Cowboys and Indians

Julianne VanWagenen

In the post-depression, and particularly post-WWII, United States, the figure of the cowboy-hero in the North American Wild West experienced a period of cultural zeitgeist that endured for decades, increasing the already impressive popularity the figure had maintained since Buffalo Bill toured with his *Wild West* variety show for 40 years around the turn of the 20th century. In the McCarthy era of intense consolidation of cultural evaluation and nationalistic sentiment, a preponderance of the myth of the West, as foundation myth, was logical. But then the imagery was picked up by John F. Kennedy's political campaign, as well as by heroes and leaders of the cultural revolutions in the late 60s and 70s, a cultural appropriation that is less likely. For is not the Left the party of community-minded and socially-driven progress towards shared-wealth, while the Right represents daring individualism and laissez-faire growth? Were not the 60s revolutions a conglomerate of protests, albeit broadly antiauthoritarian, against colonizing war, for ecological awareness and communal, egalitarian survival? And isn't the myth of the West underpinned by imperialism, industrialized growth, and libertarian individualism? Yet, even more surprising than its popularity amongst US counterculturists, was the West's popularity as a setting for epic story-telling in Italy in this same period, as seen by heightened demand for Italian-made Western comic books, television series, Spaghetti Westerns, and by the self-presentation, as well as content, of some of the most influential Italian folk stars. The 'American West' is, in fact, a modern myth so naturalized that it has proven capable of changing and enduring across cultures and generations, and against all odds. As national opinions have variously drifted in other cardinal directions, specifically when they have drifted to the communist East, seemingly far from the ideology/ies of the West, the West has managed to maintain its claim on communal imaginations. What, I wonder, does the myth's persistence says about the true nature of some of the purported changes in opinion themselves?

In 1978, just a few weeks before Italy's violent decade of politically-driven civil terrorism culminated in the assassination of the prime minister, Aldo Moro, Italian singer-songwriter, Fabrizio De André released his album, *Rimini.* Like others of the epoch, it dealt with the West, but differently, condemning rather than condoning. It included a song that criticized the myth of Christopher Columbus and his 'discovery of the Americas', another that superimposed the struggles of the Italian student-revolution group the Metropolitan

Indians (*indiani metropolitani*) on the struggles of Sitting Bull and his Lakota people, and an ironic cover[1] of Bob Dylan's cowboy ode, "Romance in Durango." Just a year before, in 1977, the Italian public, including the parliamentary and much of the extra-parliamentary revolutionary left, took its final position against recent Leftist vigilante justice after a photo, taken on May 14th during a police assault on the streets of Milan, hit the media streams. The photo showed a masked and lone gunman, legs spread, gun raised and aimed. During the same incident, within moments of the photo being taken, a 25-year-old policeman was shot and killed. The gunman's identity was unknown, but it was known that he was a member of the Men of the P38 (referring to the Waltham P38 semi-automatic pistol), a fringe militarized leftist group, called P38 for short, that since the first half of the 1970s had sought sociopolitical change through individual acts of violence.

The left before May 1977 was indecisive and divided about the level of engagement. Was theirs a violent or peaceful struggle? If peace did not bring change, then, perhaps violence was needed. It was, after all, a revolution, was it not? After years of concerns around the level and type of conflict, years of ambivalence, the publication of this photo consolidated the opinion of the PCI (Italian Communist Party), which joined with much of the country in condemning the actions of the P38. As Umberto Eco said in his article, "A Photo" (*Una foto*), published in *L'Espresso* on 29 May 1977: "I think that [the photo] revealed suddenly, without need for much more discourse, something that had been circulating in many conversations, but that words alone did not manage to make people accept. That photo did not look like any of the images in which the idea of revolution, for at least four generations, had been emblematized. The collective element was missing, and the figure of the individual hero returned in a traumatic mode."[2] After years of idealizing the myth of West—in comics, films and song—while fighting for collective action embodied by governments in the East, suddenly, the myth of the cowboy hero and the myth of the collective-action hero had collided, and the cowboy revealed himself terrifying, individualistic, extreme, and above all unacceptable. The myth of the individual revolutionary hero in Italy, Eco says, is always that of a victimized person. The myth of the West was able to victimize the cowboy by association with natives (the cowboy who, like the Lone Ranger and the Italian comic hero Tex Willer, is friend and defender of the Native), but that association, water-tight on desert vignettes for over 30 years, became a sieve on

the streets of Milan, the sincerity of the cowboy's absolute justice poured out of the photo, leaving insoluble violence behind.

Eco uses the event to demonstrate how, in contemporary society, the simulacrum has become more real than the real. The image of the world is truer than the world itself, and symbols, in effect, *create* reality. He argues that "this individual hero had the pose, the terrifying isolation […] of the solitary shooters in the West—no longer dear to a generation that wants indians."[3] Yet, it is not so clear as that, for indeed, the opposite could be argued, that the image of the cowboy inspired and allowed armed revolutionaries to continue their activity, precisely because they resembled him as marginalized figures who seemed to be fighting for a sense of justice like he did. Indeed, the semiologist and essayist, Gianfranco Marrone, in his 2012 "One photo, a thousand things," (*Una foto, mille cose*) says of the P38: "the fact is that this violent deviation, as much as it was explicitly motivated by a thousand, sometimes quite sophisticated, post-marxist analyses, was, in effect fueled by the disseminated media image of the solitary gunslinger (from the West, one understands), the real hero, in spite of his [opposition to] the classic revolutionary iconography."[4] While other Italian singer-songwriters (*cantautori*), as we will see, continue to glorify the cowboy, Fabrizio De André, in his *Rimini* album, asks the Italian public to reflect on cowboy iconography in the moment, precisely when the icon has become poignantly inappropriate and revealed as perhaps even injurious. Eco claims it is an overcome icon, but De André casts doubt on that assertion by highlighting its continued popularity, in movements like The Metropolitan Indians', and in songs like Dylan's.

This chapter will parse the myth as it has existed in the United States and Italy, to peel back, what Roland Barthes calls in his 1957 *Mythologies*, the smooth, mythical "signification" and find underneath the various signs and signifiers that make it so fantastically mutable. It will investigate the myth's manifestations during the years of sociopolitical conflict and cultural revolution in Italy, primarily 1968-1981, and argue that its presence in cultural productions supports current thought in cultural theory that the events of the 1960s were antiauthoritarian and anti-bourgeois, but never quite authentically anti-capitalist, and that subsequent cultural revolutions in the 70s continued in the same vein. Finally, I will explore how the Italian *cantautore* Fabrizio De Andre's oeuvre rejects the myth, and how, though never considered an activist, he alone deconstructs the myth by refusing to tell the tale of the cowboy, refusing to marginalize Native Americans, and re-historicizing the mythical space. In so doing, he further deconstructs the myths of his contemporaries, still playing at cowboys and indians.

THE PROBLEMATIC AMERICAN MYTH

Richard Slotkin, author of *Gunfighter Nation: The Myth of the Frontier in Twentieth-Century America,*[5] says myth is a set of stories drawn from a culture's history and retold so often it gains the power of "symbolizing that society's ideology and of dramatizing its moral consciousness." Over time it "is reduced to a deeply encoded and resonant set of symbols, icons, keywords, or historical cliches. In this form, myth becomes a basic constituent of linguistic meaning and of the process of both personal and social remembering."[6] In this sense, the value system it represents becomes naturalized and accepted as a given within the structure of the set of symbols that supports the myth. "Ideas are offered in a form that disarms critical analysis by their appeal to the structures and traditions of story-telling and the cliches of historical memory. Although myths are products of human thought and labor, their identification with venerable tradition makes them appear to be products of nature rather than history."[7] This abstraction and naturalization of the values implied by the Myth of the West, allow Westerns to act as a sort of empty container for shifting nuances in meaning, while maintaining a naturalized basic value system that relies on the structural givens of bravery, individualism, 'absolute' justice / antiauthoritarian anarchy, distrust of power, rebirth, progress, potential, and the sacrificial heroism. This value system is represented and reformed by slight manipulations in the formal representation of the epic space, which include variations on a combination of stock characters: the savage indian, the noble-savage indian, the railroad/cattle/oil baron, the sheriff, the whores, the horse, and centrally, the erring knight/wandering minstrel/nameless vigilante outlaw.

To each culture, a foundational myth. To each modern nation, as Benedict Anderson argues, the foundational myth is part of the invention of itself, which requires a nation to claim both sovereignty and limitation, and to create a sense of almost religious kinship. The myth of the West in the USA is a particularly prevalent and successful example of Anderson's "invention of nationhood where it does not exist."[8] In the United States, the Pioneer Myth, the Cowboy Myth, the Myth of the Wild West, is the story taught in grade school, the story taught to justify both history and contemporary society. It is the story of the plucky pioneers, the raccoon-hatted explorers, the primitive savage enemy / noble Native American friend, the progress and strength-of-will demonstrated in the cross-country railroad, and, finally, the accomplishment of a teleological anthem and battle cry, which accomplishes both national sovereignty and limitation: "Manifest Destiny." It is the myth, as well, of the wholly original 'American' citizen and his distinction from both New World Natives and Old World Europeans. He is individualistic, uncultivated yet modern, rebellious (willing to be violent in the name of

'justice'), distrusting of the State/Law yet profoundly nationalistic and innately just, self-actualizing, daring. This is a strong communal imagining, its strength demonstrated still today in the USA's First and, particularly, Second Amendments. Yet, the myth of the West is dehistoricized to such an extent that the set of symbols it collects are, themselves, full of, or rather defined by, lacunae. They are *form* into which ideological, not factual, meaning has been introduced. "History decays into images, not into stories,"[9] as Walter Benjamin says, and with these images man can construct useful narratives. Let us take a few important examples:

(a) **Rebirth and renewed potential** are based in colonization, genocide, and class exploitation, much of which was accomplished through culturally and politically justified acts of national violence. The myth represents a long historical time-period, but the most-frequently represented decades in 20th-century productions are those following the Civil War, giving the time period an latent sense of sturdy moral fiber. Yet, those are the very years of Lincoln's Homestead Act, passed in 1862, which allowed settlers to file for federal land grants in the Great Plains and further west, while Native Americans were forced onto increasingly restricted reservations. Some twenty years earlier, Andrew Jackson had forced the Cherokee and other nations out of the East on the infamous Trail of Tears, as it is called by the Choctaw nation. Now those and other Native Americans were being forced out of the lands further west that they had been promised upon relocation, and, realizing that White Men's promises were conditional, tribes of warriors allied and rose up in self-defense. The Great Plains American Indian Wars were fought from 1862 on. These wars and these years mark some of the most well-known battles and characters of the centuries-long fight: the Battle/Massacre of Washita River, the Sand Creek Massacre, Red Cloud's War, the Great Sioux War of 1876–77, the Battle of the Little Bighorn and the Wounded Knee Massacre. The *aggressiveness* of the Native American tribes and the *valor* of pioneer and military victims, were both important values to political maneuvers to gain public approval (then and nearly a century later), and both have, therefore, been writ over-large in the collective imagination. These post-Civil War years, furthermore, are represented as emblematic of the intrepid white-European individual's opportunity to pull himself up by his bootstraps, turning his plot of 'wilderness' into fallow field. But history shows that big business was already taking advantage of government grants by paying private individuals to sign contracts in order for the business to patch together larger systems of land for mining, securing water or oil rights, or laying railroad tracks. The pioneer West was already land most fallow for industry.

(b) **The adventurous, pioneer spirit** is central to the myth of the West and the creation of the myth of

the American individual. Yet, it is often, especially when dealing with the adventurous cowboy, romantically disentangled from the goals of adventure: raw profit by any means necessary. The California Gold Rush, for example, became a recurring setting for tales of rags-to-riches in the West, while historically it resulted in a major, state-funded genocide of Native Americans in the Great Basin. Likewise, the Black Hills War and General Custer's Land Stand, the most famous of battles, were driven by gold found in Lakota territory. The cowboys themselves, while apparently wandering the range, upholding justice (or stealing from the rich) wherever possible, historically were most often herders for cattle barons, agents of the Wells Fargo Pony Express, or Indian Agents for the government. Even the cowboy-as-outlaw's actions were teleologically defined by capital, as violence and adventure was driven by dollars and gold as they robbed banks and trains. It is important to distinguish and remember that this was not the defense-of-the-poor thievery of Robin Hood, but rather, individually-minded.

(c) So national violence was justified by 'Indian aggression' and Manifest Destiny, while **individual violence** is justified by the necessity to defend oneself (against the natives), or, in the case of the cowboy, by the sense of 'absolute justice' and 'most just judge' that is attributed to him. The cowboy appears to represent the free and ethical man that philosophers frantically sought to develop after the French Revolution. Yet his ethical system is vague at best, poignantly unethical at worst, and, practically, inapplicable universally for various reasons, while his authority relies wholly on the threat of violence and his deft use of a gun. Indeed, in this lawless setting, where the majority of men spend their time killing, gambling, drinking, and 'whoring', the just hero/anti-hero spends his time killing, drinking, and (often) whoring as well. It is an odd sort of romantic utopia for the 20th-century collective imagination, particularly that of the counter-cultural revolution. In fact, we will see that this sort of violent, individualistic vigilante-style justice does not hold up well in public opinion when it occurs in historical time, outside of the dehistoricized mythical space of the West. Furthermore, even if one concedes that the cowboy is ultimately honorable in his actions, the anarchical justice he represents is limited by its application, for he maintains white colonial justice, most often for white victims, much less often for a single or small group of natives. He remains unable to deal in or change history from within his mythical spacetime, and therefore the cowboy does nothing to rectify the greatest injustice of the West: the genocide of a people and cultural model driven by the European model of profit and progress.

(d) Finally, there is the idea of **progress** itself. Progress in the myth cultivated productivity out of the

wilderness, brought civilization by train, plane, and automobile from the Atlantic to the Pacific, progress populated the United States, developed it and industrialized it. Yet the West was not wilderness, but, rather, a habitat created across millennia by Native Americans.[10] Indeed, 'wilderness', like 'savages' and 'noble savages', is a fraught, often-misused or misunderstood, term that will need parsing in these pages. The railroad brought not culture, but another type of culture to the West, and did so through exploitation of various groups of immigrants, big-business land grabs, and destruction of habitat. Furthermore, progress as innately valuable and progress as inevitable, are white-European ideas promoted, most often, to justify subjugation of others through political or economic means.

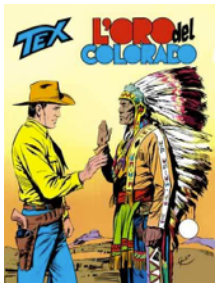
These mythical givens, then, are already dehistoricized to the extent that they can be used, not only to justify the means of nation-building, but even to construct the idea of the nation itself. As citizens learn, tell, and retell the story, its potency grows and it becomes part of the nation and people themselves. The myth develops to a point that it can no longer be convincingly argued 'untrue' or 'historically factual' within the borders of the nation, for it is a cornerstone of the self-conception of a people who have come to resemble the myth and therefore to sustain it. That the myth manages to transform itself in order to continually coalesce with most Americans during periods that would seem to it antithetical is amazing, but as a mirror image of its people, it is not wholly unbelievable. That the myth could take on such power in the Italian culture, however, when it is neither based in Italians' own history, nor a representation of the foundation of their nation, and that it could, furthermore, replicate itself and amplify its power during the 1960s and 70s in Italy—when youth culture protested America's global power and imperialistic military, as well as contemporary individualistic tendencies and consumerism—is truly amazing.

THE MYTH OF THE *FAR-WEST* IN ITALY

Giacomo Puccini's 1910 *Golden Girl of the West* (*La fanciulla del West*), a rags-to-riches tale set in Gold-Rush 'bonanza frontier', and Emilio Salgari's 1908-1911 adventure series, the *Far-West Series* (*Ciclo del Far-West*),[11] were the first Italian productions to introduce the stock characters popularized by James Fenimore Cooper's *Leatherstocking Tales.*[12] These characters—outlaw/bandit (hero), sheriff, gold-rush miners, the Indian and his squaw (natives), traveling minstrel, Pony Express rider, Wells Fargo agent (all variations of the cowboy hero)—would remain fashionable throughout the 20th century as the myth's popularity surges in post-WWII Italy. Whereas before the war, the Far-West largely represented the dreams of emigration, after the war, the

cowboy embodies a new Italian hero: the non-conformist, the anti-fascist, the guerrilla-fighter partisan (*partigiano*), member of the Italian resistance movement, who fought occupying German forces and Italians who remained Fascists under Mussolini's puppet regime. The partisan, like the cowboy, relied on a sense of absolute justice in the face of corrupt State justice, and relied on violence to achieve it. The partisan, too, left civilization and family and took to the 'wilderness', the mountains and forests, where he joined bands of individuals who fought (together and individually) for the grassroots defense of justice. It seems to me that wilderness and civilization switched positions, as cities were highly controlled by fascism and threatened by war, while in the wilderness men were free. The imagining of the city-utopia had to begin outside its walls. The West, now, represented a land of new hope, a nation yet to build, the perfect imagery for a country coming out of 20 years oppressed by a fascist regime and torn apart by war.

But in this very point, the rebirth of a nation, the myth reveals its thorniness—for Italian partisans as well as the general population—as the Far-West was, implicitly, a land whose hope and promise lay in the the American model. As long as the partisan fought alongside the US soldier, they were allies, but in the early postwar, Italy was caught between the East and the West, and its future as a nation with a liberal capitalist democracy was uncertain. After the war, Palmiro Togliatti led Europe's largest socialist party until the liberal-right DC (Christian Democrats) parliamentary win in 1948, which, with the help of the Marshall Plan and massive dissemination of American culture across the peninsula (as seen in Alberto Sordi's 1954 satirical film, *Un americano a Roma* and Renato Carosone's 1956 swing hit "Tu vuò fà l'americano"), ushered in four decades of a DC-controlled government. During the years of DC reign (1948-1992), the most popular comic book series in Italy was the Italian-produced *Tex Willer* (1948-1989). Its popularity stood unwavering, as did DC control, even during the years of countercultural revolution.



The counterculture struggle took hold suddenly in Italy, the late 60s saw just its infancy, from which grew a multi-faceted decade of antiauthoritarian socio-political unrest. In January 1966 there was the first student/worker occupation in Trento, and again in November of 1967 students organized with workers in Turin, leading up to the so-called French May (*Maggio francese*) when in Italy the majority of universities were occupied. These university protests in the spring grew into syndicate strikes during the Hot Autumn (*l'Autunno caldo*) of 1969-1970, which saw continued worker and student protests and included

massive worker strikes in the north. December 1969 saw the bombing of Piazza Fontana in Milan and the beginning of the civil strife between the fascist Black Brigades (*le brigate nere*) and the socialist Red Brigades (*le brigate rosse*) which continued throughout the 70s and became best known by the conservative term "The Years of Lead" (*gli anni di piombo*), referring to the bullets used by the Red Brigades in drive-by shootings, kidnappings and assassinations. It is alternatively called "The Tension Strategy" (*la strategia della tensione*) by the left, referring to theories that political powers colluded with fascist groups on the extreme right to arm and organize them so as to create an atmosphere of terror in which uprisings could be more easily controlled and the general population pacified and united under conservative, traditional rule. As with other western countercultural movements in Europe and the Americas, students, laborers, and other subversives, particularly on the heterogeneous socialist left, sought an overturning of that tradition rule: political and social, capitalist and bourgeois. But how to bring it about and what *precisely* was the desired change?

Much of the 20th century had been an experience of war and recovery, in turn, much of the 1960-1970s' social and political action on the left was, by definition, pacific. War was part of what must change and it was the hippies, peaceful protesters at sit-ins, and anti-war artists and intellectuals who characterize the movements in both the US and western Europe. Yet Italy is a particular case in western Europe, as the 70s also saw factions of the left, such as the Red Brigades and the above-mentioned Men of the P38, engage is guerrilla-style violent revolt. This violence increased discord within the already heterogeneous ensemble-movement. While the Old Left had, as Slavoj Žižek points out, maintained the post-French Revolution Marxist point of view of a false universalization, in which "the interest of a particular class disguises itself as universal human interest, based on a 'universal feature' of the human condition."[13] The New Left began broadly in the 1960s to re-universalize, in a sense, and to describe capitalism as a means of comprehensive hegemony, which oppresses all, not just those of the underclasses. Labor struggles, furthermore, were (and still are) increasingly disappearing in modern western states as globalization caused factory labor to move abroad, obscuring its exploitation of workers. And then, some of the civil rights and social equality successes won in the 1960s and 70s—especially the lowering of university taxes[14]—further obscured the distinction between bourgeois, petit-bourgeois and proletariate. All of these changes added up to an extra-parliamentary movement without the clear goal of raising up the underclass, and led to a movement that claimed universality but was disharmonious and, importantly, unable in its antiauthoritarianism to unite under a slogan or leader.

Indeed, the extra-parliamentary center of the movement was everywhere, making it difficult to speak broadly about the Italian 'Socialist Left' or 'youth/labor movement' in the 1970s. However, it is reasonably safe to assert that the left broadly sought a change in parliament control, a non-DC prime minister that would not compromise with the center-right as the leaders of the socialist and communist coalitions often did throughout the 1960s and 70s. It sought a modified value system that allowed for increased self-expression, personal freedom, and equality amongst race, class and gender, a value system that esteemed personhood, social interaction, art, creation over work, profit, productivity, and consumption. It sought change through protest and peaceful occupation that should turn violent only in unarmed, spontaneous self-defense. Some memorable protesters on the left, but far from the majority, saw mortal violence as necessary, not only in self-defense, but for explicit, clear and well-informed reasons of political dissent. The left, largely, did not seek local change through armed war, nor did it support powers that interfered in distant wars for local political/economic gain. It is this broad left, throughout these tumultuous decades, which represented the greatest number of extra-parliamentary activists and supporters.

Based on this description, it would appear that the 1960s and 70s young, intellectual, artistic, pacifist, anti-labor, anti-labor exploitation, anti-imperialistic, anti-capitalist, anti-mainstream generation would find little to appreciate in a comic series like *Tex Willer* or in Western or Spaghetti Western films. That the left, traditionally a collective party, and still basing most of its efforts in collective action, would find little to appreciate in the cowboy's brand of solo anarchic vigilantism. Yet, for all of its capitalistic, imperialistic, and violently individualistic implications, the *Far-West* (as it is called in Italian) was wildly popular. I argue that it is, in part, the myth's capacity to subsume new signs beneath its perennial facade that allowed it to endure as a classic setting for epic tales, and that a combination of nostalgia and the slipperiness of myth's ultimate signified, led to the generation's adherence to the myth of the West, which, in turn, is an extremely useful cultural representation of the larger movement's continued latent alignment with the capitalist model.

THE COWBOY AS AMERICAN FOLK (MUSIC) HERO

Two figures who traditionally wander the wilds between civilized lands are the hero (erring knight or roaming cowboy), who becomes a popular symbol of courage, and the vagabond (traveling minstrel), who remembers and spreads his story in the communal imagination. There are moments in history in which these roles mingle, the gauchos of the Argentinian Pampas, for example. Domingo Fausto Sarmiento in his 1845

Facundo: Civilization and Barbarism, tells of four types of gauchos, one of which is the outlaw (*gaucho malo*) and another the minstrel (*cantor*). He remarks that in the minstrel "we have the idealization of this life of resistance, civilization, barbarism, and danger. The *gaucho Cantor* corresponds to the singer, bard, or troubadour of the Middle Ages and moves […] between the life which is passing away and the new life gradually arising."[15] In the Pampas, therefore, there were four types of gauchos, all of whom discrete, while in the North American myth, the outlaw and minstrel blend into one. That is, the symbols of violence and pacifism, war and art, of revolutionary subversion and of poetic subversion, are one. Sergio Leone's Harmonica in the 1968 *Once Upon a Time in the West* carries both instrument and weapon, and before him the reformed gunslinger in the 1954 revisionist US western, *Johnny Guitar,* reapplies his fingers, the fastest draws in the West, to strum the strings of a guitar. Furthermore, a fascinating reversal occurs in the 1960s and 70s. Not only do the fictional cowboys, ideological artifacts of a national foundation myth, act as bards, the real-life folk stars, themselves, begin to model themselves on the mythical cowboys. This imitation is, indeed, at least somewhat influenced by the US Folk Revival, and Woody Guthrie is a model, in song and personality, of folk singers to come. Indeed, his guitar slogan, "This machine kills Fascists", conflated the weapon and the instrument, and he famously idealized Jesse James as a figure who fought economic inequality, turning a bandit into the ultimate protester.[16]

However, in the cases explored here, there is a mythical recreation of the cowboy that largely goes beyond US folk music, so as to no longer concern the status of US folk music itself. The examples here deal in post-folk-revival aesthetic choices made by folk artists (in the Italian case *cantautori*), in film, on stage, and on album covers, and the influence of these aesthetic representations of the West (as opposed to musical representations of country-western), not only on the American counterculturists, but on the Italian folk scene and counterculture as well. Aesthetic allegiance to the myth of the West is of particular interest, as musical allegiance would be more constrictive within a particular genre, while an artist whose music is new, rock, rebellious, or best of all, unclassifiable, but who dresses like a cowboy, will manage to bring the myth with him into other, more globally popular musical genres. In Sam Peckinpah's 1973 *Sam Garrett and Billy the Kid* the cowboys carry no musical instruments, yet they are both Sarmiento's *gaucho malo* and his *cantor,* for Billy the Kid and his sidekick Alias are played by Kris Kristofferson and Bob Dylan. Peckinpah's heroes are contemporary cowboys, dressed in slightly bell-bottomed pants, cowboy and bowler hats, cowboy boots, vests and suede jackets. Yet, it is not only that Peckinpah's cowboys have somewhat modernized dress, but, more significantly, that the

singer-songwriters themselves dress like cowboys. To look at Kristofferson as himself in the 70s or as Billy the Kid, to look at Dylan as Alias or himself, it is hard to distinguish the line between reality and fiction.

Clockwise from top-left: Dylan as Alias on a version of the cover for the soundtrack to Pat Garrett and Billy the Kid*; Dylan's album covers for his 1976* Desire *and 1978* Masterpieces*; Kristofferson's album cover for his 1971* The Silver Tongued Devil and I*; Kristofferson from two scenes as the Kid in* Pat Garrett and Billy the Kid*; Kristofferson's album cover for his 1974* Breakawav *with Rita Coolidge.*

Pat Garrett and Billy the Kid tells of an outlaw friend, Garrett, who has turned sheriff and bourgeois because he feels he needs security for his retirement years; he is charged with bringing in the Kid, a hero who mixes vigilante outlaw and hippie values. These value sets are extra-societal, rebellious, idealistic, yet on the whole incompatible; as has been pointed out, the prior depends on violence and individualism, while the latter demands peaceful and communal protest. Yet Kristofferson is both in the film and Peckinpah certainly chose his historical figure carefully, as the historical Kid[17] is as close as he could have found to a cowboy-outlaw who fulfilled counterculture values. Yet Peckinpah's film is largely contradictory as it attempts to take Kid beyond his limited parallels with counterculture and mold him into a prototype of the contemporary hero. He kills reluctantly (but without remorse) to maintain his freedom, he lives on a free-love ranch commune (where women have just barely edged themselves out of a strictly-prostitution position[18]), and, ultimately dies, in a romanticized fictional denouement, as a martyr for his beliefs, and the people he defends.

By casting two folk music heroes in the roles of the protagonists, Peckinpah gives a conclusive touch of contemporary credibility to his revised folk hero. Dylan plays Alias, a shop-keeper who is inspired by the Kid's

escape from jail and puts down his pen to pick up a knife and follow him. He plays no music in the film but wrote the soundtrack, the most famous song of which is "Knockin' on Heaven's Door." He also wrote "Romance in Durango" while filming in Mexico, a song which he released three years later on his 1976 *Desire*.[19] While Kristofferson was both an actor and a musician (Janet Joplin having made his "Me and Bobby McGee" a #1 hit just two years before), this is, significantly, Dylan's cinematic debut. And while Kristofferson is from Texas, making a Western style natural for the country and folk singer, Bob Dylan was born in a mining town in Minnesota and moved to New York City to live out his adult years. His cowboy style is more obviously an aesthetic choice. When he appeared on the music scene in 1961, he was a beatnik hipster in tight jeans, a greek fisherman's hat, and sunglasses. As he moved away from the acoustic sound, he, conversely, moved towards an acoustic western-music look, and picked up a cowboy hat that would become nearly synonymous him as an artist for decades. Dylan is one of the most famous and well-regarded global singer-songwriters, and in 1960s and 70s Italy he was astoundingly influential. His choices in dress, song, and film affected countercultural *cantautori* as the myth of the West underwent an alteration through Dylan's adherence to it.

Dylan and his ilk had the power with an entire generation to absolve the historical West of its bloodshed and represent the myth as a sort of countercultural utopia. Yet, this taking up of a myth that is founded on imperialism, genocide, and a capitalist drive towards progress, a myth which has been nationalized, sanitized, pacified, so as to appear to simply idealize individuality, adventurism, and antibourgeois values, is one of the clearest symptoms with which to diagnose a generation, a movement. That is not to say that Bob Dylan maintained he was revolutionary. That which Bob Dylan said he was and protested that he was not, changed across his career. What is important here is what his audience accepted him to be: the guiding spirit of the counterculture generation. His aesthetic allegiance to the West sanctioned allegiance by all.

THE COWBOY AND ITALIAN FOLK

Two of the most influential and well-regarded *cantautori* in the modern Italian tradition, Francesco De Gregori, the *cantautore* most influenced by Bob Dylan,[20] and Francesco Guccini, the most politically entrenched of the *cantautori* studied in this chapter, dealt in their music with the Far-West. They are not the only ones to express the genre—there was, for example, Giorgio Gaber's 1968 role on Rai's musical western *Non sparare, canta!*[21]—but there is similarity about De Gregori's and Guccini's productions, a critical desire that is complicated by nostalgia, that deserves being thrown into relief here. Both *cantautori* describe two distinct

mythical pasts when they refer to the West: that which refers to the historical US Frontier after the Civil War, and that which refers to their own memories of childhood in Italy. In 1976, De Gregori released *Bufalo Bill,* whose title track was partially inspired by Sam Peckinpah's *The Ballad of Cable Hogue,* and whose misspelled 'bufalo'[22] is meant to show the implicit contradictions and misinterpretations of the US myth and its Italian adoption. The guiding concept of the album is, according to De Gregori, America,[23] a setting and concern he returns to in 1985 with his "I cowboy" from *Chess and Tarot Cards* (*Scacchi e tarocchi*) as well as his 1993 "Adelante! Adelante!" from *Love Songs* (*Canzoni d'amore*). Francesco Guccini, visits similar themes in his 1978 *Amerigo* and his 1984 *Between Via Emilia and the West* (*Fra la via Emilia e il West*), which takes its name from a verse in his 1972 "Little City" ("Piccola città"). They suggest clearly in their works the extent to which the utopian past of the Far-West was lived by Italian children as an imagined present, and how that utopia was shattered into assorted broken promises, by the arrival of the future, the future of the child (adulthood), and the future of the West (contemporary US policy, political stagnation and corruption).

Bufalo Bill begins with an eponymous song which conveys a youthful idealism and a shining world seen through the eyes of the narrator. His youth is mirrored in the landscape around him, for his country, too, is young and full of promise. In this innocent time, God's existence is certain, visible everywhere, in nature as well as in man's uncontroversial progress:

"Il paese era molto giovane,	*The country was very young,*
i soldati a cavallo erano la sua difesa.	*soldiers and horses were its only defense.*
Il verde brillante della prateria	*The sparkling green of the prairie*
dimostrava in maniera lampante l'esistenza di Dio,	*demonstrated glaringly the existence of God,*
del Dio che progetta la frontiera e costruisce	*of the God who designs the frontier and constructs the*
la ferrovia.	*railway.*
A quel tempo io ero un ragazzo	*At that time I was a boy*
che giocava a ramino, fischiava alle donne.	*who played rummy, whistled at girls.*
Credulone e romantico, con due baffi da uomo.	*Gullible and romantic, with a man's mustache already.*
Se avessi potuto scegliere fra la vita e la morte,	*If you had asked me to choose between life and death,*
fra la vita e la morte, avrei scelto l'America."	*I would have chosen America.*

The young narrator plays and flirts, and innocently does not understand there is a choice between life and death, for, indeed, neither life nor death has any meaning without America. America is the symbol of the future, as De Gregori sings a few years later in "I cowboy," "the future for them [the cowboys] is a beautiful thing."[24] It is a symbol of life to come and of death to come, heroically and meaningfully. For, in America, one lives and dies for a cause, an unnamed ideal, at once vague and innately perceived, an ideological edifice, as Žižek says, behind

whose "dazzling splendor" are the empty elements which hold it together: "self-referential, tautological, performative."[25] The narrator is not named until the final line of the song reveals "my name was Bufalo Bill,"[26] and until that point the perspective is unclear, the 'I' of the first stanza could easily introduce a young De Gregori. For, Italy too was young, and soldiers and horses were its defense for a boy playing at Cowboys and Indians. The narrator is simultaneously the Italianized folk hero, Bufalo Bill, and the folk hero, De Gregori, who, in turn, is one man from an entire generation of young Italians who lived the American frontier in comic books and imagination.

The second verse differentiates between those who kill to steal, who kill for love, and the narrator, who always kills to play.[27] This verse, too, refers bidirectionally to the historical Bill who killed bison for sport, and who became famous for his play, his spectacle and performance of the West, and the young Italian who played at make-believe shoot-'em-up in the Far-West. The narrator grows older in the verse that follows, one day he is young, the next he is 20, then he is looking back and his youth is gone. He remembers a sad afternoon when he and a friend "sat on the side of the road contemplating America."[28] For Bufalo Bill, this afternoon is the twilight of the golden age of the West, marked by the arrival of 20th-century technology like cars and planes. For De Gregori, it marks a passage to adulthood, when one realizes that the myths and ideals of one's youth are just that, myths and ideals. The song folds the mythical American West onto the Italian peninsula, and ebbs and swells from a macrovision of the history of the United States to zoom in on childhoods passed in backyards and parks.

Importantly, Bufalo Bill and his cowboys are not the *butteri* of the Tuscan cowboy tradition, nor are they the historical cattle herders of the American frontier. Rather, they occupy a figurative and sentimental space, outside of physical space and time, as De Gregori describes it in his 1985 "I cowboy": "Cowboys ride horses in our hearts' Arizona."[29] In "I cowboy", their remoteness and solitude is a requisite for experience: "They don't have children, they don't have parents, they don't have troops, they don't have loves. They adventure alone so they rarely get lost."[30] Yet, a few years later, when De Gregori evokes similar ideas in "Adelante! Adelante!", solitude is harmful and implies being lost. The American cowboy, a South American *gaucho* in "Adelante! Adelante!", has disappeared from his endless prairie (the Pampas superimposed on the Italian peninsula), and has been replaced by a salt-charged train that races across the land. The image is a threat of earth being sown with salt, and Italy, he declares, is already sterile: "These people without hearts / […] these streets without laws, / these stalls without flocks, / without any parents to remember, / and without any children to respect."[31] The lawless streets, the

wandering individuals, that which once described an arid cowboy utopia, is now simply a desert. It is part of De Gregori's larger critique of his nation, and specifically the Christian Democrat's scandal, which erupted in the early 1990s and ended their forty-year rule. This failure of his vision of the West, so sentimental and strong less than a decade before in "I cowboy," coincides with the end of the Cold War, the end of the DC, and the end of the Far-West as the most popular comic-book landscape. For all of its sentimentality, "I cowboy" leaves the listener in its final verse with a sense that it is all make-believe, that cowboys are magicians in a smoke-and-mirrors act that is nearing its end, and that in its stead will leave nothing but a barren expanse: "before the cowboys, who knows if there was anything, but after the cowboys there is nothing."[32] De Gregori's cowboys are protectors and embodiments of an anachronistic time of hope, who, when unmasked, can unmask the entire narrative of America nested in its foundational memory of the frontier. Yet De Gregori does not unmask them, he simply mourns their disappearance by warning of the distopia they have left behind. Francesco Guccini, we will see, more effectively performs both rituals: he unmasks the hero and mourns the loss of enchantment, innocence, ignorance, hope, and beauty, as he stares at the true face underneath.

Francesco Guccini, like De Gregori, folds his mental map of the world to superimpose the myth of the West on his own childhood. On the album sleeve of his 1984 *Between Emilia Street and the West,* he remembers the frontier in his hometown of Modena:

> "Emilia Street cut Modena in two: the street on which I lived crossed it, and on the other side, there were ample fields and the town's periphery. Those fields were like our domesticated West, with just a couple of steps and crossing a street there were suddenly cowboys and indians, horses and arrows; there was, in sum, Adventure, translated into "the Po Valley," by films and comics. Then, Emilia Street went on cutting Modena in two, but the West had a different face, and the 'American Myth', that of many generations before mine, spoke a different language, that of rock, of vinyl covers, of the face of James Dean in *Rebel without a Cause,* of books that had just been discovered and published in Italian. But the two references always existed, one foot here and the other there, the dream (better, the utopia) and the reality."[33]

In the song from which the album title comes, "Little city," first published in 1972 on *Roots* (*Radici*), Guccini remembers Modena vividly, with its signs of bombings and its smell of postwar. He differentiates it from his imaginings in class: "eyes looking at you [teacher/nun], but dreaming of heroes, guns and billiards, / the imagination ran to the plains, between Emilia Street and the West."[34] Then, quickly, as he had distinguished the reality of Modena from the utopian Far-West, he distinguishes nostalgic memory from unsentimental recollection: "Silly adolescence, false and stupid innocence, / continence, empty third-hand American myth."[35] As the song and remembering progress, the dreams of heroes become "obscure nightmares of a dark period," the

imagination is no longer inhabited by the West, but by Guccini's erotic dreams, and the streets bear witness now to his frustrated love, rather than his games. Like De Gregori, there is friction between myth/reality, youth/adulthood, that revolves around the myth of the West, and more largely, the myth of America. Indeed, Guccini states: "There is continual confrontation between his America—marginalized, backbreaking, defeating—and mine, made of myths, imaginations, and flights of fancy."[36] The 'he' of "his America" in this citation was Guccini's great uncle (as well as an anticipation of the adult Guccini), of and for whom he writes "Amerigo", the title track for his 1978 album. His uncle emigrated to the United States and his experience of the American Dream when he returned to Modena differed tremendously from the myth. It is here that the myth presents its greatest rub in Guccini, when it erases the experience of the immigrant or the ex-slave in order to ingratiate and propagate itself, an act of simple propaganda that hides a national economy modeled on exploitation of land and people.

Guccini's Amerigo, his great-uncle, is, like De Gregori's narrator, 20 years old when he hits the road to contemplate America, and like Amerigo Vespucci, to see it for himself. "When I met him," Guccini sings, "or began to remember him, he was already old / […] with a hernia belt that seemed a holster for pistols. / But that morning he had the unlined face of a 20-year-old, / and anger and adventure." Guccini recounts his own idea of America before his uncle's return: it was Roosevelt's soldiers, it was Atlantis, destiny, peace, paradise lost, and the heroes of Fort Apache.[37] Amerigo's America, rather, was blood, hard work, hard days, whores, beer, immigrants in the coal mines, and all for a few bucks.[38] Guccini contrasts the idealized solitude of the cowboy with his uncle's lonely lost youth, the Po Valley a distant dream and English a strange sound that wounded him like a knife.[39] He contrasts the Missouri and Texas of the open, endless, free Far-West with the Missouri and Texas where his uncle worked locked up in the darkness of the mines. He introduces beer and prostitutes to his uncle's loneliness and struggle, objects of the cowboys' greatest pleasures become pitiful substitutes for the home and community the immigrant has left. His uncle, Amerigo, the roaming adventurer, the cowboy, when seen from up-close, is revealed as having not a pistol holder, but a hernia belt, and the experience of America, as Guccini concludes, is itself his hernia.[40] The *cantautore* certainly and effectively rehistoricizes the American myth here, and more specifically, with his references to Texas, holsters, Fort Apache, he refigures his uncle as a truer cowboy than in the comics and reinstates some historical truth to the Myth of the West.

Guccini's central concern, nonetheless, misses the most fundamental erasure of the myth, the lie on which the rest can be based: the naming of an unknown land after Amerigo Vespucci. For, the New World, was,

indeed, quite old, quite named, and quite discovered. Guccini's non-ironical title alone sets up a deconstruction of the myth that can only be partial. The song discloses the falsehood of the immigrant dream, the unfairness of their treatment, and the implications for the larger myth of America as the choice for "A Better Future." Yet, Italian emigration, in a larger historical context, is nothing more than another wave of colonialism that can be traced back past the British to the New World's 'discovery' by the Genovese, Cristoforo Colombo, and its naming after the Florentine, Amerigo Vespucci. Guccini's investigation of the myth only goes back far enough to analyze the New World in relation to the Old World, it only goes deep enough to pit European against European, like other revisions of the myth.

Furthermore, for both De Gregori and Guccini, critique is mixed with nostalgia for the ideal of the myth, perhaps an overcome ideal, but one that existed, somehow, as a representation of innocence, childhood, and hopes for a bright future. This nostalgia is a myth of its own, as both *cantautori* recall playing at cowboys and indians, Guccini quite specifically, and this remembering, in the cultural atmosphere of the 1970s, with Native Americans gaining ground as heroes in the collective imagination, allows the cowboys and the indians an equivalent status. There is no explicit value judgment in the game, "Cowboys and Indians," no semiological hierarchy in Guccini's "cowboys and indians, horses and arrows." Yet, when Brunetto Salvarini remembers playing at 'Tex' in his book on comics, *Disturbo se fumetto,* he remembers that there was, in fact, a hierarchy in children's minds, determined by the comic-book source-text, *Tex Willer.* "The fact is that when we played, no one wanted to be Tiger Jack [Tex's Navajo sidekick and best friend]: everyone wanted to be Tex, at most someone, fascinated by Carson, chose him for his part, and the smallest of the group (to his great happiness) was inevitably Kit Willer. Tiger Jack was […] too silent, too absent in his omnipresence, too perturbing in his being 'other' to be able to be part of the game."[41] This nostalgia for a game, vaguely remembered as 'Cowboys and Indians,' is a communal forgetting that distills a larger forgetting, which is reinforced every time we speak of America as a potential land of promise. That is, for Europeans and white Americans to dream of the promise or be disillusioned by the false-promise of a utopia, is to accept the terms of a foundational myth that conveniently labels Columbus's land mass as 'new' and 'wild,' while truly it was a cultivated symbiotic landscape formed across millions of years of use. To call cowboys 'friends of the native people' or call immigrants 'victims of exploitation' are two modes of forgetting, for both figures, cowboys and immigrants, historically represent the passage of a cultural model (capitalism in its agrarian and mercantile and industrial forms) that could only survive by

destroying surrounding cultural models, as it attempted again during the years of the Cold War.

Crucially for the 1960s and 70s counterculture that would have uprooted capitalism's promises, seen by that generation as largely false, it could not be done by utilizing the cowboy as an outlier figure, for he lies outside of bourgeois values, but not outside of the capitalist model. Nor could it be done by showing the sins of capitalism against immigrants alone, because immigration itself implies a marginalized people who would like to have a larger piece of the capitalist pie, and who by immigrating reveal as little regard for the sacredness of the Native American (anti-capitalist *par excellence*) culture as any political or industrial promoters of Manifest Destiny. If indigenous people were returned to their historical space in the narrative of the New World, let's say on the pages of a comic, readers would see all white men and all immigrants, group together on the side of the imperialistic villain. The cultures are mutually exclusive, and cowboys and immigrants, business men and cattle ranchers, pioneers and prostitutes and even horses are all elements of imperialism. In order to protest the idea of America (understood as the USA), Italian *cantautori* and other revolutionary cultural producers needed to protest, as well, Europe's role in creating it, and the western model's role in destroying a viable third way, absent and forgotten by the time the New World became a battleground between the two theories of civilized modernity that organized culture during the years of the Cold War.

Instead, I see the popularity of the myth of the West as a symptom a partial revolution. For decades it has been conventionally argued by scholars that the youth movements were a cultural turning against mainstream conformity and that when they failed it was because they had been sold-out to Hollywood and the mainstream suburban culture itself. However, Thomas Frank in his 1997 *The Conquest of Cool: Business Culture, Counterculture, and the Rise of Hip Consumerism,* argues that the movement was swept along with a larger cultural shift that included Madison Avenue, marketing firms, and the capitalist business model. The movement could only be co-opted by the mainstream because it was never truly in opposition to it, and it grew together with corporate business structures, whose models were changing, most significantly, to target younger demographics and create a consumer culture that constantly rebelled against the current and sought the new. This desire for the new would allow the market to constantly reimagine the communal ideal and sell it to consumers. Frank claims that, at least in the US, counterculture could be "more accurately understood as a stage in the development of the values of the American middle class, a colorful installment in the twentieth century drama of consumer subjectivity,"[42] and that its pseudo-anticapitalist status can be simply identified by a look at its heroes: "rock stars

and celebrities, millionaire performers and employees of the culture industry,"[43] as well as youths' increased identification and distinction through fashion items.[44] In order to have broken from capitalism, counterculture needed to give up all concerns for fashion as it is strictly tied to consumerism, as well as give up the ideologies embedded in American myths which secured the future of the current model.

This is not to discount the work done on campuses in the US and Europe to equalize enrollment, nor to discount civil or gender rights battles. The greatly hegemonic activist groups worked in extremely important pockets of stagnating cultural norms and created change that sought equalization within national boundaries. These are not evidence of changes to the *capitalist* structure, however. Nor are they evidence of changes that impair the capitalist structure. The great distinction to be made is between bourgeois hegemony and capitalist socio-economic structure. The counterculture was more precisely counter-bourgeois-culture, never demonstrating long-lasting, rigorous anti-capitalist or anti-imperialistic traits.

THE MYTH OF THE *FAR-WEST* IN FABRIZIO DE ANDRÉ

The Genovese *cantautore,* Fabrizio De André, was no revolutionary. He was very well-received by the public, but not as an activist singer-songwriter, as many were during the 1970s in Italy. When protesters came to disrupt and attempt to end a concert of his during *Re nudo*'s (the most influential contemporary counter-culture magazine in Italy) 1970s protest against ticket prices, De André said to a reporter: "*Re nudo's* initiative to lower ticket prices was serious, but to expect it to be free, or to want to take down the artist, seems to me a highly unfair position. Maybe I am just outside of certain frames of mind though, I am not a revolutionary, not even by temperament, and even if I were, I would have fought for candies, for superfluous things, like all the bourgeoisie."[45] This is an unconcealed dig at the youths' concerns, behind which he detects the same bourgeois individual whom Žižek looks for when he denounces false universality or the "the interest of a particular class [which] disguises itself as universal human interest."[46] De André's 1978 *Rimini*, which is explored in my expanded chapter, represents a similar but more deeply-developed critique of the 1970s and its protests for the right to more candies. He crucially superimposes the ideals of the bourgeoisie and the struggle of bourgeois and petite-bourgeois youths on those of North Native Americans to ironize the relative pettiness and, at times, falseness of the prior, when viewed in league with the latter, which it patterns itself on. Then in his 1981 album, commonly known as *L'indiano,* he continues his exploration of the myth of the West, crucially ignoring the figure of the cowboy, to focus on Native Americans, as he compares their plight to that of the Sardinians[47] in

Italy. While De André is no revolutionary, he performs the act of demythification in the revolutionaries' stead, an act that perhaps they could not have performed because it would have meant demythifying themselves.

So the myth of the Far-West survived even after the P38 cowboy was condemned, while Fabrizio De André, for his part, continued to chip away at romanticized America. In 1981, in collaboration with Massimo Bubola, he releases a self-titled album which is most commonly known as *The Indian* (*L'indiano*), due to its title-less cover and cover art. Indeed, the cover art for *The Indian* album tells much of the tale. One Native American is alone on the prairie with the sun at the horizon behind him. His clothing is apparently traditional, his hair long and decorated with feathers, his chest bare. Yet his horse and his rifle are signs of the European invasion and the struggle to maintain his traditions as more and more artifacts of the invading culture besiege him, fewer and fewer of his people remain to support him, and he becomes marginalized and excluded from the prairie around him. The cover stands in stark contrast with the others we have seen from the epoch, there is no filter between the gaze of the viewer and the Native American's gaze, no intermediate cowboy, no sign that the native is a symbol of another struggle. The Native American here simply represents himself and his people and it is the consumer's first impact. The second impact is a song that sets up a division line that differentiates the storytellers from their invaders, between the protagonist and the listener. It is titled "What I Don't Have" (*Quello che non ho*) and it defines an Us and Them—Have nots and Haves, Dispossessed and Possessors—setting up the average listener, explicitly addressed, to experience the song as a contemporary youth descended directly from the original colonizer, and, more generally, as a representation of He Who Has. The narrator, rather, is a man without:

"Quello che non ho è una camicia bianca	*What I don't have is a white dress shirt*
quello che non ho è un segreto in banca	*what I don't have is a secret in the bank*
quello che non ho sono le tue pistole	*what I don't have are your pistols*
per conquistarmi il cielo per guadagnarmi il sole."	*to conquer the sky/paradise to earn the sun.*

In the following stanzas, it continues: he is one who lives without getting away with things, without anything he does not need, without a watch to help him hurry away, without a rusted train to take him back in time, without gold teeth, without a corporate lunch, without the prairie around him, without powerful connections, without an address in his pocket, without the listener on his side, without the capacity to lie or cheat. In the final verse of each stanza the narrator reveals the function of possessing these things and in three of the six stanzas, as in the

one cited above, the function is either "to earn the sky/paradise, to conquer the sun" or "to conquer the sky/paradise, to earn the sun." This refrain is densely packed with implications. It reminds the reader that frontiersmen and soldiers used civilization and religion as a justification for taking native lands and lives; they were earning paradise by doing God's will, while, quite literally, conquering an earthly paradise in the New World. Conversely, the Sun Dance, a ceremony practiced by groups indigenous to the Great Plains in current Canada and the United States, was banned by the conquering nations, which meant essentially banning the passing down along generations of traditional song and dance and therefore was tantamount to truly conquering the Sun, the bringer of life. The banning of the Sun Dance on the grounds that it was uncivilized parallels the banning of the boar hunt evoked at the song's start.

The sun and sky are conquered with objects that are reminiscent of historical colonization, but that are flecked with contemporary details, reminding the listener that colonization is still happening, in the USA as well as Italy, indeed, across the globe. The pistols, for example, are not just pistols, nor are they the colonizers' pistols, though that particular gun is evocative of the frontier West. They are, rather, "your pistols" (*le tue pistole*). You, young Italian, you militarized leftist P38 member, you who bought this album, you whose nation colonizes. And perhaps most bitterly, you, the European American, who has "this prairie," a voided space that surrounds the narrator like it does the Native American on the album cover, but that paradoxically has disappeared to him. It is a territory taken by generations-old pistols but still possessed by you and your pistols. The "rusted train," too, links the past and present in this way, as it not only summons a weather- and time-worn locomotive, but one with the capacity to carry its riders back in time. The native knows he has no train to take him back in time to save his people and ameliorate his present, but that Europeans and European Americans do. By simply picking up a comic book, or history book, or by watching a film, they can take steam and coal locomotives back, to a flat, mythical time, where history is, in fact, altered to ameliorate their experience of the present.

But what precisely is the power of these possessions to dispossess? Some of the objects represent a larger social and economic structure to which the narrator does not belong and therefore he is dispossessed within that structure. The watch represents objective and scheduled time and the white-man's control of it (time), as he controls space (the prairie), gold teeth and bank accounts signify possession of capital, white shirts and paid lunches a corporate interdependence. Taken as a whole, these objects outline the capitalist, and inimical, mode. But, the objects are not alone the agents of power and control, even more important are the words and allies that

the narrator does not possess. The narrator does not have friends with connections, and, significantly, does not have "you" as a friend: "that which I don't have is you on my side" (*quello che non ho sei tu dalla mia parte*). Again, you the listener are implicated, you who perhaps, as a youth in Italy in 1981 would consider yourself to be on the narrator's side. But you are not and cannot be on his side, for his own lifestyle and the lifestyle he describes by exclusion, your lifestyle, are irreconcilable. The song pivots around the central idea that the tenets of capitalism as an imperial force and the tenets of a hunter/gatherer or agrarian/pastoral societies are incompatible, as most poignantly seen in the example of the Native Americans who were swindled out of their lands, initially, because they simply did not understand the fundamental capitalist concept of ownership, particularly the ownership of something as eternal, powerful, and sacred as the Earth, the mother. In later cases they were deceived because they were unfamiliar with deception, as the narrator says, "that which I don't have, is to cheat you at cards," in a game in which it is understood one must cheat to beat the cheater. The song pits those who have, those who conceive of wanting, having, and taking, as fundamentally opposed to those who have not, want not, take not but what they need. The song pits the listener and Great Plains colonizer (including the cowboy and his pistols) against the 'man without.' Crucially, the 'man without' is without *desire*, while the listener, even if he opposes capitalistic oppression, does so by demanding more. Therefore, he is a man still working within the constructs of a capitalist definition of well-being through wealth. Likewise, the Great Plains colonizer, even the cowboy, works within the constructs of national and personal land ownership that display a desire for personal security through wealth.

In song three, "Sand Creek River" ("Fiume Sand Creek") the sounds of gunshots and shouts in the distance are accompanied by a horn, an oliphant or bugle, portents of two very different hunts: one, the bison hunt that caused the warrior Cheyenne men to be away from the camp,[48] the other the hunt of the aged, women, and children left behind at the Big Sandy Creek reservation massacre. The title event occurred in 1864, when Colonel John Chivington led a group of 700 militia men, dressed in Union army uniforms, but not acting under any official directive (not that it matters), to massacre a group of more than one hundred unarmed and peaceful Cheyenne and Arapaho whose chief, Black Kettle, had before leaving hung a US and a white flag in the camp and received assurance from local authorities of the security of his people. The song is told from the point of view of a young native boy who wakes in the moonlight to the sounds of the approaching militia. Colonel Chivington was 43 during the Sand Creek massacre, yet, like De Gregori's Bufalo Bill ("I was so young and 20 seems so

young"[49]), De André says "he was a 20-year-old general / turquoise eyes and turquoise coat."[50] Like Guccini's Amerigo, who had "the face of a 20-year-old without wrinkles / and with rage,"[51] De André says Chivington "was a 20-year-old general / son of a tempest."[52] Perhaps De André sought to recall the negative image, so much more famous than Colonel Chivington's, of the heroic martyr General Custer, the youngest general in the Union army at age 23. Perhaps they wanted to turn the tables on the general perspective taken on the native victory and Custer's death at Little Bighorn, without, however conceding to tell the tale again and reinforce its mythical power as one of the most glorified stories of the West. Custer is, indeed, less remembered for his own massacre of Cheyenne at Washita River when he was 29. It is easier to remember him as a golden-haired martyr at Little Bighorn. Or perhaps, De Gregori, Guccini, and De André all associate a certain rebelliousness, vigorous intrepidness, and self-assured idealism to that age. The defiance and daring are clear and simple, but the idealism becomes a thorny issue and therefore a sticking point for De André. Three Europeans (or European Americans) go West, all with the same youthful idealism of securing riches and glory in their futures,[53] yet only one is portrayed as a threat to indigenous life in the West. Truly, only one murdered innocent natives on November 29, 1864, but all three could equally send the action of the song forward in De André's dreamlike and hazy telling. Indeed, all settlers in the West went for one reason and their settlement resulted in one overarching end as the land was continually valued more highly than the people on the land. Within the space of four refrains, "Sand Creek River" tells the comprehensive tale of the West. "There was a silver dollar on the Sand Creek riverbed," it begins. It ends, "Now our children sleep on the Sand Creek riverbed."[54]

In more ways than one, the song can be seen as the tale of centuries of massacre condensed into and represented as one. For there is a repetition of three in the song, that creates the sense of a longer struggle, a return to struggle, a maturity of struggle. There is the sense of a narrator who is reborn across six generations and across six generations always faces the pale-faced enemy. The narrator first awakens to hear "the music in the distance as it became ever louder," and three times he does not react to the approach or prepare to fight. Three times he simply closed his eyes and opened them to find himself still there,[55] still listening to them approach. Early contact with Native American tribes in the eastern North American territories was for more than 200 years relatively peaceful, as Europeans and natives set up trade, negotiated boundaries, and even fought on the same sides against common enemies. But as European settlements increased, tensions increased as well, and skirmishes transitioned into the removal period of the 1800s, and the infamous Trail of Tears that displaced

eastern tribes from long-established lands to the so-called Indian Territories west of Arkansas. The specific Sand Creek massacre and the longer tradition of massacre and removal are echoed in the narrator's innocent, dreamlike and blinking refusal of the approaching forces, and then in De André's description of the boy's death. His grandfather tells him the sounds are a dream and he still believes it when he dies: "I was dreaming so hard that my nose started to bleed / a flash in one ear and paradise on the other side / the larger tears / the smaller tears / when the snowy tree / flowers red stars."[56] The larger and smaller tears, the tears of the adults and of the children, but also the tears of a people and of an individual, the accumulated trail of tears that followed the removed natives for generations, as the natural cycle of life and death represented in the snow-covered tree, is replaced with a cycle of unnatural deaths during the spring of one's life, represented in the bloody blooms. As the stanza ends, the narrator's voice is abstracted, omnipresent, hovering outside of the boy as he declares: "now the children sleep on the Sand Creek riverbed."

The first cycle in the song ends with the night's end. The "dark cover" that had first "taken our hearts," according to the narrator, is gone. Whether that dark cover is a blanket that for years carried unseen disease to countless natives, as smallpox sometimes was spread, or whether it is the darkness of the "small dead moon" in the twilight hours of the massacre, the sun rises on the camp and with it comes the end of disbelief and inaction, the beginning of recognition and anger, as a mature warrior narrator returns to witness the destruction:

"Quando il sole alzò la testa tra le spalle della notte	*When the sun raised its head between the night's shoulders*
c'erano solo cani e fumo e tende capovolte	*there were only dogs and smoke and overturned tents*
tirai una freccia in cielo	*I shot an arrow at the sky*
per farlo respirare	*to make it breathe*
tirai una freccia al vento	*I shot an arrow at the wind*
per farlo sanguinare	*to make it bleed*
la terza freccia cercala sul fondo del Sand Creek."	*The third arrow, look for it at the bottom of Sand Creek.*

He returns to fight the enemy, he represents a new type of native in the Great Plains frontier, territory of nomadic warrior bands like the Cheyenne and Arapaho, who were immediately more hostile to colonization than eastern tribes had been. But it is too late now for a war, the narrator's people are already gone. Furthermore, his land and food are disappearing, and the enemy has become so immense, so overpowering, that it is like trying to fight the Earth that surrounds him, like shooting at the sky and the wind. Perhaps he shoots his final arrow at the enemy, perhaps he is killed before he can pull the string, perhaps he renounces the fight. Whatever its trajectory, the arrow is powerless in the face of the dollar glimmering from the bottom of Sand Creek. In exchange for that dollar, men lined the bed with Cheyenne children, and the narrator's final arrow sinks to the

bottom of the river to lie with the future generations it would have defended. "My third arrow, look for it at the bottom of Sand Creek,"[57] he says. Just nine miles from modern-day Chivington, Colorado.

De André completes the album with "If They Cut You into Little Pieces" ("Se ti tagliassero a pezzetti"), a song of praise to liberty and her counterpart, imagination, and "Green Fields" ("Verdi pascoli") a song that recounts the Native American myth of paradise after death. In "If They Cut You into Little Pieces", De André argues that Lady Liberty can never be truly destroyed by those who would cut her to pieces, neither by capitalists, nor by revolutionaries, for she is part of the natural world and it will restore her. The narrator discovers Lady Liberty playing music on the river's edge, they dance, he plays guitar and mandolin, and they make love. But the next time he meets her, she is trapped in a grey suit, newspapers in one hand and her destiny in the other. She walks alongside her assassin.

"T'ho incrociata alla stazione	*I crossed your path at the station*
che inseguivi il tuo profumo	*as you followed your fragrance*
presa in trappola da un tailleur grigio fumo	*trapped in a smoke-grey suit*
i giornali in una mano e nell'altra il tuo destino	*newspapers in one hand and your fate in the other*
camminavi fianco a fianco al tuo assassino."	*you walked side by side with your assassin.*

The image is of a commuter, who was once a dreamer at the riverbank, now trapped in a suit, trapped in a schedule, and in a life that will define and finish her. However, the image is equally of a revolutionary of the Black Brigades, a neofascist group who during the 1970s in Italy regularly bombed public spaces to render panic and terror. On August 2, 1980, while De André was writing *L'indiano,* the Black Brigades enacted one of the last and the most fatal bombing of years of the Strategy of Tension at the Bologna Train Station, killing 85 people and injuring 200 others. The commuter who walks in the station is holding a newspaper in one hand and "her destiny in the other," De André sings. One presumes the other hand holds a briefcase or small commuting valise and that that object completes the image of an administrative professional. But it completes the image, as well, of a bomber who has come, not to travel, but, to deposit his deadly cargo in the station, like the bomb in the Bologna station was deposited in an abandoned travel bag. Whether blown to bits in an armed-revolutionary's briefcase, or cut to bits by a life of soul-crushing administrative work, the briefcase is a symbol of violence against liberty. The last stanza reminds the listeners, as the first did, that neither commuting nor bombing commuters can destroy liberty, she will survive all of man's best attempts to snuff her out. She will survive in the next and final song, "Green Fields," in nature, in music and dance, imagination and play. The earth-like paradise of the Native American myth of the afterlife.

CONCLUSION

Reformers in the 1960s and 70s, as we have seen, look West for various models for overcoming capitalism, yet their models do not dig deep enough to uproot it. Indeed, many reforming ideals are founded on aspects of the very capitalism that won the West. In order to truly overcome it, the reform needs to begin with the original sin of colonization itself. *L'indiano* is recognized by Elia Perboni as "Stories of the West"[58] in a 1981 review. Yet, De André's *L'indiano* never mentions a cowboy. Bandits and American soldiers in the album are seen from a far and critical distance, through the eyes of a few of the many people who suffer from the life they—and we, De André reminds,—glorify. The storytellers are Native American children and warriors. There is no romance, there is no valor in this West, there is a stark history of exploitation for profit by *all those* who take part in the capitalist model, not just politicians or corporations. And there is the insinuation of a secondary form of indirect colonization through cultural intervention. The unlikely and largely unfit popularity of the myth of the West in Italy is, itself, an example of this sort of cultural intervention, which casts an entire nation's gaze west, during years in which the world was split along east/west lines and the US and its allies believed any country could be the first domino to fall and create a communist chain reaction. Brick and mortar colonialism was at a relative end, and colonizers were changing strategy so as to continue. Colonization was more and more often enacted in mental, rather than physical, spaces. Colonizing nations sent ideas, simulacra, as images, film, song, rather than sending citizens. Those ideas became ideals. Colonizers built factories for indigenous people rather than homes for their colonizers, and those factories became the cornerstones for achieving the colonizing ideals.

Fabrizio De André, for his part, becomes obsessed with the idea of the false discovery of the Americas, what he calls a lie.[59] He takes the opportunity in the early 1990s, at concerts and in interviews, to condemn the festivities around the approaching 500-year anniversary of Columbus's landing and says at a concert in Vicenza on September 13, 1991: "The evening of October 12, 1992, I will certainly not be toasting the centennial… the quincentennial of the discovery of America. […] I will be in solidarity with the Indians and I will remember together with them that which they remember as the day of greatest national mourning."[60] De André encourages his audience to remember the truth, a truth that, as he says,1 "our children are punished in school for declaring," that when Columbus discovered America, it had been populated since time immemorial.[61]

[1] For an exploration of De André's ironic take on Dylan in "Avventura a Durango", see my expanded chapter of "Cowboys and Indians ... and Sardinians."

[2] "Credo abbia rivelato di colpo, senza bisogno di molte deviazioni discorsive, qualcosa che stava circolando in tanti discorsi, ma che la parola non riusciva a far accettare. Quella foto non assomigliava a nessuna delle immagini in cui si era emblematizzata, per almeno quattro generazioni, l'idea di rivoluzione. Mancava l'elemento collettivo, vi tornava in modo traumatico la figura dell'eroe individuale." in Eco, Umberto. *Sette Anni Di Desiderio.* V. Milano: Bompiani, 1983. Print. pp. 96-99, p. 98

[3] "Questo eroe individuale invece aveva la posa, il terrificante isolamento degli eroi dei film polizieschi armierican (la Magnum dell'ispettore Callaghan) o degli sparatori solitari del West—non più cari a una generazione che si vuole di indiani." (Eco) p. 99

[4] "si mette a sparare per le strade essendo però fortemente minoritaria, isolata; d'altra parte, il fatto che questa deriva violenta, per quanto motivata esplicitamente da mille analisi post-marxiste anche molto raffinate, era in effetti nutrita di quell'immaginario mediatico diffuso che vede nel pistolero solitario (da Far West, per intenderci) il vero eroe, a dispetto dell'iconografia rivoluzionaria più classica" in Marrone, Gianfranco. "Una Foto, Mille Cose." *Doppiozero.com* 20 Feb. 2012. Web.

[5] Slotkin, Richard. *Gunfighter Nation: the Myth of the Frontier in Twentieth-century America*. Oklahoma paperbacks ed. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1998. Print.

[6] (Slotkin) 5

[7] (Slotkin) 6

[8] Anderson, Benedict R. O'G. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. London: Verso, 1983. Print. p. 6

[9] Benjamin, Walter. *The Arcades Project.* Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1999. Print. 476 [N10a, 3]

[10] "La wilderness non è tanto un luogo; corrisponde piuttosto a una condizione mentale, ditata culturalmente. L'idea di wilderness come realtà intonsa e selvaggia, contrapposta alla cultura rimane comunque un'astrazione di tipo urbano che riflette il punto di vista di persone ben lontane dall'ambiente naturale dal quale dipendono. L'idea di una natura vergine, senza traccia di occupazione umana, acquista, inoltre, una connotazione di tipo politico e sociale in quanto implicitamente 'disumanizza' le popolazioni indigene che [ci] vivono." Seminario "Le frontiere del Far West" (2007: Bergamo, Italy). *Le Frontiere Del Far West: Forme Di Rappresentazione Del Grande Mito Americano*. Milano: Shake, 2008. Print. p. 105

[11] *Sulle frontiere del Far-West,* 1908; *La scotennatrice*, 1909; *Le selve ardenti,* 1910

[12] *The Pioneers*, 1823; *The Last of the Mohicans*, 1826; *The Prairie*, 1827; *The Pathfinder*, 1840; *The Deerslayer*, 1841

[13] Žižek, Slavoj. *The Sublime Object of Ideology*. London: Verso, 1989. Print. p. 50

[14] Legge: 21 aprile 1969, n. 162, Nuove norme per l'attribuzione dell'assegno di studio universitario. (GU n.114 del 5-5-1969) http://www.normattiva.it/uri-res/N2Ls?urn:nir:stato:legge:1969-04-21;162@originale

[15] Sarmiento, Domingo Faustino. *Facundo: Civilización y Barbarie.* Buenos Aires: Mundo Moderno, 1952. Print. p. 43 "El gaucho cantor è el mismo bardo, el vate, el trovador del Edad Media que se mueve […] entre là luchas de lass ciudades y del feudalismo de lo campos, entre la vida que se va y la vida que se acerca."

[16] *The Life, Music and Thought of Woody Guthrie: A Critical Appraisal*. Farnham, Surrey, England: Ashgate, 2011. Print.

[17] Henry McCarty, best known as Billy the Kid, is arguably the historical figure who most closely resembles the romanticized cowboy outlaw and folk hero. He was well-spoken, including in Spanish, he was known to kill reluctantly and only in self-defense, he never worked as an Indian scout, soldier, or Pony Express rider, but most often was an itinerant ranch hand, horse thief, and sometimes (apparently reluctant) murderer. He lived to be only 21, from 1859-1881, and had little to do with the Great Plains or Gold Rush West, much more to do with the Southwest frontier.

[18] When the Kid escapes from jail, he returns to his ranch to find his friends all in one room in bed, some with women, some alone. The man in bed with the Kid's woman reluctantly gets up, and the naked girl happily allows the Kid to take his place.

[19] An album which De André calls "uno dei i suoi migliori album […] dove c'è ancora il gusto per la ballata." (Sassi) p. 245

[20] De Gregori, besides working on the translation of "Desolation Row" with De André, and performing Dylan songs in his duo Francesco e Giorgio (principally a Simon and Garfunkel cover band) and in his solo career, he participated in Dylan's film, *Masked and Anonymous* in 2003, he was known to be closest in style to the US artist, with his 2005 album *Pezzi* coming the closest to achieving that style. He published an album of translated Dylan songs in 2015 called D*e Gregori canta Bob Dylan - Amore e Furto,* in which he introduced a new translation of "Desolation Row." The album was #1 on the FIMI chart as of 5 November 2015.

[21] Giorgio Gaber, for example, in 1968 starred in Rai's comedic Western television series, *Non cantare, spara,* in which he plays a half-blood Native American, Idaho Martino, called Halfblood (Meticcio). The series told the story of Custer's 7th regiment on the way to Little Bighorn and Gaber was known for singing the opening theme, "The Ballad of Idaho Martino" (La ballata di Idaho Martino) in cowboy-dress, and summing up the events of past episodes.

[22] A *bufalo* in Italian is a water buffalo, famous for their mozzarella di bufala. While the North American buffalo, or bison, is a *bisonte*. So Buffalo Bill, by nature of his name, is automatically misinterpreted in the Italian collective imagination, by all those who do not speak English well enough to distinguish between bison and water buffalo.

[23] Intervista a De Gregori di Michelangelo Romano e Paolo Giaccio, riportata in *Francesco De Gregori: un mito.* ed. Riccardo Piferi. Lato Side: Roma, 1980, p. 69

[24] "il futuro per loro è una cosa bella"

[25] (Žižek) p. 109

[26] "il mio nome era Bufalo Bill"

[27] "il cacciatore uccide sempre per giocare"

[28] "E mi ricordo infatti di un pomeriggio triste, io, col mio amico 'Culo di gomma', famoso meccanico, sul ciglio di una strada a contemplare l'America."

[29] "I cowboys vanno a cavallo, / nell'Arizona dei nostri cuori"

[30] "Non hanno figli e non hanno padri, non hanno armi e non hanno amori. All'avventura vanno da soli, così si perdono raramente"

[31] Questa gente senza più cuore / E queste strade senza più legge, / E queste stalle senza più gregge, / Senza più padri da ricordare, / E senza figli da rispettare.

[32] "prima dei cowboys chissà se c'era, ma dopo i cowboys non c'è più niente"

[33] "La via Emilia tagliava Modena in due; la strada dove abitavo, da una parte, si incrociava con essa. Dall'altra parte c'erano già gli ampi campi della periferia. Erano un po' il nostro "West" domestico: bastava fare due passi, o attraversare una strada, e c'erano già indiani e cow-boys, cavalli e frecce; c'era, insomma, l'Avventura, tradotta in "padano" dai film e dai fumetti. Poi la via Emilia continuò a tagliare Modena in due, ma il West aveva volto diverso, e il "mito americano", quello di tante generazioni oltre alla mia, parlava lingua diversa, quella del rock, delle copertine dei dischi, della faccia di James Dean in Gioventù bruciata, dei libri che altri appena prima di noi avevano scoperto e voltato in italiano. Ma i due riferimenti esistevano sempre, un piede di qua e uno di là, il sogno (meglio, l'utopia) e la realtà."

[34] "gli occhi guardavano voi, ma sognavan gli eroi, le armi e la bilia, correva la fantasia verso la prateria, fra la via Emilia e il West…"

[35] "Sciocca adolescenza, falsa e stupida innocenza, / continenza, vuoto mito americano di terza mano"

[36] "C'è un confronto continuo tra la sua America – emarginata, di fatica, di sconfitte – e la mia – fatta di miti e immaginazioni, di viaggi di fantasia." in *Un altro giorno è andato: Francesco Guccini si racconta a Massimo Cotto*. Firenze, Giunti, 1999, p. 101.

[37] L' America era allora, per me i G.I. di Roosvelt, la quinta armata, / l' America era Atlantide, l' America era il cuore, era il destino, / l' America era Life, sorrisi e denti bianchi su patinata, / l' America era il mondo sognante e misterioso di Paperino. L' America era allora per me provincia dolce, mondo di pace, perduto paradiso, malinconia sottile, nevrosi lenta, / e Gunga-Din e Ringo, gli eroi di Casablanca e di Fort Apache."

[38] "E fu lavoro e sangue e fu fatica uguale mattina e sera, / per anni da prigione, di birra e di puttane, di giorni duri, / di negri ed irlandesi, polacchi ed italiani nella miniera, / sudore d' antracite in Pennsylvania, Arkansas, Texas, Missouri. / Tornò come fan molti, due soldi e giovinezza ormai finita."

[39] "e Pavana un ricordo lasciato tra i castagni dell' Appennino, / l' inglese un suono strano che lo feriva al cuore come un coltello"

[40] "l' America era un' ernia"

[41] "Il fatto è però che quando si giocava tra noi, nessuno voleva 'fare' Tiger: tutti volevano essere Tex, al massimo qualcuno, affascinato dalla figura di Carson, sceglieva per sé la sua parte, e il più piccolo inevitabilmente (e con la sua grande felicità) Kit Willer. Ma Tiger Jack […] troppo silenzioso, troppo 'assente' nella sua onnipresenza, troppo perturbante nel suo essere 'altro' per potere entrare nei nostri giochi." in Salvarani, Brunetto. *Disturbo Se Fumetto?: Dylan Dog e Marin Mystère, Tex Willer e Nathan Never: Ipotesi Per Un Uso Politicamente Corretto*. 1. ed. Milano: Unicopli, 1998. Print. p. 138

[42] (Frank) p. 29

[43] (Frank) p. 8

[44] One had to dress of the left, which implied consumeristic concerns. On Italian campuses, it was even important to have the correct scooter, the "Primavera" was for conservatives and the "Vespone" was for leftists. "l'essere di destra o di sinistra contava anche riguardo ai mezzi a motore che si possedeva: si arrivava per giunta ad affermare che la Primavera fosse di destra, mentre il classico e sempiterno "Vespone", di sinistra." in Fraddosio, Pier Paolo. "La Storia Della Vespa Primavera." *OmniMoto* 28 Dec. 2013. Web.

[45] "l'iniziativa di *Re Nudo* per la diminuzione del prezzo del biglietto era seria, ma pretendere la gratuità, o pretendere di demolire la figura, il ruolo mi pare altamente scorretto. Ma forse sono proprio estraneo a certi schemi, non sono rivoluzionario, nemmeno per temperamento, e se anche lo fossi stato, avrei combattuto per I cioccolatini, per il superfluo, come tutti I borghesi." Sassi, Claudio, and Walter Pistarini, eds. *De André Talk: Le interviste e gli articoli della stampa d'epoca.* Roma: Coniglio Editore, 2008. Print. pp. 179-180

[46] (Žižek) p. 50

[47] For an investigation of the comparison between Native Americans and Sardinians, see my expanded chapter: "Cowboys and Indians... and Sardinians"

[48] "I nostri guerrieri troppo lontani, sulla pista del bisonte."

[49] "avevo pochi anni e vent'anni sembran pochi"

[50] "fu un generale di vent'anni / occhi turchini e giacca uguale "

[51] "quel mattino aveva il viso dei vent' anni senza rughe / e rabbia e avventura e ancora vaghe idee del socialismo."

[52] Calling Chivington a 20-year-old general is not just a simple oversight. De André in concerts would present the story of Sand Creek in minute details before performing the song. At a concert on September 13, 1991, a Piazza degli Scacchi in Marostica, Vicenza, he refers explicitly to the man by rank and name: "Colonnello Chivington." Giuffrida, Romano. De André, Gli Occhi Della Memoria: Tracce Di Ricordi Con Fabrizio. Milano: Elèuthera, 2002. Print. p. 63; Furthermore, when asked where his passion for Native Americans comes from, he mentions that he was influenced by Westerns, a visit to Canada, and "dalla lettura di libri come *Memorie di un indiano Cheyenne* e *Seppellite il mio cuore a Wounded Knee.*" (Sassi) p. 246; The Westerns he cites are *Soldato Blu* and *Un uomo chiamato cavallo,* both revisionist westerns with realism regarding the massacres of natives. (Sassi) p. 254

[53] Amerigo's questo for riches is clear in his emigration. Bufalo Bill says that his father guarded cattle, his mother was a farmer, he killed bison to be the best. Indeed, the historical Bill gained fame largely through hunting bison for sport. Chivington was a minister who moved west to set up missions, and who sought glory through the lord. "I have come to kill Indians, and believe it is right and honorable to use any means under God's heaven to kill Indians. ... Kill and scalp all, big and little; nits make lice." General John Chivington cited in Brown, Dee (2001) [1970]. "War Comes to the Cheyenne". *Bury my heart at Wounded Knee.* Macmillian. pp. 86–87

[54] "C'è un dollaro d'argento sul fondo del Sand Creek […] ora i bambini dormono sul fondo del Sand Creek."

[55] "chiusi gli occhi per tre volte / mi ritrovai ancora lì"

[56] "Sognai talmente forte che mi uscì il sangue dal naso / il lampo in un orecchio nell'altro il paradiso / le lacrime più piccole / le lacrime più grosse / quando l'albero della neve / fiorì di stelle rosse / ora i bambini dormono nel letto del Sand Creek."

[57] "la terza freccia cercala sul fondo del Sand Creek"

[58] Perboni, Elia. "Storie del West, storie del Barbagia. *Ciao 2001.* 27 September 1981. in (Sass) p. 252

[59] "È una menzogna che Colombo abbia scoperto l'America nel 1492" Archivio DA IV/09 (B.3; 1-36) agenda p. 159

[60] "la sera del 12 ottobre del 1992, non starò certo a brindare al centenario… al cinquecentenario della scoperta dell'America. […] starò vicino agli Indiani e ricorderò insieme a loro quello che loro ricordano come il giorno del più grave lutto nazionale." Giuffrida, Romano. De André, Gli Occhi Della Memoria: Tracce Di Ricordi Con Fabrizio. Milano: Elèuthera, 2002. Print. p. 63

[61] "È una menzogna che Colombo abbia scoperto l'America nel 1492 […] la popolavano da tempo immemorabile. […] Ma se uno dei nostri bambini dà questa risposta a scuola viene punito." Archivio DA IV/09 (B.3; 1-36, agenda) p. 159