Civilizing the Scaffold

"We all died painfully
swallowing our last calls
kicking at the wind."
Fabrizio De André[1]

Pisanello's 15th century *Saint George and the Princess,* in the church of Sant'Anastasia in Verona, depicts the story of Saint George, a tale much like that of Perseus and Andromeda. Saint George travels to a faraway town that regularly sacrifices farm animals to a local dragon; sometimes the town has even to sacrifice its children to appease the monster. When Saint George arrives, it happens to be the princess of Trebizond who has been randomly selected for sacrifice; she is tied up at the shore awaiting her destiny when Saint George arrives. He injures the dragon, tames him, brings him into town and tells the townspeople he will slay the dragon before their very eyes if they all convert to Christianity. Today, the part of the fresco with the dragon has worn away, and we are left with a slightly more modern mural, for the mythical creature has disappeared and minor figures, like the men being hanged above the crowd in the near background, gain greater centrality. It is as if medieval mysticism has been worn away by the development of ages and been replaced by a post-Enlightenment tale of a princess or merchant's daughter saved from lowly scoundrels, and who, like the dragon, are sacrificed for the common good, in the name of morality. In Saint George's tale, this morality is strictly Christian, the dragon dies so the townspeople can be converted. While, without the dragon, the tale is both less explicit and slightly less removed in time and space. Saint George could be mistaken for any heroic sailor setting off for adventure, while the sacrificed are nameless Florentines outside the city walls, their sins possibly the sins of a merchant city-state: thievery,

treason, or counterfeiting. The princess, in this scene, has been saved in a lateral sense, indirectly, from threat of their continued nefarious existence. She has been saved in this sense, not by St. George, but by unseen powers of the city-state, and St. George's role in the depiction becomes, then, unclear. Indeed, the knight historically is losing centrality, and does not last much longer than the dragon in the timeline of the West. The hanged men, rather, gain centrality in the fresco. With the dragon gone, their event is primary.

It is unclear the reason for which Pisanello depicted these men. It has been suggested that he was setting the fresco doubly in a faraway byzantine town and in Florence where Piazza Piave, once called Piazza delle Forche (Gallows Square), was known for its daily public hangings, until 1786 when it became the first European state to abolish public execution. What is clear is that, whatever Pisanello's intentions, the fresco works in at least two ways to elucidate the process of civilization as it relates to punishment, the central matter in this chapter. Firstly, the fresco is dated to around 1438, a moment of great change for the Western world. In Verona it is the end of the Middle Ages, while in

Florence, Cosimo de Medici has ruled for four years already, and a local Renaissance has begun. In France, the Hundred Years' War is coming to an end, and within 15 years, the feudal system in France will have given way to the centralized State, as will be discussed in more detail later in regards to François Villon. Already, and increasingly, in 1438, knights in feudal systems have lost much autonomy to execute men, they are laying down their swords to enter noble courts where they will learn, increasingly, that social success must be vied for with words rather than brute force. This transition marks the beginning of the rise of so-called 'civilization' and the beginning of the end of vigilante justice as standard; though half a millennium later modern man still remembers this autonomy romantically in myth, in Westerns and superhero stories, for example. The knight's once central position in *St. George* has been obscured by time, and its erasure of the dragon. Now *St. George* tells another story, not of a 10th-century knight, but of 15th-century knights whose positions are still, if precariously, prominent, but increasingly functionless.

Meanwhile, the hanged men in *St. George,* now the only force opposing the representation of goodness and morality in the foreground, are distanced from the hero, they are peripheral and belong to the backdrop of the city-state, to the city-state's mechanism of control and punishment. Pisanello's portrayal of a knight who fights mythical battles, for dragons and princesses, and a State that deals in the quotidian task of maintaining order, is exceedingly timely, as the knight is just beginning to pass into myth and the Kingdom or State is creeping to the fore, its power manifested and secured through threat of death in public executions. The existence of hanged men will become problematic for the State, and in time, they too will lose any prominence in the city. But before they disappear, they will come throughout the early modern period to complexly and variously represent much of the loss, achievement, and myth of the civilizing process. This, finally, is the second point: Pisanello lucidly depicts many of the difficulties of public execution: its literal and metaphorical position at the edges of society, its population by the lower classes (as seen by the hanged men's dress), its aspects of spectacle (specifically its position above the rest of the crowd, to be witnessed by all), its association with a sense of sacrifice, martyrdom, atonement (for neither Saint George nor the princess died as sacrifice or martyr that day, but two died in their places). With the dragon gone, the mural becomes a

historical, rather than mystical document, that remembers the many who were executed and forgotten, rather than the few who were executed and redeemed in the common memory, like the man commemorated a few meters away from the fresco, above the altar. Thus it seems to unwittingly celebrate those condemned to the gallows, perhaps not all martyrs, but perhaps some unjustly executed nonetheless. Particularly because the fresco is installed in a church, the hanged men come to possess the possibility of redemption. They represent the double witnessing that creates a martyr. The sacred object, the martyr, must witness god, and in a second recognition, the martyr must be identified and redeemed by the crowd who watches his death. In this case, ordinary hanged men are given a second opportunity to be witnessed by centuries of churchgoers in Verona.

Perhaps Pisanello desired exactly this, to artfully commemorate, specifically or generally, condemned men who had not deserved to die. If so, he would not be the first nor the last to use the gallows as a symbol of injustice. The theme of injustice and redemption was never far from the hearts and tongues of those who frequented public executions in Europe and Great Britain through the 19th century, and it is a theme picked up and remembered in British folk ballads that date back as far as the 15th century and that were revived by the 20th-century anglophone musicians after being variously recorded in written form and published a century before. These folk ballads were revived in traditional and near-traditional versions, while the gallows setting re-entered the popular imagination in new and creative ways, as seen in its centrality to Western comic books and films produced during the second half of the 20th century. Indeed, Pisanello's scene is reminiscent of the carnivalesque setting of Bob Dylan's 1965 "Desolation Row" which begins: "They're selling postcards of the hanging / They're painting the passports brown / The beauty parlor is filled with sailors / The circus is in town."[2] In context—though hardly clear without substantial investigation due to the extremely hermetic nature of the song—Dylan's song tells of a 1920 lynching of innocent black circus workers in Duluth, Minnesota. In context, Pisanello paints the scene of a saint's heroism. Yet, visually, both illustrate a confused city center, full of animals, ships at port and men to sail them, townspeople in all sorts of dress, mythical and epic figures, and the exaltation and reproduction of a hanging, one in 1920 on Desolation Row (translated by Fabrizio De André and Francesco De Gregori in 1974 as

"Via della povertà"[3]) and the other c1433 at the end of Malcontents' Row (Via dei Malcontenti), in the Gallows Square.

Beyond Dylan's one-liner homage, the larger generation, associated with the American Folk and anglophone Post-Folk Hippie and Psychedelic Rock Movement, had a fraught relationship with hangings and lynchings; they were at once central to the important and heroic role of vigilante justice in Western stories of the folk and cinematic tradition as well as recognized as *unjust* in revived folk ballads and in songs by African American blues and jazz musicians that influenced the folk artists.[4] Broadly, however, the image of public hanging seems to have been used to call law and justice into question, whether that meant the lynchings in the West that were seen as inexorable in lieu of law that had not yet been organized, or whether it meant that established law or social groups acting as judges and executioners due to their prominent place in society were unjust and the system, generally, corrupted.

The Dule Tree and Folk Tradition

Though not the only one to return to vogue—for instance "Barbara Allen," a 17th century English folk ballad (and later Child Ballad 84),[5] was performed by Joan Baez and Simon and Garfunkel, and was influential to Bob Dylan, and as we shall see, "Geordie" another Child Ballad was performed and recorded by Baez—a particularly popular folk-revival ballad was a gallows ballad, commonly known as "Maid Freed from the Gallows Pole" in the British tradition as as "Feher Anna" in the Hungarian. It was recorded by Judy Collins as "Anathea" on her 1964 *Judy Collins 3* album, by Bob Dylan as "Seven Curses" on his 1963 *Freewheelin',* and by Led Zeppelin as "Gallows Pole" on their 1970 *Led Zeppelin III*. While the details differ, all three remember the tale of a man who awaits the arrival of a loved one who would bribe the judge/hangman and save his life. Inevitably, in these particularly tellings of the tale, the judge accepts or refuses the bribe and asks for more, the body of the daughter or sister who brings the silver and gold. She concedes to give him her body and sees in the morning light that her loved one has been executed anyways. This particular gallows ballad is popular perhaps because it calls into question the law itself, the right of a judge to condemn a man to death, the intrinsic validity of laws to rule the land unevenly, protecting those in power and punishing

the powerless, and the objectivity of the morality that belongs to those that create and uphold law.

The song, then, is a subversion of class hierarchies and hegemonic morality that unscrupulously and irregularly applies itself across society. But the gallows do not signify civil unjust singly, as the question of execution was fraught in public opinion in the 1960s and 1970s. As stated, the hanging tree is the representation of justice in the romanticized Wild West of the postwar and counterculture decades, as the cowboy is a new version of the medieval knight, for whom the gallows was a symbol of his judicial power. Yet, it contradictorily looms as the threat of his own unwarranted death as well, thus managing to represent both absolute justice and the absolute lack of justice. The rope hanging from a tree is perhaps problematically assigned ethical value in the mythical west as the myth itself was reworked, rewritten, reassessed and updated so many times as to confuse a certain sense of right and wrong that could be directly applied to the contemporary reality. But it is not just in the mythical West that the symbol is problematic, it is evoked by US and British folk and rock singers, as we have seen, and by others, like the French *chanson* musician, Georges Brassens in songs like "Le verger du roi Louis" (1960), "L'assassinat" (1962), and "La messe au pendu" (1976). Around the same years as the gallows were reawakened in national mythoi by folk musicians, national opinion in England and France—and even, in a sense, in the United States—saw the countries' last executions. The last execution in the United Kingdom was by hanging in 1964, while in France it was by guillotine in 1977. The United States is one of the only modern Western states that upholds the death penalty (legal as of 2016 in 31 states), but the 1970s saw its only federal moratorium, which lasted from 1972 to 1976. *Public* executions were abolished earlier in all cases: in the United Kingdom in 1868, in France in 1939 and in the United States in 1936. The musicians who sing of the gallows seem to touch upon something that public execution represents, that the gallows specifically represent. Execution, when it is romanticized, is done so not as an act in itself, for none of these artists argue for the return of the gallows in these year, but as it gives a sense of the loss of something else. They, perhaps, intuit some of what Michel Foucault will argue in his 1975 *Surveiller et punir* (*Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*[6]), that the death penalty has not been abolished so as to render law more humane, but, rather, in order to render the judicial process a more proficient and

effective system of control. They perhaps intuit that the inhumanity of punishment has not disappeared in the modern landscape, but it has become harder to sing about, to communicate about, for it has been hidden. So, they revert to singing of the gallows, so obvious and stark.

The occasional reference to public executions (specifically hangings)—in the form of retold folk ballads or in original pieces like the Styx "Renegade" from their 1978 *Pieces of Eight* album—in the case of the US and British folk and rock musicians, is not comprehensive enough to argue that any one band had a clear sense of the full significance of the gallows as a cultural symbol and its position to argue and/or criticize contemporary forms of control utilized by national penal systems. The gallows as a symbol, particularly accompanied by a corrupt judge, was an effective allusion to a general sense of unjust hierarchies of power. Theirs was an unscrutinized intuition of certain losses (or mere mutations) in the seemingly irrepressible process of 'civilization', that, as we shall see, are poignantly symbolized by the disappearance of the gallows. In Fabrizio De André's enduring return to the gallows in his oeuvre, however, one can ascertain a much clearer sense of its manifold power and a greater drive towards unveiling—through hanged-men and other representations of sacred power and communal sacrifice that substitute the hanged-man—contemporary illusions of humaneness in spectacle and punishment. In doing so, he questions the established definition of post-Enlightenment 'Western Civilization,' as the evolutionary path should be considered, globally, the one of most righteous progress towards an ever-gentler humankind. And in doing so, he returns to the crucial moment depicted by Pisanello, the end of the Middle Ages and the birth of early-modern Kingdoms, first generally in Scottish/English a folk ballad and then very specifically in the life of François Villon.

Beyond Child Ballads

Fabrizio De André, seemingly unaware of Joan Baez's 1963/4 rendition,[7] translated Child Ballad 209[8] "Geordie" in 1966, with the help of Maureen and Giorgio Rix for the literal translation, and then with modifications of his own. But his interest is hardly a single example that belongs to the larger folk zeitgeist, which came about, at least in part, due to the coincidence of the effects of the Folk Music Revival and Bertrand Harris Bronson's publishing of the tunes to the Child Ballads

throughout the 1960s. To give a sense of the importance throughout De André's career of the themes of crime, judgment and punishment, listed below are songs relevant to those themes—which represent 14% of his corpus of songs with lyrics—though many more of his songs deal with offense and judgment as they relate, not to the penal system specifically, but rather to cultural norms and societal judgment and exclusion.

PUBLIC HANGINGS:

- "A Crime of the Countryside" ("Delitto di paese" 1965, after Brassens' "L'assassinat")
- "Geordie" (1966)
- "The Ballad of the Hanged Men" ("La ballata degli impiccati" 1968, after François Villon's "La ballade des pendus")
- "Recitative" ("Recitativo" 1968)
- "Poverty Street" ("Via della povertà" 1974, after Bob Dylan's "Desolation Row")

Allusion to public hangings, while strictly mentioning public torture:

- "Death" ("La morte", 1967), which takes it tune from Brassen's "King Louis's Orchard", which, in turn, takes its lyrics from Theodore de Banville's "Ballad of the Hanged Men" ("La ballade des pendus" from his 1866 play *Gringoire*), which tells of royal lands reserved for hangings

OTHER FORMS OF PUBLIC EXECUTION:

- "Via dolorosa" ("Via della croce", 1970)
- "Titus's Testament" ("Il Testamento di Tito", 1970)
- "Joan of Arc" ("Giovanna d'Arco" 1974, after Leonard Cohen's "Joan of Arc")

LEGAL JUDGES, IN DIRECT RELATION TO THE ACCUSED:

- "The Gorilla" ("Il gorilla" 1968, after Brassens' "Le gorille")
- "A Judge" ("Un giudice" 1971, after Edgar Lee Master's "Judge Selah Lively")
- "Dream Number Two" ("Sogno numero due", 1973)
- "Father's Song" ("Canzone del padre", 1973)

INCARCERATED MEN:

- "Miché's Ballad" ("Ballata del Miché", on his second single release in 1961), Miché is imprisoned but eventually hangs himself in his cell[9]
- "A Blaspheme" ("Un blasfemo" 1971, after Edgar Lee Master's "Wendell P. Bloyd"), the blaspheme is imprisoned then killed by guards
- "A Mad Man (Behind Every Idiot There's a Village)" ("Un matto (Dietro ogni sceme c'è un villaggio)" 1971, after Edgar Lee Master's "Frank Drummer")
- "A Doctor" ("Un medico" 1971, after Edgar Lee Master's "Doctor Siegfried Iseman")
- "My Hour of Freedom" ("La mia ora di libertà", 1973)
- "Don Raffae'" (1990)

As demonstrated in other chapters, the themes of corrupt justice and punishment of the powerless permeate De André's work for decades. He utilizes the figure of the hanged-man, specifically, to negotiate those same themes, as well as those of spectacle, normalization and discipline. Though the songs listed above span the length of 30 years, the majority of the songs this chapter will deal with come from Fabrizio De André's first four concept albums, published during five years near the beginning of his career: *We All Died Agonizingly* (*Tutti morimmo a stento,* 1968), *The Good News* (*La buona novella,* 1970), *Neither to Money, Nor to Love, Nor to Heaven* (*Non al denaro, non all'amore né al cielo,* 1971), and *Story of a White-Collar Worker* (*Storia di un impiegato,* 1973). In these albums De André follows a narrative of the cultural evolution of punishment that is seated, almost ironically, in the public execution that razed time to year 0 and inaugurated the current historical cycle of Western civilization. From faceless public executions in late-medieval France, to the most renowned public execution in the Western imagination, to the relationship between the judge, the law, and the imprisoned in early 20th century North America, and then to contemporary Italy and the same relationship there, De André investigates the old system of punishment and traces its transitions to the current system, and the causes and effects of those transitions.

The Implications of the Hanged Man

When Fabrizio De André appeared on the music scene, he was labeled by the media "The Minstrel in Microgroove" and "The 'Medieval' Singer-Songwriter."[10] The young musician admitted to being taken with the time period and said he preferred the medieval title "troubadour" to the modern "*cantautore,*"[11] citing Provençal troubadours like Jaufré Rudel and Rambaldo di Vaqueiras as some of his influences. It is well known that François Villon was an early inspiration in De André's work and that he borrowed from his own translations of Provençal ballads that he found in music shops in France for some of his early songs. Yet, De André's fixation with medieval poetry and lyric is not as clearcut as it initially appears. When he cites a poet like Villon as an influence, he often cites him together with *poètes maudits* like Charles Baudelaire and Authur Rimbaud.[12] Furthermore, at least some of this preference came down to him distilled through the French anarchist singer-songwriter and poet, Georges Brassens, whom he recognized as, if not influential, at least sympathetic to his

affinity for medieval ballads,"[13] and whose 1960 rework (via Banville) of Villon's "La ballade des pendus" perhaps had a hand in De André's own 1968 version, "Ballata degli impiccati." De André's so-called medieval styling, as defined by contemporary journalists and music critics—"ancient songs, as if sung by 13th-century minstrels"[14]—is, like his influences, far from strictly medieval. In 1968, when he sounded to critics like a 13th-century minstrel, he had just released *We All Die Agonizingly: Cantata in Si Minor for Solo, Chorus and Orchestra.* The concept album includes a series of movements, rather than discrete songs, and takes the form of the type of compositions for which Johann Sebastian Bach is famous. Indeed, as scholars have pointed out, De André's Middle Ages are quite long, beginning with Charles Martel in the 7th century in narrative, ending somewhere around the Baroque in arrangement, and colored throughout by his fascination with the 19th-century French poets and Brassens' 20th-century French folk.[15]

If musically, then, De André's influences hardly limit themselves to the medieval, it is perhaps his fondness of medieval social structures that has shined through and earned him a reputation as a medieval troubadour reborn. Indeed, he claims in 1967: "If I could conserve certain social advancements made during the following centuries, I would happily see a modern society set in the Middle Ages."[16] This indistinct statement can be clarified somewhat by other of the singer's preferences and beliefs. De André, for example, did not drive, abhorred flying, and claimed variously to want to live on a private island, and on top of a mountain with no telephones.[17] Therefore, it seems he intends with his statement a world with less technology, generally, fewer modes of fast communication and commute. He was non-religious, so his "conservation of certain social advancements," should include the 20th-century's relatively secular society, as well as social advancements for minority groups, for whom (indigenous people, women, transexuals, for example) he was an outspoken advocate throughout his career. But, if he sought less technology and the preservation of some social advancements, he could have easily chosen the 18th or 19th century. I propose, rather, that the Middle Ages specifically appealed to the part of Fabrizio De André that, throughout his life, desired a less-centralized society, one less controlled by cultural norms and a monopoly on violence, whether that violence was physical, economic or other.

As a youth, he moved out of his family home and in with the "seedy side of Genoa: thieves and prostitutes."[18] He loved a prostitute during this period and admits: "I was a coward and hypocrite: see, in this I have remained bourgeois. No, I would never have married her."[19] De André could not shake the effects of the social code on his social conscious. For, well-embedded societal restrictions, reenforced from birth, become elements of the individual self, create self-restraint imposed externally but experienced as a split of one's own desires. Throughout his career he makes this claim again and again, that he is "bourgeois" and, born into that social class, cannot, no matter his intentions, be anything else.[20] He laments his position within society, not as equal to the difficulty of the marginalized classes, but nonetheless as controlled by a mechanism within which one has to do as others dictate, rather than as one, himself, would choose.[21] "How can we free ourselves of this society?"[22], he asks, and imagines an answer in his early artistic creations, which often deal with contemporary matters indirectly, filtered through a decentralized historical setting. He recognizes medieval-feudal and early-merchant societies to be ones in which the organization of space, particularly in the metropolis, was much less clearly defined and thoroughly controlled, in which the comprehensive normalization of behavior, which De André vehemently criticizes across his career, was not yet complete. This "imposed emotional restraint upon subjects," as Norbert Elias points out in *The Civilizing Process*, which "outlaw[ed] the free expression of desires [began] first within courtly circles and then outside them,"[23] in a process that would take centuries to achieve. If a Western man today were to travel back to the medieval-feudal period, as Elias points out, he would note "the wilder, more unrestrained and adventurous life of the upper classes in this society," which could be considered alternatively barbaric and coarse as compared to the 20th century.[24]

In the Middle Ages, even the Late Middle Ages, when the merchant class was rising and gaining power, the necessary economic, technological, and intellectual developments had not yet taken place that would, across the next 400 years, work synergistically to create an environment that categorized and classified all types of human behavior, labeling only that which was 'useful', 'diligent,' and above all, 'disciplined', as 'proper' and therefore sanctioned by the State.[25] As the feudal system transitioned to increasingly centralized modern States, the monopoly on violence, necessary for

centralized control, began to play an even greater role in regulating behavior as nuanced institutions like asylums and prisons, allowed the State to increase control while appearing to lessen it. While the 19th century would see the bourgeoisie, the new middle class, add to courtly social requirement (*court*esy), and begin to formalize its own demand for propriety and decency, in the name of Enlightenment and bourgeois discipline and achievement, 'Civilization,' that is, decency and propriety generally conceived of and enforced within the modern Western State, was far from simply arrived at individually by each civilized individual—though important philosophical attempts are made to devise models that will produce the moral/ethical/civilized individual.[26] It would rely on this monopoly on violence, as defined by Jean Bodin's 1576 *Les Six livres de la République* and Thomas Hobbes' 1651 *Leviathan,* which acts as the central notion of modern public law. As Max Weber points out in his 1919 *Politics as a Vocation,* it requires an exclusive and legitimate right to force and retribution within a social organization. Therefore, the knight eventually turns the power of his sword over to the judges of the courts and becomes, in turn, a bureaucratic functionary of those, first noble then civil, courts. Then, further powers are turned over to the courts, which begin to gain a monopoly on control of behavior that extends far past that of physical violence.

De André investigates the connection between control, discipline, and behavioral normalization and uses the scaffold as a platform to scrutinize the inner working of contemporary structures of societal control and, in turn, to demythify the aggrandizing self-promotion of the West's relentless civilizing. The scaffold and the figure of the hanged man are particularly useful because (1) they reveal imbalances of control and punishment that are more effectively hidden by the modern penal system; (2) they mirror the hanged-man who has not been overcome, whose existence, indeed, is proliferate in the civilized world: the self-condemning addict and suicide; (3) the scaffold is literally a stage, a traditional space of savage competition, raised up, object of the multitudinous gaze, upon which the social/political 'other' speaks, sometimes as a symbol of the king's or State's power, and sometimes as a symbol of his own subversive power, so much greater than the modern staged subversive's; (4) finally, they remind the listener of the power of the executed man to incite revolution as a martyr, the power of *witnessing*, and the comparative impotence of the figure of the incarcerated

man across history and today. It is important to keep in mind as we begin that De André does not propose public execution, or execution in general, as a preferable form of punishment, or romanticize it in any way,[27] rather, he uses it as a comparative tool to neutralize the conventional rhetoric around Western (his songs specifically deal with Italy, France, England and the United States) civilization.

The Scaffold and the Institution: Clarity of Judgment

In De André's early career, he transitions from songs that testify to public executions, to songs that scrutinize the judicial process and detention. From the first camp are songs like "Geordie," "A Crime of the Countryside," "The Ballad of the Hanged Men," and "Titus's Testament," (1966-1970), while in the second are "A Judge," "A Mad Man," "A Blaspheme," "Dream Number Two," and "My Hour of Freedom" (1971-1973), with "Recitative" (1968) that deals in an intermediary space between the public hangings of the past and judges of the present. In three phases, he expresses the shift from an execution to an internment-based penal system. Phase one details the stark justice or injustice of pre-modern law, as it is directly, swiftly, and publicly expressed by the hand of the executioner in the name of the king/empire. Phase two portrays an increased ambiguity of justice in the modern world: the almighty will of the king is converted into a supposedly objective judicial process, and death as retribution for crime is converted into a variety of internments for a variety of threatening and non-threatening actions. Finally, phase three reflects on the contemporary landscape in which behavioral controls that support the power structure have become so effective that people lose sight of injustice, while surveillance and confinement have become so pervasive that spaces of freedom and internment become indistinct and reverse.

In "Geordie," there are a number of differences made between Child ballad 209 from the c16th-century folk ballad and De André's translation; these changes throw into sharp relief the translator's intentions. In the English version of the Child ballad, for example, Geordie is of the "king's royal breed" and so "will be hanged in a golden chain" because "he stole sixteen of the king's royal deer / and sold them." His wife rushes to the London court, she swears her husband has never stolen and says she will give up all three of her children to save him. In response, "the judge looked over his left shoulder / he said fair maid I'm sorry / he said fair maid you must be gone / for I cannot

pardon Geordie." In De André's version Geordie will be hung from a golden cord, but he is not given the status of a noble birth, De André gives instead an age to Geordie, "he isn't 20 years old yet," and when his wife comes to save him, she does not offer her children in exchange, but simply insists that he is innocent.[28] In response, she hears: "Neither the hearts of the English, nor the scepter of the king / will be able to save Geordie, / even if they all cry with you / the law cannot change."[29] The changes lend less ambiguity to the song than the original, Geordie is young and poor and sells deer reserved for the king for money, which one can presume he needs to eat and feed his loved ones. The maid who loves him, as well, is ethically unambiguous, no longer offering any bribe in return for his life. Indeed, her pathetic humility, which displays the ignorance of the powerless, is emphasized as she pleads only for one more winter with him before he is hanged, and as she remembers in resigned optimism at his relative luck: "they will hang him on a golden cord / it is a rare privilege."

The most significant change, however, is in the disappearance of the judge. De André, who will become fixated with the figure of the judge, erases his presence and power from this ballad. The judge's "I cannot pardon Geordie," becomes an anonymous "the law cannot change," not even the king and all of England can pardon Geordie. Though historically inaccurate, as condemned men awaited the king's pardon from their time in jail all the way through their walk up the scaffold, the law takes on an objective universality that will be lost when the judge reappears later in De André's work. In this distant past, in this foreign land, the law pretends, like the Ten Commandments, to supersede the king, to derive from the seat of the king's own terrestrial power, from God himself. The claim is thus clear and unambiguous, not man who judges man, but god who judges man, and it requires no justification by the powers that wield it. This clarity of pretension, that civil law descends from divine law, only makes the injustice of Geordie's affair clearer to the modern, more secular and democratic listener. The ancient law of retaliation, "an eye for an eye," does not apply in crimes against the monarch, as it has seldom applied across history to crimes against one's social superior or inferior. Certainly the Christian mandate to turn the other cheek—though the king's law descends from a Christian god—does not apply. The social hierarchy is clear and the law is unalterable, divine, even in its injustice. Geordie's wife does not question the law, she only pleads for his life. Geordie himself is

not heard in the song, but perhaps, if we had heard his last words, they would have much like Titus's, who, like Geordie, is a common thief and pays with his life.

Titus, from De André's 1970 "Titus's Testament," is the Penitent or Good Thief who, in the Gospel of Luke, asks to be remembered by Jesus in the Kingdom of Heaven. The thief dies namelessly next to Jesus in the New Testament (as Pisanello's hanged men in the church of Sant'Anastasia), but in the non-canonical Arabic First Infancy Gospel, he is given the name of Titus. De André's Titus underlines the power dynamic that organizes the terrestrial interpretation of the divine 5th commandment, "Thou shalt not steal." He says, "The fifth says you mustn't steal / and perhaps I respected that one / by silently emptying the brimming pockets / of those who had stolen: / but I, lawless, stole in my own name / those others stole in the name of God."[30] A more detailed reading of this, one of the most significant songs of De André's career, can be found in the chapter that deals with *The Good News* album. That which is important here is specifically the form of crime and its punishment. Titus and Geordie steal from the rich and pay with their lives, yet Titus points out that the rich steal from others, and worse yet, they justify and validate it in God's name. Titus does not specify his crime, but De André's thieves, generally, are bread thieves.[31] They steal to survive, they steal the most basic metaphor for life itself: the manna of Exodus, the sustenance given, shared, and promised by Jesus throughout his life, remembered in the most fundamental prayers and teachings of the Christian Church, "Give us this day our daily bread," and in the sacrament of the eucharist during which it becomes a consumption of the Lord himself. Titus's death is particularly effective in underlining the fundamental injustice of future Western systems of justice that closely resemble the Roman form. For, Titus dies next to the very man, the god, who resets times, whose execution becomes a symbol for a new Christian morality that is founded in a loving and compassionate god. This new morality undergirds the process of Western civilization, yet the prosecution of bread thieves goes on essentially unaltered in De André's historical summary. Titus's execution lends then, a shadow significance to the primary significance of the symbol of the cross. If Jesus's cross is an exceptional gallows, one that according to Paul the Apostle "disarmed the powers and authorities," and "made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross,"[32] then

Titus's cross is the unexceptional gallows, the unremembered, the disregarded, the gallows of the unjust death of a man who is not god, but man alone. If Jesus's cross is change, Titus's is consistency.

Historically, and in De André's oeuvre, the gallows is reserved for common men, like those who die, namelessly and gruesomely, in his version of François Villon's "The Ballad of the Hanged Men." In the song, the crimes go unnamed like the men, the condemned reveal only their brevity: "Before it was over / we reminded those still living / that the price was our lives / for the damage done in an hour."[33] Nor does Villon's own version disclose the offenses of the five or six men that we, the reader cum spectator, "see" hanged.[34] Yet, something can be established from Villon's own life. He was first banished from Paris in 1455 after a skirmish and duel during which Villon wounded a man mortally. That man, Phillippe Chermoye, apparently drew the first blood and forgave Villon on his deathbed, which led eventually to a royal pardon. The poet, however, was banished again and then sentenced to death by hanging for robbery. The death sentence was commuted to banishment, but it is believed that he wrote his "Ballade des pendus" while awaiting the gallows in prison. Villon wrote much of the rest of his poetry in exile, reversing courtly values and holding up, rather, the society's lowlives. He defended the thieves who awaited the gallows, while another banished medieval poet, Dante Alighieri, conversely argues from exile, in his *Divina commedia,* for a harsher punishment for fraudulent crimes than for violent ones. The Florentine's reasons are at least trifold. For one, and most simply, the sin of fraud fits the body analogy of the Inferno, where *Malebolge* correspond to the stomach. Truth is nourishment of the soul, while fraud is a poison. Secondly, Dante wants to emphasize the distinction between fiction and fraud, as he does with Geryon, the negative image of Dante, one is truth with the face of deception and the other deception with the face of truth. He seeks, furthermore, to separate himself from the fraudulent and false prophets and counselors he overcomes, and therein more empathically claim the ultimate truth of his poem as it recognizes the danger in and sin of falsely seeking and claiming unsanctioned knowledge.

Finally, and most importantly here, is Dante Alighieri's personal experience as it shaped his cosmos. The fraudulent thieves are placed in the 7th bolgia of the 8th circle of the Inferno. Fraudulent counterfeiters are found even deeper, in the final *bolgia* before the inner circle of treachery that skirts

Lucifer. Dante's placement of the counterfeiters reveals simultaneously the pride and preoccupation he feels for the highly advanced, yet highly unstable, trading capital of the Republic of Florence. The Republic's gold florin was, during Dante's life, the dominant trading currency in Western Europe. Medieval writers saw money as the blood of the body politic, and Dante, who more than perhaps anything else (save salvation) desired the end of civil strife in his hometown of Florence, recognized in currency the potential for destabilizing society. Dante saw during his lifetime that when the Sienese banking family, the Bonsignoris, collapsed in 1298, a number of rival families sprang up in Florence and added to the political friction between the Guelfs and Ghibellines. Therefore, he surmised wisely, that in counterfeiting currency, one is not only fraudulent, not only avaricious, one poisons the lifeblood of the political body and threatens the ruin of the very currency economy that supported the strength of the city. Dante shows prescience in his concern for counterfeiting and the power of currency to stabilize the city-state, for it would be Giovanni de' Medici's foundation of his bank in 1397 that would allow his son Cosimo to inaugurate the Italian Renaissance 40 years later while acting as Florence's de facto ruler and patron. During his rule, as is a trait of the increasingly centralized state, war transitioned from the internal to the external, and citizens within the borders were guaranteed relative peace. Cosimo's stabilized and controlled Florence is the Florence depicted by Pisanello's hanged men, who are a symbol of State power and a warning that sought to maintain peace by discouraging challenges to power.

Dante Alighieri formed part of the noble ruling class, a White Guelph and supporter of papal power, who was exiled from Florence during one of the many sudden reversals of power in the city; he stood to gain greatly from a stable, centralized, trade-based State. François Villon, on the other hand, was of poor birth, and lived to witness the end of the Hundred Years' War, which installed the Kingdom of France and the *Ancien Régime,* after a period of political instability much like Florence's. The end of the Hundred Years' War marked the beginning of the transition that would eliminate the last traces of medieval feudalism and the appearance of the centralized state under an absolute monarch. This transition was accompanied by a shift from a largely barter to a currency-based economy, a greater differentiation of labor, a rising bourgeois class that began to meld and clash with

the noble class, and a march in the direction of what came to known in the 1700s as 'civilization.' Villon was an early opponent of the stable, centralized state that Dante sought in Florence. Though he was well-educated, in a position, perhaps, to join the rising bourgeois ranks, in Villon's 2000 verses of *Le testament,* he demonstrates a rancor for the commercial world and the nascent bourgeoisie that is gaining power that rivals noble power. Villon rejects the new structure and chooses, instead, the class of those who were powerless in the feudal system and who remain powerless in the early modern state, some of whom are De André's same disempowered personalities: drug addicts, prostitutes and criminals.[35]

Part of the evolution from the barbaric to the civilized, from the pre-modern to the modern State, from the medieval-federated to the centralized governing system, as argued by numerous historians and cultural philosophers, has been an increasingly effective power monopoly in the nuancing of the penal system to include elaborate legal judicial processes and non-physical punishment in various forms of internment. The causes and effects of that evolution have been argued across the 20th century. Vic Gatrell in his 1994 *The Hanging Tree* argues that the end of public executions in the Western world marks perhaps not the most obvious way of defining modern times, but certainly one way. As it defines, in a large sense, modern man.[36] While the end of public executions was at first seen as increased humaneness on a massive scale, he argues that it more precisely marks, specifically in England, an increased squeamishness among the Victorian bourgeoisie and thus is an element of not a humanizing moment, but a civilizing one, that was possible as far as it was encouraged by increased theft and reduced violent crime (hallmark of the State's monopoly on violence), and conceivable only because of improvements in the efficiency of the police and the character of legislation which accomplished more efficiently what the terror of public executions had accomplished only partially.[37]

Michel Foucault more famously points out in his 1975 *Discipline and Punish* nearly the same for France. He sees in the modern penal system "a tendency towards a more finely tuned justice, towards a closer penal mapping of the social body" led by reformers who "wanted to regularize the excesses and weaknesses of punishment, they wanted it more regular, more effective, more constant,

more detailed in its effect."[38] They sought, not only to better punish the fraudulent whose death sentences were frequently remitted, but they sought, furthermore, to normalize behavior by normalizing punishment and "lowering the threshold of tolerance to penalty."[39] No longer was an act simply established and punished, but the judgment of the person, rather than the act, became customary. "Therefore it is, more than ever before, a subscribing of individuals to various casts outside the normal: the perverse, the psychotic, the impulsive, the ignorant."[40] This, too, is part of the process of civilization as Norbert Elias describes in his fascinating work of historical psychology, the 1939 *The Civilizing Process*:

> "The circle of precepts and regulations is drawn so tightly about people, the censorship and pressure of social life forming their habits are so strong, that young people have only two alternatives: to submit to the behavior demanded by society, or to be excluded from life in 'decent society'. A child that does not attain the level of control of emotions demanded by society is regarded in varying gradations as 'ill,' 'abnormal', 'criminal' or just 'impossible' from the point of a view of a particular caste or class, and is accordingly excluded from the life of that class."[41]

Thus, as society civilizes, it begins to invest certain behaviors with a morality that does not naturally belong to them. Vagabondage (as commons disappear) and madness (as self-restraint gains importance) are punished, for example, and politeness or propriety becomes increasingly and inextricably knitted with a yarn of virtue. *Policé* and *civilisé* were both terms used by courtly people in France to designate the quality of their behavior; it is perhaps not surprising that 'police' (in both English in French) came to refer to the enforced administration of public order or conduct, while *civilisé* became by 1704, in English, 'civilization' or the "act of making a criminal process civil."[42] The latter term was first used in French as a buzzword of European ideology in 1757, by Victor de Riqueti marquis de Mirabeau, to reference "a group of people who were polished, refined, and mannered, as well as virtuous in their social existence"[43]

In this civilizing process, which includes (and is partially defined by) the evolution of the criminal justice system, judges come to personify the justness of the law itself as well as the moral superiority that lends them the authority to act as its arbiter. They represent, as Foucault says, "a justice that is supposed to be 'equal', a legal machinery that is supposed to be 'autonomous,'"[44] and as Elias Canetti argues in *Crowds and Power*, the judge "invariably reckons himself among the good; his

chief claim to his office is his unshakeable allegiance to the kingdom of good, as though he had been born a native of it. His decision is binding. The things he judges are quite definite and factual; his vast knowledge of good and bad derives from long practical experience."[45] Yet, the system, for all its claims to autonomy and the objectivity of a judge whose decisions come from practical knowledge and long exercise of his neutrality, is not so much a system that punishes more justly as it is one that punishes more subtly, more convincingly, and more comprehensively. It naturalizes judgment to a point that citizens accept it far beyond its legal limit, and as all are constantly judged, all become constant judges themselves. Thus the modern penal system, and indeed society writ large, more effectively hide imbalances in control than the pre-modern system by lowering people's threshold for penalty, by largely broadening the terms that define unacceptable behavior, and by investing in judges the capacity, not only to judge actions, but to judge men, with the authority invested them by the State.

As De André transitions from tales of pre-modern to modern punishment, he, even before Foucault, details a penal process that reveals a larger process of social control and false humaneness. At the end of his 1968 *We All Died Agonizingly,* which marks the last of his gallows tales—he will only mention one more in passing, in his 1974 translation of Dylan's "Desolation Row"—he speaks in the collective voice of the hanged men: "we are the abandoned human flock / who died with the knot at our throats."[46] He directs his discourse to two groups of men: "Bankers, delicatessen owners, notaries … elected judges, men of law."[47] This "Recitative" will be dealt with in more detail in the sections dealing with addiction and dying men's last words, but here it is fruitful to unpack a few verses. De André recognizes that there are two classes of men who judge, the bourgeois class, and the class of elected officials. The two create and support each other, that which was the *policé* of the French courts becomes the civil administration of the State courts. These groups are "senza fallo," which could be interpreted alternatively as "faultless" or "cowardly, lacking virility." They are the demigods of society, he says, who live in silver castles and have touched the apogee in glory. But they are also obese men whose "hearts are in the form of piggy banks" and to whom "compassion isn't always convenient."[48] In De André's ambivalent definition of these powerful men, there is an incisive criticism of their right to control the civil justice system as well as their reasons for wielding that

power as they do. "Men to whom compassion is not always convenient" De André asks, "How many innocent men to horrific agony have you voted / deciding for them their fates?"[49] These elected officials decide the fates of Villon's hanged men, but also the fates of the drug addicts, the contemporary antiheroes who complement the medieval criminals of the concept-album.[50] Already their claim to judgment is flimsy: their claim to innocence ("senza fallo"), their claim to objectivity ("pietà non convien sempre) is called into question. Then, in 1971's *Neither to Money, Nor to Love, Nor to Heaven,* De André tells a judge's story, destroying any lingering credibility through the judge's own admissions and tales of incarcerated men that surround him.

The transition in *Neither to Money* is important because the judge is, for the first time, clearly the modern sort who has arrived as his position through study and practice, and therefore claims greater objectivity within a larger criminal justice system that aims to raise public confidence in its fairness. The condemned men who surround him are neither violent criminals nor thieves; they demonstrate the lasting ambiguity, and new extension, of law: one is mad, one is falsely accused, one is complicated. After the introductory song on the concept album, which sets the scene in a midwestern US town's cemetery, around 1915, the date of the publication of Edgar Lee Master's *Spoon River Anthology*. Three songs follow the introduction: "A Mad Man," "A Judge," "A Blaspheme," and "A Doctor." In these songs we see De André's sense that the judicial system is no more just than the premodern, pre-civilized system, but that it punishes more, it punishes more obscurely, and it is not "civilized" (See: enlightened, humanized, improved, civil) when it is not convenient.

The quality of the Mad Man's condition is placed into doubt from the outset, from the title of the song itself, which in the English version is "Frank Drummer," while De André titles it "A Mad Man (Behind Every Idiot There's a Village)." What exactly is defective, abnormal, unacceptable, about this man who declares in his first words: "You [listener] try to have a world in your heart / that you can't manage to describe in words"[51]? This man who, in an attempt to find the correct words, begins memorizing the encyclopedia, but who, upon arriving at *matto,* "crazy", upon reading society's assessment of him, gives up his quest and turned himself in to the insane asylum. De André does not give us a definition of *matto*, but he precedes it with other entries in the encyclopedia "dopo maiale,

Majakowsky, malfatto" (after pig, Mayakovsky, deformed). This gives the sense of one who is uncivilized, who refuses, politically and creatively, to conform, and who, therefore, is considered somehow wrong, maladjusted, unfit. Foucault points out that, while the village idiot has seldom been historically included into society, it is not until the 17th century and the Age of Reason, in what Foucault calls "the Great Confinement," that so-called idiots (along with prostitutes, vagrants, and blasphemers) are excluded from society across Europe and confined in new types of institutions.[52] Furthermore, that which is considered 'madness' or cause for institutionalization[53] greatly increases as the civilizing process in society further constricts an individual's right to express emotion or act on natural impulses. Foucault claims that 10% of Parisians were confined in the 17th century.[54] Norbert Elias argues that the controlling agencies of society at large which it is expected are reproduced within the individual, not only repress natural emotion and impulse, but create further complications in individuals who struggle to repress those drives. "Compulsive actions and other symptoms of disturbance … uncontrollable and eccentric attachments and repulsions … apparently groundless inner unrest shows how many drive energies are damned up in a form that permits no real satisfaction."[55] The unacceptable impulses or desires of the mad man in society are no less unacceptable than the judge's own impulses in the following song. Indeed, the mad man is perhaps more clearly, if harmlessly, psychotic, while the judge proves himself more sociopathic, and indeed more harmful to others. The judge, however, follows the rules of society and waits to act on his impulses until he has arrived at a social and civil position in which acting upon those desires are sanctioned.

Masters', and in turn De André's, judge is another member of society who is seen as deformed, abnormal, and whose virtue and decency has been assumed abnormal as well by town gossips who say "that a dwarf / is a lowlife for sure / because his heart is too / much too close to his ass."[56] So the dwarf, sustained for years on hatred, reveals a plan to become a lawyer and then, as God from the cathedral, so too the judge from the tribunal's "cathedra" or pulpit, the dwarf became "finally a judge, / arbiter on earth of good and bad."[57] From that position the judge took revenge and demonstrated God's inscrutable mind, God's unknown stature, by acting as a god, inscrutable in

judgment himself, and sending, with great piety and pleasure, to the executioner all those who said to him "Your Honor."[58] This judge, who scaled the ranks from lawyer to judge through regular church attendance,[59] could easily be the same who in "A Blaspheme," finessed the law to fit his own personal moral sense and, as the blaspheme testifies, "They first charged me with disorderly conduct, / There being no statute on blasphemy. / Later they locked me up as insane / Where I was beaten to death by a Catholic guard."[60] In this testimony, it is clear that some modern changes to law have included a greater tolerance; the man who is accused of blasphemy should, in the 20th century, be able to accuse his accuser of bigotry, in turn. Neither the one nor the other should be actionable attitudes in civil court, yet, the men in positions of power, the judges and guards, can take actions of their own. These actions are protected, for they are obscured from the view of the masses, the system hides what may be violent in carceral punishment and what is, indeed, arbitrary in much disciplinary action, and thus, as Foucault argues, the judicial and internment branches work together at "attenuating the effects of revolt that they may both arouse."[61] There is no revolt against the death of the blaspheme. There is no revolt against the incarceration of the doctor who, in "A Doctor," after years of treating the poor, is starved into submission by the system and imprisoned by "a judge with the face of the system;" the doctor, the character most similar to De André's traditional bread thief, is stamped forever as a swindler and a crook for selling an eternal youth elixir in order to feed his family.[62]

There is a revolt 50 years later, however, remembered in *Story of a White-Collar Worker,* as "our May" and "Spring," referring to the student revolts in France in May 1968 and the so-called Prague Spring of the same year. In Italy, De André sees laborers strike and students arrested by forces of social control that set up barricades to curb demonstrations, that injure and massacre protesters on the sidewalks.[63] He sees it as a revolution, not just against the government and police, but against individuals and near-entire social classes that do not take part in or support the social unrest; those who "believe television's truths" and who think nothing will change because they "have voted for security and discipline."[64] The revolution reminds all those watching that individuals are only secure as long as they follow the intricate rules of society that guarantee social order at the individual level and small scale, but that work to guarantee it, that is, guarantee distributions of power and wealth, at

the mass level and large scale. As long as individuals are docile, remain in their allotted space, behave as they are told, the social order is maintained, but when students or workers demand answers, changes, reform, the violence of the system, the old violence of the scaffold, now hidden so effectively, reveals itself. As De André's "My Hour of Freedom" puts it at the end of the album: "Certainly you have to come a long way / moving down the road by an obedient gymnastics / before a much more human gesture / gives you a sense of the violence."[65] That human gesture is student and worker protests, while the violence is the police force that so quickly became violent in response to protests. In the dream trial sequence of "Dream Number Two," the anarchist antihero of the album is reminded that only the powerful can overturn power: "Listen, / once a judge like me / judged he who had written the law: / first they changed the judge / and right after / the law."[66] The anarchist's own violent act will only strengthen those powers as it will create fear in the stable social classes and allow those who control the monopoly on violence to increase control in the name of social defense and wellbeing. The judge tells the anarchist: "When you killed / favoring power / the lifetime associates of power / gathered downhill / in defense / of their own celebration."[67]

Giorgio Agamben calls this a "state of exception" that gives government or ruling officials authority beyond the law during moments of crisis and often extending beyond the crisis moment itself to become a regularized extension of oppressive control. During these moments, the production/dissemination of knowledge is controlled as well, limited voices have the *auctoritas* of truth as media outlets are censored beyond usual measure and opposing voices undermined or silenced. The Jacobin force that Antonio Gramsci referred to in his "Voluntarism and Social Masses," which enacts the coercion necessary to move great masses to action and force the national-popular collective will to emerge, is cut down at the knees by what some theorists now call the post-hegemonic State. That is, a State in which enforced constriction of social behavior and confinement of social activity to disciplinary institutions (be they schools, universities, prisons, asylums), which produce as Foucault says, "subjected and practiced bodies, 'docile' bodies,"[68] aid the State in controlling the flow of information and the congregation of uncontrollable bodies. Importantly lacking in the State thus defined, is the crisis of authority that Gramsci saw as crucial to the

emergence of the national-popular collective will as culturally hegemonic.

The concept of posthegemony, as it aligns with post-Foucauldian theorists like Agamben, is most obvious in these states of exception, which, as Nicholas Thoburn points out, recast "the relationship between law and politico-military and economic crises and interventions."[69] The organization of society is such that censored information, unsanctioned knowledge, passes only through the disciplinary institutions that are themselves unsanctioned. Indeed, De André's anarchist antihero realizes only in prison that "they have taught us to marvel / at those who steal bread" but that it is a human right, and that bread not given must be taken, one must protest a law so unjust. "Now," the anarchist says, "we know that it is a crime / not to steal when one is hungry."[70] He reminds us that his bomb revealed his desire for power over others and thus was an unjust act, but he reminds us as well that those in seats of power perform similar acts and worse, but without being seen, unlike regular citizens, who, as the judge says to the anarchist, are surveilled from birth.[71]

Those in positions of power are above the eyes of the law. They are literally in the position to see without being seen, to judge without being judged. Power, in De André's oeuvre, looks down from various panopticons: in the "Recitative" it is in the "apogee" of silver castles; in "Dream Number Two" the power is above the judge, who is in turn above the defendant "at the tribunal pulpit,"[72] and who says "above me, / for that which you have done / … the powers are grateful;"[73] and in the 1996 "Khorakhane" the powers judge bread thieves from "the point of view of God."[74] Power surveils but is, itself, hidden from the community, as is the modern condemned man, for the State fears his last words and the potential *auctoritas* his voice has gained through his actions and his sacrifice. De André calls to the public, as the anarchist's tale ends, he redirects the center of the community to the prison's walls, as the scaffold was once positioned. "Now come to the prison" he says, "listen at the doors / to our final song."[75] He calls the audience at the modern concert, at the stage that replaces the scaffold, back to the scaffold and its historical role as a space for subversive flows of information. With the power of the scaffold's last words behind his voice, a power that will be discussed later on, De André not only remembers those who were hanged unjustly, but he reminds the audience that hangings have not been truly abolished by civilization, but that they have been, rather, hidden, and in more ways

than one.

The Hanged Man and the Hanged Man: Suicide and Addiction

Fabrizio De André, from the very beginning of his career, conflates the role of the publicly executed man of the past with that of the drug addicted and suicidal man of his present. In this conflation, he reveals an understanding of the ways in which the increasingly civilized world puts constraints on the emotional liberty of the modern individual, which can have various effects on adult individuals who come to be considered maladjusted to the demands of modern civil society. As Norbert Elias argues, the civilized man "becomes less dangerous, but also less emotional or pleasurable, at least as far as the direct release of pleasure is concerned."[76] We see in De André's 1961 "Miché's Ballad," a man maladjusted to the State's monopoly on violence, who cannot bridle his emotions of hatred or love. In 1968's *We All Died Agonizingly,* the drug addict of "The Addict's Canticle" and the hanged men of "The Ballad of the Hanged Men," share the role of antiheroes shamed and punished by society. In 1976's "Wolf Tail," an entire generation of young people, first revolt, and then escape into heroin, demonstrating a desire to fight for something more and when that fight is ultimately refused to them, an attempt to escape to something more, psychologically, emotionally, and sometimes permanently. Finally, in his song dedicated to Luigi Tenco, whose suicide was committed at the Sanremo Festival, we see that De André connects the civilizing process, not only to increased numbers of suicides and increased drug use, but that he connects it to the ferocity of competition and the public's revelry in the spectacle of Sanremo itself, which becomes a substitutional site for the loss of violence in the individual's life, as well as for the loss of the sacred communal sacrifice.

In "Miché's Ballad," a man is sentenced to 20 years in prison because he killed a man who wanted to steal his love, Marí. Rather than passing those years without Marí, Miché hangs himself, is buried without ceremony or tombstone in a potter's field, until an unknown person comes to place a cross with his name and the date above the *fosse commune,* or mass grave. The song reveals some of the most basic effects of constricting the individual, whether that constriction is emotional or bodily, and

it deals in some of the earliest constrictions placed on the civilizing man. Miché's tale is ambiguous in its historical setting,[77] there are no technological clues, the only weapons are a cord and a nail, while the motive is as old as time itself: Miché's was a crime of passion. Indeed, his final resting place, the potter's field, reminds of the original potter's field and the original suicide, that which was bought with the silver returned to the Jewish priests by Judas before he hanged himself.[78] Miché's story could be that of a feudal knight—during one of the earliest stages of what is contemporarily considered the process of civilization—who is being forced, during the earliest periods of post-feudal centralization, to give up the judicial autonomy that had long been his. By around 1475, as Norbert Elias points out, "The leading nobles have to forgo more and more frequently the relatively unbridled life at their ancestral sets, and are bound increasingly tightly to the semi-urban court and to dependence on king or princes."[79] But it could also be the tale of a passionate youth from 20th-century Italy. The listener's only clue that the story is relatively contemporary, is that Miché, for his crime, receives 20 years rather than death at the gallows.

Miché's story takes on a further ambiguity by his own simplicity of character and action. Another man threatens to take Miché's Marí, and Miché is unable or unwilling to contain his emotional response and takes justice into his own hands. When he is punished, in turn, for his violence, he once again cannot support his bodily containment, which implies another sort of emotional containment, that of his love for Marí, and so he turns to violence again as the only way, in the face of a centralized judicial monopoly, to determine his own destiny and gain liberty:

"io so che Miché	*"I know that Miché*
ha voluto morire perché	*wanted to die so that*
ti restasse il ricordo del bene profondo	*you would remember the profound love*
che aveva per te	*that he had for you.*
se pure Miché	*Even if Miché*
non ti ha scritto spiegando perché	*didn't write to you explain why*
se n'è andato dal mondo tu sai che l'ha fatto	*he was leaving this world you know that he did it*
soltanto per te	*only for you.*
vent'anni gli avevano dato	*Twenty years they had given him*
la corte decise così	*the court decided it was so*
perché un giorno aveva ammazzato	*because one day he murdered*
chi voleva rubargli Marì	*the man who wanted to steal his Marì*
l'avevan perciò condannato	*They had therefore condemned him*
vent'anni in prigione a marcir	*twenty years in prison to rot*
però adesso che lui s'è impiccato	*but now that he has hanged himself*
la porta gli devono aprir."	*they have to open his doors."*

Miché demonstrates so simply his incapacity to accept the terms of civilized society. He is prohibited by society from expressing the fullness of his emotion, in this case clearly because it is violent against another individual. He is punished in an effort to curb and cure his inability to behave as society demands, and in an effort to rehabilitate him. However, in his punishment, even more personal autonomy, indeed his physical liberty is taken, and his autonomy of action remains literally, only upon his own body. Unable to manage his imprisonment, unable to manage the shame of his action—"he left knowing that he could never / tell you that he had killed, / because he loved you"[80]—he found the only freedom left to him: death. His murder and suicide is the simplest example in De André of the individual who cannot learn to repress certain natural impulses that arise in, and are disciplined since, childhood. Miché is an example of an inability to repress his emotions, to curb either his anger or his love.

Alternatively, there are the characters who are unable to find a reason to live once they have learned to curb their emotions, or who are unable to manage the shame that is used as a tool to inhibit behavior in children and that can be internalized and magnified in the 'maladjusted' adult. The shame of certain impulses mixes with the shame in adulthood that individuals can be made to feel for not meeting cultural standards of discipline. Discipline that leads, through various sorts of hard work, to that signifier of success and civic stewardship in the Western civilized world: relative wealth. That shame can overpower its positive counterpart, pride, while, in turn, emotional responses around future-appraisal turn negatively from hope to fear, especially in the face of negative social emotional responses that are latently buttressed by the drive for wealth. Avarice, greed and even cruelty, overwhelm generosity and sympathy. Norbert Elias describes the increased threshold for shame as a counterpart development to the increased threshold for repugnance that accompanies civilization. That increased repugnance is argued by historians as a leading motive for the demise of public executions. John Stuart Mill, one of the most influential 19th century philosophers, speaks of the relationship between repugnance and civilization, saying in his essay, "Civilization," that:

> "the spectacle and even the very idea of pain is kept more and more out of sight of those classes who enjoy to their fulness the benefits of civilization," and that is due to the "perfection of mechanical arrangements impracticable in any but a high state of

> civilization… All those necessary portions of the business of society which oblige any person to be the immediate agent or ocular witness of the infliction of pain, are delegated by common consent to peculiar and narrow classes: to the judge, the soldier, the surgeon, the butcher, and the executioner."[81]

His view is poignant here as Mill spent his career investigating limits of authority and liberty, arguing for a greatly limiting State authority over the individual but basing that in the promise of civilization itself. He believed that man, once civilized, would control himself and that control would benefit the individual as well as society absolutely. As we have seen here and will continue to see, the notion of civilization is problematic when proposed as an objective good, when for example, Mill proposes when he refers to British imperialism in India and China as a sort of benevolent despotism that will put savages in those countries on the road to useful progress. Mill's civilization is, in many ways, another form of State authority that is couched in non-penal but highly controlling and disciplinary state institutions. Mill, indeed, was a proponent of Jeremy Bentham's (architect of the panopticon) utilitarian theory of normative ethics, and thus while Mill proposed a state authority with limited power, he intended a societal authority with great power to discipline and create useful, and in turn moral, citizens.

Norbert Elias argues that the repugnance experienced increasingly by Mill's refined class, is accompanied by increased shame which is used as a tool to, in part, assure that repugnance. From the medieval books on etiquette written to deter young men from wiping their noses on their collars, books that display an external force on the constriction of behavior, the civilized world increasingly encourages internalized constrictions. The constrictions become greater, the self-restraint demanded increases, and no longer is the shame associated only with improper etiquette, but with the accidentally allowance of any number of impulses. Elias's historical psychological evaluation of the effects of civilization on the modern individual suggest that, as he says, "an advance of the threshold of shame and repugnance that becomes more and more perceptible in the make-up of Western men," reveals a "conflict expressed in shame-fear [that] is not merely a conflict of the individual with prevalent social opinion; the individual's behavior has brought him into conflict with the part of himself that represents this social opinion."[82] While the 19th century saw the the birth of the individual and his liberation from the monarchy and noble class, while that century fought to hide

away and eventually abolish the scaffold, to liberate the criminal from death, in favor of increased internment in an attempt to rehabilitate him, that same civilizing process created an individual who was more constrained than ever. Mill explicitly argued for State authority *only over violence* against another (civilized) individual. Yet, in reality, State institutions, in concert with the noble and bourgeois classes' sense of properness, and in the name of progress, created an authoritative society that comprehensively judged and pros/persecuted behavior, beginning in schools, where children learned to be good, just, responsible, civilized citizens.

As investigated in the last section, a crucial defect in the penal element of the system begins with laws that are meant to keep order—an order that implies class-order—, and it extends to the breaking of laws themselves, which is tolerated by those who are in the position to hide their actions through social or monetary influence. The process of civilization, however, in its singular vision of 'good' and 'useful' citizenship, hangs as many men as are saved from incarceration or the scaffold, when socially-constructed shame and fear overwhelm opportunities for pride and hope. De André cites shame and fear across his career as motivating emotions, as much as hatred, and more perhaps than love. His sense that shame is a social construct, and one that in the West is tied to the socioeconomic structure, is underlined by notes he took while reading Henry David Thoreau's "Civil Disobedience." In it, Thoreau writes "Confucius said: 'If a state is governed by the principles of reason, poverty and misery are subjects of shame; if a state is not governed by the principles of reason, riches and honors are the subjects of shame.'"[83] In a copy of that book, in Italian translation, held at the archive of the *Centro Studi Fabrizio De André* at Siena University, De André underlines the citation of Confucius.[84] Thoreau continues: "where my liberty is endangered, or until I am bent solely on building up an estate at home by peaceful enterprise, I can afford to refuse allegiance to Massachusetts, and her right to my property and life. It costs me less in every sense to incur the penalty of disobedience to the State than it would to obey."[85] What is the penalty of disobedience? It is, indeed, jail time, which Thoreau serves until Ralph Waldo Emerson comes to pay his fines. But it is also the shame, itself, of not achieving one's potential according to the principles of reason. A shame that almost certainly did not affect Thoreau, but that certainly does affect many modern men without

the deeply studied and strongly held philosophical convictions to combat it.

In his 1967 "Death," another homage to Villon's "Ballade des pendus" via Brassen's "Le verger du Roi Louis," De André sings of "Ragged beggars who without shame / stood in hair shirts and the pillory."[86] These medieval beggars' shamelessness contrasts the prevailing emotion of his 1968 *We All Died Agonizingly,* in which Villon's medieval hanged men merge in their lament with contemporary heroin addicts to become haunted by shame and fear. In the album's introductory song, De André reversions the genoese poet, Riccardo Mannerini's, 1958 poem "Heroin" ("Eroina"). De André makes many changes, but leaves the refrain the same: "How will I ever be able to tell my mother that I am afraid?"[87] This fear is born in Mannerini's poem of the idea of the future generally, by those who are laughing at him, by a loss of meaning, and by a sense of alienation that perpetuates itself as the speaker becomes daily more terrified. The fear in De André's canticle is generally the same, but emphasized in certain points. It is a fear of the future, "Who will talk to me again / of bright tomorrows?" It is largely a loss of meaning, "Above all who / and why put me in this world / where I live my death / with tremendous anticipation."[88] It is an alienation expressed across each verse that searches for 'who' in the world will explain, speak, listen, to the speaker's words, which "transform into a deaf lament,"[89] as they go unheard. Crucially, it is an alienation that is multiplied by a sense of public shame that prohibits the speaker from finding and accepting community: "I no longer see / anyone but these glass imps / who are openly spying on me / and laughing behind my back."[90] This surveilled and mocked individual, who has lost faith, love, hope, and due to his own sense of shame, alienated any who are left that love him, expects no compassion from society. He says that when he dies, "they will admonish me" as one of those men who "thinks it's nice / to play ball / with his own brain." But before his lament ends, he momentarily remembers, aside from the shame and fear that remain, that which caused him to play, or experiment, with his brain. He remembers that he was "trying to launch it / beyond the established boundaries / that someone traced / at the edges of infinity."[91] This desire to search beyond the sanctioned limits, the desire for infinite knowledge, uncensored knowledge, is emphasized in De André's version, as he transforms Mannerini's "beyond the line,"[92] into his own "beyond the established boundaries," stressing both their man-made nature

and the difficulty with which one may cross them. Those who would cross them, risk complete alienation to search for another model of reality that is not based on the principles of reason, wealth and status. That is, they search for a reality that is diametrically opposed to their own, for the guiding principles of their reality are meaningless to them and therefore all proffered futures hopeless. Not unimportant to an objective consideration of this mode of thinking, is a reminder that many so-called savage, non-western societies have constructed much of their shared experience of reality on the transcendence of the empirical world through structured and mentored experimentation with hallucinatory drugs.

The shame the heroin addict experiences in life, as he awaits the death that will expunge his pain, becomes the shame the hanged men experience as they die, but that shame in the hanged men, far from internalized, is still an alien force, tangible in the scaffold crowd's scorn in "The Ballad of the Hanged Men": "Those who ridiculed our defeat / the extreme shame and the method of it / that he may suffocate by the identical grip / and get to know the knot."[93] The hanged men are aware, like the heroin addict, that they will die without compassion or pardon, as is the lot of both the unrepentant and suicides, and they join in voice with the addicts in "Recitative"—"We who invoke compassion are the addicts … We are the abandoned human flock / who died with the knot at our throats"[94]—to ask for mercy, for compassion. Importantly, they remember their shame, and they ask that the men who judge them, the men of "ambitious dreams," the useful men to society, "not find shame in compassion."[95] That is, they ask for a reassessment of the self-appraisal of the social emotion of compassion: that they feel pride, rather than shame, for being compassionate. For, if there is shame in compassion, then the inverse holds that there is pride in avarice, greed and cruelty.

This dual presence of the addict and the hanged man in the 1968 album, *We All Die Agonizingly,* resonates with the characters of the anarchist bomber (*Story of a White-Collar Worker,* 1973) and Wolf Tail (*Rimini,* 1978; discussed in depth in "Cowboys, Indians … and Sardinians"), who both contain within themselves, in a sense, De André's experience of the social uprisings, protests, and civil terrorism of the 1960s and 1970s. Both men fight against the powers at be, both are angry, both throw bombs, both make mistakes, but neither is mistaken in desiring change and acting

towards that change. Unlike the restitution of the sovereign's power through a display of power through execution, the revolutionary against the modern State is dealt with mundanely. The scaffold crowd was always on the hinge of violent revolt, where the condemned man could be turned into a positive hero against the law, against the rich, the powerful, all of which the crowd easily identifies as the enemy. In the Foucault's assessment of the modern state, rather, the crowd is "a compact mass, a locus of multiple exchanges, individualities merging together, a collective effect, is abolished and replaced by a collection of separated individualities."[96] This collection of separate individualities creates the anarchist himself, who finds his first community in prison, and who uses the first person plural pronoun "we" rather than the singular "I" for the first time in his final song from prison. The modern State discourages revolt by discouraging emotional congregations, by curbing emotion itself and encouraging discipline from childhood on. So some revolutionaries are hidden away, while others succumb to their own ability to maintain the revolutionary spirit, in themselves or in the community, and like the fictional Wolf Tail and many historical activists like him, they give up on the revolution and seek oblivion, through drug use, rather than face the world as it is."[97] We see that Western civilization has both ended and augmented the hangings of individuals: the public, central, ceremonial, sacrificial, emotionally-charged space of the noose has been traded for a isolated, marginalized, neglected, rejected, alienated space of the addict and suicide. The stage itself has remained, and while it is now populated by entertainers, whose primary, and often sole, purpose is diversion, the stage has not yet completely shaken certain latent ritualistic and civic-political qualities that once belonged to it as a scaffold.

The Scaffold and the Stage: Of Arenas and Altars

The public, central, ceremonial, sacrificial, emotionally-charged space, once held by the scaffold, has been replaced, in civilized society, by the stage. The stage holds many functions—political, civic, theatrical, musical, balletic—but the role of the musician, the rock or folk star, is arguably that which is most closely a substitution of the work performed by the scaffold. The concert represents a space for chaotic revelry, post-religious, irrational revelation, and communal celebration that overcomes the aggregate, atomistic, nature of modern society made up of discrete, often

alienated, individuals. Already in 19th-century Bayreuth, Nietzsche recognized Richard Wagner as a sort of early composer/musician cum prophet. He compared the "world as exhibition" that historicism presented to its "blasé spectators," with Wagner's "suprahistorical power of an art consuming itself in actuality can bring salvation for the 'true neediness and inner poverty of man."[98] Music, Nietzsche believed as a young man,[99] represents an opportunity to balance out the Dionysian and Apollonian again after the rationale of the Enlightenment, to not only reason about life, but revel in it. He muses on the fact that music should have become such an important part of the lives of modern man and says:

> "Music could not have been born in our time. What then does its presence amongst us signify? An accident? A single great artist might certainly be an accident, but the appearance of a whole group of them, such as the history of modern music has to show … a circumstance of this sort leads one to think that perhaps necessity rather than accident is at the root of the whole phenomenon."[100]

Indeed, modern man needs music, needs the concert, for the two together give him the opportunity to communicate something that has been lost to civilization. For, wherever one finds civilization, according to the young Nietzsche, one finds an inability to communicate feelings due to the fact that "few are able to preserve their individuality in their fight against a culture which thinks to manifest its success … by the fact that it involves the individual in the snare of 'definite notions,' and teaches him to think correctly."[101] The music and the concert represent a return to the ritualistic, revelry, and revelation, that has been lost to the rational man. It is revelation, sublimation, through submersion of the individual into a holistic sea of being and feeling, and, perhaps today more than in the Wagner's shows in Bayreuth, it is also a space where Benjamin's 'aura' is restored to the age of mechanical reproduction and where, more importantly to us here, Kantian sublimation occurs. In the first case, mechanical reproduction, which has torn artwork out of time and space, it removes it from the temple, from the church, and from the museum, it decays its aura, the "unique phenomenon of distance, however close the object may be,"[102] by destroying its uniqueness through reproduction. While the musician's music is reproducible, he, himself, is not, and therefore, in his very person he is able to maintain the aura of art, both in its traditional religious cult value, and the secular dedication to the cult of Beauty. Perhaps this too is a reason that music, especially when composition and

performance meet in a single person, has become so important to modern man.

This Dionysian revelation, this Benjaminian 'aura', are positive aspects of the modern singer-songwriter and his relationship with the stage and the crowd. However, in his relationship with the Kantian sublime, the relationship between stage and crowd begins to reveal its dark underbelly, the crowd and the ritual's latent desire for the blood promised by ancient ritual. For this single composer and performer, the center of the crowd's emotional and intellectual energy, the one voice heard by silent thousands, maintains some of the essence of the man on the scaffold. It is as if the musician is the condemned man, to whom all lend their ear for his last words, and who, miraculously, is saved from death by the king's pardon at the last moment. While the stage claims to be the civilized scaffold, in a sense, allowing crowds to act out communal rituals without the traditional sacrificial denouement, it does not cleave itself from its premodern blood-thirst completely. Indeed, the musical stage maintains aspects, not only of the scaffold, but of the arena itself, where knights drew crowds to witness them fight to the death. The next two sections will investigate the implications of the stage's residual associations with premodern platforms of (1) competition, valor, and death, and (2) punishment, death, and potential salvation through martyrdom. The musician's stage, indeed, returns to act as at times as an ancient or medieval arena, and at times as a potential altar.

The following sections will also work to demonstrate Fabrizio De André's awareness and critique of the various latent roles played by the musician as performer, in an effort to clarify his complex relationship with the stage itself. Particularly in songs that act as scaffold ballads, dually embodying the role of the executed's last words on the scaffold, and the role of the crowd's flash ballads, often associated with scaffold culture. British public scaffold ballads, or flash ballads as they were called due to their spontaneous nature, were, according Vic Gatrell, spaces of "remembering and imagining, which wove a collective idea of the scaffold in the space between print and orality."[103] The tone could be one of ridicule, it could be obscene, it could be historical, reporting the facts. The tone could also be elegiac or satirical, however, and therefore by the 19th century in England, they had been repressed, due to their potential for inciting violence and revolt. The popular singer-songwriter who brings the scaffold ballad back to the stage, then, becomes a highly charged public figure. Even

more than other popular singer-songwriters as he now is standing in for the executed man, singing out his last words before a rapt audience, using the emotional musical form used by scaffold crowds and commenting on his own execution, glossing his own death so it will be read by the audience from the correct point of view. When that gloss goes beyond a lament for his death, when it is politically or socially charged, the singer-songwriter, the *cantautore* in the Italian case, specifically, risks translating himself into a potential martyr in the crowd's communal imagination.

The Stage as Arena

The gallows represents judicial power to the feudal knight, a symbol of his omnipotence on his piece of land, as it returns to represent the local power of the strongest individual in the mythology of the North American West. But as power centralizes, partially through a monopoly on violence, the knight must transition into other roles. He is no longer autonomous and omnipotent, no longer able to gain land and wealth through the threat of violence and demonstrations of superior strength and force. The knight becomes a troubadour, he becomes a mercenary soldier, and in various other roles, secures a membership in the court of a more powerful, landowning knight. His knightly valor and strength are no longer useful to him to gain wealth and land, but may still gain him prestige. For, as knights broadly lose their right to violence, they maintain some of it in sporting contests that outlive the medieval society that contrived them. As Norbert Elias states:

> "Belligerence and aggression find socially permitted expression in sporting contests. And they are expressed especially throughout 'spectating' … This living out of affects in spectating … is a particularly characteristic feature of civilized society. It partly determines the development of books and theater, and decisively influences the role of cinema in our world."[104]

The violence that was once part of everyday life, is allowed a circumscribed space. Only within the confines of the arena, may men battle each other, and may crowds of spectators return to a primordial and wild state that craves the spilled blood of communal sacrifice.

This violent medieval relic, which was in turn an ancient relic in medieval times, is a well-known, and often observed characteristic of modern sporting events, North American football being a classic example, of the slow, violent battle to gain the land of an opposing team (or army). However, the crowd's blood-thirst is far less often recognized in spectators at other sorts of competitions, like,

for example, in artistic competitions, and specifically here as considered in the annual Sanremo Music Festival held in Sanremo, Italy. Perhaps, because they are less often compared to ancient rituals to determine power and valor because they are less obviously violent, or perhaps because they take measures to hide their true natures, by calling themselves 'festivals', rather than 'competitions'. They are competitions, however, and are arguably, more ruthlessly competitive than even the most violent modern sporting event. For, artists do not compete as a team against another team; they compete alone against tens, sometimes, hundreds of other individuals. Therefore, they are not judged as a single part of a larger mechanism, but individually, literally put under a spotlight to be scrutinized and either praised or discarded. It is not one against one, but one against many.

Another important difference is the way in which a winner is determined. In sporting events, the winner is simply the team that performs better, the team whose physical strength, speed, ability outmatches the other. Though unfair arbiters can affect the outcome of a match, there is certainly far less subjectivity in the outcome of a sporting match than in the outcome of, for example, a festival like Sanremo. Sanremo, and competitions like it, are highly modern and highly civilized in a Foucauldian sense. For Foucault, in a disciplinary society "the judges of normality are present everywhere … We are in the society of the teacher-judge, the doctor-judge, the educator-judge, the 'social worker'-judge;" he says, "it is on them that the universal reign of the normative is based."[105] Sanremo is an opportunity for each citizen to play his favorite role: that of arbiter, he decides good v. bad, not basing his judgment on morality, but on taste. This is not inherently problematic, for, theoretically, a competition based on the tastes of individuals would be a highly democratic competition, which would allow a society to choose the artists that gain the national spotlight and, in turn, influence future artists. However, the actual process, as is often the case, hardly resembles the ideal.

Firstly, broadly speaking, modern spectators have already been normalized and conditioned themselves, largely by the media, to prefer, if not a certain individual, at least a certain *type* of individual. Secondly, in the specific case of Sanremo, the false premise of the democracy of the competition reveals itself even more egregiously. As Marco Santoro explains, "participants were

presented directly by record companies, and then selected based on a complex system of commissions, committees, and votes. Many times over the years the selection process has been altered due to pressure and protests on the part of both music companies and journalists, due to the general management of selections, which was seen as lacking transparency and too often maintaining open ties to interested parties."[106] Therefore, Sanremo not only represents a space in which individuals are encouraged to act as judges, to normalize culture, as it were; not only does it further the interests of the disciplinary society, but it is both latently and directly controlled by private interests that, when they cannot influence the democratic whole, obscure results and declare a winner that best suits a select few citizens' morality or pocketbooks.

Fabrizio De André, for his part, condemned Sanremo, its authority and its effects, throughout his career. The Festival, indeed, was highly influential in the world of popular music in Italy from its inception in 1951 until at least 1968-71, which Franco Fabbri and Goffredo Plastino mark as the end of its central role in shaping the Italian pop music scene.[107] In the countercultural 1970s, musicians and fans began to see participation in Sanremo as a sort of betrayal, yet as the following list of successful participants demonstrates, it will continue to maintain an influence in the industry throughout, at least, the 1980s; winners and runners up have included Claudio Villa (1955, 57, 62, 67) Domenico Modugno (1958, 59, 60, 62, 64, 66, 76), Sergio Endrigo (1968, 69, 70), Adriano Celentano (1961, 68, 70), Wess and Dhori Ghezzi (1976), Eros Ramazzotti (1986), Gianni Morandi (1987), Cristiano De André (1993), Gino Paoli (2002). Other contestants have included Giorgio Gaber (1961, 64, 66, 67), Mina (1960, 61), Ivano Fossati (1972), Rino Gaetano (1978), Patty Pravo (Critics Award 1984, 87, 97), Vasco Rossi (1981, 82), Raf (1988, 90, 91), Jovanotti (1989), and Enzo Jannacci (Critics Award 1991), and Francesco Guccini (1967), Francesco De Gregori (1980), and Gianna Nannini (2007) as authors,[108] among many others.

De André recognized in the ritual, and in the public, precisely the remnants of ancient violence that civilized society claimed to have overcome. On February 1, 1968, on the first day of the Sanremo Festival, he wrote a review for the *Corriere Mercantile,* saying:

> "In my view, Sanremo's biggest defect consists … in the traumatically competitive climate of the show, almost as if the Italian spectator cannot enjoy himself unless he is

> witnessing an agonizing event; demonstrating, as such, that he does not love the music generally or a song particularly, as much as he loves the fight, the tension of participants and their anxiety to survive duels that necessarily result in a winner and a loser; to put it concisely, the battle … singing wars … all of which brings little honor to the Italian public, which in certain occasions proves itself the most deserving heir of the ancient Roman who crunched peanuts at the gladiators' spectacles."[109]

He recognizes the implicit roles artists play when they participate in contests; they are the gladiators, they are the knights, and they battle not just to win, but to survive, if only in the public imagination. He objects to the "competitive climate," amongst the artists, as well as to the role played by the public. For, the artists face an audience that, he suspects, hope to witness, not something beautiful, but something painful, spectacular drama born out of actual trauma. His suspicion of the audience is related here to the death of his friend, Luigi Tenco, who had committed suicide a year earlier at the Sanremo Festival. Yet his refusal, not only to participate in festivals, but even to give concerts from the beginning of his solo career in 1961 until 1975, reveals a hesitation that precedes Tenco's untimely death. His assessment of an audience that "wanted a violent emotion," leads him suspect an audience who, as he writes in *Corriere Mercantile,* "will be disappointed if nothing dramatic [like Tenco's death the year before] were to happen"[110] in 1968. His suspicion of an audience that revels in the pain and trauma of the performers anticipates the results of Sanremo that came two days later, when Sergio Endrigo won, the first *cantautore* to take the prize. In the competitions leading up to 1968, Sanremo was dominated by pop acts, performers who sang the music written by others. Luigi Tenco was not a performer, he was a singer-songwriter, a *cantautore,* a group of musicians as yet unsanctified and held at the margins of public interest. As Marco Santoro argues in his *Effetto Tenco,* Luigi Tenco was the sacrifice the Italian public needed to bring *cantautori* into the spotlight. More broadly, however, Tenco's initial sacrifice, his suicide, as we shall see, made audiences see red with respect to many *cantautori* to come, as the public, particularly sectors of fans, challenged *cantautori* to authenticate their words with actions.

The Stage as Altar

As stated, a singer-songwriter's performance has the capacity to inspire revelation through full-immersion in feeling and community, in its uniqueness, it promises a space for the return of the

'aura' of art, and as it retains aspects of ancient death games, as well as the scaffold crowd viewing the condemned man's last words and terrific death, it allows the potential for a sort of sublimation that is often denied in modern culture. This capacity for deep emotional response and revelation is part of that which lends to the singer-songwriter such an influential role in the modern world, where other traditional religious and secular rituals with similar potential have been rationalized out of existence. Yet, in Italy, for a set of reasons particular to its local history, the relics of scaffold were stronger in the late 1960s and 1970s, than in other Western countries, where they appear nonetheless to maintain close, if subconscious ties, in the collective imagination. The scaffold was a place for powerful last words, it was a place where a kingdom's or State's criminal could become the people's martyr, where a death meant to secure the power of the king could ignite, instead, rebellion and revolution. The Western folk singer-songwriter, *chansonniere*, *cantautore*, figuratively occupies a place similar to the condemned man. He is regarded by various strata of society as a voice to be marginalized and/or silenced and as the voice of the people and subversion. His words carry the weight of authenticity, as he is not a singer performing another's poetry, but a poet himself. Furthermore, his words are expected to carry the weight of responsibility; his is not frivolous poetry, it is expected to hold in its depths all of the emotion of the human experience and to subvert normative culture, complacent society and oppressive government. He is the (often self-declared) outsider, the reject, with the potential to become a prophet. His potential as prophet, indeed, *depends* on his very position as society's persona non grata. The aura of the singer-songwriter, together with his authenticity, lend to his words the figurative and sublime power of the criminal cum martyr's last words before death. Yet, *his death is only figurative*, the public, generally, does not demand that he sacrifice himself in order to demonstrate his authenticity, in order to demonstrate his dedication to whatever cause his public associates him with.

The line between witnessing a secular, artistic genius and a religious prophet and thus the line between a figurative sacrifice, perhaps of one's personal life and privacy for example, and of a literal death (considered alternately as the execution of a blasphemer and martyrdom), can be obscured, as it was for Mark David Chapman, who accused Lennon of blasphemy and assassinated him.[111] In Italy,

however, the case is particular, due in part to Italy's near history: the social repression and censorship experienced by a generation across the twenty years of Fascism and the events and results of WWII and the and frustration and disappointment experienced in 1948 when during the Italian Republic's first elections, Italian left (formed of Europe's largest communist party, Togliatti's Partito Comunista Italiano and the Partito Socialista) lost to the Christian Democrats, in a defeat some argue was guaranteed by America via the Marshall Plan. And due in part to Italy's contemporary history, Tenco's foundational sacrifice (1967) and the tense and violent decade of civil strife in Italian that followed the 1968 student and worker revolts, which marked just the beginning of a series heterogeneous counter-cultural (artistic and political) movements. All of which set the *cantautore* to steep in a public that was roiling, engaged, active, desperate, and self-sacrificing, and that demanded proofs of authenticity that included, at times, imprisonment, at times death. It is important to remember the climate of the times: the Prime Minister, Aldo Moro, was kidnapped and assassinated; public figures like Franca Rame[112], Dori Ghezzi and Fabrizio De André,[113] himself, were kidnapped, and variously violated, tortured, and held for ransom; and great thinkers saw fit to choose sword over pen. Indeed, Antonio Negri, like Antonio Gramsci before him, wrote many of his best-known works from behind bars, serving time, not as a political prisoner, but accused in the 1990s of acts of political terrorism during the 1970s.

If the singer-songwriter was central to the counter-cultural activism of other young movements in the West, movements that were exceedingly less violent (indeed, most often pacifistic), less fervently political, and less enduring than those in Italy, then what role would *cantautori* play in the Italy's counter-cultural epoch? They, like their public, and by their public and for their public, were expected to engage as well, not just artistically, but politically and, above all, personally, like Tenco. Tenco shot himself in the head in his Sanremo hotel room when he was disqualified from the competition. It would seem that he killed himself, then, because he lost, but De André explains that his friend went to the festival unwilling, forced by his record label: "He, only he, was the first Italian *cantautore,* … He went to Sanremo without wanting to. … It was truly a sacrifice for him to enter in the bolgia of Sanremo."[114] It would seem to De André that the banality and humiliation of his first

sacrifice, led him to choose a second sacrifice, into which he could instill his own meaning. His action could also be read, itself, as an act of demythifying, in this case, the myth of the popular festival, which put on airs of democracy but, rather, spoon-fed the public, so called *musica leggera,* or easy-listening. Sanremo winners are not *canzone* but *canzonette,* which Turin's music collective, the Cantacronache, considered "gastronomic" songs,[115] literally created for consumption, and which Umberto Eco investigates in his 1964 "La canzone di consumo" or "The song for consumption" in *Apocalittici e integrati.*

When Tenco's songs, raw, unglamorous and dealing in the human experiences, lose to the *canzonette* of the easy-listening machine then, Tenco despairs not only for himself and his art, but for the public, who does not see through the myth of the spectacle itself and therefore cannot arrive at anything deeper than the superficial *canzonette.* Roland Barthes argues that there are three ways that post-modern artists attempt to break down myth: (1) by obscuring significance, (2) by teaching the public to read the highly coded language of myth and (3) by saying nothing at all, believing that the most effective mode of combatting modern myth was by refusing to give it voice.[116] Whether this was Tenco's goal or not, it proved effective, and the *cantautore* finally gained the public ear when he stopped singing. The public that had looked on Italy's first *cantautore* with what De André calls "hatred and ignorance"[117] in his 1967 song dedicated to his friend's death "January's Prayer," after his death looked to *cantautori* in expectation, in part of words that elucidate human experience, as has often been the storyteller's role, and that naturally belongs to the *cantautore.* But in expectation, at times, that the *cantautore* play the role he latently plays, as described above, of executed cum martyr.

Most explicitly, this role is played by Francesco De Gregori during the "Palalido incident," when in 1977 a group of extreme left demonstrators interrupted a concert in Milan to contest De Gregori's claim of solidarity with the left. Protestors were upset that De Gregori's management had cancelled a tour that had been essentially free to the public, tickets covering only the costs with some proceeds going to far left extra-parliamentary organization, *Lotta continua* (Continuous Struggle). They accused him of attempting to profit from his so-called political leanings and accused him of being beholden to the capitalist machine.[118] The agitators called De Gregori back onto stage after the

concert and held a mock trial. The agitators played the roles of judge, jury, and executioner, while De Gregori replies to their questions and accusations at the microphone. Amongst other charges, an agitator, recorded by a journalist who was still in the audience, says, "Music doesn't make a revolution. First you make the revolution, and then you can begin to think of the arts and music. Mayakovsky said that, he was a true revolutionary and committed suicide. You should commit suicide too!"[119] In this moment, the complex public role of the *cantautore* is at its most explicit, he is at once expected to be an artist, performer, revolutionary, and martyr. When he does not completely fulfill his role, he is charged by the people as a sort of traitor to communism, socialism, and more generally, populism.

When Svetlana Boym talks about the case of Mayakovsky in her *Death in Quotation Marks,* she points out that due to "peculiar cultural and political circumstances, the reaction against the Romantic myth of the poet was much less pronounced in Russia than, for instance, in France."[120] That is, the cult of poet endures in Russia, while Europe begins a process of killing the author, distancing his personality and his biography from his productions. A part of the 'peculiar circumstances' that she cites, is political oppression experiences before and after the revolution. She argues that "the cult of the poet thrives on political oppression. … The poet is supposed to be more than just a poet and to have a cultural mission. He can be a voice and a consciousness of the nation, a martyr, dying young, a Christ-like figure, who takes upon himself the sufferings of people."[121] This explains Mayakovsky's anachronistic romantic legacy in the 20th century, and it illuminates the role Italians hoped and expected *cantautori* would play. Italy in the 20th century experienced a confusing spectrum of political oppression, first 20 years of Fascism under Mussolini, then the 1948 elections that, with the aid of the US and the Marshall Plan, would defeat Europe's largest Socialist party in a victory that put the liberal Christian Democrats in power for the next 40 years. Yet, Italy along with the rest of western Europe, in part the US, and particularly France, headed towards the polemic but influential announcement of the death of the author.

The author's death refers specifically to an idea tested by the historical avant-garde, as the Surrealists, for example, practiced automatic writing, letting go of the idea of the *genius* of the poet, and returning to a revised idea of the poetic muse who flows and writes through the poet. New

Criticism in the United States followed with its challenge to authorial intent and its tenet of intentional fallacy. Roland Barthes declared the author officially dead in his 1967 essay, "La mort de l'auteur," which was quickly challenged by Foucault in his 1969 "Qu'est-ce qu'un auteur?" and by many others to follow. The essay, however, continues to be highly influential in European and US criticism, and while it is still controversial, the author, generally, has not been fully united with his productions. There is another death of the author that is perhaps even more important, when discussing the influence of Mayakovsky as well as poets in the West, and that is the loss of the cult figure of the poet as associated with his work. Boym states that in Russia his cult status remains because of 'particular conditions' and 'political oppression.' I agree, and would like to specify those conditions further by including the rise and diversification of spectacle in capitalist society. In Russia the poet does not compete with the radio star, film star, socialite, while in the West, the cult of personality gradually transitions to obscure the poet.

In the particular conditions of Italy, then, the *cantautore* stands in the perfect, the sole position to take the place of the sort of poet that Mayakovsky represents. Mayakovsky's life and death are more complex than often popularly remembered, for example, he did not commit suicide *in the name of* the revolution, but rather, either for personal reasons as the Soviets claimed, or, as some believe, due to his belief that the revolution, ultimately, was a failure. However, he represents to many, and certainly to the student activists who tried De Gregori, a poet-revolutionary, a poet-hero, which Boym calls "a distinctly modern phenomenon which presents an alternative to the image of the alienated and effaced poet."[122] The poet-hero is a return from the 'art for art's sake' bohemian 19th-century poet, Ugo Foscolo is an early-romantic Italian example who precedes the slogan and movement, while Gabriele D'Annunzio is a somewhat problematic late-romantic version. D'Annunzio is problematic because he is perhaps the first great artistic market manipulator, he began in the aesthetic realm of art (and life) for art's sake, then transitioned to a revolutionary poet as the First World War and historical avant-garde trends in Italy progressed. As many experiments in the historical avant-garde continue along the vein of art for art's sake, F.T. Marinetti, the Milanese Futurist, is rather politically driven and makes of himself a would-be poet-revolutionary who is

sympathetic to Fascism. Mussolini too came on the scene as a supporter of socialist and artistic revolutionary movements, only after his March on Rome did he begin a transition to Fascism. For these particular combinations of art and politics, perhaps, poets fall out of favor in the second half of the 20th century. In part, as stated, they are generally obscured by more omnipresent cultural producers from films and radio. However, in Italy their motives become, furthermore, suspect whenever their scope falls beyond the strictly literary; as De Gregori wrote in "Yesterday's Tales / Storie d'ieri", performed on his 1975 album *Rimmel* as well as De André's 1975 *Volume 8,* "Mussolini too wrote poetry, / what ugly creatures, poets, / every time they open their mouths it's to trick."[123]

In these particular conditions, in a nation that had suffered generations of political stagnation and oppression, in a culture that was losing its poets for various reasons, to whom could the people turn for heroes? The answer is arrived at naturally, the spectacularized poets of the 20th-century, the *cantautori*. They are youth heroes across the West, but in Italy, their role is emphasized, in part perhaps due to Tenco's original sacrifice, and in part due to the particular conditions in Italy that differed so greatly from the conditions in France, England, or the USA. Italian youths do not want 'art for art's sake' from their *cantautore*. They do not want only inspiration, but adhesion and action. If the revolution fails, they seek a martyr that will reignite the fight. The student activists who declare De Gregori guilty of crimes of capitalism sentence him to death by his own hand, and De Gregori, upon surviving the experience, says he will never perform again after this event. His promise lasts only two years, while De André, unthreatened, had already refused to perform, and his promise lasted the first 10 years of his career. De André defended his reticence for years by claiming that, as he says, "The public frightens me."[124] The assertion is dual, referring to his own fear of public performance (though he had performed for years in small Genoese venues, as a guitarist), as well as to his personal relationship to his journalistic insights in *Corriere Mercantile* into the repressed desires of the civilized crowd, that has been denied its sacrifice, but that has not yet ceased to yearn for it.

Conclusions

The ten years that De André does not perform in public, are relatively concurrent to the ten years during which he develops his history of punishment, beginning at the beginning of his career

with songs like "Geordie," and ending in 1973, at the end of his "Story of a White-Collar Worker" album, as the incarcerated antihero calls the public to the prison walls to hear his final song. In 1974 he releases *Canzoni* (Songs), with Francesco De Gregori, which still features executions, though they are now not strictly thematic and non-sequential as compared to the history of punishment as he developed it up to that point.[125] Executions in some form will continue to exist through De Andre's career, but after 1974, they will become increasingly removed from the tales of trial and execution, trial and incarceration, hanged men and martyrs that we see in the first years of his career. It is as if De André understands the sacrificial role he is to play and chooses to play it, not as a man, but as an artist alone, in his music, rather than in his person. He does not play out the ritual of execution himself, but rather, tells the stories of those who have, remembers them so that the public too will remember these forgotten men, some innocent, some guilty, some martyrs, some revolutionaries, but all figures who, unlike the *cantautore,* can truly tell the story of unjust laws, of false civilization, for they truly were victims of it. He speaks of them rather than speaking for himself, rather than making his own political claims in the present, he traces a thread across the past that ends at the prison walls. He calls the bloodthirsty crowd there, the crowd that wants revolution, the crowd seeking truths, he tells them to look there, where the real substitute for the scaffold lies. Then, when he has parsed the spaces, the scaffold and the stage, in an attempt to remove from the concert space any ritualistic, revolutionary, or sacrificial relics, he climbs up.

He climbs on stage, not as a man, not as a hero or martyr, but as a performer. The stage is now a space he can inhabit less problematically, if not for his audience (which still in the early years accuses him of profiteering), at least for himself. It is a space, for De André, that can represent, at its best, Dionysian revelry and Bakhtin's carnivalesque. De André perhaps recognizes the possibility of social transgression in the concert setting, inappropriate closeness, excitement, attire, consumption, a loosening of social norms that resembles the medieval society that so attracted him in his youth. The concert at its worst, by 1975, no longer represents a scaffold, as he had worked to disengage it from that relic of meaning. By 1975 De André has unveiled the space to see it in a harsh non-poetic light that has molded it into its contemporary form: in the light of capitalistic spectacle. It is this

characteristic that ultimately drives him, for by 1975 when he takes the stage, he has become the negative image of Fiddler Jones, the protagonist of his *Not to money, nor to love, nor to God*. Jones gives up the farm to become a musician, while De André gives up music, as much as he can, to become a farmer. Before 1975, Fabrizio De André's identity was mixed, he was a musician who lived and played in Genoa. In 1975, he allows his life and his art to split so that he can more fully inhabit both realms without fear of one bleeding into another. De André and Dori Ghezzi move to Sardinia and open a farm in 1975, in order to pay for his farm, which is never solvent, he begins to perform.[126] Only after having disengaged the role of the *cantautore* and the executed/revolutionary/martyr, can De André successfully separate his private and public self, in order to perform before the public eye without risking the sacrifice of himself. His life in Sardinia, his family, his farm, defines him. His music, his performance, his fans, are simply part of a his career, and the sacrifices he makes to them are no more than the sacrifices made by any modern working individual.

[1] "Tutti morimmo a stento / ingoiando l'ultima voce / tirando calci al vento." De André, Fabrizio. "Ballata degli impiccati." *Tutti morimmo a stento.* 1968

[2] Dylan, Bob. "Desolation Row." *Highway 61 Revisited*. Columbia Records, 1965.

[3] De André, Fabrizio and Francesco De Gregori. *Canzoni.* Produttori associati, 1974.

[4] Bob Dylan specifically cites Billie Holiday's 1939 "Strange Fruit" as a n influence in the documentary *No Direction Home.* Dir. Martin Scorsese. Paramount Pictures. 2005. Film.

[5] A collection of 305 traditional English and Scottish ballads anthologized by Francis James Childs in 1882 as *The English and Scottish Popular Ballads*, ed. by Francis James Child, 5 vols (Boston and New York: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, [1882–98]. The ballads anthologized have come colloquially to be known as Child Ballads. Bertrand Harris Bronson gathered and published the tunes to these ballads in the 1960s, and therefore, the folk ballads were particularly ripe for interpretation at that time.

[6] Foucault, Michel. *Discipline and Punish: the Birth of the Prison.* 2nd Vintage Books ed. New York: Vintage Books, 1995. Print.

[7] In 1962 he was introduced to Maureen Rix, who was an English teacher the school in Genoa that Giuseppe De André owned and Fabrizio administrated, and in 1965, while she was in London, he asked her to bring back some British folk songs. One of them was Geordie. (Pistarini, Walter. *Canzoni Nascoste. Storie Segrete.* Firenze, Italia: Giunti editore, 2013. Print.) Furthermore he demonstrated an ignorance of the popularity of reversioning Child Ballads when asked in 1969 "Che rapporti ci sono tra le sue canzoni e quelle, per esempio, di Joan Baez?" He replies: "Direi che non c'è nessun rapporto. Direi che le mie canzoni partono da un folk … europeo occidentale … le canzoni di Bob Dylan, della Joan Baez e di altri anglosassoni partono invece fs folk tipo western." De André quoted in Ferrari, Mariuccia B. "Intervista a Fabrizio De André. Musicherà i Vangeli apocrifi il cantautore di *Marinella."* in *Corriere del Ticino,* 14 May 1969. (Sassi, 93)

[8] The Child Ballads is the colloquial name given to a collection of 305 ballads collected in the 19th century by Francis James Child and originally published in ten volumes between 1882 and 1898 under the title The English and Scottish Popular Ballads.

[9] De André considers this song his first as a writer: "Questa canzone è del 1961. È la prima che ho scritto [il primo singolo, "Nuvole barocche/E fu la notte", non lo considera un "suo" prodotto, NdR] e mi ha salvato la pelle; se non l'avessi scritta, probabilmente, invece di diventare un discreto cantautore, sarei diventato un pessimo penalista." Get citation

[10] "Fabrizio De André, il menestrello in microsolco." in *Sorrisi e Canzoni TV,"* 2 July 1967 (now in Sassi, 28); "Il cantautore "medioevale Fabrizio è lo sconosciuto più conosciuto d'Italia." in *ABC.* 27 July 1967 (now in Sassi, 31)

[11] (Sassi, 28)

[12] "Mi appassionano e mi affascinano, ad esempio, i poeti e gli scrittori provenzali e francesi come François Villon, come Baudelaire." De André quoted in "La mosca bianca delle [sic] piccola musica," in *Rossana.* 11 December 1967. (Sassi, 35); "Ho avuto molti maestri: anzitutto i poeti francesi dal '200 all'800: fra quelli recenti soprattutto Rimbaud e Baudelaire." De André quoted in Di Siero, Gianna, "Contro la guerra, più di me Bob Dylan," in *Ciao 2001.* September 1970. (Sassi, 111)

[13] "Siamo affezionati alle ballate medioevali." in Sassi, 56

[14] "I critici dicono che le sue sembrano canzoni antiche, cantate di menestrelli del Duecento." "Un cantautore scandalizza i benpensanti," in *Panorama,* 6 June 1968. (Sassi, 54)

[15] "Sul piano melodico ed armonico questa partita di arcaicità che il cantautore e i *media* indicano come genericamente medievali arriva in realtà al Rinascimento, mentre sul piano del *sound* e dell'arrangiamento sconfina addirittura nel Barocco." Ivaldi, Federica "Il medioevo secondo De André," in Guastella, Gianni, and Paolo Pirillo, eds. *Menestrelli e Giullari: Il Medioevo Di Fabrizio De André e L'immaginario Medievale Nel Novecento Italiano: Atti Del Convegno "Il Medioevo Di Fabrizio De André"* (Bagno a Ripoli, 16 Ottobre 2010). Firenze: Edifir, 2012. Print. p. 120

[16] "Potendo conservare alcune conquiste sociali fatte nel corso dei secoli successivi, vedrei volentieri una società moderna ambientata nel Medioevo." (Sassi, 33)

[17] (Sassi, 33)

[18] In his youth in Genoa, he frequented and eventually moved in with "seedy people of Genoa: thieves and prostitutes" and admits it was his own cowardice that kept him from marrying a prostitute he loved. (Sassi, 77, 112); Of his move to Sardinia, he says: "In Sardegna ho scoperto una cultura non tanto distante dalla mia, a parte le sovrastrutture della cultura borghese." (Sassi, 234)

[19] "Però sono stato vigliacco ed ipocrita: ecco, qui sono rimasto borghese. No, non l'avrei mai sposata" (Sassi, 78)

[20] He laments in 1970 in an interview dealing with his album, *We All Die Agonizingly,* that his sense of guilt for "having been part of that social group that possessed the power." He says: "I would prefer that social classes did not exist. But they do and I cannot not be 'bourgeois'." (Sassi, 115)

[21] "Non posso dire che anch'io mi sento un diseredato. Anch'io mi sento entrato in un ingranaggio di chi deve dare ciò che vogliono gli altri." (Sassi, 115)

[22] "Ma come liberarsene d i questa società?" (Sassi, 115)

[23] Elias, Norbert. *The Civilizing Process.* Oxford: Blackwell, 1994. Print. p. 17

[24] (Elias, xi)

[25] By 1784, Kant would write in his *Ideas on a Universal History from the Point of View of a Citizen of the World:* "Cultivated to a high degree by art and science, we are civilized to the point where we are overburdened with all sorts of propriety and decency." A sort of antithesis to 'culture,' this application of the idea of morality across society, this "similitude of morality," as Kant called it, is not culture but mere civilizing, he says. Kant refers to the noble class: the artifice (French language in German courts) and elaborate etiquette (control of feeling, disguise of all vulgar attitudes) that was so central to the class's self-image.

[26] Kant, Schiller, and Stirner make arguments for various paths to individuated ethics.

[27] It would be a particularly difficult position in Italy in the second postwar to attempt to romanticize the death penalty. Capital punishment was abolished in 1889 in the modern Italian state and then reinstated by Mussolini in 1926, who expanded its use in 1930 with the Rocco Code. The death penalty ended with the ratification of the new democratic constitution in 1948 and so in the postwar imaginative it was associated the Fascist regime. Lynching, as compared to hanging, could have been more easily romanticized as the partisans took the monopoly on violence out of the control of the state and Mussolini himself was executed and then hung in a public square. This form of hanging would closely align with the problematic sense given to it in Westerns, however, De André does not deal in lynchings (except and almost certainly unwittingly in his translation of "Desolation Row"), he deals in executions by the State.

[28] "Impiccheranno Geordie con una corda d'oro, / è un privilegio raro. / … / non ha vent'anni ancora / … /Geordie non rubò mai neppure per me."

[29] "Né il cuore degli inglesi né lo scettro del re / Geordie potran salvare, / anche se piangeran con te / la legge non può cambiare."

[30] "Il quinto dice non devi rubare / e forse io l'ho rispettato / vuotando, in silenzio, le tasche già gonfie / di quelli che avevan rubato: / ma io, senza legge, rubai in nome mio, / quegli altri nel nome di Dio."

[31] In "Khorakhané," in "La mia ora di libertà," in "La domenica delle salme" it is a prostitute who breaks the law to earn her bread.

[32] Colossians 2:15

[33] "Prima che fosse finita / ricordammo a chi vive ancora / che il prezzo fu la vita / per il male fatto in un'ora."

[34] "Vous nous voyez ci attachés, cinq, six"

[35] Giuffrida, Romano, and Bruno Bigoni, eds. *Fabrizio De André. Accordi Eretici.* Milano: Rizzoli, 2008. Print. p. 31

[36] Gatrell, Vic. *The Hanging Tree: Execution and the English People 1770-1868.* Oxford [England]: Oxford University Press, 1994. Print. p. 6

[37] (Gatrell, 16, 590)

[38] Foucault, Michel. *Discipline and Punish: the Birth of the Prison*. 2nd Vintage Books ed. New York: Vintage Books, 1995. Print. pp. 78, 80

[39] (Foucault, 301)

[40] (Foucault, 19)

[41] (Elias, 116)

[42] http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?term=civilization

[43] Mazlish, Bruce. *Civilization and Its Contents.* Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2004. Print. p. 7

[44] (Foucault, 232)

[45] Canetti, Elias. Crowds and Power. New York: Continuum, 1981. Print. p. 297

[46] "siamo l'umano desolato gregge / di chi morì con il nodo alla gola"

[47] "Uomini senza fallo, semidei … Banchieri, pizzicagnoli, notai … Giudici eletti, uomini di legge"

[48] "che vivete in castelli inargentati / che di gloria toccaste gli apogei" and "coi ventri obesi e le mani sudate / coi cuori a forma di salvadanai"

[49] "Quanti innocenti all'orrenda agonia / votaste decidendone la sorte"

[50] The same dynamic is emphasized in *The Good News* two years later, the good magistrate judges a powerless man, a non-citizen, a man literally without legal rights. In the first stanza of "Via Dolorosa": "For your death on the cross / you can be grateful to the good man Pilate." "di morire in croce puoi essere grato / a un brav'uomo di nome Pilato"

[51] "Tu prova ad avere un mondo nel cuore / e non riesci ad esprimerlo con le parole"

[52] Foucault, Michel. *Madness and Civilization: a History of Insanity in the Age of Reason.* Vintage Books ed. New York: Vintage Books, 1988. Print.

[53] Italy in 1971 is just beginning to see what becomes the first European reform of psychiatry that began with Franco Basaglia's appointment as director of psychiatric hospitals in Trieste, the passing of the Basaglia Law in 1978, and the final dismantling of the Italian mental hospital system in 1998. The goal of the reform was to put an end to social exclusion and isolation in institutions, to be replaced by community integration that discouraged social pressure to normalize behavior.

[54] Foucault, *Madness.* p. 38

[55] (Elias, 454)

[56] "che un nano / è una carogna di sicuro / perché ha il cuore troppo / troppo vicino al buco del culo."

[57] "giudice finalmente, / arbitro in terra del bene e del male."

[58] "E allora la mia statura / non dispensò più buonumore / a chi alla sbarra in piedi / mi diceva "Vostro Onore", / e di affidarli al boia / fu un piacere del tutto mio, / prima di genuflettermi / nell'ora dell'addio / non conoscendo affatto / la statura di Dio."

[59] "dalle panche d'una cattedrale / … / alla cattedra d'un tribunale" and Master's clearer "through your diligence,/ And regular church attendance, / You became attorney for Thomas Rhodes / … / You became the County Judge"

[60] This is Master's version. De André's "Mi arrestarono un giorno per le donne ed il vino, / non avevano leggi per punire un blasfemo, / non mi uccise la morte, ma due guardie bigotte"

[61] (Foucault, 303)

[62] "E quando dottore lo fui finalmente / non volli tradire il bambino per l'uomo / … / E allora capii fui costretto a capire / che fare il dottore è soltanto un mestiere / che la scienza non puoi regalarla alla gente / se non vuoi ammalarti dell'identico male, / se non vuoi che il sistema ti pigli per fame. / … / perciò chiusi in bottiglia quei fiori di neve, / l'etichetta diceva: elisir di giovinezza. / E un giudice, un giudice con la faccia da uomo / mi spedì a sfogliare i tramonti in prigione / … / bollato per sempre truffatore imbroglione."

[63] "Anche se avete chiuso / le vostre porte sul nostro muso / la notte che le pantere / ci mordevano il sedere / lasciamoci in buonafede / massacrare sui marciapiedi / anche se ora ve ne fregate, / voi quella notte voi c'eravate." in "May Song"

[64] "se avete preso per buone / le "verità" della televisione" and "E se credete ora / che tutto sia come prima / perché avete votato ancora / la sicurezza, la disciplina" in "May Song."

[65] "Certo bisogna farne di strada / da una ginnastica d'obbedienza / fino ad un gesto molto più umano / che ti dia il senso della violenza"

[66] "Ascolta / una volta un giudice come me / giudicò chi gli aveva dettato la legge: / prima cambiarono il giudice / e subito dopo / la legge."

[67] "quando uccidevi, / favorendo il potere / i soci vitalizi del potere / ammucchiati in discesa / a difesa / della loro celebrazione."

[68] (Foucault, 138)

[69] Thoburn, Nicholas, "Patterns of Production: Cultural Studies after Hegemony." *Theory, Culture, and Society* 24.3 (2007): 79-94.

[70] "C'hanno insegnato la meraviglia / verso la gente che ruba il pane"; "ora sappiamo che è un delitto / il non rubare quando si ha fame"

[71] "noi ti abbiamo osservato / dal primo battere del cuore"

[72] "alla cattedra d'un tribunale / giudice finalmente"

[73] "ma al di sopra di me, / per quello che hai fatto, / per come lo hai rinnovato / il potere ti è grato."

[74] "e se questo vuol dire rubare / questo filo di pane … lo può dire soltanto chi sa di raccogliere in bocca / il punto di vista di Dio"

[75] "venite adesso alla prigione / state a sentire sulla porta / la nostra ultima canzone" in "La mia ora di libertà." *Storia di un impiegato.*

[76] (Elias, 453)

[77] Though we know that De André pulls the story from chronicle of a real event that occurred in Genoa, to Michele Aiello, an southern Italian who immigrated to the north.

[78] Matthew 27:3 - 27:8

[79] (Elias, 169)

[80] "se n'è andato sapendo che a te / non poteva mai dire che aveva ammazzato / Perché amava te."

[81] J.S. Mill, "Civilization" (1836) in Robson (eds.), *Collected Works,* xviii. *Essays on politics and society.* (Toronto, 1977), 130-131.

[82] (Elias, 492)

[83] http://xroads.virginia.edu/~hyper/walden/Essays/civil.html

[84] "Confucio dice: 'Se uno Stato è retto dai principi della ragione, povertà e miseria sono oggetto di vergogna; se uno Stato non è retto dai principi della ragione, ricchezze e onori sono oggetto di vergogna." 389-90

[85] http://xroads.virginia.edu/~hyper/walden/Essays/civil.html

[86] "Straccioni che senza vergogna / portaste il cilicio o la gogna"

[87] "Come potrò dire a mia madre che ho paura?"

[88] E soprattutto chi / e perché mi ha messo al mondo / dove vivo la mia morte / con un anticipo tremendo?

[89] "si trasformano i suoni / in un sordo lamento."

[90] "Io che non vedo più / che folletti di vetro / che mi spiano davanti / che mi ridono dietro."

[91] "Cercando di lanciarlo / oltre il confine stabilito / che qualcuno ha tracciato / ai bordi dell'infinito."

[92] "riuscendo a lanciarlo / oltre la riga"

[93] "Chi derise la nostra sconfitta / e l'estrema vergogna ed il modo / soffocato da identica stretta / impari a conoscere il nodo."

[94] "noi che invochiam pietà siamo i drogati … siamo l'umano desolato gregge / di chi morì con il nodo alla gola"

[95] "che la pietà non vi sia di vergogna."

[96] (Foucault, 201)

[97] "E adesso … che ho imparato a pescare con le bombe a mano / che mi hanno scolpito in lacrime sull'arco di Traiano / con un cucchiaio di vetro scavo nella mia storia / ma colpisco un po' a casaccio perché non ho più memoria."

[98] Nietzsche, Friedrich. *On the Advantage and Disadvantage of History for Life.* 1874. pp. 32, 64

[99] Nietzsche distances himself, eventually, from Wagner and his youthful belief in the power of his productions. He does so at the same time that he begins to distance himself from Romanticism and its search for a new mythology, beginning to believe that myths are for tearing down, not for reconstructing or reinventing.

[100] ibid., Chapter V

[101] ibid., Chapter V

[102]Benjamin, Walter. *Illuminations: Essays and Reflections.* Ed. Hannah Arendt. Trans. Harry Zohn. New York: Schocken Books, 1968. p. 222

[103] (Gatrell, 119)

[104] (Elias, 166)

[105] (Foucault, 304)

[106] "i partecipanti erano presentati direttamente dalle case editrici e discografiche, e selezionati da un complesso sistema di commissioni, giurie e votazioni, più volte cambiato nel corso degli anni e seguito di pressioni e proteste, da parte sia delle aziende musicali sia dei giornalisti, a cause di una gestione ritenuta spesso poco trasparente e sin troppo apertamente legata a interessi di parte." Santoro, Marco. *Effetto Tenco: genealogia della canzone d'autore*. Bologna: Il mulino, 2010. Print. p. 63

[107] Fabbri, Franco, and Goffredo Plastino. *Made in Italy: Studies in Popular Music.* N.p., 2013. Print.

[108] Fabrizio De André wrote the song "Faccia di cane" with Roberto Ferri for i New Trolls. The song participated in the 1985 Sanremo but De André asked that his name not be included as a songwriter.

[109] "A mio parere il maggior difetto di Sanremo consiste … nel clima traumaticamente competitivo della manifestazione, quasi che lo spettatore italiano non riesca a divertirsi altrimenti che dinnanzi ad un avvenimento agonistico; dimostrando, in tal modo, di non amare la musica generale o la canzone in particolare, quanto piuttosto la lotta, la tensione dei partecipanti e la loro ansia di superarsi nel duello che deve necessariamente dare un vincitore ed un vinto; in poche parole, la battaglia … guerra canora … non fa neppure onore al pubblico italiano, che in certe occasioni si dimostra il più degno erede dell'antico romano che sgranocchiava le noccioline agli spettacoli dei gladiatori." Translated by J. VanWagenen. in Sassi, 41

[110] "Ben, questo pubblico, l'anno scorso, l'emozione violenta che cercava l'ha avuta: un'emozione tanto violenta che se quest'anno— Dio non lo voglia — non dovesse succede proprio nulla di drammatico, forse qualcuno ci rimarrebbe male." Sassi, 41

[111] Jones, Jack. *Let Me Take You down: Inside the Mind of Mark David Chapman, the Man Who Killed John Lennon*. London: Virgin, 1993. Print. p. 118

[112] On March 9, 1973, Dario's Fo's lifelong companion, and artist and feminist movement activist in her own right, Franca Rame, was kidnapped and raped by a group of far-right terrorists.

[113] De André and his wife and popular artist, Dori Ghezzi, were kidnapped from their home in Sardegna on August 27, 1979, and held by a group anonymous Sardinian kidnappers demanding ransom from De André's father. They were held for four months outside, chained to a tree in a forest, and hooded unless being fed.

[114] "Fu lui, solo lui, il primo cantautore italiano … Perché è diventato famoso soltanto dopo la morte? … Ci andò di malavoglia [a Sanremo]. … Era un vero e proprio sacrificio, entrare nella bolgia di Sanremo." (Sassi, 39)

[115] Straniero, Michele L., Sergio Liberovici, Emilio Jona, Giorgio de Maria. *Le canzoni delle cattive coscienza.* Milano: Bompiani, 1964. p. 5

[116] Barthes, Roland. *Mythologies.* New York: Hill and Wang, 2012. Print.

[117] "Signori benpensanti / spero non vi dispiaccia / se in cielo, in mezzo ai Santi / Dio, fra le sue braccia / soffocherà il singhiozzo / di quelle labbra smorte / che all'odio e all'ignoranza / preferirono la morte."

[118] This came during a time that many were protesting ticket prices, a movement instigated by the periodical *Re nudo* (The Nude King) and discussed in more depth in "Cowboys, Indians … and Sardinians."

[119] "La rivoluzione non si fa con la musica. Prima si fa la rivoluzione, poi si potrà pensare alle arti o la musica. Lo diceva anche Majakovskji che era un vero rivoluzionario e si è suicidato. Suicidati anche tu!" Luzzatto Fegiz, Mario. "Concerto interrotto e palco invaso al Palalido." *Corriere della Sera* 3 Apr. 1976. Print.

[120] Boym, Svetlana. *Death in Quotation Marks: Cultural Myths of the Modern Poet.* Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1991. Print. p. 120

[121] ibid. p. 120.

[122] ibid. p. 160.

[123] "Mussolini ha scritto anche poesie, / i poeti che brutte creature, / ogni volta che parlano è una truffa"

[124] "Il pubblico mi fa paura." Sassi 46

[125] Track 1, "Via della povertà" is a translation of Dylan's "Desolation Row and begins, like Dylan's with the scene of a hanging; track 5 "Morire per delle idee," is a version of Brassens' "Mourir por des idées," as hinted at by its title, deals with dying for a cause; track 6 "Giovanna d'Arco" is a translation of Leonard Cohen's "Joan of Arc" and recounts her death as a martyr on the stake.

[126] In fact, when he is kidnapped for ransom, his father has to pay the kidnappers as his money is wholly invested in his farm.