato grande in epoche

diverse e contrapposte, come gli anni Trenta e Quaranta del fascismo e della guerra gli anni Sessanta-Settanta dell'idealismo e della ribellione." Balestra, "*Spoon River* e Fabrizio De André", 106.

[193] "Per gli ex giovani di quelle generazioni lì, De André ha rappresentato *il* maestro indiscusso in tempi di tumulto—sociale, politico, religioso, di costume." [emphasis original] Vizzaccaro, "Esplorando 'Spoon River'", 78.

[194] De André wrote "Amico fragile" in the summer of 1972 but it was not released on an album until 1975's *Volume 8.*

[195] Fabrizio De André, lyrics, "Amico fragile", in *Come un'anomalia: Tutte le canzoni,* ed. Roberto Cotroneo (Turin: Einaudi, 1999), 179-180.

[196] "Evaporato in una nuvola rossa" De André, "Amico fragile", *Come un'anomalia*, line 1.

[197] "In un vortice di polvere" De André and Bentivoglio, "Il suonatore Jones", *Come un'anomalia*, 129, line 1.

[198] "Libertà l'ho vista svegliarsi / Ogni volta che ho suonato" De André and Bentivoglio, *Come un'anomalia*, "Il suonatore Jones", 129, lines 15-16.

[199] Discussing the genesis of the song, De André says: "C'erano medici, avvocati, gente di un certo livello culturale, e io volevo parlare, sentire il loro parere su quello che accadeva. Ed invece anche quella sera, come tutte le sere, finii con la chitarra in mano. Ho cantato delle canzoni, poi ho riprovato a parlare con loro; niente, hanno cercato di rimettermi la chitarra in mano" Sassi and Pistarini, *De André talk,* 339-340.

[200] "i miei figli / [che] parla[no] ancora male e ad alta voce di me" De André, "Amico fragile", *Come un'anomalia*, lines 36-37.

[201] “potrei barattare la mia chitarra e il suo elmo / con una scatola di legno che dicesse perderemo” De André, “Amico fragile”, *Come un’anomalia*, lines 38-39.

[202] De André, “Amico fragile”, *Come un’anomalia*, lines 44-45.

[203] “Sono traumatizzato dalle canzoni: ho inseguito attraverso le canzoni il pane quotidiano. Per me, scrivere una canzone e andare in nevrosi è la stessa cosa. Faccio canzoni per mestiere. Invece, non è per denaro che allevo vacche.” Sassi and Pistarini, *De André Talk,* 171.