"STOP! HEY! WHAT'S THAT SOUND?":

A CRITICAL RE-EXAMINATION OF THE SOCIO-POLITICAL FUNCTIONS OF 1960s POPULAR MUSIC IN AMERICA

MICHAEL J. STIAVNICKY

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Examination Committee members:

1. Anne MacLennan
2. Gerda Wekerle
3. Rob Bowman
4. Steve Bailey

ABSTRACT

The music of the 1960s was a unique confluence and expression of social, political, and musical forces. Out of the heavily politicized atmosphere of 1960s America, what can be considered some of the most socially poignant popular music of the twentieth century was created. In order to demonstrate the socio-political functions of popular music, and examine the effects that co-optation had on the spread of this music and its message, I conducted an ethnographic content analysis of the *Billboard* Top 40 popular music charts from 1957-1972. With such statistical data I traced the presence of socially conscious songs on the charts in order to demonstrate how the socially significant music of this era in fact spread to larger, more mainstream segments of the population. Furthermore, I have also offered a refreshing alternative for examining the concept of co-optation, which will open new doors into further research done by other academics.

DEDICATIONS

To my mother and father for teaching me how to teach, learn, live and love,

You, who are on the road
Must have a code
That you can live by.
And so, become yourself
Because the past
Is just a goodbye.

Teach, your children well
Their father's hell
Did slowly go by
And feed them on your dreams
The one they pick's
The one you'll know by.
Don't you ever ask them why?
If they told you, you would die
So just look at them and sigh
And know they love you.

And you (Can you hear and)
Of tender years (Do you care and)
Can't know the fears (Can you see we)
That your elders grew by (Must be free to)
And so please help (Teach your children)
Them with your youth (You believe and)
They seek the truth (Make a world that)
Before they can die (We can live in)

Teach your parents well
Their children's hell
Will slowly go by
And feed them on your dreams
The one they pick's
The one you'll know by.

Don't you ever ask them why?
If they told you, you would cry
So just look at them and sigh
And know they love you.

"Teach Your Children"
Graham Nash of Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young

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Do you believe in rock and roll?
And can music save your mortal soul? ...
The day the music died.[1]

Don McLean .

On January 15th 1972, American-born singer-songwriter Don McLean topped the American popular music charts with his folk-rock hit entitled "American Pie". Though "America Pie" was a tribute to the music of the 1960s, an ode to the decade's socially conscious ethos that inspired people to change , ironically, this song (and its subsequent popularization) also demarcated, as McLean sang himself in "American Pie" itself, "the day the music died". By "the day the music died", I understand (as I believe McLean intended as well) the metaphorical death of 1960s socially conscious popular music insofar as the positive ethos of progress, freedom, and equality, that it both inspired outwardly and seemingly carried intrinsically within it, had ended. McLean, in the various verses of "American Pie", explains the coming of the "death" of this era of music with lyrical descriptions of the decade's monumental social, political and cultural events. McLean sees this "death" as the result of particular pivotal social, political and cultural events that not only deepened the wedge between idealized progress and activism and led to a growing disenchantment within the counterculture movement itself, but also led to the creation of an inflated sense of confidence on behalf of mainstream America, which cyclically in turn led to greater resistance and intransigence against change.

Though it would be ludicrous to assert that the mass popularity and commercial success of "American Pie" was the immediate factor that brought

[1] Don McLean, "American Pie", *American Pie* (1972).

about the end of this era of music and its ethos of change, it is entirely reasonable to believe that it is a *signifier* of the end of this brand of socially conscious music as a popular and socially poignant trend. In other words, "American Pie" is a historically reflexive song, a tribute to something dear that has departed; it commemorates and celebrates the complete cycle of co-optation of this socially conscious music by both forces of commerce and politics. "American Pie", and its climb to the top of the American popular music charts, signified the end of the 1960s decade of music that McLean was attempting to honour because "American Pie" is itself a eulogy – be it an esoteric one for this brand of socially conscious music – and only things that are recently deceased can be paid homage to in such a manner. However, "American Pie" is not only the song that signified the end of 1960s music and the counterculture era, though it is an archetypal example of the culmination of the co-optation efforts made by forces of both mainstream government and capital – efforts made to capitalize on and control the popular social and musical movement.

Based on this notion, I consider "American Pie", and other socially conscious songs similar to it from this era, as exemplary cases of the concept of co-optation in praxis, as they demonstrate both the augmentative and "watering down" effects that co-optation can have in regard to music's socio-political functions. Though these efforts of co-optation may have often been disingenuous, insofar they were primarily driven by a commercial desire for profit, (as McLean acknowledged himself when questioned about the meaning of his "American Pie" as he answered: "It means that I never have to work

again!"[2]), popular socially conscious songs also functioned as a microcosm for the socio-political climate of the 1960s, a living example of how socially conscious music helped to absorb and diffuse a message of political and social responsibility into and across a mainstream discourse. Considered as such, though "American Pie" may no doubt have been a result of the forces of co-optation, as well as may have also been a sign of the end of this brand of socially conscious music, it was also no doubt a sign that the music during this period of time was a unique brand of music in that music had never before been both as *conscious* of social, economic, and political problems nor as *popular* on such a widespread scale. Furthermore, the socially conscious popular music of the 1960s was also unique insofar as it functioned toward a few particular political ends: the expansion of the civil rights project, and diffusion of awareness about important issues concerning the war in Vietnam. In other words, what I mean to say by this is that, "American Pie" and other popular socially conscious songs of the 1960s helped open up for the door social and political change by exposing mass numbers of people to the ideas of change and progress which were embedded in the music and educating them of important issues.

Many studies of the socio-political potentials of popular music in the 1960s and its role in the political and social activism of the decade indicate that, the process of *co-optation*, or the *popularization* of musical content, has often been seen as wholly negative process, one which directly leads to decay and decline of socially conscious or politically poignant music and its messages. (Denisoff, 1969,

[2] Dr. Alan Howard, "The Story of Don McLean", http://www.don-mclean.com/articles/play.asp?p=15 (accessed on June 24, 2009).

1970, 1972; Rodnitzky, 1971, 1999; and Gonczy, 1985) Though it is undeniable that the process of co-optation does indeed have an effect on the sound of the music, respective audience of a musical genre, and the patterns of music's consumption, it does not necessarily mean that the effects of co-optation are wholly negative, nor that they inevitably lead to an erosion of the genre of music's message or its cultural authenticity. In other words, it is my assertion that the co-optation of a musical style does not necessarily mean that the original or genuine message of a subculture is lost, just dispersed. Rather than looking at co-optation as purely a negative erosion process, I believe that it ought to be thought of as more of a *layered process,* one which functions in a multitude of ways with varied effects. Accordingly, rather than taking such a narrow-minded and negative approach towards a consideration of the process of co-optation, I intend to over the course of this thesis paper present the concept of co-optation as a more value–neutral process, more of a complex and multi-faceted concept. Borrowing from David Pichaske, I present co-optation as a process of *absorption* into the mainstream and *diffusion* through a larger audience and greater portion of the population.[3] This complication of the concept and process of co-optation helps me demonstrate how not only music, but also more importantly the *popular* music of the 1960s, facilitated social reform by challenging the norms, values and traditional ideologies of conservative America. Thereby critically examining the interaction between music and social movements of the 1960s, and analyzing the multi-directional flow between forces of capitalism, co-optation, and counter-

[3] David Pichaske, *A Generation in Motion,* Granite Falls: Ellis Pr, 1989. 153.

cultural social progress, this work will provide insight into the questions: 'whether the co-optation of socially conscious songs did inform portions of the population that would not normally have been knowledgeable of important socio-political events?'; 'whether people outside the movement used music as a tool for understanding or participating in a movements?'; and lastly, 'did the increased cultural exposure to once "radical" messages and ideas (such as the equality and liberation of blacks, or anti- Vietnam War protests) in the realm of popular culture help facilitate change in society by rendering those listening more tolerant of ideas about change through culturally pre-disposing them?'

Ultimately, it is my hypothesis that the music of the 1960s was a unique confluence and expression of social, political, and musical forces: the struggle for equality by blacks[4] in the Civil Rights Movement, mass student protest and campus oriented activism, the Vietnam War and its domestic opposition, the evolution and popularization of rock and roll, and underlying it all was the

[4] I used the verbiage of "blacks" over "African-Americans" for a twofold reason concerning the accuracy of *my* project. First, the term black is more *accurate* in that it accommodates for those racialized artist who were not only not of African descent but also those musicians who were not even Americans. Secondly, the term "black" is more *accurate* because it includes those "non-white performers who were not African-American per se. Instead it includes all racialized performers, quite simply, anyone who was not visibly white. Overall, this differentiation in terminology is important because American popular music during the 1960s still came from places all over the world and was created by artists with numerous different racial backgrounds. Though race is indeed a central aspect of my thesis, I do not want to harp on the ethnicities or origins of the artists or do so in a divisive way. Rather, my project is more concerned with the racialization (and de-racialization) that was going on in popular music and the larger political rhetoric in order to exposit if and how the musical messages of change facilitated greater social change. "Blackness" for this project's sake, is not so much a matter of self-identity, but more of a simple sense of being a societal visual cue. (This means that an artist like Trini Lopez, who was Mexican and may have been considered a social "other", was, by my assessment, considered white because visually he was white.) This choice to work off a visuals cues was not intended to simplify racial difference, or to marginalize anyone, but rather was to create a manageable and meaningful sample relevant to the context of the times. Also, in the instances where a band was comprised of multiple races, those chartings classified in the "black" category regardless of majority of a band's or band member's racial composition. (Note: In order to determine the racial identity of the artist, I consulted photographic evidence of each artist included in my sample.)

baby-boom. That, out of the tumultuous and heavily politicized atmosphere of the 1960s what can arguably be considered some of the most socially poignant popular music of the twentieth century was created. Socially conscious music of the 1960s celebrated a "coming together" of a generation that sought to change the world for the betterment of all of society; the music was littered with themes of brotherhood, equality, and peace. The socially conscious music of the 1960s was music that was intended to help a generation of student-activists challenge the social-praxis of society; music that sought to provide the emotional incentive as well as the intellectual and physical context for social activism. Over the course of this thesis paper, I will offer evidence that supports this claim and the general belief that music in the 1960s was not only used as an effective tool for *education, recruitment, reaffirmation* and *mobilization* within the social movements of the 1960s, but also how music helped facilitate and augment the spread of progressive messages through interaction with forces of large capital and its *popularization.*

In order to demonstrate the aforementioned functions of this brand of socially conscious music, as well as quantitatively and qualitatively measure the effects of co-optation on the diffusion and absorption of the message of change embedded in this music, I conducted an ethnographic content analysis of the *Billboard* Top Forty popular music charts from 1957 to 1972, and in so doing, traced the presence and potency of socially conscious songs on the charts within these years. The data collected from this study, will help me demonstrate the ways in which the socially significant music of this era, and the counter-cultural

message embedded within particular songs, spread and diffused to larger segments of the population that, without music, would have never been exposed to such politically charged messages. Essentially, I will argue that this brand of music helped facilitate the larger socio-political change as it was aimed at exposing the truth; at exposing the resistant mainstream to controversial social and political ideas in the cultural sphere before the political one and by challenging traditionally held "American" beliefs. I analyzed this type of music within the socio-political context of 1960s America, to provide insight into the discussion of the way this form of popular protest music helped a generation form and shape a new ideology of collective belief and identity – one that challenged the world around them and the "unjust, out-of-date" residual values of conservative America. This additional qualitative research helped to triangulate my ethnographic content analysis with a socio-historical contextualization of the important historical events of the decade as they relate to the music, as well as an analysis of the decade's defining music and musical events and their outward effect. This work also critically re-examines the existent literature on the political, social, and cultural functions (and limitations) of 1960s music as a "popular culture" insofar as it functioned as an alternative mode of social communication that gave expression to the emergent music and youth infused social movement (Eyerman and Jamison, 1991, 1995, 1998; Rosenthal, 2001; Pratt, 1989; and Reed, 2005), as well as, a form of popular culture that was commodified and co-opted by various social forces including the capitalist

recording industry and social movements themselves. (Denisoff, 1969, 1970, 1972; Rodnitzky, 1971, 1999; and Gonczy, 1985)

Review of the Literature

> In order to take the spiritual temperature of an individual or society, one must mark the music.[5]
>
> Plato

> Change is inscribed in noise faster than it transforms society.[6]
>
> Jacques Attali

Plato and Attali each offer an interpretation of the socio-cultural functions (or potentials) of music commenting on an inherent value that music carries within it *qua* being a creative output of humanity, however they have very different interpretations of this value. For Plato, music functions as if it were some sort of a 'social mirror' - a sort of metaphorical litmus paper for the context of the times. In this facet, music and knowledge of its thematic content is valuable insofar as it can provide an emotional window into a particular environmental, spatial or temporal context. Furthermore, according to Plato, music can help interested individuals differentiate people from one another, as well as provide insight into these groups of people, their values, beliefs and aspirations. Jacques Attali on the other hand, focuses more on how music functions as an inherent expression of emotive human experiences and interactions for both other people and their environment. He highlights the

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[5] Plato, *Republic*, Translated by Desmond Lee, Toronto: Penguin Classics, 2000. 88.
[6] David James, "The Vietnam War and American Music", *Social Text*, Vol. 23, Autumn-Winter Issue, 1989. 125.

power that is often inscribed within music intrinsically, a power that can change social and individual attitudes, beliefs, and truths *before* they are ever really consciously discussed or thought of, and definitely before they enter into, or become part of the collective conscience. According to Attali, music's dynamic ability to critically engage with the social values and cultural mores oftentimes acts as an antecedent to socio-political change by exposing people to ideas about change through culture before they experience the inevitable destabilization of society that change would surely bring. In its simplest positive formulation, music functions to make people more likely to accept and enact change as it predisposes them to not only sympathetic ideas but towards general support of the message or cause.

Though referencing quotes that are separated by over two thousand years of human history may seem peculiar or irrelevant, these two quotes actually serve as excellent examples that underscore two very important functions of music relevant to the popular music of the 1960s and its role in supporting and stimulating social change. Those who have written on the topic of the socio-political potentials and effects of music in the 1960s can be divided into two respective camps: "Platonists" and "Attalians". I not only polarize and critique the aforementioned two theoretical camps, but also through a critical re-examination of the concept (and effects) of co-optation, synthesize these two groups positions with regard to each other. I will first present, and refute, the arguments of the Platonists. After which, I will highlight the arguments of the

Attalians and point out the methodological shortcomings of their strict "in-movement" approach.

The Platonists Position & Respective Critiques

The 'Platonists' argue that music provides knowledge of a particular socio-political climate or context, but cannot ever provide the emotional or intellectual incentive for action, change or reform. The three leading academics that continue the traditions of Plato are: R. Serge Denisoff, Jerome L. Rodnitzky, and Daniel J. Gonczy. These three academics, in each of their respective considerations of the socio-political functions of 1960s music, employ a similar critical theory approach, to similarly conclude that, political music is limited to working within a given social movement. That, in other words, socio-political music has no function outside of the one it provides those already actively involved in a social movement. R. Serge Denisoff perhaps expresses this collective belief best, when he states that, "in the context of social movements, songs evidence the creation of moral re-affirmation rather than the function of building outside support."[7]

R. Serge Denisoff's absolutist position on popular political music and his dichotomization of the protest music of the Civil Rights Movement stands out. Unlike Jerome Rodnitzky and Daniel Gonczy, for whom the folk revival and popular protest music was once potentially a genuine political force co-opted and inevitably watered down, Denisoff argues the popular folk content of the

[7] R. Serge Denisoff, "Protest Songs: Those on the Top Forty and Those of the Streets", *American Quarterly*, Winter Vol. 22: 1970. 807.

early 1960s that was abundant on college campuses across all of the country was *completely* apolitical as it was only ever commercially inspired.

To elaborate, for Denisoff there was a critical divide between the *political action* of the decade of the 1960s and its *political music*. Though Denisoff asserts music can sometimes be political in its *direct* usages, he is skeptical about how much political resolve comes as a result of the popularization of socio-political music. In his work "Protest Songs: Those on the Top Forty and Those of the Streets", Denisoff considers the socio-political potentials of popular protest music by utilizing Barry McGuire's "Eve of Destruction" – an overtly socially conscious number one hit that charted in September 1965 – as a critical case example for assessing the ability of all popular music's ability to garner outside support and sway mainstream opinion with its persuasive rhetoric. In order to support his conclusions, Denisoff conducted an ethnographic survey of 158 random students at a junior college in the San Francisco area.[8] A school which Denisoff himself acknowledged as having a "student body [that] was generally conservative and apolitical in contrast to the four-year schools in the region such as the University of California at Berkeley and San Francisco State college."[9]

Therefore, this is my first objection to Denisoff's methodologies, sampling and conclusions. That, by selecting an *apolitical* school rather than a more political one, as well by conducting his survey at a junior college wherein the student populous was much younger, Denisoff has already tailored and segmented his sample in a manner that has led to greater support his desired

[8] Ibid, 812.
[9] Ibid.

conclusion. For example, if the students polled (on aggregate) know less about contemporary socio-political issues, are less politically active, and are relatively sheltered from the world, then surely the results are going to reflect such apolitical attitudes.

Another critique that I would like to make against Denisoff is, that from this already questionable and highly scrutinized sampling method he further concludes that only 24 per cent of the total sample of students who were polled had a positive response. Or in other words, only one quarter of the students polled even recognized that "Eve of Destruction" was at all: "meaningful", "original", or "saying something".[10] However, in the same poll, Denisoff also quietly acknowledges that a daunting 46 per cent of all respondents who participated in his survey had "No Opinion" on whether Barry McGuire's "Eve of Destruction" had any meaning at all. Based on this, my objection to Denisoff's methodology is that Denisoff contorts his statistical data by focusing on the "fact" that only 24 per cent, the minority of respondents had a positive response, while attempting to remain ignorant to the fact that 46 per cent of all people polled in his sample, either found "Eve of Destruction" so poetic, and so esoteric that they could not even comprehend its message – or they simply did not care enough to take the time and energy to answer Denisoff's questionnaire thoughtfully. In other words, it is my assertion that the data that Denisoff used to support his conclusions was simply not meaningful enough to yield and soundly justify the conclusions that he attempts to ground with it. What I mean to say is

[10] Ibid, 814.

that, when Denisoff concludes based on his selective sample of results that, "protest songs disseminated by the mass media do not appear to transcend the reaffirmation function"[11], it is my assertion that his previous methodological oversights are enough to discredit his conclusions. Rather than speak about the efficacy of interpretation for *all* of popular protest music, Denisoff should confine his conclusions to the degree of generalization that his sample can support. Though I do not agree with the conclusions Denisoff draws, nor see the "interpretability problem" of popular protests songs as a legitimate critique that would prevent me from using such a technique in my own research, it is worth noting that he still does raise some interesting points about the commercial nature of some protest songs versus other songs – points which are worthy of critical discussion.

For example, in his dichotomization of the genre of 1960s protest music Denisoff creates two interesting concepts that help to differentiate the socially conscious music of the 1960s: "protest songs" and "freedom songs". Denisoff refers to popular socially conscious songs (such as "Eve of Destruction" for example), songs that are primarily aimed at commercial success rather than direct political participation, as "protest songs".[12] According to Denisoff, 'protest songs are largely professionalized pieces of music before they are statements about society. Though they sometimes make statements about the nature of society, or critically question social relations of power, these songs are still often written or at least performed by professional musicians and oriented toward

[11] Ibid, 818.
[12] Ibid, 820.

individual consumption. They are primarily composed as an entertainment enterprise and for the sale and redistribution to a larger more generalized audience.[13] Moreover, according to Denisoff, 'protest songs' lack outward political potency insofar as they do not have the ability to recruit new members to a social movement, or inform outsiders of its cause. [14] Ultimately, for Denisoff the audiences are too diffuse and more often than not do not comprehend the socio-political content of the song, thereby missing its message the majority of the time. [15]

Denisoff contrasts the commercially inspired genre of 'protest songs', with what he calls "freedom songs"[16]. "Freedom songs" are on the other hand, the songs used in moments of direct political action and collective protest. They are "aimed at the committed in times when social action was in progress or contemplated."[17] 'Freedom songs are the songs of the Civil Rights Movements, songs such as "We Shall Overcome". They are the songs that activists sang collectively as they marched the streets of places such as Birmingham and Selma, Alabama in pursuit of their equality under the law and recognition of civil rights. According to Denisoff, "these [freedom] songs, in contrast to the efforts of the mass media, are designed to achieve specific goals for a defined audience...they are intelligible and political, not part of the entertainment enterprise."[18] Put quite simply the "freedom songs" of the 1960s were political insofar as they served a

[13] Ibid, 819-20.
[14] Ibid, 813-14.
[15] Ibid.
[16] Ibid, 818-19.
[17] Ibid, 819.
[18] Ibid, 820.

direct political purpose in a particular moment of protest. Therefore, Denisoff argues, this type of song: the non-commercial, in-movement brand of protest music is political. And, it is only political insofar as if it serves as a source of moral reaffirmation and collectivism in a particular political moment.[19]

The crux of Denisoff's differentiation between "protest songs" and "freedom songs" is simply the commodified nature of the former as popular music. In other words, because protest songs are primarily expressions of capitalism and displays of its materialistic nature, Denisoff discredits any potential for them to have any outward socio-political effect. Denisoff dismisses 'protest songs' as politically potent, songs like "Eve of Destruction", when he states:

> Eve was not written to be used in a protest movement or a demonstration. Rather, it was an expression of intellectual discontent cast in symbolic form. Its idiom was that of commercial music – of entertainment. It did not *directly* speak to or attack the social order. And the song does not presuppose that the listener is engaged in facilitating social change.[20]

Denisoff asserts that, due to their *individualistic* and *commercial* nature, as well as usage of poetic metaphors and symbolism, protest songs did not directly support movement activity and therefore were not in any noticeable or traceable way political. (Daniel J. Gonczy, supports Denisoff's conclusion that music's limit to a re-affirmative role with his own assertion that this era's music can be primarily characterized as esoteric and elitist.[21] Gonczy agreed that both freedom

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[19] Ibid, 822.
[20] Ibid.
[21] Daniel J. Gonczy, "The Folk Music Movement of the 1960s: Its Rise and Fall", *Popular Music and Society*, Vol. 10: Issue 1, 1985. 27.

and protest songs only functioned to persuade those who were already involved in the movement or predisposed to intellectual and ideological support.) However, 'if popular protest songs were not political, then how, and why did "Eve of Destruction" – with its evident thematic content about racism, social injustice, and a sense of nuclear annihilation growing from an increasing divide between the East and West – ever reach number #1 on the popular music charts especially seeing as how it was considered a socially taboo song? ("Eve of Destruction" was banned on many popular radio stations during its popular period.'[22]) Therefore, it is my assertion that though these comparative concepts of "protest songs" and "freedom songs" provide for some thought provoking analysis of the different social and political functions of music, they do not stand to be mutually exclusive, nor are they so clearly determinable in praxis.

In order to deconstruct and debunk Denisoff's distinction between 'protest' and 'freedom songs' in practical application, I will highlight and contrast the reality of the mass popularity of the song "We Shall Overcome" as a form of popular music and political protest. In other words, it is worth noting that the song that Denisoff points to as the archetypal in-movement, 'freedom song', "We Shall Overcome" itself charted at number ninety on the *Billboard* Top 100 songs of the year in November of 1963 with popular folk musician, Joan Baez's cover version.[23] In other words, "We Shall Overcome" was itself a *popular* song, a song with a presence on the popular music charts. This means that,

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[22] John C. McWilliams, *The 1960s Cultural Revolution*, Westport: Greenwood Press, 2000. 19.
[23] Joel Whitburn, *Billboard: Top Pop Artists & Singles, 1955-1978*, Menomonee Falls; Record Research Inc., 1979. 24.

though people did indeed use this song on the streets of Birmingham and Selma, these people and others *also* listened to it at home on their car radios and in their homes in places outside of direct political action. Though Baez's charting at the ninetieth position with "We Shall Overcome" is not nearly as significant as the number one charting of Barry McGuire's "Eve of Destruction", (and therein is not as strong of a representation of the mainstream culture), it still does demonstrate some blurring between what Denisoff seemingly strictly dichotomizes as 'freedom' and 'protest' songs. The (albeit limited) commercial success of "We Shall Overcome" undermines Denisoff's strict assertion that, protest music, with a commercial idiom, does not challenge the social order because protest music does not require any sort of activism from its listeners, only their consumption. The dual popularity and political poignancy of "We Shall Overcome" demonstrates that the popularization of a song does not necessarily result in the erosion of its socio-political effect as Denisoff asserted it did.

Another tidbit of information worth noting about "We Shall Overcome" is that Joan Baez was only one of many artists to record the song in the context of the Civil Rights Movement. Other performers to record prior versions included: Guy Carawan, Mahalia Jackson, Jamila Jones, Taj Mahal and Pete Seeger.[24] Therefore, not only does Joan Baez's 1963 version of "We Shall Overcome" make evident that the 'freedom song' had been co-opted and popularized for a long time already, but it also begs the question: 'what made Baez's version more

[24] Jim Brown, *We Shall Overcome* [video-recording], San Francisco: California Newsreel, 1988.

popular than the others?' The fact that Baez's "We Shall Overcome", a movement song lacking any stereotypical qualities of popular music and one that narrowly differed from the versions prior, charted on the national popular music charts in 1963 is most likely evidence of the coinciding blossoming popularity and momentum of the Civil Rights Movement rippling through society – though some credit could also be attributed to Baez's clout as a popular singer and presence as a movement personality. In 1963, Joan Baez was one of the elite few who were both political and musically popular enough to spread the message of social change effectively to those both inside and outside the already existent (and somewhat limited) social movement.

If the above critical examination of "We Shall Overcome" and its popularity is evidence of the commercial propensity of both 'protest' and 'freedom songs' which subsequently undermines Denisoff's assertion, then so too does T.V. Reed's example of instances in which protest music was altered to become a freedom song during the 1960s. In his article "Singing Civil Rights: The Freedom Song Tradition", T.V. Reed continues Denisoff's examination of the 'freedom song' tradition. However, rather than come to a conclusion about the qualitative difference between 'protest' and 'freedom songs' and how co-optation limits music's socio-political potentials, Reed prefers to acknowledge historical instances in which the line between the two dichotomies was increasingly blurred. For example, in support of his attempt to blur the commercial idiom that is used as the basis for discrimination, Reed cites the actions of the 1960 Greensboro, "sit-ins" – the grassroots act of protest of four local college students

against the general practice of segregation and active discrimination at their local Woolworth department store – and the subsequent re-appropriation of contemporary popular music as a critical case example. He cites these examples because he asserts they demonstrate the two-way flow of co-optation and the fact that popular songs can too be easily adapted in order to be used as 'freedom songs' in times of direct political action.[25] "The Greensboro sit-ins were a warning to America's white populace in 1960 that it could anticipate similar acts of civil disobedience in the future" and popular music was a central part of protest.[26] One example Reed cites of popular music's importance in cementing itself as an important socio political force was when, at the Greensboro "sit-ins" students re-appropriated Little Willie John's "You Better Leave My Kitten Alone", a song that was re-appropriated during the sit-ins, from a popular R&B song about a jealous lover's warning to a presumed rival, into a freedom song that mockingly warned blacks against the coming intransigence of some whites.

> You better leave segregation alone,
> Because they love segregation like a hound dog loves a bone.[27]

Similarly, Reed cites another example with Ray Charles's "Moving On", another popular R&B song, this time about a bad relationship and a lover's need to walk away. This song was altered to be expressive of the black experience of segregation. The new lyrics of "Moving On" sang:

> Segregation's been here from time to time,
> But we just ain't gonna pay it no mind,

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[25] T.V. Reed, "Singing Civil Rights: The Freedom Song Tradition", *The Art of Protest: Culture and Activism from the Civil Rights Movement to the Streets of Seattle*, T.V. Reed, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2005. 20.
[26] John C. McWilliams, *The 1960s Cultural Revolution*, 33.
[27] T.V. Reed, "Singing Civil Rights: The Freedom Song Tradition", 20.

It's moving on...
Old Jim Crow's moving on down the track,
He's got his bags and he won't be back...
Well I thought they was jiving about Jim Crow's gone,
So I went down to his house and he sure wasn't home![28]

Just as when one realizes a romantic relationship has gone sour, black southerners had the same moment of revelation, with aide of these songs, about the source of their social, economic and political anguish: systematic and informal practices of racism, like segregation and its laws. This impromptu, on-the-spot, process of re-appropriating popular songs and their lyrics in order to change this music into a "freedom song" no doubt demonstrates an intrinsic power within music itself, regardless of its narrative structure, degree of co-optation and often meaning, to offer itself to collective singing and involvement in direct political action. Events like the 1957 Alabama Bus Boycott, the Freedom Rides of 1961, and of course the 1960-61 Greensboro sit-in's usage of music as an integral part of protest strategy, cemented music as a quintessential part of the social movements of the 1960s. The barriers between protest songs and freedom songs had began to crumble, and with it the barriers that stood in the way of change, would soon follow.

In 1963, when contemporary folk musician Pete Seeger responded to the nature of "We Shall Overcome", he simply stated that, in his interpretation, "We Shall Overcome" was a song *for* the oppressed.[29] Though Pete Seeger is no doubt one of the fathers of modern folk and someone of whom I greatly admire, the fact of the matter is that this claim would support someone like Denisoff, and in my

[28] Ibid, 21.
[29] Jim Brown, *We Shall Overcome* [video-recording] California Newsreel (1988).

assessment sell-short the potentials of music at this time. For, music at this time was not only being used as a pedagogy for the oppressed in situations of *direct* political action of the Civil Rights Movement – and this criteria should not count as the only one for assessing how music can support social change. In other words, surely freedom songs *did* provide a real source of moral legitimization and affirmation as both Denisoff and Seeger acknowledged. As the "'litanies against fear'...freedom songs became...an indispensable part of a deep-seated process of personal political transformation."[30] But they also did something to spark the popularity of this brand of music. Or, as [activist] Bruce Hartford remembers it,

> We were singing...somehow, I can't explain it through the singing and the sense of solidarity we made a psychological barrier between us and the mob.[31]

I make this distinction about the dual prospect for political affect in both protest and freedom songs because it is important to highlight the advantages that having different intended audiences of 'freedom songs' and 'protest songs' can have as, as previously noted, these songs were respectively different insofar as they *represented*, and were *targeted* to, different segments of the population.

Therefore, it is only reasonable to presume that the effects of each form of protest music would have correspondingly different functions. The music of the Civil Rights Movement, what Denisoff considers freedom songs, were solely used by people who are without choice or any other option but activism and performed at times of direct activism. This is what makes them political for

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[30] Ibid.
[31] Ibid.

Denisoff, and that may be so. Thus, singing freedom songs was a direct political behaviour as a freedom song *qua* being a 'freedom song' can only be used in a situation of protest. However, on the 'flip side', just because popular protest songs are or were popular, their audiences diffuse, and their meanings sometimes esoteric, it does not correspond in my assessment (unlike Denisoff's) that their co-optation correspondingly renders them to have no overtly measurable socio-political effects.

Rather than draw such a sharp line in the sand about the essence or primordial motive of popular music, and accordingly devalue particular songs based on their degree of involvement in a system of economic exchange as Denisoff does, it may be most beneficial to consider protest music, regardless of its degree of commercialism, audience orientation, or its given context or environment, on more of a continuum. Rather than deny all socio-political efficacy of protest songs because of their commercial idiom, protests songs like Barry McGuire's "Eve of Destruction" should be considered as an opportunity to spread the message of change through the medium of music to new audiences and potential movement supporters. Moreover, the fact that "Eve of Destruction" reached number one in 1965 and charted so high could also be recognized as a potential process of cultural exposure to some of the counterculture messages and themes to a larger, more mainstream public.

Rather than considering co-optation to be a process that made the socially conscious music of the 1960s entirely devoid of all of its socio-political content, Rodnitzky and Gonczy both view this process as more of a mainstream curiosity

in the emergent music's message; a curiosity that subsequently results in an influx of commercial interest, and an eventual watering down of the music and any message it may have had. (Rodnitzky, 1971; Gonczy, 1985) According to Rodnitzky and Gonczy, music may have indeed once been political or had a positive effect towards facilitating social change, but it has since soured insofar as it was co-opted, fragmented, or polarized. In their respective works, both Jerome Rodnitzky and Daniel Gonczy consider the effects co-optation on the unique brand of socio-political music that was blossoming in the early 1960s.

In "The Folk Music Movement of the 1960s: Its Rise and Fall", Daniel Gonczy takes a similar approach to the one that Don McLean uses in his popular song "American Pie". Gonczy, akin to McLean, demarcates particular important socio-cultural events that led to both the development of music as an integral part of the social movements of the early 1960s and later, to its subsequent co-optation, fragmentation, and dilution. Gonczy marks the beginning of the folk revival and catalyst for the newfound marriage between music and politics as the Kingston Trio's 1958 recording of "Tom Dooley". From this recording on, a relationship would gain strength between music and politics with the subsequent music of folk-singer activists such as Joan Baez, Bob Dylan, Richard Farina, Pete Seeger and Phil Ochs.[32] Furthermore, Gonczy acknowledges that in the early years of the folk revival (1960 to 1964), music and musicians found themselves at the forefront of political activism catapulted there by events such as the 1960 Greensboro sit-ins, the numerous Freedom Rides through the

[32] Daniel Gonczy, "The Folk Music Movement of the 1960s: Its Rise and Fall", 15.

Southern states, and the 1963 culmination of music and politics at the March on Washington – an event which thrust musicians into the limelight and concretized music as a central movement activity with their involvement in moments of political protest.[33] The March on Washington was a particular poignant event because it placed popular musicians Joan Baez, Bob Dylan, Mahalia Jackson, and Marian Anderson, in front of the same audience, on the same stage as civil rights movement leader Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. on the same hot day in August, when he delivered his famous "I Have a Dream" speech.[34]

Gonczy's analysis of the socio-political effects of 1960s popular music does not stop at the "in-movement" function of protest music, acknowledging (unlike Denisoff but similar to Rodnitzky) that, music and musicians were also taking an active role in critiquing and calling attention to important social and political issues concerning the liberty, equality, and fair treatment of all people regardless of race "outside" of their music (in moments of direct political action as well as in the minds of many Americans through the critical and topical content of many of these songs.) Hence, in addition to performing live at protest events during this *early* period of the 1960s in order to show their support, many of these same musicians now began to pen and perform their own socio-politically conscious, or topical protest songs as a mode of protest. These songs were often about a wide range of contemporary, controversial events mostly to do with the Civil Rights Movement. In this way, popular folk music functioned similarly to a

[33] Ibid, 17-18.
[34] Klaus Fischer, *America in White, Black, and Grey: The Stormy Sixties*, New York: Continuum International Publishing, 2006. 118.

newspaper insofar as it *informed, educated* and *positioned* its listeners of particular important civil rights atrocities, generational moments of struggle, and historical moments that increased the urgency for social against segregation.

In 1962 for example, songs like Bob Dylan's "Oxford Town" called attention to the domestic fiasco created by the conservative backlash against the enrollment of the first black student at the University of Mississippi, James Meredith. Again, music played the role of herald when, in 1963 civil rights activist and widely respected field secretary of the Mississippi chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) Medgar Evers, was assassinated by *presumably*[35] Ku Klux Klan member Byron De La Beckwith. Famous folk singer-songwriters Nina Simone, Phil Ochs, and Bob Dylan each respectively recorded their own musical condemnations of this event with, respectively: "Mississippi Goddam" (1964), "Too Many Martyrs" (1964), and "Only a Pawn in Their Game" (1964). Each of these artists sang the story of Evers's death, and told of the growing sense of urgency for the need for equality, as well as the increasing need for agency of black people that such event brought on. Additionally, this augmented interaction between music and politics during this period is particularly evident when one considers the following socially conscious song examples of other civil rights atrocities.

First, Bob Dylan's "The Death of Emmitt Till" (1962) told the story of the lynching and brutal murder of fourteen year-old black Emmitt Till who was killed by an all-white mob – an all-white mob which was never brought to trial.

[35] presumably due to the verdict rendered by the all-white jury that acquitted De La Beckwith after reaching deadlock on two separate occasions in 1964.

Similarly, Dylan's "The Lonesome Death of Hattie Carroll" (1964) is a ballad that similarly told the story of a black Baltimore barmaid Hattie Carroll's murder by a white southerner William Zantzinger who was sentenced to only six months in prison for second degree murder. Richard Farina's "Birmingham Sunday" (1964) described the bombing of a black church in Birmingham, Alabama in September of 1963, an attack which resulted in the death of four young girls and no prosecutions. Not to mention the plethora of political songs about the threat of nuclear annihilation and dangers or anxieties created by living in a 'push-button' Cold-War context society including Dylan's "Masters of War" (1964), "A Hard Rain's Gonna Fall" (1964), "Talkin' World War III Blues" (1964), and Ochs's "Talkin' Cuban Crisis" (1964).

Based on these early examples, Gonczy argues that the music during this early period of the 1960s had a unique quality that made it political insofar as it bounced between the real world and culture – it commented on and responded to a particular contemporary lived experience.[36] During this early period from 1960 to 1964, "the civil rights movement of the 1960s was creating its own 'tradition', and the music...contributed new attitudes and experiences."[37] The immediacy and direct nature of the interaction between music and politics made, for Gonczy, the music of the early part of the decade political insofar as it both functioned re-affirmatively in movements, as well as to notify people of the urgency for change. However, in the summer of 1965, Gonczy highlights two quintessential events, one cultural and one political, that he believes had an

[36] Daniel Gonczy, "The Folk Music Movement of the 1960s: Its Rise and Fall", 16.
[37] Ibid, 26.

enormous impact on the vigor and intensity of the civil rights movement as well as the collective unity of protest music and its committed followers.

The first of these occasion occurred in July of '65 when Bob Dylan "went electric" and was 'booed off' the stage at the folk music festival in Newport, Rhode Island by some of the more "hardcore" folk music folk. According to Gonczy, this signified the commercialization of folk music thus ending its golden age with its splintering.[38] Dylan's "selling-out", combined with the devastating August riots in the Watts section of Los Angeles, which clearly demonstrated that the Civil Rights Movement was really heating up, collectively showed that the projects for progress of the social movements and the music of the 1960s were both becoming more fragmented ideologically and racially segregated.[39] According to Gonczy, the commercial and political successes of the folk music revival in the early part of the decade were a Janus-faced monster insofar as they inherently and inevitably led to their co-optation and dilution of socio-politically conscious music toward the latter half of the decade. However, rather than view the years 1964 and 1965 as years in which music eroded and evaporated as a social force due to increased social inertia, I believe that during these years, interest and knowledge of important social issues actually grew due to the co-optation, as well as many important events took place that initiated the process of the polarization of the American population that came about in the later 1960s and early 1970s.

[38] Ibid, 27.
[39] Ibid, 28.

Whereas Gonczy glamourizes the 'good ole days' of folk music and then points to its co-optation to demonstrate its decline, Jerome Rodnitzky, takes the reverse approach by focusing on the post-1965 effects of co-optation. He points to critical case examples of folk music's co-optation, commercialization and subsequent decadence in order to demonstrate its inefficacy as a socio-political force in the latter half of the 1960s. In "The Decline of Contemporary Protest Music" Rodnitzky argues that "during the last five years, [1966 to 1971] protest music has increasingly lost its meaning."[40] This decline of the socio-political poignancy of protest songs, for Rodnitzky, directly corresponds to the popularization of such socially conscious songs. Rodnitzky, similar to Gonczy and Denisoff, pins down 1965 as the critical year of commercialization for socially conscious songs, and points to Barry McGuire's "Eve of Destruction" – a song written and composed by P.F. Sloan, for which McGuire was chosen to sing because of his mainstream qualities and propensity to be accepted by popular music consumers – as an integral catalyst for co-optation. Accordingly, Rodnitzky views the subsequent folk-rock boom and music of Bob Dylan, Simon & Garfunkel, The Byrds, Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young, and Joni Mitchell, as commercially inspired, either too bland or vague in socio-political content to be truly considered political.[41] Similarly, he regards the politicization of some hard rock as a politically vacuous movement too. The music of the Rolling Stones, The

[40] Jerome L. Rodnitzky, "The Decline of Contemporary Protest Music", *Popular Music and Society*, Vol. 1: Issue 1, 44.
[41] Ibid, 45.

Doors and Jefferson Airplane was considered to be too infused with drug influence, they were '"too hazy" to be political.[42] According to Rodnitzky,

> the words, style, and music [of these songs] are all open to various poetic interpretations. They are really do-it-yourself protest songs seeing as how you can read your own problems into them.[43]

Ultimately, Rodnitzky asserts that the music of the latter decade was no longer political as it was no longer attached to any movement activity or any real form of organized activity. He writes about the socio political poignancy of the decade's late music, that:

> Media [generally] co-opt radical reform by diluting content and dulling fervor ... [Therefore] the question is not whether protest music is alive and well commercially ... The real present problem is that protest music has been fragmented by its commercial success, cultural acceptance, and failure to establish relationships with specific social reform movements.[44]

For Rodnitzky, the process of co-optation is conceived of as wholly negative process insofar as it is restricted to functions that water down both the music-in-itself and its involvement in social movements. In other words, he views the only tangible resolve of the co-optation of this brand of socially conscious music as a fragmentation, polarization, and disintegration of political movements into more musical movements – not necessarily political ones.[45]

Collectively, Gonczy and Rodnitzky believe that the socially conscious protest music of the 1960s, as a result of its commodification and co-optation by the mainstream media, was significantly different in style, content, and context

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[42] Ibid, 44-5.
[43] Ibid, 45.
[44] Ibid, 49.
[45] Ibid, 49-50.

by the latter part of the decade than it was at the beginning. They argue that the ethos of the socially significant protest song had eroded toward the end of the decade insofar as a few, less popular performers only continued it, and considered against a genre of folk-rock mainly made up of other, less socially significant protest music.[46] Therefore, Gonczy and Rodnitzky restricted the political music of the 1960s to an "in-movement" role believing that when efforts of co-optation and popularization were made and such forces introduced, protest music was no longer, *qualitatively* the same.

However, what is selectively neglected by Rodnitzky & Gonczy is that there were actually *quantitatively* more socially conscious protest songs on the *Billboard* Top 40 songs during the latter half of the decade than there was in the former. Clearly, the concept of co-optation should be looked at as a more multi-layered process wherein there are more than just negative effects. In the same processes of popularization and co-optation as well as in the augmented mainstream interest of this genre of politically potent protest music, it is also likely that some people were *exposed to, educated by,* and possibly *reformed by* its message beyond being merely just *sold* to by record companies. Quite simply, co-optation did not directly lead to the creation and a cultural vacuum for socio-political content, and to believe that it did, in my assessment is absurd.

[46] Rodnitzky, Jerome L., "The Sixties Between the Microgrooves: Using Folk and Protest Music to Understand American History", *Popular Music and Society*, Winter Vol. 23 Issue 4, 1999. 110.

The Attalians: Music as a Knowledge Producer

> When songs are sung about oppression, whether it is channeled through [themes of] racism, poverty or brutality they are elementally dangerous because they are exposing the reality of situations which those in power would prefer to be masked. Songs that strip away illusions and show things as they are, are subversive simply because they tell the truth. In societies structured around discrimination nothing is more subversive than the truth.[47]

As Mary Ellison acknowledges above, music can be an elementally dangerous political weapon as it often has the power to unmask the truth in situations of oppression. The researchers I have grouped as 'Attalians' collectively assert that music, carries within it this intrinsic power that simultaneously changes and reforms society once it enters the popular consciousness. This immediate change comes as a result of the fact that music infuses new forms of knowledge into the public sphere that inherently point out the contradictions of the oppressive situation. All of the academics that I consider to be part of the this camp are connected to each other insofar as they all focus on the role of music *within* social movements of the 1960s, and then deduce its effects outwards. (Eyerman & Jamison, 1991, 1995, 1998; Rosenthal, 2001; Reed, 2005; and Pratt 1989) They use an "inside-out perspective" because rather than look at the situations or context in which this music took place as the main contributing factors, the Attalians primarily focus on how the protest music of the 1960s functioned to *create* new opportunities for activism, those that directly supported change. Furthermore, they assert that music, by infusing the public sphere with new forms of knowledge not only questioned the existing social

[47] Mary Ellison, "Consciousness of Poverty in Black Music", *Popular Music and Society*, Vol. 10, Issue 2: 1985. 41.

order both domestically and internationally, but also offered new ideas about the dignity, freedom and equality of all of humanity; ideas which thereby helped reinforce and facilitate the projects of decade's progressive social movements.

The leading academics of the Attalians are collaborators Ron Eyerman and Andrew Jamison. Using their "cognitive-praxis approach"[48], Eyerman and Jamison examine the role of music in the political movements of the 1960s and argue that music and musicians of the 1960s helped articulate not only the messages of the Civil Rights Movement and anti-Vietnam War protests, but also inherently and commensurably functioned as a source of collective identity formations for a large demographic of college-aged activists who identified with the music and its subculture.[49] Eyerman and Jamison assert that their cognitive approach highlights the ability of social movements to: *create* new kinds of identities both for collectives and individuals; as well as give *expression to* the forms of knowledge that are valued and shared by particular groups of people, in particular temporal or spatial contexts.[50] "The cognitive approach views social movements primarily as knowledge producers, as social forces that open up spaces for the production of new forms of knowledge."[51] Eyerman and Jamison applied this approach to the study of the 1960s social movements while focusing

[48] Ron Eyerman & Andrew Jamison, *Social Movements: A Cognitive Approach*, Cambridge: Polity Press, 1991. 3.
[49] Ron Eyerman & Andrew Jamison, "Social Movements and Cultural Transformation: Popular Music in the 1960s", *Media, Culture and Society*, Vol. 17: 1995. 452.
[50] Ron Eyerman & Andrew Jamison, *Social Movements: A Cognitive Approach*, 3.
[51] Ron Eyerman & Andrew Jamison, "Social Movements & Cultural Transformation", 450.

on music's role in facilitating large socio-political change insofar as it acted as a "knowledge producer"[52].

According to Eyerman and Jamison, music often functioned as an important source of knowledge production for the social movements of the 1960s as musicians, such as Phil Ochs, Tom Paxton, Pete Seeger, Buffy Saint-Marie, Ed McCurdy, and Malvina Reynolds, to name a few, were integral to movement activity right from the 'get-go'.[53] "Folk music...serve[d] as an important 'medium' for communicating the multifaceted message of protest."[54] In other words, Eyerman and Jamison acknowledged that the social movements of the 1960s, and the inherent hope they carried for a better future through their proposed widespread social reform, often provided inspiration for the *content* for popular protest music, particularly considering it was already a prevalent topic in the hearts and minds of many Americans. Additionally, music, in many ways and on many occasions, provided the *context* for social engagement by attracting large gatherings of socially active people.

> The movement provided the folk singers with more than an audience, it provided content and a sense of mission over and above the commercial...One could almost say, if it were not of the movement there would not have been a folk revival in America in the early 1960s. ... But the flow of influence can also be traced the other way. In this period, popular music was one of the main mediating forces, forms of translation, between the movement's more obvious expressions, mass demonstrations, organizations, and the wider population.[55]

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[52] Ron Eyerman & Andrew Jamison, *Social Movements: A Cognitive Approach*, 55.
[53] Ron Eyerman & Andrew Jamison, *Music & Social Movements: Mobilizing Traditions in the Twentieth Century*, New York; Cambridge University Press, 1998. 122-23.
[54] Ibid, 122.
[55] Ron Eyerman & Andrew Jamison, "Social Movements & Cultural Transformation", 459.

Eyerman and Jamison highlight the 'two-way flow' that took place between forces of popular music and social movements in the 1960s and argue that this interaction was mutually beneficial. In other words, the *music supported the social movement* as it offered a softer and catchier expression, one that was more conducive to the mainstream's ear, of the movement's greater social and political goals. In turn, the *movement supported the music* insofar as quite literally, a significant number of musicians such as Phil Ochs, Peter, Paul & Mary and Tom Paxton, all made fairly decent earnings off their collective radio royalties, live performances, and album sales. Rather than assert that the protest music of this era was politically vacuous merely because it interacted with and was affected by forces of capitalism, Eyerman and Jamison view this process and interaction as more of a mutually beneficially relationship for both the movement's goals and the music's commercial output. Quite simply, both parties advantaged from this interaction, and, as Edward P. Morgan acknowledges in his book entitled *The Sixties Experience: Hard Lessons about Modern America,*

> you are co-opted when the adversary puts his goals on your power; you are not co-opted when your power allows you to exploit his means (or contradictions) in behalf of your goals.[56]

By this consideration, the ability for musicians and those in the social movement alike to mobilize and exploit the forces of capitalism to their own ends as well as to make a living off this popular trend, demonstrates the two-way flow and the mutual benefit that came as a result of this popularization. This two-way flow also functions as a sign of the social movement's of the 1960s success in

[56] Edward Morgan, *The 60s Experience,* Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1991. 276.

further spreading new, and critiquing socially-stagnant, forms of knowledge to broader segments of the general populous.[57] In short, based on this line of reason, co-optation cannot be considered a wholly negative process.

Eyerman and Jamison uphold the beliefs of Jacques Attali because they posit that the music of the 1960s was inherently infused with a unique brand of knowledge that was a confluence of many different social, political and economic factors. Eyerman and Jamison assert that, "knowledge is...the product of a series of social encounters, within social movements, between movements, and even more importantly perhaps, between movements and their established opposition."[58] Popular music functioned as a conceptual space for the interaction between different groups of people, social organizations, and forces of hegemonic power therefore aiding the social movement in its goals.[59]

In addition to making their own unique subset of arguments in support of the idea of music being a socially and politically poignant force in the 1960s, Eyerman and Jamison also respond to the critique levied against them by the Platonists. The Platonists's "problem" with considering music as a socio-political force as the Attalians do is that, for the Platonists, the social movements of the 1960s (and music's involvement in them) were too short-lived, shallow, and superficial in resolve. In other words, according to the Platonists, the social movements did not last long enough or have enough tangible resolve to really be effective. Eyerman and Jamison believe that this critique is moot however, due to

[57] Ron Eyerman & Andrew Jamison, *Social Movements: A Cognitive Approach*, 64.
[58] Ibid, 57.
[59] Ibid, 55.

the misinformed position that the Platonists hold on what a social movement *is* and *should be*. In other words, the Platonists believe that in order for a social movement to be significant in its resolve, it must have considerable *duration* and *lasting power*. For Eyerman and Jamison however, this "requirement" put on the longevity of a social movement, which is used to judge its importance, immediately contradicts the nature and purpose of what a social movement actually is. By Eyerman and Jamison's definition of a social movement, social movements "are impermanent, transient phenomenon, which means that there are ebbs and flows, cycles...of movement activity."[60] Therefore, the fact that the music and social movements of the 1960s altered in direction, substance and form towards the end of the decade as they spread across society, does not take away from the immediate value of the movement's activity for Eyerman and Jamison – it merely means that these socio-cultural forces have changed, perhaps as a general response to the equally as dynamic context of the socio-political climate.

Similar to Eyerman and Jamison, Rob Rosenthal examines the value of music for the social movements of the 1960s insofar as for Rosenthal views this music as, not only playing a re-affirmative role for those who were already committed to the movement, but also as a force that transcended that specific role to perform other positive and necessary functions for movement development as well. According to Rosenthal, the sole assertion of the re-affirmative role that music performed during this period seems more than

[60] Ibid.

obvious as, no doubt "the act of collectively making music help[ed] to lift the spirits of those already involved in social movement activity."[61] Rosenthal argues vehemently that when music was used *in* moments of movement activity it was used a direct political weapon – an expression and source of solidarity for those in the movement. However, what Rosenthal was primarily interested in, was not the mere moral re-affirmative role that the Platonists focus on, but instead, "how it [music] might help educate, recruit, and/or mobilize those *not* already committed to a struggle"[62] – all of which Rosenthal argued the political protest music of the 1960s accomplished.

Moreover, according to Rosenthal, music *qua* being a creative product of humanity that is infused with both encoded and decodable meaning has the ability to change the mood or emotional patterns of a person. Further, protest music while being an expression of civic frustrations or critique of society's relations of power therefore can actually change the ideas and even behaviours of an individual.[63] Protest music forces a critical engagement on behalf of the listener with the songs thematic content, which often relates to real world events, and frames them in a manner that favours the causes of the social movement at-hand. In order to understand how socially conscious music can help incite change in those who are listening to it but also still consider themselves to be outsiders to a social movement's activity, Rosenthal examines the first of the three main functions of socio-political music: *education*, *recruitment*, and

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[61] Rob Rosenthal, "Serving the Movement: The Role(s) of Music", *Popular Music and Society*, Fall Vol. 25 Issue 3/4: 2001. 11.
[62] Ibid.
[63] Ibid, 12.

mobilization. Rosenthal posits that popular protest songs have the uncanny ability to enter the mainstream flow of information unlike any other form of movement discourse, and in their exposure to pockets of the population who without these songs might not have been exposed to, or have developed such (movement sympathetic) ideas.[64] Quite simply, Rosenthal believes that music can function to *educate* the larger public of important social issues.

However, Rosenthal does not stop at music's ability to educate. Rather, he furthermore believes that, if it is possible in the exposure of protest music to new audiences to educate them of particular socio-political events or causes, then it is equally as likely that, through the same medium (and cognitive processes), there lies the ability to *recruit* them to that cause as well. By recruitment, Rosenthal considers music's ability to "induce (or help induce) people to move beyond intellectual awareness or emotional sympathy [of a cause], to joining an organization or otherwise crossing the line into an identity (and self-identity) as a movement supporter."[65] It is important to note that, Rosenthal does not argue that *education* and *recruitment* are congruent processes. Nor does he argue that once one *is* conscious of particular social events that this knowledge *directly* translates into an additional emotional support for the movement or movement affiliation. Rather, Rosenthal uses the concept of recruitment as a simple tool to pointing out the fact that, often, songs have the ability to move us beyond just educating us of events to taking directed action. In other words, sometimes music can have the power intrinsically infused within it to change our attitudes

[64] Ibid, 13.
[65] Ibid.

and behaviours; to offer our emotional support to particular causes, regardless of if we are conscious of this process or not.

Rosenthal then goes on to argue for the potential for music to *mobilize* action, and writes:

> If music can educate and recruit, it seems equally plausible that it can play a role in mobilization ... that is it should be able to help persuade those who identify with the movement but remain inactive to take the step into concrete movement activity, and to persuade those already engaged not only to maintain their activities but to go beyond what they have already done.[66]

I acknowledge that protest music was indeed infused with change and messages about change that inherently educated those listening about the social movements at-hand and in this education process, people were recruited to be movement sympathizers, particularly considering the leftist manner which these protest songs were often framed. However, to assert that music had a *direct* ability to provide inspiration for mobilized social action is based on a slippery slope line of argument, and, I think, is too difficult of an assertion to reasonably prove. Therefore, rather than posit a *direct* correlation between music and movement mobilization, I think that it is more beneficial to consider music as the *context* for some of these efforts of mobilization and a part of a more general trend of diffusion of radical ideas embedded in protest music across a broader segment of society. Ultimately, it was important to recognize that music, or musicians in the 1960s, were in any sort of way directly controlling the organized the activity of the movement. Rather, music (and popular music) served to *mediate, express* and to some degree *form* people's feelings with their worldly

[66] Ibid, 14.

experiences as music often provided both the physical and psychological space necessary for critical reflection.

Ray Pratt argues that live and recorded music during the 1960s produced a "sound-space", a free area in which people were encouraged to program their own environment.[67] *Sound-space*, according to Pratt, can manifest itself in a twofold fashion as either: a free physical space like that of one's immediate environment at a rock festival or concert; or in a more abstract way, as a psychological space "in its ability to 'stop' time, to make us feel we are living within a moment"[68] in way that engages us with our context rather than facilitates escape from it. At rock concerts and music festivals of the 1960s where live music was being performed, this *physical* free space manifested itself in the creation of a social code of behaviour and ethos that was produced and radiated. In its *psychological* form, recorded or live music of the 1960s created a particular space within the minds of many young Americans wherein they were encouraged to critically reflect on, as well as negotiate, the various ideas they had about the music's thematic content with their own real world contemporary experiences. In both cases music acted as a creator of community insofar as it provided a source of collective identity that bonds all the members of the community.[69] Those within this community were provided with a sense of

[67] Ray Pratt, "Popular Music, Free Space, and the Quest for Community", *Popular Music and Society*, Vol. 13: Issue 4, 1989. 59-60.
[68] Ibid, 60.
[69] Ibid, 62-3.

belonging regardless of if they were those listening to, or performing, the music.[70]

Consistent with Ray Pratt, musicologist and theorist of social movements, T.V. Reed writes in his own study of the Civil Rights Movement and its music, that:

> Music, of course, was not the only force in shaping movement identities, but clearly it was amongst the most powerful...Gaining a sense of 'somebodiness' that was so crucially a part of the movement's work often came paradoxically when the self was given up to a larger whole, a collective spirit.[71]

This collective spirit of the generation, the ethos of the counterculture movement, was best encapsulated and expressed at pivotal moments of the decade bringing music and politics together: *The March on Washington* in 1963; the annual *Newport Music Festivals* of the early half of the decade; at the numerous free concerts put on by bands such as The Grateful Dead, Quicksilver Messenger Service and Jefferson Airplane at the Haight-Ashbury commons affectionately entitled "People's Park"; at Jerry Rubin's *Festival of Life* in Chicago of 1968; or, perhaps most of all, in loving atmosphere of the three-day festival peace, love and rock and roll that was *Woodstock* in 1969. Ultimately, Pratt's argument is based on the continuity of these festivals over the course of the decade, as he believes their popularity demonstrates their centrality and importance in the collective political expressions and projects of the baby-boom generation. Furthermore, at various intersections throughout the decade these festivals performed a cathartic role in that they helped release and give

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[70] Ibid, 65.
[71] T.V. Reed, "Singing Civil Rights: The Freedom Song Tradition", 33.

expression to the frustrations of the emergent counterculture as well as provided them with moments for celebration. Each social movement responded to and interacted with the socio-political climate of the decade in a uniquely different, but equally as important way. To illustrate this point with an example, the feeling or environment of being at the *March on Washington* was probably very different from being in Chicago during the summer of 1968 at *The Festival of Life.* The social movement activity had become angrier and more direct in its attacks against society as the decade had progressed. Frustration too was on the rise as everywhere "progress" spread, it was met with staunch opposition. Ultimately, "it is therefore important to realize that these mass gatherings of young people were not simply about having fun or listening to music, but experiencing a sense of community belonging without the presence of adults"[72] to act as a safe enclave for development away from the forces of authoritative opposition.

In each of their respective studies the 'Attalian' theorists *limit* their research to the "in-movement" functions of music completely neglecting the larger context of the 1960s including forces of government and commerce. This is problematic because the Attalians collectively attempt to make conclusions about the effects of this music based on their research, sample, and methods, which, quite simply, do not have the breadth or depth in data to support the magnitude of the conclusions being made thus open to the critique that this brand of socio-political music had no functions "outside of a small circle of friends." For the most part, the focus this genre of research is on social movements and music

[72] Klaus Fischer, *American in White, Black, and Gray: A History of the Stormy 1960s*, 308.

ignoring the effects that co-optation had on the socially conscious music of the 1960s. Any *complete* study of this decade of music's socio-political potentials must acknowledge the fact that this brand of socially conscious music *was* indeed co-opted, and that in this process the music was fundamentally changed from an instrument of primarily politics to one of both politics and commerce. It is important to recognize that the music of the 1960s and its socially conscious message did in fact get co-opted, commodified, and popularized.

I would like to present a middle-ground position between the two by critically reconsidering the concept of co-optation itself and its externally manifested effects. Thus, through a critical reconsideration of co-optation and the subsequent popularization of socially conscious music, I will demonstrate how the process of co-optation actually helped spread and diffuse progressive, and sometimes radical, movement ideas across the mainstream, which therein become more absorbed into mainstream discourse to the end of facilitating social change.

Rethinking Co-optation: A Hybrid Approach

The only shared belief in the literature is that the music of this era interacted and intertwined with the social, political and cultural issues and events of the decade, to a degree and in a way that previously had never been witnessed. Though both academic camps agree with the assertion that popular music *did* interact with the socio-political factors of the 1960s, the fact is that they

express this belief quite differently and thereby draw a range of different conclusions from each other.

It seems utterly implausible to deny the fact that the process of co-optation did not have any effect on the sound of the music, its respective audiences, musical genres, and the patterns of consumption. Surely the fact that socially conscious music *became* a popular trend resulted in, at the very least, an influx of commercial interest, big capital, fans, and mainstream media attention. Equally as unconvincing are assertions that co-optation necessarily corresponds to an inevitable erosion of the genre of music's message or its cultural authenticity or that co-optation is a wholly negative process. It is my assertion that the co-optation of the musical style of socially conscious songs did not necessarily mean that the original or genuine message of the 1960s subculture was lost or destroyed over the process.

Based on such a consideration, I argue that the process and concept of co-optation ought to be thought of as more of a layered process with respect to how it interacted with the social movements and music of the 1960s. Instead of considering how co-optation eroded or conquered the message of 1960s socially conscious music, I will rather, borrowing from David Pichaske's *A Generation in Motion*, argue how co-optation *absorbed* it. According to Pichaske, co-optation in the music business should be viewed as a more value–neutral process; as a layering process that is a natural part of the music *business*. Pichaske writes about the inevitable systematization of popular protest music,

> The music biz is an ideological whore. It is dedicated to maximum profit, and it wont wring the neck of a goose that lays golden discs

> out of pure philosophical differences...co-optation is a natural product of systems.[73]

Pichaske demonstrates that it was not any specific action, event or non-action that was unique to the New Left movement of the 1960s that made the movement fragment and dilute, but more of a natural fact of the cycle and process of co-optation.[74] According to Pichaske, the process of co-optation can be likened most to that of the processes of diffusion and absorption insofar as when cultural movements are co-opted they are spread to new areas of the populous wherein the messages are received and decoded and regardless of if they are supported, opposed or negotiated, they are still *absorbed*.[75] In the case of socially conscious music in the 1960s, just like as in the process of diffusion with that of any other object, like that of a great smelling dinner or a warm apple pie baking for example, radical movement ideas were spread through the media of popular music to a wider demographic of the population. And, just as it may be possible that the smell of a warm apple pie grows fainter as it spreads to new areas and was diffused, so too is the case with these socio-political messages. Or to use a visual metaphor to demonstrate: if the 1960s socially conscious music and its spread across the mainstream can be compared to a fireworks display, then co-optation can be considered the spark that ignited the fuse to make the firecracker explode as it traversed upwards into the unknown. Though, the firecracker, much like the music, was a finite and short-lived experience, it still bedazzled those watching leaving a lasting impression of it in their minds as it fragmented,

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[73] David Pichaske, *A Generation in Motion: Popular Music & Culture in the 1960s*, 158.
[74] Ibid, 156-57.
[75] Ibid, 153.

spread and its beauty faded out of the night's sky. Therefore, in this guise of considering music as a "knowledge producer"[76], co-optation acted as a catalyst for change as it rendered this brand of socially conscious music an even more potent, popular and recognizable presence and augmented its ability to spread the messages of change intrinsic to it. As Robert Cantwell writes, in his novel *When We Were Good,* which takes a historical look back at the experiences of the 1960s, the music helped carry "a culture of personal rebellion across normally impermeable social and cultural barriers under the influence of authority of folk music, at once democratic and ...imbued with a spirit of protest." [77] The ability of music and musicians to educate and inform people of the ideas and values of the New Left and its social movements was augmented, according to Cantwell, through the media of popular culture and catalyst of the process of co-optation actually helped the music reach a broader segment of people, and (perhaps) function with a more long-lasting effect.[78]

Therefore, by using my own ethnographic content analysis of the *Billboard* popular music charts from 1957 to 1972 as a source of primary research, this paper will next critically reconsider the concept of co-optation and effects that it had on not only the content and message of socially conscious music of this era, but also to trace its diffusion through society.

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[76] Ron Eyerman & Andrew Jamison, *Social Movements: A Cognitive Approach,* 3.
[77] Robert Cantwell, *When We Were Good: The Folk Revival,* Cambridge: Harvard University Press; 1996. 349.
[78] Ibid.

Methodologies and Sampling

> Music has more power than coping; it also helps understand your troubles and can help you do something about them.[79]
>
> Pete Seeger

In order to trace the diffusion and absorption of socially conscious songs in the decade's popular music, as well as present the music of the 1960s as a communicative force that performed important socio-political functions that helped facilitate larger social change, I conducted an ethnographic content analysis of the *Billboard* Top 40 Popular Music charts from the period of January 1st, 1957 to January 15th, 1972. An ethnographic content analysis generally refers to an integrated method, procedure, and technique for locating, identifying, retrieving, and analyzing documents for their relevance, significance, and meaning.[80] The emphasis is on discovery and description, including search for contexts, underlying meanings, patterns, and processes, rather than mere quantity or numerical relationships between two or more variables.[81]

By examining the popular music of this period both quantitatively and qualitatively, I uncovered some interesting patterns and trends that helped me complicate the effects of co-optation insofar as how music facilitated the diffusion of the protest message. This ethnographic content analysis of the *Billboard* Top 40 Popular Music charts will not only follow the discourse in popular music on issues and themes of civil rights, equality, peace, freedom, and anti-war sentiments, but will also trace the patterns and flow by which "socially

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[79] Jim Brown, "Pete Seeger: The Power of Song", [video-recording], New York: Public Broadcasting Services (2007).
[80] David L. Altheide, "Ethnographic Content Analysis." *Qualitative Sociology*, Vol. 10, 1987. 65.
[81] Ibid, 65 + 68.

conscious" songs were diffusing through segments of the larger population and thereby facilitating social reform by spreading new forms of critical knowledge.

By "socially conscious songs" I am referring to those songs that addressed in their lyrical content the important socio-political issues of this era particularly in relation to society's relations of power, its ideological first principles, and systems of hegemony. Socially conscious songs are songs of the 1960s that expressed the generational discontent of a lot of children of the baby boom. They are the songs that expressed the growing frustrations with mainstream and right-wing intransigence to the full-fledged administration of civil rights as well as the increasing disenchantment of this generation with figures of authority which itself came as a result of the escalation of the war in Vietnam and years of government intransigence and deception. Furthermore, of the socially conscious songs considered, socially conscious songs can further be divided into: *overtly socially conscious* (OSC) and *abstractly socially conscious* (ASC). Overtly socially conscious songs are those that directly attacked or addressed the problematic social phenomena of the 1906s by referring to specific historical names, instances, events, or particular sets of social maladies. On the other hand, *abstractly socially conscious* (ASC) songs are those that address the same or similar social maladies but do so in a general, more poetic, rhetorical, an often esoteric manner. In other words, overtly socially conscious songs (OSC) are those songs that can be considered a generational call to arms, a song that provoked action or movement as well as critical thought, whereas abstractly socially conscious songs (ASC)

would only provoke the latter.[82] Therefore, in addition to analyzing the presence of socially conscious songs to document the magnitude of the movement insofar as it is expressed and manifested on the popular music charts, this analysis of the nature of the message of popular protest music also helped me exemplify the spiritual temperature of the movement *per se* by considering the (increasing) degree of "directness" within the music, as a sign for the increasingly desperate and angry "structure of feeling"[83] of both the music and social climate. Additionally, the increased courage of more performers to "sing out" more overtly and in greater numbers against oppression in the context of the latter half of the decade was also interesting information (to say the least) when considered against the Platonists proposed effects of co-optation and the belief that co-optation "watered down" the message. Therefore, I will analyze and critically consider the racial tolerance of the popular music charts themselves by examining the presence of black recording artists (those who both recorded socially conscious music and not) as years progressed to show social change and progress of the civil rights project or lack thereof in the popular music charts.

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[82] I am fully aware of the nature of my ethnographic content analysis, and the results thereof, in that it is open to interpretation as it is very much *an interpretation* of these songs and events. However, for the aforementioned reason, I have considered these songs as an integral piece of 1960s culture. By perpetually placating them within the general socio-political climate, I believe I have ascertained a more complete understanding of both the encoded and decoded meanings of many of these popular songs. What this translates into directly in my thesis, is that there might be instances at which the author's intended meaning of the song may not correspond to my reading of it – this is not an oversight. Rather, I merely believe that a song can mean a lot of different to a lot of different people. Sometimes, given a particular artist, context, or a particular social, cultural, or political climate, or just due to a matter of open lyrical interpretation and popular understandings, a song can take on a meaning well beyond or somewhat different from the author's intentions of it. For these reasons, I have provided full disclosure on my enthrographic content analysis.

[83] Raymond Williams, "Structures of Feeling" in his *Marxism and Literature*, London: Oxford University Press, 1977. 130-131.

Finally, the genre of music of socially conscious songs, the nature of ownership of the music, and whether, or not, the songs were originally composed by the charted performer is also highlighted. Each of the categories in my ethnographic content analysis will help to tease out important trends and patterns of not only statistical data, but also qualitative data that will help "measure" the efficacy and spread of 1960s social movements and their respective messages of change.

In order to obtain the sample of popular songs considered in my ethnographic content analysis, I used Joel Whitburn's *Top 1000 Hits of the Rock Era 1955-2005* in order to determine the Top 40 Songs of each year considered from January 1st 1957 to January 15th 1972. Joel Whitburn, of the *Billboard* popular music charts, ranked these Top 40 Songs of each year in accordance with the following: the highest chart position of the song, and then the number of weeks that each song spent at its corresponding peak position. These songs, as the forty *most* popular songs of each year, act as an illuminating representation of the general mood and message of popular music throughout the decade of the 1960s.[84] Therefore, the *most* popular songs of each year, and the social consciousness of the lyrics will generate an accurate representation of how music, particularly socially conscious popular music, functioned to facilitate larger socio-political change as it diffused and spread across the larger mainstream discourse. This sample is an expression of the ever evolving and

[84] It is important to note that when I use the term "Top 40" throughout this thesis, I am not denoting songs that have charted within the Popular Top 40 music charts at any point in time, but rather that I am referring to those songs that comprise the Top 40 *most* popular songs per annum as calculated by Joel Whitburn of *Billboard*. Whitburn calculates the Top 40 songs per annum by considering respectively the songs peak position on the charts, in relation to the amount of weeks it spent at that position.

dynamically changing, but mutually beneficial and continuous relationship between popular music and social movements that took place during the period of 1957 to 1972. This relationship would greatly change both the music of the era as well as the world that encompassed it.

I selected the time period of January 1st 1957 to January 15th 1972 for my consideration of the decade of the 1960s for a number of reasons. Firstly, I consider a "decade" as more of a cultural attitude and generational ethos rather than just as years. Perhaps James F. Harris captures this idea of a decade being comprised, and expressive, of a set of ideas, rather merely an elapsed time period when he states:

> The Sixties was the period when the younger generation went searching for new answers to age-old questions about such issues such as the meaning of human life, the value of the individual, the authority of the state, Truth, Justice, and spirituality.[85]

Accepting a decade as more of a cognitive-praxis, a search for new answers and new ways of living, rather than just considering it as the elapsing of years, one can see it is more likely that the tracings of the 1960s actually began in the later years of the 1950s with the early events of the Civil Rights Movement and New Left student-based support, rather than at the moment when the clock struck midnight on New Year's Eve, December 31st, 1959. In other words, the 1960s generation's search for truth, justice, and equality, as well as their radical re-questioning of the authority of an unjust state was not conceived or concretized at any one moment or with any one event, rather it was a confluence

[85] James F. Harris, "Listen to the Music", *World & I*, Vol. 11 Issue 12, Toronto; Canadian Reference Centre, 1996. 308.

of many social, political, technological and economic factors that drastically changed the ebb and flow of traditional "American" life in the wake of the Second World War. However, for the purposes of clarity and brevity, I demarcated 1957 as the year in which my research will start for a combination of social, political and economic factors but primarily for musical-cultural reasons.

First off, socio-politically speaking, 1957 was a pivotal year because it was the year in which the Civil Rights Movement *formalized* a lot with the creation of organizations such as the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC)[86]. The year 1957 bore witness to movement leaders like Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., E.D. Nixon and Bayard Rustin solidifying their leadership and beginning to collectively organize protest and collective action for future reform.[87] The year 1957 marked when the Civil Rights Movement experienced its first-wave of *intensification*. This newfound intensity of the Civil Rights movement was brought to an ugly head with the fiasco that had taken place in Little Rock, Arkansas wherein President Eisenhower called in the National Guard to ensure the safety and security of the *Little Rock Nine*, the black students who the state's governor, Orval Faubus, attempted to prevent from enrolling in Little Rock Central High School because of the precedence it would set which would no doubt subsequently lead to more acts of desegregation.[88] Though sentiments for change, government repression, and moments of collective action indeed existed

[86] Edward Morgan, *The 60s Experience*, 42.
[87] Ibid, 41.
[88] Ibid, 47.

before 1957, the crisis in Little Rock marked the first time during the Civil Rights Movement when forces of government were *forced* to act on the growing social disquietude which had manifested itself in an upsurge of racially inspired conflict; the government had previously just been trying to ignore this upsurge. Though I point to particular important socio-political *events* as markers for the end of the decade of the 1960s, it is essential to differentiate that I have done so in a way that views these events not as events *per se*, (in other words as the sole reasons for the mass politicization/de-politicization of the 1960s,) but rather as signifiers of the larger socio-political climate and its respective changes. Furthermore, even more important than these social and political factors, I chose my sample's starting date as 1957 for the additional set of musical-cultural reasons that also demarcate 1957 as the beginning of the era of widespread changes to both socio-political attitudes and contexts of the times.

Firstly, in 1957, rock and roll took on an increased importance as a socio-cultural force as it became more popular and more "threatening", at least to those conservative people who were advantaged in existing unjust power situations. The first reason 1957 was an important year is that it marked the first time in history when a black individual (not performing group) reached number one on the popular music charts when Sam Cooke did so with "You Send Me".[89] This individual superstardom is an important fact to consider because it was the individual superstars of rock and roll, the black performers particularly Cooke,

[89] Though The Platters, who were fronted by Tony Williams (a black man) and were also comprised of all black band members, had reached number one twice the year before in 1956 with their respective hits "My Prayer" and "The Great Pretender", none of the individual members of the Platters were singled out and made to be superstars as Sam Cooke was in 1957.

Little Richard, Chuck Berry and Fats Domino, who personified the "threat" that rock and roll represented, not the anamorphous "faceless groups" such as the Platters or the Coasters. The "threat" that rock and roll now represented according to many conservative or more radical right-wing people was demonstrated in sentiments of those people such as Asa Carter, who sat on the executive council of the North Alabama White Citizens Council. Carter "charged that the NAACP was 'infiltrating' white youth with rock-n-roll music"[90] and "the 'basic, heavy-beat music of the Negroes' appealed to the 'base in man, brings out animalism and vulgarity', and, most important, represented a 'plot to mongrelize America'."[91] Carter, along with three other men, was later found responsible of beating Nat King Cole close to death at a Birmingham concert in 1956.[92]

Additionally, over the years 1956-57, the sheer presence of black performers on the popular music charts grew exponentially from that point forward. Therefore, this growth was no doubt a sign of music's ability to functions as a safe enclave for not only black cultural expression but also political development. For, in 1955 only 7.5 per cent of all the performers on the Top 40 were black, whereas by the end of 1957, that number had doubled to an average of near 16 per cent total black performers. Quite simply, the year 1957 functioned as a catalyst for change as it was the year in which the generational ethos of the 1960s *intensified* and *solidified* enough to the point at which the New Left and the

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[90] David Pichaske, *A Generation in Motion: Popular Music & Culture in the Sixties*, 38.
[91] David P. Szatmary, *Rockin' in Time: A Social History of Rock-and-Roll*, Upper River Saddle; Pearson Prentice Hall Press, 2004. 22.
[92] Glenn T. Eskew, *But for Birmingham: The Local and National Movements in the Civil Rights Struggle*, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press. 1997. 115.

emergent counterculture garnered the collective strength necessary to inspire the widespread social activity and lead the fight for progress that was to come.

Similarly, 1972 marks the year in which the popular generational ethos of the 1960s came to an end. Among the many socio-political critical events that converge in 1972 are the political scandals uncovered in Watergate in 1972 as the base for the end of the decade, or the Kent State / Jackson State killings in 1970 and the collective mourning of a nation, and the alpha and omega of music festivals in 1969 with Woodstock and Altamont. However, rather than focus on the context of the environment to justify my sample, for the purposes of my ethnographic content analysis I used the Top 40 music charts as my social litmus and worked outward from that.

That is why I selected 1972 as the year to end my sample, because as previously mentioned, on January 15th 1972, Don McLean charted atop the popular music charts with "American Pie"; a song that was both a eulogy for the symbolic death of the socially conscious music that celebrated its accomplishments, as well as an archetypal example of the forces of commodification at work and the absorption of the process of co-optation. In other words, my sample ends in 1972, because it was in this year that the socially conscious protest music movement of the 1960s became too fragmented, and too diffuse, too much reformed by the processes of co-optation to still be a genuine expression of a generation's collective ethos. In other words, by the year 1972, the popular music of the 1960s was no longer infused with the political energy, zest, enthusiasm and originality (that it once had at the beginning of the decade and)

that was necessary to infuse, incite, and encourage widespread critical political engagement. I am not, however, arguing that the socio-political events of the decade of the 1960s were not important in the formation and fragmentation of the social consciousness of the decade. Rather I just want to focus on more, for my own sample and my own research, the *Billboard* music charts as the basis for examining the effects and diffusion of the socially conscious message of popular protest music.

In accordance with this research strategy, I comprised a sample of the 601 most popular songs from 1957 to 1972 and, from that conducted a rigorous ethnographic content analysis on these songs in respect to: their social consciousness, the racial background of the performer; the thematic content of the music; its genre; and its ownership.[93] I believe that many of the trends and patterns uncovered and discussed in my ethnographic content analysis through these categorizations will highlight the significance of the particular brand of political popular music being examined.

My ethnographic content analysis and discussion will be placed within the *context* of the 1960s to ground the results and patterns discovered and on the popular music charts with other sets of secondary data both of a cultural and historical nature. More specifically, by considering the popular music charts within the changing socio-political climate of the 1960s, as well as by pointing to

[93] Though I do believe that there were indeed other social, economic, as well as technological factors that would have played a part in this co-optation and the spread of message of change, I have chosen to focus on these particular details in my ethnographic content analysis as I believe these variables to be the most revealing and relevant to patterns of measuring social consciousness. Though economic class would certainly be one of these social variables that could have been considered, I purposefully decided to omit this factor in my study as I wanted to *focus* on tracing racial trends and patterns of social development.

archetypal song examples that help to highlight these moments of shift, I will triangulate my primary research with both related historical research and critical discourse analyses. By selecting and critically decoding archetypal song examples, I intend to consider music as a window into the social, political, and cultural context of the 1960s social movements by tracing the dynamically changing message in the music, and the events to which the lyrics responded. This additional methodology will help me establish how, the music of the 1960s, as a form of social communication was political insofar as it was perpetually re-shaping and challenging the cognitive praxis of those listening; reconstructing a representation of the shifting "structure of feeling", what Raymond Williams saw as a perpetually reflexive relationship with lived, active, relationships which is often aimed at systematic changes and generates practical social consciousness in the reflecting agent.'[94] I will now begin to uncover and discuss the important trends and patterns relevant to tracing the socio-political diffusion and absorption of popular protest music, across and into mainstream discourse.

Ethnographic Content Analysis

> I think it's time we stop! Hey! What's that sound?
> Everybody looks what's going down![95]
> Buffalo Springfield, "For What It's Worth"

Akin to the lyrics of Buffalo Springfield's 1967 hit "For What It's Worth", within which Stephen Stills suggestively sings that young Americans should

[94] Raymond Williams, "Structures of Feeling", 130-131.
[95] Stephen Stills, "For What It's Worth", Buffalo Springfield, *Buffalo Springfield* (1967).

begin to pay attention (if they have not already begun to) to their socio-political environment as a battle between the left-wing and right-wing was brewing, I think it is time that I stop and pay attention to what is "going down" on the popular charts in order to discuss the importance of its message and patterns of consumption in rendering it a socio-political force – or at least one that mutually interacted with social movements to help facilitate or provoke change. In order to discuss the overall importance of popular music as a socio-political force, I am going to investigate four particular central trends or patterns that I have noticed within the Top 40 popular music charts between the years of 1957 to 1972. I point to these trends and patterns as thematic evidence of music's role as a facilitator of social change in not only a reaffirming role, but also one as educator, recruiter, and diffuser of important social messages and patterns of movement. After such discussion, I will then offer my own analysis and rationalization for these socio-cultural meaning and later on ground my assertions with a socio-cultural contextualization of these trends through the pivotal events of the decade.

The first of the four foremost important socio-cultural trends within the *Billboard* popular music charts is that the presence of black (and minority) performers charting within the Top 40 increased as years of the decade progressed, thus making the charts a more *inclusive* atmosphere – one more conducive to change and progress. The second trend considered is that in the early years of the sample period, black musicians wrote more of their own songs (that charted in the popular charts) as they were forced to be more independently successful than white musicians in order to achieve a similar degree of success.

Third, and most importantly, that the overall number of socially conscious songs (both overtly and abstractly) charting on the Top 40 popular music charts actually increased as the decade progressed. This was the result of the diffusion and absorption of co-optation that helped spread the message of change embedded within the music. And finally that, though the popular music charts became a more socially conscious public sphere as the sample period progressed, the number of black performers charting with socially conscious songs was limited in comparison to those of their white contemporaries.

It is my hypothesis that these four trends collectively offer evidence that not only supports the assertion that in the 1960s music acted as an enclave for safe cultural expression for an individual or collective's socio-political frustrations and disenchantments, but also suggests interesting evidence that complicates the traditionally conceptualized effects of the process of co-optation. In other words, these four patterns commensurably suggest that this unique brand of socially conscious music which was emergent in the decade (and accordingly on the popular music charts) acted as a cultural facilitator of the larger social progress and political reform.

Billboard Top 40 Popular Music Chart's Inclusiveness of 'the Other'

One of the more prevalent as well as interesting patterns that I noticed in my examination of the Top 40 popular music charts was that from the period of 1957 to 1972, the sheer presence of black recording artists doubled, increasing at an average rate of 6.7 per cent black representation per year. (See Figures 1 & 2)

This statistic manifested itself in the representation of the Top 40 insofar as for every two and a half years, an additional black performing artist or group made the popular charts in place of a white one. (See Figures 1 & 2) However, if this statistic is applied as a general rule across society (as well as considered as an accurate model for the rest of the music business because it was the most popular songs of this period), then this increase of 6.7 per cent more representation of black recording artists would have reasonably been much more significant. In other words, hypothetically, this trend could be a reflection of a much larger *racial acceptance boom* that was taking place both in the larger scheme of the music business and American society during the 1960s. This incremental growth of the representation of black culture in the mainstream media was a twofold sign that, not only was mainstream society becoming more accepting to minorities and their forms of cultural expression, but music too was also becoming more *important* as it was now both a prominent profession as well as mode for cultural expression. This ethnographic content analysis demonstrates that, though music had always been an integral part of the black movement for equality as music was historically a safe enclave in which black people had been free to create and express their own culture[96], in the late 1950s something tangibly shifted as music began to transcend this role and become a mode of popularized cultural expression for black musicians.

In what follows, I will briefly demonstrate and historically contextualize the socio-cultural importance of the popular explosion of black representation on

[96] David Pichaske, *A Generation in Motion: Popular Music & Culture in the Sixties*, 130-31.

the popular music charts that took place at the beginning of my sample period. I will do so in order to highlight how this trend complicates the effects of the concept of co-optation and offers evidence to support the claim that, the popular music charts (and popular music) of the 1960s can be considered an accurate social litmus for the socio-political context.

In the immediate period following the Second World War, amid the context of the post-war American economic boom, though there were many prominent, influential and talented black musicians, very few, if any, were famous, and even less were rich. At this time, black musicians such as Chester "Howlin' Wolf" Burnett, Muddy Waters, John Lee Hooker, and Arthur "Big Boy" Crudup were beginning to professionalize their music insofar as it was being recorded, pressed and released, however through the systematic racism of the music business, as a microcosm for American society, none of these musicians ever actually made any money from their record sales or radio royalties.[97] The lack of recognition, respect, and money paid to these early black bluesmen was not the result of any shortcoming in their musical talents or innovativeness, but rather was more the product of a highly racialized and centralized music industry; one in which the major recording studios informally agreed, to not formally sign, (m)any people of colour.[98]

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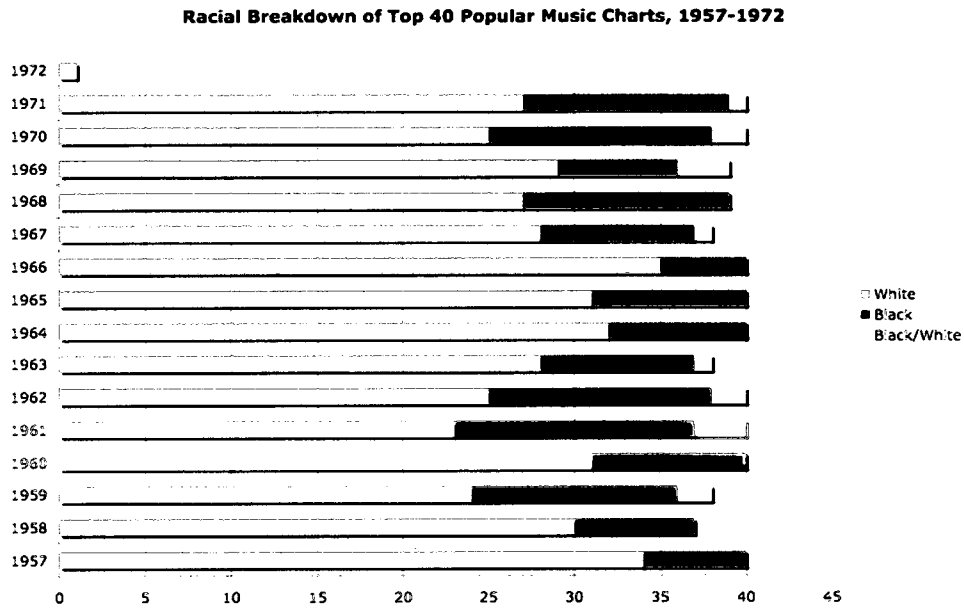
[97] Szatmary, David P., *Rockin' in Time: A Social History of Rock-and-Roll*, Upper River Saddle; Pearson Prentice Hall Press, 2004. 26
[98] Ibid, p. 10-14 + 22-23.

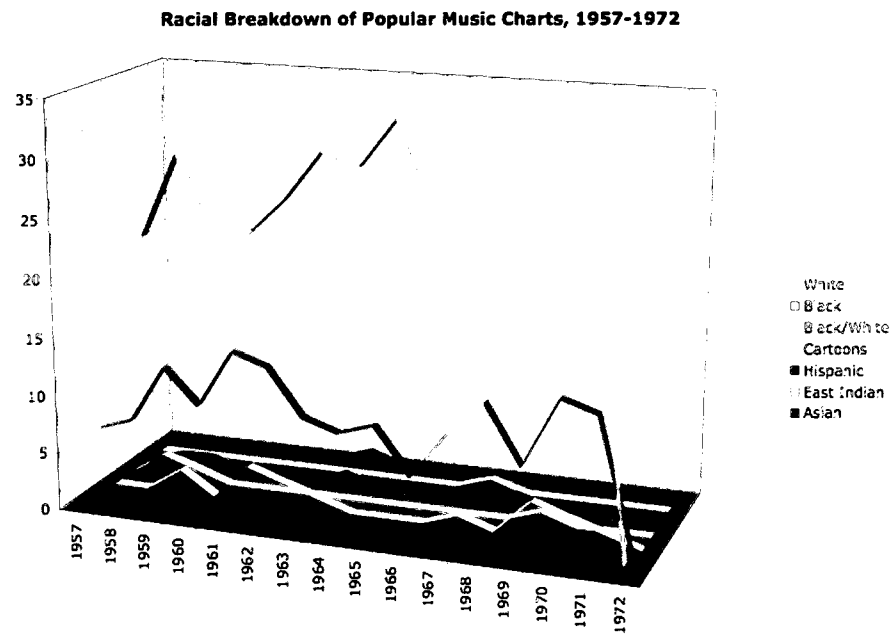
Figure 1:



Furthermore, though this residual societal racism was manifesting itself in the entertainment business insofar as it was preventing many black musicians from signing with major labels, what was also happening as a result of this mainstream selectivity was that the independently owned record labels, the ones who were willing to take the chance on a non-mainstream, non-white artist were beginning to sign a lot of the emergent "ethnic" talent. As Michael Bertrand acknowledges in his book entitled, *Race, Rock and Elvis*, the "independents were

left virtually alone to advance ... the tastes of commonly disregarded segments of the population."[99]

Figure 2:



By the end of the year 1952, rock and roll had already blossomed quite successfully into an emergent subculture, and with the majority of market share of this new trend of popular music being held by independent owners, the majors felt threatened. For, the profit that the independents were gaining was

[99] Michael Bertrand, *Race, Rock and Elvis,* Chicago; University of Illinois Press, 2000. 65.

coming at the expense of the large entertainment conglomerates hold on the North American music market. In other words, this general racialized divide between *whites/majors* and *blacks/independents*, was increasingly problematic for the major labels because with the continuing emergence of rock and roll, and the fact of the matter being that it was black musicians (the independents) who were driving this cultural and musical trend, the majors were now competing with more than just each other for total market share.[100] It was the majors who, for the first time, were left on the outside looking in. Therefore as a result of their decreased market share, the majors were pressured into taking an immediate interest in the rock and roll market that they had previously neglected. Quite simply, rock and roll's sudden surge of popularity threatened the majors's longstanding status in, control of, power over, and profit drawn from the music business. The major labels were not about to idly sit by watching as the dollars slipped through their hands, they were going to fight for the market share of this new trend of rock and roll. The clash for rock and roll's teen market came to an ugly head in the years 1952 to 1956, as with the ever-expanding teen demographic, the battle over rock and roll's potential profits grew nastier. Between the years 1946 to 1960, the number of American teenagers had near

[100] There were of course exceptions to this general pattern of ownership being linked with race during the Cover Phenomenonl these exceptions are twofold. First of all, it is merely important to note that there were indeed white artists signed to independent labels during this period, as well as the opposite, a presence of black artists signed to major labels. This means that major labels did not flat-out refuse to record black artist's music as might be suggested. Rather, it is more likely a result of the fact that the majors used the artists that they had in their stable to record this songs, whom were generally white, in order to reduce costs and avoid signing new talent. Secondly, it is important to note that there were also other independently owned record labels, like Dot Records for example, who were also covering popular black R&B tunes with a white artists who were considered safer, and potentially more popular. Dot's biggest sensation was perhaps the biggest star of the Cover Phenomenon itself, Pat Boone.

doubled from 5.6 million to 11.6 million.[101] Accordingly, the vast potential for profit from this genre of teen-oriented music also spiked as by 1957 teenage spending had reached a cumulative $9 billion.[102] Musicologists now commonly refer to this struggle for the rock and roll's teen market between (primarily) major record labels and independents (with a few key exceptions such as Dot Records, the independent recording label that had signed to it Pat Boone, perhaps the biggest Cover Phenomenon "star") as the *Cover Phenomenon*, 1952 to 1956.

Though at face value the *Cover Phenomenon* may seem to have been primarily motivated by racial factors because it *resulted in* the suppression of black people and culture, and *tapped into* an already existing racial order, in my assessment the *Cover Phenomenon* was not racist per se. Rather, it was fore mostly *driven by* a commercial ethos and capitalist logic, which undeniably had outward racialized societal effects, that sought to *capitalize on* and *exploit* the shortcomings of both black musicians as well as independent record companies by using the unjust power disparities of society to forward the financial gain of major labels. What I mean to say by this is, considering that the major labels were competing for the first time for (lost) market share with more than each other, it seems more reasonable that the incentive behind the *Cover Phenomenon* would be more one that was driven by a desire to regain lost profits as the majors were no longer in a stranglehold position on the American popular music market rather than a racial stratification. Ultimately, the racialized setting in which this phenomenon took

[101] David P. Szatmary, *Rockin' in Time: A Social History of Rock-and-Roll*, 21.
[102] Ibid.

place is actually the source of this exploitation, the opportunity structure in which this exploitation took place. David P. Szatmary states in support of the idea of *Cover Phenomenon* being profit-driven,

> Established record executives feared the economic consequences of a new popular music that they did not control. Out-distanced by new, independent labels that had a virtual monopoly on rock acts by 1955, they [major labels] worried about their share of the market, especially when white teens started to buy rock-and-roll records en masse...to reverse this trend, larger companies signed white artists to copy, or 'cover' the songs of African-American artists, sometimes sanitizing the lyrics.[103]

Therefore, as a reaction to this increased independent control of the market share, major recording companies began to cover independently produced R&B songs, written and recorded by black artists, when they were beginning to rise in popularity on the R&B charts. What the major labels would generally do was: use one of the white artists already under contract, those which were generally considered more traditional "pop" singers or C&W singers, (genres that were deemed more acceptable by the mainstream white audiences of the popular music charts), to cover these emergent hits to the profitable gain. The majors would even occasionally alter the text or sound of the song slightly to "popularize" or "bleach out the blackness" of the song. Then, they would re-release their own "pop" version of the song, planning its release within (normally) three weeks or so of the original R&B release, in order so that they can flood the market with their own product by utilizing their superior modes of production, recording and distribution. Ultimately, this was all done in order to usurp the profit that could have potentially gone to the original

[103] Ibid, 24.

recording artists. Danny Kesler of the independent recording label Okeh Records found that,

> the odds for a black record to crack through [into the mainstream] were slim. If the black record began to happen, the chances were that a white artist would cover – and the big radio stations would play the white records...there was a colour line and it was not going to be easily crossed.[104]

Over and over, an R&B song would get released, experience a brief taste of commercial success (most likely on the R&B charts, but quite possibly also on the popular chart as well) until the point when, a major recording company would then come along and record their own "superior" cover version. Sadly too, more often than not, the cover version would be the more commercially successful version between the two even despite the fact that most people knew it was not the original recording. Though the major's version usually entered the market a few weeks after that of the independent's release (as soon as it was clear that the given song was going to be a hit), they would always catch up to and pass the independents on the popular charts due to economic factors such as their superior modes of manufacturing, distribution, and marketing. Additionally, the majors's versions would also exploit contextual factors such as the black performers shortcoming for profit due to the colour of their skin. Over and over this pattern would repeat itself with numerous different black artists and the different independent labels that they were recording with.

Therefore, having said all of this, in 1957 when Sam Cooke's "You Send Me", a number one hit that peaked for three weeks, topped the charts unscathed

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[104] Ibid, 25.

by the forces of white co-optation there was something particularly significant about this anomaly. Whether this anomaly (and respective change) in "non-covering" was brought on by political, social or musical forces (or a confluence of them all) is indeterminable and highly contestable. However, what is important to note here is that in my ethnographic content analysis there is evidence that supports the assertion that this event marked, and led to the breakthrough of black musicians onto the popular music charts *en masse*. To illustrate, after the release and breakthrough of "You Send Me", later in the year 1957 other Top 40 popular chartings by black artists included: Sam Cooke again, Fats Domino, Billy Williams, and Chuck Berry, as well as other all-black doo-wop groups the Rays and the Coasters. This *breakthrough* onto the popular music charts by black artists was significant for black progress as it opened up the doors for more, and other black musicians. Furthermore, the fact that in 1957, six black musicians/groups could all chart within the Top 40 meant that, numerically speaking at least blacks were being accepted more as black musicians performed 15 per cent of the year's chartings – a number that had doubled over the past two years.

Similarly, from the period of 1957 to 1959, the presence of black/"other" performers on the popular music charts grew another 23 per cent, from 15 per cent (6 positions) to 38 per cent (15 positions) representation of black artists. (See Figure 2) The race of the artists seems like it was becoming less and less important over time. This increased representation of black musicians on the Top 40 popular music charts can be considered a sign that 1960s society was too

progressing and becoming more tolerant of black people, their ideas, culture and obviously their music.

What these early independent pioneering artists like Fats Domino, Sam Cooke and Chuck Berry did was crack open the popular music charts for blacks and, in so doing, paved the way for the mainstream and mass-level commercial success of other black artists to come in the years that followed. These black musicians helped solidify a presence within mainstream cultural discourse, one that was later further developed in order to truly express black culture freely, openly, and in respect to relevant social issues. Evidence of the mainstream acceptance of blacks and black music on the popular music charts is clear in the results of the years 1961-1962.

Figure 3:

Racial Breakdown of White and Black Artists on the Top 40 Popular Music Charts, 1957–1972.

	White	Black
1957	**34**	6
1958*	**30**	7
*1959**	**24**	15
1960	**31**	9
1961	**24**	16
1962	**24**	16
1963	**29**	11
1964	**32**	8
1965	**31**	9
1966	**35**	5
1967	**29**	11
1968	**28**	12
*1969**	**30**	9
1970	**25**	15
1971	**27**	13
1972*	**1**	0

*Years wherein the total sample of songs is not forty. (Numbers do not include any cartoon chartings).

Between 1961-1962, the black presence on the Top 40 popular music charts reached a new historical high, averaging 40 per cent black representation (16/40 positions). (See Figure 3) This ballooning of black representation to 40 per cent total representation over these years is particularly intriguing considering that in 1960 there were only 18.9

million black Americans in American in total, a number that only comprised 10.5 per cent of the total US population.[105] In other words, over the years 1961-1962, black representation on the popular music charts was four times the size of their respective portion of the total American population. This disparity between the representation of black people in society and the popular music charts can surely be considered a sign that black people were making much progress; that the popular charts were an antecedent to social change as music was demonstrating strong evidence of being a socially progressive force. This demonstrates that the process of commodification and forces of popular music were indeed facilitating the larger social change and augmenting its effects through its popularization – by helping these ideas spread to more people. In support of the assertion that this heightened capitalist interest in black culture functioned as an antecedent to change, it is also interesting to note about this "dance craze" trend that, between the years 1961-1962, of the black musicians who charted on the charts during these years, 19 per cent (6/32 positions) were produced by major record companies. (See Figure 4)

Figure 4: **Breakdown of the Original Composition of Black/B&W Chartings During the Co-optation of the "Dance Craze", 1961-1962.**

Artist	Song	Year	Recording Label	Orig.
Bobby Lewis	"Tossin' and Turnin'"	1961	Beltone	No
Chubby Checker	"Pony Time"	1961	Parkway	No
The Marcels	"Blue Moon"	1961	RCA Victor	No
Gary "U.S." Bonds	"Quarter to Three"	1961	Legrand	Yes
Ray Charles	"Hit the Road Jack"	1961	ABC Paramount	No

[105] U.S Census Figures, *Time Almanac of 2005*, 377.

The Shirelles	"Will You Love Me Tomorrow?"	1961	Scepter	No
Ernie K-Doe	"Mother-In-Law"	1961	Specialty/Mint	Yes
The Marvelettes	"Please Mr. Postman"	1961	Tamla	No
Brook Benton	"The Boll Weevil Song"	1961	Mercury	Yes
Chris Kenner	"I Like It Like That, Part 1"	1961	Instant	Yes
Dee Clark	"Raindrops"	1961	Vee-Jay (Falcon/Abner)	Yes
The Miracles	"Shop Around"	1961	Tamla	Yes
Shep & The Limelites	"Daddy's Home"	1961	Hull	Yes
The Shirelles	"Dedicated to the One I Love"	1961	Scepter	No
Gene McDaniels	"A Hundred Pounds of Clay"	1961	Liberty	Yes
Mar-Keys	"Last Night"	1961	Stax	Yes
The Jive Five	"My True Story"	1961	Beltone	Yes
Ray Charles	"I Can't Stop Loving You"	1962	ABC Paramount	No
Joey Dee & the Starliters	"Peppermint Twist - Part 1"	1962	Roulette	Yes
The Shirelles	"Soldier Boy"	1962	Scepter	No
Gene Chandler	"Duke of Earl"	1962	Vee-Jay (Falcon/Abner)	Yes
Chubby Checker	"The Twist" (re-entry of 1960 #1 hit)	1962	Parkway	No
The Crystals	"He's A Rebel"	1962	Philles	No
Little Eva	"The Loco-Motion"	1962	Dimension	No
Chubby Checker	"Limbo Rock"	1962	Parkway	No
Dee Dee Sharp	"Mashed Potato Time"	1962	Parkway	No
Nat King Cole	"Ramblin' Rose"	1962	Capitol	No
The Orlons	"The Wah Watusi"	1962	Cameo/Parkway	No
Ray Charles	"You Don't Know Me"	1962	ABC Paramount	No
The Contours	"Do You Love Me?"	1962	Gordy (Motown)	No
Chubby Checker (with Dee Dee Sharp)	"Slow Twistin'"	1962	Parkway	No
Booker T. & the MG's	"Green Onions"	1962	Volt/Stax	Yes
Barbara George	"I Know (You Don't Love Me Anymore)"	1962	Battiste's AFO	Yes

From the results of the dance craze, it can be reasonably concluded that *being black* was actually considered to be something "cool". "Blackness" was, for the time, something that increased the record sales of the record released. Therefore, major record producers and independents alike were tapping into and exploiting this newfound popularity in an effort to cash-in on the blossoming dance craze trend and cultural cache of blackness. This "interest" in blackness

during these years explains why during the dance craze trend black representation on the Top 40 popular music charts skyrocketed. In this early instance, and for the (first) rare occasion, forces of commodification and co-optation were actually working *in favour* of black progress. Because it was now considered trendy to have black R&B artists record your dance song, "fluff" artists such as Little Eva, Chubby Checker, and Dee Dee Sharp made huge names for themselves singing songs that merely explained a dance's movements in the lyrics, lyrics which they did not even write.[106]

In support of the claim that co-optation created an interest in black culture, Robert E. Weems Jr., in his own consideration of the processes of commodification in the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s, confirms the fact that forces of capitalism were interested in black music and culture as well as the general stimulation of a "soul market". In his work entitled, "The Revolution Will Be Marketed: American Corporations and Black Consumers during the 1960s", Weems Jr. reports that, "between 1961 and 1966, American corporations ...increased their advertising budget for black-oriented stations three-fold."[107] According to Weems Jr., "the development of the 'soul market' illustrates corporate America's attempt to adapt to African-American consumers's political and cultural reorientation."[108]

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[106] It is important to note here that I do not refer to these artists as "fluffy" to discredit them, nor to diminish the importance of their respective Top 40 chartings, but rather to stress the importance that it was essentially forces of commodification and capitalism that were driving this influx in black representation.
[107] Robert E. Weems Jr., "The Revolution Will Be Marketed", Ed. Lawrence B. Glickman in *Consumer Society in American History: A Reader*, Ithaca; Cornell University Press, 1999. 319.
[108] Ibid, 322.

Ultimately, during the dance craze years, large-scale forces of capitalism acted as a catalyst for progress insofar as the efforts of co-optation no longer stifled black progress or exploited racialized shortcomings, but rather worked in support of change. Quite simply, whereas traditionally only white people had the potential to attain the highly desired (or at least profitable position of) "fluff artist", now black people too were becoming 'shills'. Therefore, strictly economically speaking at least, this increased interest in "blackness" meant great equality. Additionally, it no doubt spawned, sparked and supported the careers of many black musicians during this period as well as served as a very real sign for the early "progress potentials" of the co-optation of music.

In short, for the purposes of reassessing the effects and potentials of co-optation being a socially progressive force, this "dance craze" example helped construct a picture of how the process of co-optation can be considered a much more value-neutral concept. In this guise, co-optation functions more akin to the processes of *absorption* and *diffusion* rather than simple exploitation. Moreover, from this example it can also be seen that the process of co-optation is not inherently a destroyer of popular culture and all that is good within them, nor is it a force that only waters down genuine cultural trends, rather it is a much more complex and multi-faceted concept and process than that.

Confronting Resistance: Racial Comparative of Popularity

Though increased black representation on the popular music charts may have been a sign of and even catalyst for societal progress, the second trend

considered teases out aspects of the underside of this progress, or at least aspects of its resistance. If the first trend demarcated is not only evidence of a shift in popular attitudes about racism and segregation during the early stages of the Civil Rights Movement's developments, but also how the music business acted as a cultural antecedent and safe enclave that helped facilitate societal progress by making those listening to these songs and appreciating the recording artists more prone to ideas about racial tolerance or equality, then the second trend can be considered a sign of the residual racism that still lingered in society's hegemonic cultural institutions and had to be overcome. In my ethnographic content analysis, the second major trend that I noticed was that, in the first five years of my sample period considered, black musicians wrote more of their own popular songs than those of their white contemporaries. By strictly taking a look at the numbers, one can see that from the period of 1957 to 1961, an astonishing 57 per cent (30/53 total chart positions) of the songs that black musicians charted with were also originally written by that musician.

This early majority of independent black musicians is staggering, particularly when it is considered against the chartings of contemporary white musicians and the mere fact that, during this same period, only 32 per cent (45/143) of all white chartings were originally composed. (See Figure 5) Therefore, it is my opinion that this early influx in the number of independently successful black songwriters in the late-1950s to early-1960s can be interpreted in one of two ways: either this boom of black creativity during this developmental period means that black people were on aggregate more creative than not only

white people within this period but also the norm of their own creative standards in comparison to the numbers of rest of the decade (which is highly improbable); or, that, more likely, there was generally a "higher", more difficult set of standards, being placed on black musicians in order for them to chart on the popular music charts.

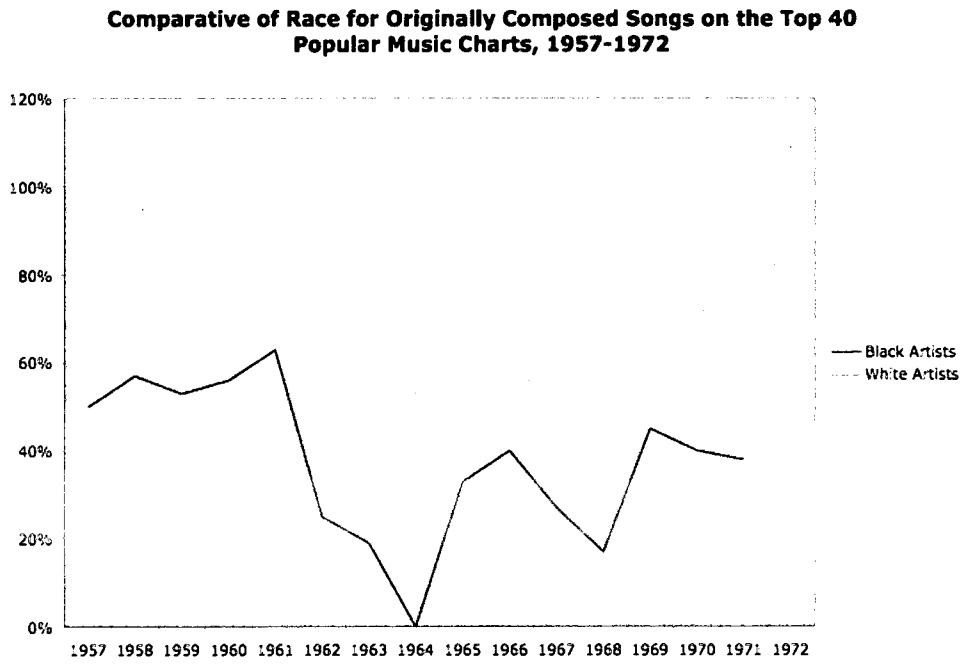
From this pattern, I deduced that the few black individuals who could chart during this early period, were on the aggregate, forced to be more independently successful in order to achieve the same amount of success as that of their white contemporaries. Moreover, when this early upsurge is considered in conjunction with the numbers from the rest of the decade, it becomes clear that this early boom is a sign of a disparity on the popular charts between the social and political standards put on both black and white people respectively. However, this trend should also be considered with the knowledge that major record labels, who generally used a Tin-Pan Alley format to create this chart-toppers, a method solely available to those organizations large enough to have vertigal integration and the stratification of functions within their corporate structure, were mostly comprised of white recording artists. This meant that white artists signed under major labels were often separate from the song-writing process, whereas black artists, who generally signed to independent labels, did not have the support system around them to feed them with songs. This organizational structure proved to be an impetus for black creativity as it provided a situation wherein blacks were "encouraged" to write their own

material, however it also functions as a sign that there was still, generally, a higher standard for success being placed on black artists over whites.

In 1962, something drastically shifted insofar as not only the number of blacks on the popular music charts dipped, but so too did the number of blacks charting with songs that they wrote for themselves – the latter dropping drastically in comparison with the former. Statistically, between 1962 and 1966, an average of only 20 per cent (10/49) of the songs that blacks charted with on the Top 40 music charts were originally composed. On the flip side, during this same five year sample, the percentage of white artists who wrote their own songs grew from 38 per cent from 1962 to 63 per cent in 1966, with an average of every second white artist writing their own song (75/151). (Underlying all of this, was also the fact that during this same period between 1962 to 1966, white representation on the popular music charts rose to its respective peak during the fifteen year period considered as black representation dropped to a new low.) The rapid decrease of black creative representation on the Top 40 popular charts that took place in and in the few years after 1962 was more reasonably the result of a backlash against black progress that was manifesting itself on the popular music charts as a microcosm of larger society than it was the product of sudden loss of creativity for blacks as a collective.[109]

[109] An additional factor to this decrease in black representation after 1962 could have also been the result of the fact that in the year 1964, the British Invasion landed in North America and immediately grabbed hold of the popular charts. Like it or not, many of these British artists were white males, and the presence of these bands on the popular music charts during these years no doubt should be factored into any consideration of the results discussed above.

Figure 5:



However, in order to fully understand the nature of this mainstream resistance or backlash against the forms of black progress made on the popular music charts in years prior, this data must be triangulated against both its thematic content and the maturation of the social movement that was the Civil Rights Movement. What I mean to say by this is that, if one pays attention to the peaks and valleys of black creativity throughout the progression of the sample period, there is, and was, a correlation between mainstream society's tolerance for black *freedom of expression* (at least on the popular music charts) and the growing sense of urgency for black equality expressed in the intensification of

the civil rights project. Quite simply, as the Civil Rights Movement and its music intensified the Top 40 music charts became a less accommodating place for black people to freely, and equally, express their political and cultural frustrations in a musically infused public sphere.

Interestingly, as noted above, the period in which black musicians were the exceptionally "free" to express their creative endeavors was from the period 1957 to 1961, during the "dance craze" phase. (See Figure 4) It is important to demarcate the "dance craze" genre of music as the period in which black freedom of expression was exceptionally high because, despite the fact that this musical trend was utterly and completely apolitical, it still opened up future avenues for musical expression and subsequent change. Though this music was the type of "cotton candy" music one would find on *American Bandstand*, Tin Pan Alley kind of stuff, it still helped black musicians make great progress by providing them a means into the mainstream public discourse – albeit not the socio-political discourse yet.[110] The "dance craze" is also significant to demarcate because it also shows a period in which there is a highteigned interest in black culture, and accordingly, demonstrates some of the first instances in which the Tin-Pan Alley system of stratified labour was applied to black artists. In short, this in my assessment, is a sign of an increasing tolerance of black culture and people by once conservative institutions of power and people.

Additionally, the year 1962 is an important year to acknowledge because it was the second year of the "dance craze" phase in which black representation

[110] David Pichaske, *A Generation in Motion: Popular Music & Culture in the Sixties*, 80 + 159-160.

on the popular music charts remained high with 16 chartings, but freedom of black equality began to drop off as only four of those sixteen composed their own song. What happened between the years 1961-1962 was that, major record labels who wanted to catch onto the dance craze trend were coerced into being more tolerant of black artists and culture. This *change* was the resolve of the forces of co-optation and the record companies's desire not to surrender any market share more than it was a desire to make racial progress, however it still had effects for both. When this spike in black freedom of expression during the "safe" dance craze is juxtaposed against the results of a few years later when, not only the music charts but also the socio-political environment of the 1960s heated up, it seems apparent that the mainstream was more accommodating of free black cultural expression when it was apolitical and unthreatening to the established social order than when it challenged it directly. However, the first year in which a backlash against black progress is noticeable was in 1963, wherein only 9 per cent of all (1/11) charting black artist originally scored their own song. This backlash is increasingly apparent when one considers that, over the next three years the numbers of black representation remained dauntingly low, as in 1964, 1965, and 1966 respectively, zero of eight, three of nine, and two of only five black artists wrote and recorded their own popular songs. (See Figure 6) Perhaps one reason that explains this sharp decline during the period from 1963 to 1966, is that the face of American politics and domestic social life was rapidly changing and intensifying.

Figure 6: **Detailed Chart of the Breakdown Between Originally Composed Songs and Race on the *Billboard* Top 40 Popular Music Charts, 1957-1972.**

	Original Songwriter		Breakdown of Black Songwriters (Original Songwriter)		Breakdown of White Songwriters (Original Songwriter)		Racial Breakdown	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	White	Black
1957	9	31	3	3	6	28	34	6
1958*	13	27	4	3	9	24	30	7
1959*	16	24	8	7	8	17	24	15
1960	16	24	5	4	11	20	31	9
1961	21	19	10	6	11	13	24	16
1962	13	27	4	12	9	15	24	16
1963	11	29	1	10	10	19	29	11
1964	17	23	0	8	17	15	32	8
1965	20	20	3	6	17	14	31	9
1966	24	16	2	3	22	13	35	5
1967	16	24	3	8	13	16	29	11
1968	18	22	2	10	16	12	28	12
1969*	22	18	4	5	18	13	30	9
1970	25	15	6	9	19	6	25	15
1971	18	22	5	8	13	14	27	13
1972	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	0

*Year where total sample of songs is not 40. (Does not include Cartoon chartings).

Therefore, under this conception the sharp decline in the popular music charts inclusiveness and tolerance for black forms of cultural expression was an expression of the mainstream's resistance to and fear of the widespread change that might resolve. Quite simply, during this period America was going through some of her more turbulent, "teenage" (one might call them) years as she was still radically reforming her identity both domestically and abroad. The political and social shift and general volatility of America was the result of two main

forces: the Civil Rights Movement's intensification, and the US's ever-increasing involvement in Vietnam. Moreover, this highly politicized period of societal and cultural polarization was additionally incited and infused by other important socio-political events.

One of these said pivotal socio-political events was, the June 12th, 1963 murder of NAACP field secretary and civil rights activist Medgar Evers, an act that greatly angered blacks and activists. Evers was shot and killed while entering his home in Jackson, Mississippi. To compound the general social malaise about this assassination, the alleged gunman of the crime, Byron De La Beckwith, was also never successfully convicted.

A few short months later, at the August 28th, 1963 *March on Washington* which, at conservative estimates, saw at least 200,000 people descended on the US's capital in support of black equality and desegregation, the Civil Rights Movement intensified again, having a ripple-effect on the socio-political environment of the 1960s on the whole. Though the *March on Washington* is highlighted and popularly remembered by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s "I Have a Dream" speech, this event stood for much more. Ultimately, this event symbolically fired a warning shot at conservative American notifying them of the mass change that was to come as it not only signified the first mass organized protest of its kind but also triggered much more civic awareness and action in support of civil rights issues.

Later that year, on November 22nd, 1963, when US President John Fitzgerald Kennedy was assassinated in Dallas, Texas, the nation again

experienced a sharp polarization in the grieving of its president and the aftermath of its investigation with the Warren Commission. This event rattled the nation to its very core as it was the first time in modern history that a US president was successfully assassinated. Additionally, this event also obviously brought to an end the Kennedy years, policy, and general feeling of hope for a better future that he gave to most Americans.[111]

After the assassination of Kennedy, Vice President Lyndon B. Johnson was left to lead the nation. One of LBJ's first defining acts as president was the successful legislation of the *Civil Rights Act* in 1964, and the subsequent passage of the *Voting Rights Act* in 1965. Both of these events sparked activism for blacks and whites alike, but for different pockets of the populous for different reasons. For radical-right whites, this progress incited reactionary violence and activism to incite social action, whereas for blacks it incited further social action in the black power movement as the "progress" that was made formally in the Civil Rights Movement, for many had still not been realized both in the informal power relations of America, and in many of its formal institutions of hegemony.

Backlash from the formal advances in the US political system led to the 1964 wave of riots that sprawled across the US's northern cities like New York City, Chicago, and Detroit later in the decade. Though the earlier of the riots were directly sparked by the NYPD's unjust beating and murder of a fifteen-year-old black boy, this political activity spread as if it was a contagious

[111] Lee Harvey Oswald, was charged for the shooting though he claimed to have no involvement or knowledge of it upon his arrest. Oswald was never brought to trial as he was himself gunned down two days later by Jack Ruby.

epidemic and accordingly ignited the black underclass. These events seem to be a clear sign of the future intransigence and inertia that progress was going to be met with the rest of the decade. This anger and resentment towards black progress ultimately culminated in the 1965 assassination of Black Nationalist and militant-black activist, Malcolm X. Malcolm X was assassinated during a rally in Harlem by unnamed gunmen. The only thing that angered black activists and nationalists more than the assassination of their intellectual movement leader Malcolm X, was the lack of attention paid and effort made in the investigation into his murder by the authorities.

Lastly and perhaps most important to the overall socio-political intensification during this period is the "Americanization" of the Vietnam War which was taking place under the governance of Lyndon B. Johnson. During this period of "Americanization", US troop commitment increased exponentially from 15,000 at the end of 1963 to 200,000 only two years later.[112] This decision ramped up US involvement in the conflict overseas to the point where America, and most Americans, felt as if they were personally involved and vested in the outcome of the Vietnam War – whether they felt they were vested positively or negatively in its outcome was more of a matter of their overall stance on the war.

Collectively, these socio-political events manifested themselves socially, and in the popular music charts, as a general force of conservatism – one against the emergent counterculture. And, it was during this period, that large rifts in

[112] Klaus Fischer, *American in White, Black, and Gray: A History of the Stormy 1960s*, 181.

American social life began to spring up; left divided from right, young from old, pacifist from patriot, and social activist from member of the 'silent majority'.

Based on my consideration of the patterns of black representation on the *Billboard* Top 40 popular music charts, it is my assertion that the conservative backlash against "black progress" is the result of not only conservatism and resistance from the right, but also a natural result of the process of co-optation selectively tailoring and segmenting what was "commodifiable" versus what was not, what was profitable and what was not, particularly in the given socio-political context of the 1960s. In other words, during the years 1963 to 1966, as the socio-political context of the United States of America intensified, the Black Power movement replaced the Civil Rights Movement as the main form of black cultural expression as many believed the political pursuit of black equality needed to take a more "active" approach. In reaction to this intensification, the popular music charts became a more secluded place, one that resisted expressions of black culture, particularly any form of black culture that was socially poignant. What is most interesting is that, these processes and forces of capitalism deemed particular expressions of black culture "commodifiable" (and others "not") based on whether they were considered "safe" or unthreatening to the (predominantly white) mainstream public – safe in that they did not challenge the racial status-quo. Ultimately, because the black power movement was (and is) fundamentally exclusionist, insofar as it was a Black Nationalist movement and did not want to participate with, or work within the system, it was not as easily susceptible to, nor really even attractive to forces of capitalistic

co-optation. For this reason, it was the black bands and artists with safe images, soft images that were easy to sell to the mainstream public. During this period, it was those artists like The Supremes, The Temptations, Martha Stewart & The Vandellas, and The Four Tops that dominated the black presence of Top 40 chartings from 1963 to 1996, whereas the more heavily politicized genres of black music, such as those of soul and funk genres, had a scarce presence on the Top 40 popular charts (with only one exception, the respective charting by the king of soul himself, James Brown in December of 1965 with his "I Got You (I Feel Good)" which charted at a peak of number three.)

Based on all of the above information, rather than believe that black musicians stopped writing their own songs or stopped writing about socially conscious issues during this heightened period of black activism (as I alluded to earlier), I believe it is more likely that the highly politicized and exclusionary nature of the music's thematic content as part of the Black Power movement rendered much black music too risqué for the respective listening audience of popular music as early as 1963.[113] This is particularly poignant considering the fact that it was not until 1965, with Barry McGuire's "Eve of Destruction" that the Top 40 popular music audiences were really interested in socially conscious music. Again, what occurred was that processes of co-optation naturally selected

[113] Another factor that may have contributed to the decline of black artists who wrote their own Top 40 hits is the growing popularity of Motown and the male and female vocal groups. The reason being is that, these predominantly black groups, signed to labels such as Motown, Tamla, and Gordy, labels that used a stratified system of labour division akin to that of Tin-Pan Alley. This created a situation wherein black artists who were charting on the Top 40 were "silenced" because they did not write their own music. I believe that this consideration of the stratified system of the Motown music machine is important to note, but still one has to consider this in the midst of the Civil Rights Movement, as a sign that black musicians did not have a powerful enough voice to speak for themselves in the mainstream media outlets.

the music that was most conducive to profit and, in following its capitalist ethos let the rest fall to the way side. And again, because the Black Power movement that was emergent over these years was so politically volatile and disinterested in mainstream participation (or strongly resisted mainstream co-optation), it in turn too made this music unappealing to mainstream market forces – at least for a little while that is.

In sum, it is worth noting that as the sample period considered comes to a close between the years 1967 to 1971 the number of black creative musicians *stabilizes* staying in the range of 17 to 45 per cent representation, at an average rate of 33 per cent representation (20/60 total chartings). However, of these twenty black original songwriters, still only socially "safe" artist's or unthreatening songs from charting artists like Sam & Dave, Arthur Conley Jr., Archie Bell & The Drells, Otis Redding, Marvin Gaye, or Stevie Wonder would chart in the Top 40 – rarely anything that was both originally composed and overtly socially conscious message. During the same period of 1967 to 1971, white creative representation skyrocketed to a range of 45 to 76 per cent, with an average representation of 57 per cent (79/139 total chartings) original composition.

When this black chart *stabilization* is compared against the overall trends and patterns of the popular music charts, it becomes apparent that though the charts were actually becoming both more socially conscious and more independently creative, the fact remained that the freedom of musical and cultural expression of one's political frustrations, the usage of music as a public

sphere, was not accorded to all equally regardless of race. In other words, though the presence of black musicians may have been increasing as time progressed thus making the charts a more tolerant place for different cultures, there was still a mainstream hesitancy to fully enfranchise these minorities actors within this musically charged public sphere. This hesitancy is noticeable in the different prerequisites accorded to different races in order to achieve mainstream success.

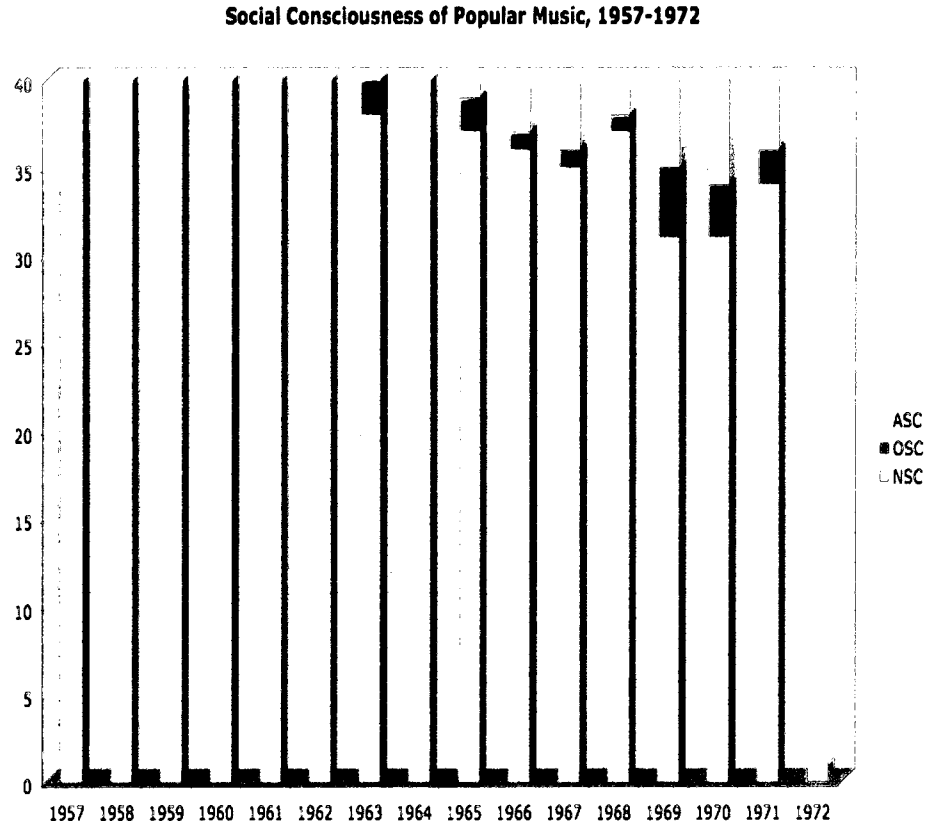
Tracing the Absorption and Diffusion of 1960s Socially Conscious Music

The most socially significant and revealing trend is that, the overall presence of socially conscious songs (overt and abstractly socially conscious) that chart in the Top 40 on the popular music charts generally increased as the sample period considered elapsed. This trend is the most quintessential of my findings from my ethnographic content analysis because it is evidence that runs directly contrary to the Platonist thesis which asserts that, political protest music of the 1960s dramatically altered in and after the year 1965, this form of socially conscious material disappeared from mainstream discourse as a result of its co-optation. They view co-optation as an inherent process of "watering down", in which the original message and content of the music is diluted and replicated to the point where the original culture is no longer "genuinely political". In short, for the Platonists, this brand of socially

Year	Number of Overtly Socially Conscious Charting in Top 40	Number of Abstractly Socially Conscious Charting in Top 40
1963	2	0
1964	0	0
1965	2	1
1966	1	3
1967	1	4
1968	1	2
1969	4	5
1970	3	6
1971	2	4
1972	0	1

conscious music strictly functioned in an "in-movement" role insofar as those who listened to it (and continued to through the decade) were already involved in social activism, or were more predisposed to supporting ideas of the political left. By considering some of the statistical data of this trend, I assert that the socially conscious boom that took place from 1963 to 1972, was more the *result* of

Figure 8:



its co-optation (of mainstream interest in a blossoming cultural trend), and that its popularization actually helped spread the message of social reform (that embedded within the music) to pockets of the mainstream population that may have not been previously exposed to such politically infused ideas. Moreover, the fact that these socially conscious songs were charting so well on the Top 40 music charts was also a sign that the message of change was being absorbed into this mainstream as well as diffused across it. (See Figures 7 & 8)

To use the statistical data as quantitative evidence that supports this claim, from the period of 1957 to 1962, there were zero chartings of overtly or abstractly socially conscious songs in the Top 40 popular music charts even though there was a plethora of social activism. Though some socially conscious material was already starting to brew within particular music scenes, such as the folk music scene that was blossoming in New York City's Greenwich Village, for the most part, popular music was apolitical. However, in 1963, this all changed as the trend of social consciousness (represented by the early "finger-pointing songs" of the folk revival) caught on, and two overtly socially conscious songs registered on the Top 40: "Blowin' in the Wind" by Peter, Paul & Mary and Trini Lopez's upbeat version of "If I Had a Hammer". Therefore, in my assessment, by 1965 and the time Barry McGuire's "Eve of Destruction" reached number one on the popular music charts, the song that the Platonists demarcated as the onset of the co-optation of this socially conscious musical trend, socially conscious political protest music *had already settled into* the mainstream as well as solidified a presence on the popular music charts with other socially conscious chartings of:

The Byrds and Bob Dylan, who both charted in the Top 40 with socially conscious songs respectively with "Turn, Turn, Turn! (To Everything There is a Season)" – which was a Pete Seeger song which he adapted from the Book of Ecclesiastes – and "Like a Rolling Stone". The Platonists also neglect to mention that, both "Eve of Destruction", and "Turn, Turn, Turn! (To Everything There is a Season)" peaked at number one on the Top 40 charts in 1965. This dual charting of socially conscious number one hits, signifies that socially conscious music had truly already arrived at, and been *absorbed into* the mainstream cultural and political discourse as "Eve of Destruction" was not the only socially conscious song on the charts (nor off them either).

Moreover, this augmented mainstream interest in socially conscious music is supported by the overall mushrooming of these types of songs toward the end of the sample period. For example, from the period of 1965 to 1972, the presence of socially conscious songs charting within the Top 40 ranged from 8 and 23 per cent representation, at a total average representation of 14 per cent (39/280), whereas during the eight years prior, there was only an average of less than 1 per cent total representation (2/320) of social consciousness of popular music. (See Figure 8) In order to fully comprehend the importance of this trend, insofar as how it helped to layer the concept of co-optation in an effort demonstrate how the patterns of mainstream consumption helped facilitate the larger social change of the 1960s, I will compare my own decoding of this trend with that of the Platonist position that I highlighted earlier. Furthermore, I will triangulate my differentiations from them with both a micro-level analysis of my ethnographic

content analysis and a macro-level consideration of the changing socio-political climate when necessary.

The first critical distinction that I make from that of the Platonists' perspective is, rather than assert that 1965 was the first year in which forces of co-optation influenced the music charts, I stress that these "big money" forces were always present in the popular music industry throughout the whole sample, just in different forms. Furthermore, I believe it to be important to acknowledge that the forces of co-optation actually first expressed their interest in *socially conscious music* in 1963, when two artists who were generally more conducive to mainstream tastes, covered two folk revival songs of other more authentic folk, but also politically virulent, musicians much akin to what the Cover Phenomenon did only five years earlier with respect to the co-optation of "blackness" in the dance craze.

The two cover songs that signify the onset of the forces of co-optation's interest in socially conscious music as a popular trend are respectively: Peter, Paul & Mary's 1963 version of Bob Dylan's 1962 overtly socially conscious freedom song "Blowin' in the Wind" which peaked at number two for one week; and Trini Lopez's rendition of Pete Seeger's 1949 overtly socially conscious folk song "If I Had a Hammer" which peaked at the third position for three weeks. An interesting anecdote to this point about the earlier co-optation of socially conscious music is also that, Peter, Paul & Mary and Trini Lopez, the artists who recorded the cover versions of socially conscious songs of other contemporary artists, were both under contract to Warner Brothers Records, a major label. It is

also interesting to note that Warner Brothers also had the trio of Peter, Paul & Mary record their own version of the socially conscious "If I Had a Hammer", which was a Top 10 hit peaking at number ten one year earlier in 1962.[114] This anecdotal piece of information is very important because it illustrates the early interest of (at least) one major label in co-opting the rising popularity of the blossoming socially conscious music. This meant that rather than major labels being a repressive force in the battle for change, by 1963 they had already devised tactics of co-optation to, more advantageously and intelligently, profit from this growing social movement. Quite simply, inadvertently or not, major labels such as Warner Brothers and Columbia (who had signed Bob Dylan) were helping spread the message of change to new, more mainstream audiences. Therefore, it is my assertion that, the two popular socially conscious songs that charted in 1963 undermine the Platonist assertion that Barry McGuire's 1965 hit "Eve of Destruction" ought to be considered the first instance in which major forces of capitalism were interested in this type of music. Furthermore, it is also my assertion that Peter, Paul & Mary as well as Trini Lopez should be credited (to some degree considering neither party wrote either song) with the first socially conscious song(s) to chart within the Top 40 (not Barry McGuire) as they both respectively charted two years prior. Though those in the Platonists camp have made the argument that there was something inherently "more commercial" about Barry McGuire's hit song, in that he was not traditionally

[114] Joel Whitburn, *Billboard: Top 1000 Hits of the Rock Era, 1955-2005*, Milwaukee; Hal Leonard Co., 2006. 488.

considered a protest singer nor did he write his own song, I think that this critique is moot when it is leveled against the arguments that I have made above.

The second critical distinction that I make from the Platonists, is that I consider 1965 as the beginning of a *settling* period for socially conscious music on the Top 40 popular music charts, rather than the year in which co-optation began, or in which the negative forces co-optation began to lead to the end of this popular trend. What I mean to say by this is that, by taking a critical look at the Top 40 popular music charts, it is noticeable that in and directly after the year 1965, the presence of socially conscious music on the popular music charts *stabilized* rather than declined. In other words, before the co-optation boom that took place in the latter years of the 1960s wherein co-optation would fully support the diffusion and absorption of its message through and across mainstream cultural discourse, socially conscious music first needed to secure a significant chart presence. This stabilization in and after the year 1965 is exactly what happened as is demonstrated by the upsurge and later leveling off of socially conscious songs between 1965 to 1968. (See Figure 7 & 8) Statistically speaking, from the period of 1965 to 1968, the representation of socially conscious songs ranged slightly, while settling between 8 and 13 per cent socially conscious representation. It is important to differentiate that the period of 1965-1968 was one of stabilization and absorption for socially conscious music because it illustrates that rather than socially conscious music being fragmenting, polarizing and diluted in its co-optation, it acted as more of a normative and socializing force to those mainstream audiences listening. It is my assertion that

during this period of stabilization from 1965 to 1968, the thematic content of the socially conscious material that charts on the Top 40 popular music charts *expanded* and became *more expressive* of more social concerns and maladies rather than became a "watered down" political expression. Musical social consciousness came to include not only themes of freedom, equality, and freedom, the issues to do with the Civil Rights Movement as it had earlier on the in decade, but now, it also was infused with important themes of brotherhood,

Figure 9: **Table of the Socially Conscious Songs Charting on the *Billboard* Top 40 Music Charts, 1965 to 1967.**

Performing Artist	Song Title	Peak Chart Date	Peak Wks.	Peak Pos.	Recording Label	Original Song	Social Conscious	Race
The Byrds	"Turn! Turn! Turn! (To Everything There Is A Season)"	Dec. 4/65	3	1	Columbia	No	OSC	White
Barry McGuire	"Eve Of Destruction"	Sept. 25/65	1	1	Dunhill	No	OSC	White
Bob Dylan	"Like A Rolling Stone"	Sept. 4/65	2	2	Capitol	Yes	ASC	White
Sgt. Barry Sadler	"The Ballad of the Green Berets"	March 5/66	5	1	RCA Victor	Yes	ASC*	White
The Beatles	"We Can Work It Out"	Jan 8/66	3	1	Capitol	Yes	ASC*	White (British)
The Rolling Stones	"Paint It, Black"	June 11/66	2	1	Decca	Yes	ASC*	White (British)
Simon & Garfunkle	"The Sounds of Silence"	Jan. 1/66	2	1	Columbia	Yes	OSC	White
Strawberry Alarm Clock	"Incense and Peppermints"	Nov. 25/67	1	1	UNI	Yes	OSC	White
The Beatles	"All You Need Is Love"	Aug. 19/67	1	1	Capitol	Yes	ASC	White (British)
Sam & Dave	"Soul Man"	Nov. 4/67	3	2	Stax / Atlantic	Yes	ASC	Black
The Monkees	"Pleasant Valley Sunday"	Aug. 19/67	2	[redacted]	Colgems	No	ASC	White
Scott McKenzie	"San Francisco (Be Sure To Wear Flowers In Your Hair)"	July 1/67	4	[redacted]	Ode	Yes	ASC	White
The Rascals	"People Got To Be Free"	Aug. 17/68	5	1	Atlantic (ATCO)	Yes	OSC	White
Jeannie C. Riley	"Harper Valley P.T.A."	Sept. 21/68	1	1	Plantation / Warner Bros.	No	ASC	White
Steppenwolf	"Born To Be Wild"	Aug. 24/68	3	2	ABC Dunhill / RCA Victor	Yes	ASC	White (Canadian)

community and peace, the values of the counterculture movement. Furthermore, this second critical distinction is supported by the fact that in the latter part of the decade, 1960s socially conscious music came to express a much more "general" social malaise and, accordingly became much more attractive (or at least acceptable) to the mainstream tastes. Though songs may not have been as *direct* (or topical) as they once were earlier in the decade, they were still *equally* as socially poignant, just in a different way. Moreover, this new abstract mode of political protest in the socially conscious music movement offered itself quite effectively to the processes of co-optation as socially conscious music grew even more popular than it was before.

For example, while a song such as Simon & Garfunkel's 1965 socially conscious song "Sounds of Silence" continued the tradition of the Civil Rights Movement protest music, it did so in a more poetic way. At a deeper reading, "Sounds of Silence" is a poetic, but virulent assertion for the need to "speak out" against the injustices of humanity. For me, it is a musical interpretation of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr's "dream". Simon and Garfunkel sing:

> Because a vision softly creeping
> Left its seeds while I was sleeping
> And the vision that was planted in my brain
> Still remains, within the sound of silence.[115]

"The vision" that was left in the brain of the narrator functions as a metaphor for Dr. Martin Luther King Jr's "dream" of brotherhood, equality and peace between all races and colours of people. Simon and Garfunkel sing for the need to break the silence that is halting the realization of this dream when they

[115] Simon & Garfunkel, "Sounds of Silence", *Sounds of Silence* (1965).

express to those with stiff ears that, they must listen to this message as "silence like a cancer grows"[116]. Similarly, with their 1960s hit-song, "People Got to Be Free", The Rascals explicitly expressed the need for all of humanity, or all of America perhaps, to immediately recognize the mutual freedom and equality of all people everywhere regardless of any mode of discrimination. The Rascals sang:

> People everywhere just wanna be free
> Listen, please listen, that's the way it should be
> Peace in the valley, people got to be free
> You should see, what a lovely, lovely world this would be.[117]

In addition to these two songs, there was also a plethora of other socially conscious songs filling the airwaves and popular music charts. For instance, Strawberry Alarm Clock's 1967 overtly socially conscious number one hit "Incense and Peppermints", *encouraged* a critical self and worldly examination (which may or may not be induced by drugs) to discover your place in the rapidly changing world by singing "turn on, tune in, and turn your eyes around, look at yourself". Also, The Beatles's 1967 abstractly socially conscious number one hit "All You Need Is Love", became an anthem for the counterculture's generational mantra of "peace, love and rock and roll". Likewise, Sam & Dave's 1967 number two hit "Soul Man", charted as the first song that was an clear expression of the emergent Black Power movement. And finally, Scott McKenzie's 1967 abstractly socially conscious number four hit, "San Francisco

[116] Ibid.
[117] The Rascals, "People Got to Be Free", *People Got to Be Free* (1968).

(Be Sure to Wear Flowers In Your Hair)", became the signature song for the mass migration of young counter-cultural, societal "misfits" to California.[118]

Ultimately, rather than believe that music was a destructive force on the social movements of the 1960s simply because it *was* co-opted it, it is my assertion that during the latter years of the 1960s, the popular music lexicon actually *increased,* and in so doing supported the Civil Rights Movement's goals. This co-optation actually helped spread movement ideas as a more generalized expression of social and cultural reform to an audience made up of a more general base. The assertion that there was actually an *expansion* of music's social consciousness rather than *regression* of it is supported by not only the sheer numbers on the popular charts, but also the larger context of growing anti-war sentiments and civic frustrations on behalf of the American people with the government and its inability to exit Vietnam. From this social stagnancy, and conservative intransigence, the younger generation threw almost every aspect of social, political and cultural life into the spotlight as they became increasingly disillusioned and angry.

In terms of the socio-political context of the 1960s, the intensity of the decade had also increased as the rift that had been escalating between the New Left and the conservative right grew to the point where it almost tore America apart ideologically, as well as in a very "real" way on the streets of many major cities in various forms of virulent and volatile political protest (as well as

[118] These "hippies" flooded the Haight-Ashbury area in San Francisco during the summer of '67 now popularly referred to as "The Summer of Love" in search of bringing to life, and community the first principles of the counterculture.

conservative backlash). For example, during the years 1965 to 1968, Americans bore witness to three political assassinations: one, black nationalist Malcolm X on February 21st 1965; two, black civil rights activist and leader of non-violent protest movements Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. on April 4th 1968; and three, younger brother of former president JFK, and future potential president himself Robert Francis Kennedy two months later on June 6th 1968. By the end of 1968, Americans had also been enduring more than eight years of their government's military involvement in Vietnam, a military that was making an ever-increasing and seemingly incomprehensible demand for the country's young men. For example, also by the end of 1968, there had been 30, 057 cumulative fatalities in Vietnam and an all-time high troop presence of 540,000 young American men.[119] Ultimately, these events, and numerous others like the lack of informal societal change from the formal changes made by the Civil Rights Movement, fostered a growing disenchantment with representatives of the American government, and music helped express these feelings.

Musically, it is interesting to note here however, that none of the songs of the 1960s that charted in the Top 40 ever, overtly or explicitly, challenged the US's involvement in Vietnam. Though there was a growing social discontent that was being expressed in the increased number of protest songs, as well as a growing number of artist recording protests songs, this tidbit of information demonstrates that 1960s mainstream taste preferences were still only accommodating of the *less virulent social messages*. Moreover, the songs that *did*

[119] John C. McWilliams, *The 1960s Cultural Revolution*, xxxii.

chart in the Top 40 generally focused on the overall countercultural themes of peace, unity and freedom – or as the generational mantra proclaimed, "peace, love and rock and roll".

In sum, this period from 1965 to 1968 was an important one on the popular music charts because during this duration of time, the presence of socially conscious music stabilized and accommodated to mainstream taste preferences. Ultimately, this period should be considered the time in which socially conscious music and musicians *secured* their presence in the popular market; this act was an antecedent to the change that would come as a result of this trend's complete co-optation.

The third and final critical distinction that I make is, rather than view the latter half of my sample period and its co-optation as a process of cultural erosion or dilution wherein socially conscious music was no longer a political force, I assert that during the period of 1969 to 1972 specifically, there was actually a *mass diffusion* of this cultural trend that made the message of socially conscious music "boom". In terms of the numbers of socially conscious hits, in both the years 1969 and 1970, the number of socially conscious songs charting within the Top 40 reached an all-time high at 23 per cent representation (9/40 chartings). Furthermore, in the year 1969 specifically, the year that many people consider the pinnacle of the 1960s (as far as music goes at least), the four socially conscious songs that reached number one cumulatively topped the charts for one third of the year for 17/52 weeks. (See Figure 10) Again, in 1970, the six socially conscious songs that charted at number one on the Top 40 popular music charts

controlled the charts for 18/52 weeks. (See Figure 10) The spike in representation of socially conscious music over these two years is evidence of an increased mainstream interest in issues *concerning* or in support of the democratic ideals of the New Left generation rather than it is evidence of a rejection of them. Quite simply, the fact that almost one quarter of all the total number of songs charting on the Top 40 popular music charts was socially conscious, is compounded by that, for almost a third of these two years, one socially conscious song or another topped the music charts.

This "spike" in social consciousness on the popular music charts was generally supported by, and in response to, a larger socio-political intensification and polarization between factions of the American public, as the events of 1969 and 1970 drove the nation to the brink of implosion. One (sad) fact that illustrates the widespread social discontent is that, by April of 1969, the American combat death toll had surpassed that of the Korean War for the new American historical high as it rose past 33,629 to 33,641.[120] At the same period, the US armed forces had a peak presence of soldiers with 543,482 young men currently being overseas.[121] By the end of 1970, even though President Nixon had begun withdrawing troops the summer prior, the US death toll of American soldiers in Vietnam had reached 44,241 (and was still climbing).[122] On the home front, as the years of conflict in Vietnam progressed, the general sentiment of "middle" America became more and more supportive of bringing our troops home and

[120] Ibid, xxxiii.
[121] Ibid.
[122] Ibid.

Figure 10: **Table of the Socially Conscious Songs Charting on the *Billboard* Top 40 Music Charts, 1969 to 1971.**

Performing Artist	Song Title	Peak Chart Date	Peak Wks.	Peak Pos.	Recording Label	Original Song	Social Conscious	Race
The 5th Dimension	"Aquarius/Let The Sunshine In"	April 12/69	6	1	Soul City	No	OSC	Black
Zager & Evans	"In the Year 2525 (Exordium & Terminus)"	July 12/69	6	1	RCA Victor	Yes	OSC	White
Sly & The Family Stone	"Everyday People"	Feb 15/69	4	1	Epic	Yes	OSC	B/W
The Beatles	"Come Together"	Nov. 29/69	1	1	Capitol	Yes	ASC	White (British)
Tommy James & The Shondells	"Crystal Blue Persuasion"	July 26/69	3	2	Roulette	No	OSC	White
Blood, Sweat & Tears	"Spinning Wheel"	July 5/69	3	2	Columbia	Yes	ASC*	White
Blood, Sweat & Tears	"And When I Die"	Nov. 29/69	1	2	Columbia	Yes	ASC*	White
Creedence Clearwater Revival	"Bad Moon Rising"	June 28/69	1	2	Fantasy	Yes	ASC*	White
The Zombies	"Time of the Season"	March 29/69	2	[redacted]	Decca	Yes	ASC	White (British)
Simon & Garfunkle	"Bridge Over Troubled Water"	Feb. 28/70	6	1	Columbia	Yes	ASC	White
The Guess Who	"American Woman"	May 9/70	3	1	RCA Victor	Yes	ASC	White (Canadian)
Edwin Starr	"War"	Aug. 29/70	3	1	Gordy	Yes	OSC	Black
The Beatles	"Let It Be"	April 11/70	2	1	Capitol	Yes	ASC	White (British)
Sly & The Family Stone	"Thank You (Falettinme Be Mice Elf Agin)"	Feb. 14/70	2	1	Epic	Yes	ASC	B/W
Ray Stevens	"Everything is Beautiful"	May 30/70	2	1	Barnaby / Warner Bros.	Yes	OSC	White
The Temptations	"Ball Of Confusion (That's What The World Is Today)"	June 27/70	3	[redacted]	Gordy	Yes	OSC	Black
John Ono Lennon	"Instant Karma (We All Shine On)"	March 28/70	3	[redacted]	Apple	Yes	ASC	White (British)
Sugarloaf	"Green-Eyed Lady"	Oct. 17/70	2	[redacted]	Liberty	Yes	ASC	White
Three Dog Night	"Joy to the World"	April 17/71	6	1	Dunhill	No	ASC	White
Isaac Hayes	"Theme From Shaft"	Nov. 20/71	2	1	Enterprise	Yes	ASC	Black
Marvin Gaye	"What's Going On?"	April 10/71	3	2	Tamla	Yes	OSC	Black
The Undisputed Truth	"Smiling Faces Sometimes"	Sept. 4/71	2	[redacted]	Gordy	No	ASC	Black
John Ono Lennon	"Imagine"	Nov. 13/71	2	[redacted]	Apple / EMI	Yes	OSC	White (British)
Five Man Electrical Band	"Signs"	Aug. 28/71	1	[redacted]	MGM	Yes	ASC	White (Canadian)

intransigent in its collective assertion to end the bloody conflict in the Pacific. Based on the arguments above, it is my determination that, in order for there to be such an increased interest on the popular music charts, there must have also been an equal socio-political interest in these counter-cultural ideals and goals. Quite simply, this spike in representation of socially conscious songs was clearly a sign that forces of co-optation, combined with an escalating socio-political climate, had successfully brought these countercultural ideas into the mainstream's cultural and political discourse.

This *shift*, in both the mainstream media's representation of the conflict in Vietnam as well as in the amount of interest given to "alternative" perspectives (such as socially conscious music), was led by the members of the mainstream media who had begun to become disillusioned by the war, particularly by the *Tet Offensive* – an event which clearly demonstrated that the war was far from over and that the public had been misinformed.[123] For example, in response to the Jan 30th 1968, *Tet Offensive*, CBS *Evening News* anchorman Walter Cronkite responded on the evening news, "What the hell is going on? I thought we were winning the war!" Furthermore, this event prompted Cronkite to go on a "fact-finding" mission to Vietnam wherein he would responsibly report as a member of the fourth estate. On February 7, 1968, upon return from his mission, Cronkite reported:

> To say that we are close to victory today is to believe, in the face of evidence, the *optimists* who have been wrong in the past. To suggest that we are on the edge of defeat is to yield to unreasonable

[123] Klaus Fischer, *American in White, Black, and Gray: A History of the Stormy 1960s*, 198.

> pessimism. To say that we are mired in a stalemate seems the only reasonable, yet unsatisfactory conclusion.[124]

According to cultural historian Klaus P. Fischer, President Lyndon B. Johnson himself even knew that he was losing the support of the American public after the venerable reporter shared these "findings".[125]

Ultimately, these growing sentiments of frustration, those that had come from years of enduring the seemingly futile war, were compounded by the apparent social paradoxes of American society. These paradoxes were highlighted and brought to the fore by America's involvement in Vietnam – for example the fact that many black men were fighting for the rights of Asian men that they themselves did not enjoy in their native America – and had manifested in a general sense of heightened political activism and media awareness by the end of the decade. This boom in mainstream media attention given to the expression of counter-cultural messages and forms of its political activism is quite evident at end of the sample period with events such as: the *Woodstock Festival for Peace and Freedom*; a musical and cultural celebration of peace, freedom and humanity which was itself an event that was filled with three full days of rock and roll music, a lot of drugs, and an even more free spirited attitude of love; and, the various campus protests (and violent government reactions) that took place on "hot-spots" of college campuses across America in both '69 and '70.

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[124] Ibid, 199.
[125] Ibid.

The most noticeable of these protests were those that respectively took place at UCLA's campus in Berkeley, California, and the shootings at Kent State University in Ohio. On May 15th 1969, Governor of California and former Hollywood actor. Ronald Reagan ordered the National Guard to spray the American, college-aged, anti-war activists protesting at UCLA with the same skin itching powder used against the Vietcong.[126] Almost exactly a year after, on May 4th 1970, on the campus of Kent State University, again the National Guard was called in to deal with an outburst of activism this time however by President Richard Nixon, and this time resulting in the death of four innocent by-standers who got caught in the crossfire as soldiers in the National Guard randomly opened fire and started spraying bullets into the crowd for fifteen seconds.[127]

Ultimately, these actions intensified the political environment of America, and not only created a greater rift between right-wing reactionaries and the socially progressive youth of the 1960s generation that was "taking it to the streets" in order to make reform, but these events also brought a lot more mainstream media attention to the political agenda of the New Left. Furthermore, the shift in media attention and support that was noticeable in not only the socio-political factors resulted in a disillusioned public, one which was made more susceptible to "radical" ideas.

By looking back at the *Billboard* Top 40 Popular Music charts as a social litmus and paying attention to the poignant political nature and message of some music, I demonstrate that, there was not only a boom in the representation of

[126] John C. McWilliams, *The 1960s Cultural Revolution*, xxxiii.
[127] Ibid, xxxiv.

socially conscious songs during this period, but also a boom in the assertiveness of the message and willingness of musicians to overtly sing out against forces of the mainstream. Mainstream society's increasing politicization and support of the leftist political agenda is clearly represented on the popular music charts within a few key chartings. One such example is, Tommy James & the Shondells's "Crystal Blue Persuasion", a 1969 overtly socially conscious song and number two hit that peaked for three weeks. This song suggested in its chorus that people better prepare themselves for the mass change and social reform that was clearly brewing with the lyrics:

> A new day is coming and people are changing ...
> You'd better get ready, gonna see the light
> Love, love is the answer.[128]

In a similar manner, Sly & The Family Stone's "Everyday People", (another 1969 overtly socially conscious song, a number one hit for four weeks) also proclaimed the need for future tolerance and love of others, regardless of one's colour, race, ethnicity, or class.

As a more virulent and angry example of the politicized left and mainstream support of the left political agenda, Edwin Starr's "War", which was a 1970 hit that topped the charts for a sum total of 3 weeks, stands out. In "War", Starr questions the "value" of war insofar as he asks who actually benefits from it, and questions who bears the burdens of war damages and death toll. Starr

[128] Tommy James & the Shondells, "Crystal Blue Persuasion", *Crimson and Clover* (1969).

ultimately suggests that war is good for "absolutely nothing" dumping a laundry list of its negative implications both domestically and abroad.[129]

The Temptations, in their popular song "Ball of Confusion (That's What the World is Today)" which was a 1970 number three hit that charted there for three weeks, execute a similar strategy to Starr. "Ball of Confusion (That's What the World is Today)" as the title suggests quite explicitly teases out and critiques everything that was wrong with contemporary 1970s America. On numerous occasions throughout the song, The Temptations vehemently voice the problems befalling contemporary America making it a "ball of confusion":

> Segregation, determination, demonstration,
> integration, aggravation, humiliation,
> obligation to our nation ...
> Air pollution, revolution,
> gun control, sound of soul.
> Shooting rockets to the moon,
> kids growing up too soon.
> And politicians say more taxes will solve everything.[130]

In a lighter fashion, Marvin Gaye's "What's Going On?" (a 1971 overtly socially conscious number two hit that climaxed at its peak position for a sum of three weeks) also critiqued the social, political and environmental problems of America. Rather than merely pointing fingers, Gaye delved deeper into the social and political malaise of America and questioned how this had all spiraled out of control. He challenged his listeners to not only diagnose the problems of

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[129] Edwin Starr, "War", *War & Peace* (1970).
[130] The Temptations, "Ball of Confusion (That's What the World is Today)", *Ball of Confusion* (1970).

America, but he also challenged them to be part of the solution when he repetitively asked them what was 'going on?'[131]

Last, but definitely not least, John Ono Lennon's "Imagine" is another 1971 overtly socially conscious song (that charted as a number three hit for two weeks) that sought to make the world a better place. "Imagine" is an anthem for international peace, love, and freedom. In "Imagine", Lennon presents his audience with different hypothetical scenarios in which the world's problems did not exist. He uses these hypothetical constructs to invoke critical reflection on these problems, their sources of conflict and difference, and the necessity of these sources. Lennon challenges those listening to 'imagine' a better future, and to more importantly, help bring it into action by hailing out more "dreamers".[132]

Considered collectively, all of the above song examples directly attacked, questioned or critically examined important issues concerning contemporary 1960s America, its power and resource disparities, ideological beliefs, and hegemonic social institutions. In other words, music during this period did not only not take place in a social vacuum but was also often used as a response or mode of political engagement for the American New Left generation; a way for them to raise awareness about the problems befalling American society and an expression of their interpretation of the solution. This upsurge in socially conscious music during this period supports the 'Platonist' thesis that, music can act as a social window into the times in order to help express the mood or feeling of a particular social environment, but at a deeper level, due to the general fact

[131] Marvin Gaye, "What's Going On?", *What's Going On?* (1971).
[132] John Lennon, "Imagine", *Imagine* (1971).

that these chartings were topping the popular music charts we can also reasonably conclude that these songs were also a sign for the growing tolerance for, and support of, the widespread social change. What I mean to say by this is, because these socially conscious and politically potent songs were able to reach the top of the popular music charts (which can stereotypically be considered to be representative of mainstream taste values and culture), it must be accordingly so that there was an equal socio-political absorption of, and interest in, the new democratic values of the American baby-boom generation on behalf of the rest of American society.

Ultimately, it is my belief that these three critical distinctions about the spread of socially conscious music during this sample period help clarify how the concept and process of co-optation interacted with this brand of music in the 1960s. Furthermore, the co-optation of socially conscious music facilitated in the expansion, diffusion, and absorption of this message into mainstream culture rather than solely diluting or fragmenting it (as the Platonists argue that it did). Although it would be undeniable to argue that the message of the socially conscious music was not *at all* co-opted, and that this co-optation did not have its (negative) effects, it should also be acknowledged that co-optation and forces of commodification helped spread the message too through its popularization.

Confronting Resistance: The Containment of a Politicized Black "Voice"

If the last pattern considered is a sign that socially conscious music of the 1960s spread rather than faded away towards the end of the decade, then this

next trend is significant because it is an intriguing caveat to the last one. In other words, as the popular music charts became a more socially conscious public sphere as noted above, the number of black performers charting with socially conscious songs was *limited* when compared to the number of contemporary white performers. (See Figure 11) For example, of the 42 total socially conscious songs that charted on the Top 40 between the years 1957 to 1972, only nine of them (21 per cent) were recorded by black artists and one (2 per cent) of them by a Latino, Trini Lopez. This apparent *limitation* of the politically poignant expressions of black culture becomes increasingly evident when one considers the nature of the songs that charted paying particular attention to whether they were originally composed, or if they addressed the important socio-political concerns. What I mean to say by this is that, not only was the sheer presence of the black political voice limited, but 1960s mainstream America's allowance for black socially conscious music often corresponded to the degree of the songs "political-ness" in its message and the larger context of society. In other words, during the latter half of the sample period both the project for black equality and the conflict in Vietnam escalated to the point where they were inciting civic disobedience, and this was in turn affecting the content on the popular music charts. Though black musicians were writing politically poignant songs, for both the anti-war movement and the emergent black power movement, it was primarily the former that were deemed *acceptable* to the mainstream's taste preferences if a black musician was to chart with a socially significant hit at all. In fact, the only two socially conscious songs that charted in the Top 40 in the

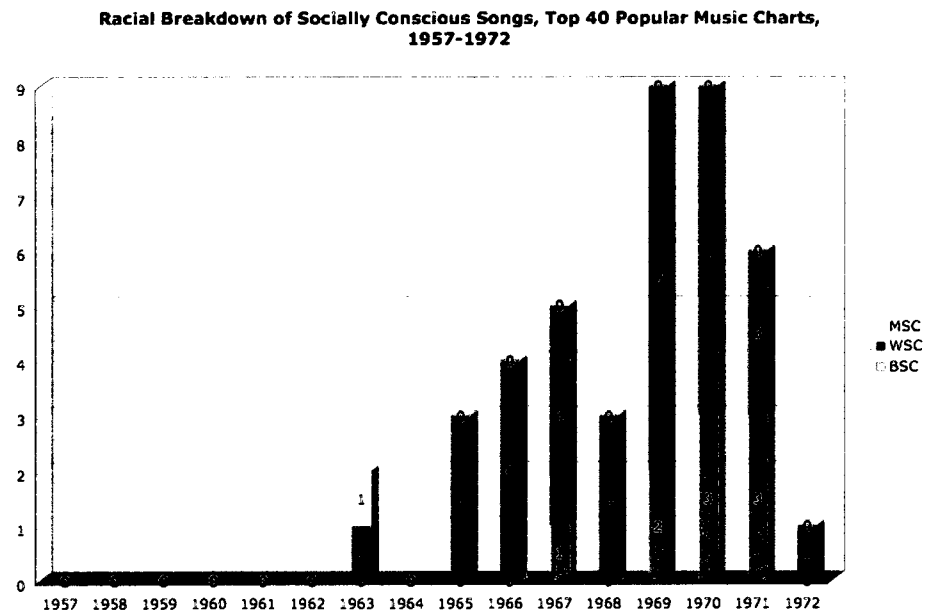
sample period of 1957 to 1972 that can be considered expressions of the black power movement are: Sam & Dave's 1967 "Soul Man" and Isaac Hayes's 1971 "Theme from *Shaft*". Without intentions of discrediting the significance of these two chartings, it is my assertion in my critical reading of these songs that, they are not exactly the most virulent expressions of black power.

Furthermore, it is also interesting to note where these songs (the less direct expressions of black power) charted in comparison to the more direct, potent and threatening expressions of the black power movement which could be found in many songs by artists like Gil Heron Scott or James Brown, to name a few. Though Brown, the King of Soul music himself, did chart in the Top 40 in 1965 at number three for three weeks with "I Feel Good (I Got You)", again this *selectivity* of black socially conscious music by the mainstream is made apparent when one considers the highly politicized and black nationalist nature of Brown's other contemporary hits, and the fact that they were predominately neglected by the mainstream's tastes. In other words, Brown's 1968 "Say It Loud (I'm Black and I'm Proud)" which peaked the R&B charts for numerous weeks did not even reach the Top 40 *Billboard* Pop music charts at all[133] The only reason that I can presume to be reasonable based on this specific lack of co-optation and mainstream success was that it was too esoteric, exclusive and explosive to be considered appealing by the masses. Quite simply (and interestingly), what I am acknowledging here is that, there is a clear lack of overtly socially conscious expressions of black power charting on the Top 40 during a heightened period of

[133] Joel Whitburn, *Billboard: Top Pop Singles. 1955-2006*, 117.

black activism and consciousness. However in order to accord for this lack of black socially conscious chartings, rather than believe that black people were not writing overtly conscious songs at all during this period, nor songs that had popular chart potential, I believe that there was a mainstream fear of, and therefore resistance to, ideas of black nationalism and expressions of black power because these ideas inherently threatened the longstanding social order and

Figure 11:



traditional way of American life.[134] As the project for black equality intensifies and the black power movement became more socially and politically virulent, the Top 40 popular music charts themselves were no longer as accommodating for songs that expressed a strongly politicized, politically independent, black "voice", despite its potential to still be highly profitable and co-optable. This pattern is socially significant because it demonstrates both that 1960s conservative society was not entirely prepared to enfranchise black people and give them an equal voice in public discourse, and additionally, that black movement leaders increasingly felt that blacks needed to withdraw from the mainstream and its co-optive participatory democracy in order make headway for black equality and progress. In short, this trend is important because it highlights not so much, who is *included* in mainstream political discourse and by forces of co-optation, but rather who or what was *intentionally excluded* from these processes due to the fact that they might be perturbing to the shared American ideology and unsettling to its hegemonic forces.

Discussion: Layering Co-optation

> You are co-opted when the adversary puts his goals on your power; you are *not* co-opted when your power allows you to exploit his means (or contradictions) in behalf of your goals.[135]
>
> Carl Oglesby

[134] Though I will not undertake this task in my own research as it is a topic that could stand alone, I do believe that it would be interesting to do an ethnographic content analysis on the disparity between chartings on the Top 40 and R&B charts during this period as the results of which would definitely help highlight significant instances wherein particular songs did or did not cross-over between the two charts.

[135] Edward Morgan, *The 60s Experience: Hard Lessons About Modern America*, 277.

As the results from my ethnographic content analysis and discussion of the four most noticeable patterns of consumption confirm, the process of co-optation is much more complex and multi-layered than what was noted by prior academics aforementioned. Therefore, rather than assert that the co-optation of 1960s socially conscious music and trends of popularity had no positive effects at all, I instead argue that the process of co-optation helped facilitate the spread and absorption of the message of change and mobilized and encouraged new forms of social activism.

In order to fully appreciate the intricacies of how co-optation both helped and hindered social progress, one must remember that co-optation is infused with both 'push' and 'pull' effects, and respect the different ways in which it can interact with the social movements and social forces it comes into contact with. For example, when forces of corporate capitalism get involved in an emergent subculture and co-opt it, though it would be undeniable to say that there is not a resulting polarization and fragmentation of music as new genres or artists entered the marketplace in order to facilitate maximum profitability is being garnered from these short-lived trends, it would also be equally as unreasonable to assert that this co-optation had no outward effect in helping to increase the sheer number of people who were exposed to this emergent subculture. In other words, though forces of commodification *pulled* people apart as it augmented their social divisions and cultural taste preferences, it also helped *push* people together as it not only informed more people of the important issues concerning society that were embedded in it. In addition to this, music, as a lived cultural

experience, often times encouraged or directly facilitated moments of political activism for the various social movements of the 1960s.

Building on this complication of the concept and process of co-optation, it is important to acknowledge that social movements are often conceived of as "knowledge producers"[136]. Under such consideration, this meant that the information that was inherently infused into the socially conscious music of the decade not only became a very popular form of knowledge as it spread to new segments of the population, it also incited a critical re-evaluation of what was considered to be *socially true* or *historically factual* for many of those people who were listening. In other words, according to Eyerman and Jamison's "cognitive approach" to social movements, the socially conscious music of the 1960s acted as a structuring force for society that opened up a (free) space in which individuals could creatively interact with each other for the betterment of society.[137] Based on such a consideration of a social movement, it is important to note the socialization power that this new form of knowledge can have. As Eyerman and Jamison note,

> a social movement is not one organization or one particular interest group. It is more like a cognitive territory, a new conceptual space that is filled by dynamic interaction between different groups"[138] [and social factions]. This does not mean that social movements are only learning processes... [rather] it is [also] precisely in the creation, articulation, and formulation of new thoughts and ideas – the expression of new knowledge – in which social movements realize their political functions.[139]

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[136] Ron Eyerman & Andrew Jamison, *Social Movements: A Cognitive Approach*, 3.
[137] Ibid, 55.
[138] Ibid.
[139] Ibid.

Ultimately, using a knowledge producing cognitive approach to social movements as my foundation, it is my assertion that even though forces of big capitalism did make a lot of money of the co-optation of socially conscious music and the aforementioned trends, this co-optation and popularization did not render the music or message itself politically ineffective. In fact, as the quote from Carl Oglesby suggests, it is my assertion that, though the music of the 1960s may have indeed been co-opted insofar as corporate interest was taken in it, it was not devoid of its political or social value because of this co-optation. Rather, this co-optation acted as a catalyst for change thereby enhancing the ability for the social conscious musicians to spread their message by not only creating a larger audience who consumed this musical message but a more politically diverse and receptive audience too. Co-optation led to the popularization of particular musical trends that helped facilitate larger socio-cultural change by predisposing potential forces of opposition to the message of social reform in a mode that is "softer" and more conducive to absorption. Like the smell of a warm apple pie filling the kitchen as it bakes, the process of co-optation diffused the message of change that was intrinsically embedded within many socially conscious songs to areas of the mainstream which had not previously been exposed to such ideas. In what follows, I will conduct a brief socio-political contextualization of the manifestations of the process of co-optation of socially conscious music, and in turn, argue how *in* each of the respective periods of my proposed tripartite of the decade, music facilitated widespread social change by

performing a unique subset of effects and interacting with numerous social, political, and cultural forces.

Reconsidering the Socio-Political Functions of Music in its Context

Thus far, a lot has been written about the role that popular music played as a facilitator of social change during the 1960s. A fair amount has also been written about popular music's importance as a mass and mainstream cultural expression of the growing American socio-political discontent. Though a lot of information has been presented (particularly in support of the assertion that co-optation had a layered effect), it is important to note that thus far, most of the data used to supplement these assertions, has also only focused the effects of co-optation on a particular brand of socially conscious music. Thus far, this has been a micro-level analysis of the music on the Top 40 popular music charts by critically looking at the issue at-hand from an "inside-out" perspective and thereby arguing in an *inductive* manner. Therefore, at this point, I intend to ground some of the *inductive interpretations* I have drawn from the specific case examples of popular songs, with the larger context of American social and political life. In other words, I seek to triangulate the primary data drawn from my ethnographic content analysis against some other sets of secondary data – secondary data of both a *historical* and *musical-cultural* nature. Accordingly, I have divided my sample period into three distinct periods in which the music and the social movements of the 1960s interacting with each other. In each of these periods, I view music and social activism reflexively performing a unique

subset of functions that were (most often) mutually beneficial in terms of their social, political or economic goals. These three periods will be referred to as: *The Formational Period* (1957 to 1962), *The Intensification & Co-optation Period* (1963 to 1966), and *The Absorption & Diffusion Period of the "High Sixties"* (1967 to 1972). By tracing the changing relationship between forces of music with those of important political, social, and cultural events, I hope to paint an overall picture of the positive (and negative where need be) functions that music played over the entire course of the sample period considered with intentions of contextualizing this socially conscious music within not only the evolving social movements of the decade, but also the wider range of political, social, and cultural events that encompassed it.

Formational Period, 1957 to 1962

> Come mothers and fathers, throughout the land,
> Don't criticize what you can't understand,
> For your sons and your daughters are beyond your command,
> Your old road is rapidly agin'.
> Please get out of the new one, if you can't lend a hand.
> For the times they are a-changin'[140]
>
> Bob Dylan

In an examination of the development of the relationship between the music and social movements of the 1960s, the period between 1957 to 1962 can be referred to as the *formational* period. This period was "formational" insofar as many of the political, social and cultural forces that were developing in smaller enclaves of activism during these years, set the table for the widespread change,

[140] Bob Dylan, "The Times They Are A-Changin'", *The Times They Are A-Changin'* (1964).

or at least fight for it, that was to come in the years following. For example, over the course of these six years, the project for black equality was very much in its *formational years* as it slowly began to pick-up momentum with the onset of its first mass organized protest events such as: the Alabama Bus Boycott, Greensboro "sit-ins", and Freedom Rides. These events called attention to the urgency of the issues of black Americans in the socio-political context of America. These events, regardless of the fact that mainstream media coverage was not yet favourable of them, were important because they pushed the issues surrounding civil rights and black equality into the mainstream social and political discourse. This is demonstrated by the simple fact that this wave of political and social events was now deemed "newsworthy" enough to garner the national media's attention and actually be covered. In addition to the social progress that was made in direct moments of protest during these years, the Civil Rights Movement also made great leaps and bounds in "progress" as it *formalized* politically with the creation of many new national organizations. Between these years, progress-oriented organizations such as, The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), Congress of Racial Equality (CORE), and, The Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) were all created.[141] As the number of members in these organizations climbed, they simultaneously helped mobilize and encourage a lot of black activism. These organization also helped provide the necessary leadership for the continuation of the project for black equality and the desegregation of the south

[141] Edward Morgan, *The 60s Experience: Hard Lessons About Modern America*, 47.

as out of them many of the faces history recognizes today emerged – people such as Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Stokely Carmichael, E.D. Nixon, and Bayard Rustin, to name a few. These organizations provided a means by which black individuals and their movement leaders could enter the formal political process of America.

In addition to the domestic issues that were brewing during this period as well as greatly changing the face of America, the foreign relations policy of America was too rapidly changing in the late 1950s and early 1960s as the Cold War conflict between the US and the former USSR was escalating without end in sight. The Cold War stand off had now spooked Americans to the point where, the propaganda to do with it and general sentiments of "McCarthyism", turned the "threat" of Communism into a seemingly ubiquitous reality, one with exaggerated (detrimental) domestic social effects to "American" life. Ultimately it was the US's fear that, if Communism was allowed to spread abroad, in places such as Vietnam and Korea, it would certainly spread like wildfire through all the regions of the South Pacific, which would make it an uncontrollable and very dangerous threat to America security and prosperity – this was known as the "Domino Theory". In response to this growing fear, during the formational period, the US's defense against the threat of Communism took a two-pronged strategy – one for the foreign threat, and one for domestic infiltrators. This strategy for dealing with Communism took a hard line interventionist policy as government officials believed it to be the *only* way to avoid the proposed effects of "Domino Theory". Furthermore, this aggressive interventionist policy was

also supported by the US's collective ideologies inherited from: the Truman Doctrine; as well as their committed belief in their Manifest Destiny as a nation; and the Geneva Conference of 1954.[142] Moreover, during this formational period, America, for the first time (and without much thought of the long-term consequences) made a formal commitment of US troops to South Vietnam as early as 1959. This nonchalant, non-decision made by President Ike Eisenhower, ultimately led to what would (unknowingly at the time) become the longest and most deadly war in American history – one that lasted just over sixteen years and cost America nearly 47,000 of its young men.[143]

Similar to the sense of urgency in eradicating the threat of Communism abroad, on the domestic home front, it also became of the utmost importance that the threat of Communism was thwarted immediately, however this time the threat was in the form of the infiltration of Communist ideas and thought into forms of popular culture and political discourse. In accordance with the US government's apparent desire to fight against Communism at home, and as a sign of their seeming willingness to take this fight to almost any extreme in order to "win" this battle, many (radical) leftists, people like university professors or popular folk musicians were deemed to be threatening to national security and were subsequently blacklisted.[144] Though they were being stripped of much that was dear to them, these individuals did not fail in their critique against this conservative-inspired domestic paranoia. In other words, the same leftists who

[142] Ibid, 134.
[143] John C. McWilliams, The 1960s Cultural Revolution, xxxvi.
[144] David Pichaske, *A Generation in Motion: Popular Music & Culture in the Sixties*, 9.

were under siege from the conservative right, were also striking back at it by the means they had at their disposal. For example, in response to the anti-communists sentiments that were spiraling out of control, leading the nation towards outright paranoia, Bob Dylan wrote the sarcastically biting song "Talkin' John Birch Paranoid Blues". In it, Dylan sings:

> Well, I wus lookin' everywhere for them gol-darned Reds.
> I got up in the mornin' 'n' looked under my bed,
> Looked in the sink, behind the door,
> Looked in the glove compartment of my car.
> Couldn't find 'em . . .
>
> I wus lookin' high an' low for them Reds everywhere,
> I wus lookin' in the sink an' underneath the chair.
> I looked way up my chimney hole,
> I even looked deep inside my toilet bowl.
> They got away . . .
>
> Well, I quit my job so I could work alone,
> Then I changed my name to Sherlock Holmes.
> Followed some clues from my detective bag
> And discovered they wus red stripes on the American flag!
> That ol' Betty Ross.[145]

"Talkin' John Birch Paranoid Blues" was shot at both the *John Birch Society* specifically, a group formed in 1958 by Robert W. Welch Jr. and was comprised of right-wing American conservatives who were staunchly anti-communists and for private property laws and deregulation[146] and, more significantly, the overall attitude against Communism that was held by mainstream America, which Dylan viewed as one that was ill-informed and naively frightened. Dylan believed that, as a product of their fear, the American public was easily

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[145] Bob Dylan, "Talkin' John Birch Paranoid Blues", *The Freewheelin' Bob Dylan* (1962).
[146] *The John Birch Society*'s Website, "Core Principles" Retrieved on July 18th 2009. http://www.jbs.org/index.php/about/core-principles.

manipulated by their government in order to get them to conform as well as complacently resign the full range of their liberties in exchange for the government's protection against this threat and the promise of national security. Therefore, Dylan, in his "Talkin' John Birch Paranoid Blues" pokes fun at these increasing sentiments of xenophobia and growing fears of Communist ideology, by taking the witch-hunt of McCarthyism, the one in search of "commies", to its most ridiculous extreme. As was demonstrated above, the narrator of the song has practically lost his or her grip on reality in order to purge Communism from their lives. He searches for Communism under his bed, in the toilet bowl, on the television set, and he even notices for the first time that the American flag has "red" stripes on it, and accordingly suspects Betsy Ross (the original seamstress of the American flag) of being a commie infiltrator. Dylan, through his suspicious narrator, spends the majority of his efforts searching for "Reds" and Communism in places where it could not possibly spread just to prove the point that, America's search, like that of his narrator's has too, lost its grip. This song was an effective critique because it helped point out the ridiculousness of the contemporary situation particular with the increasing level of domestic paranoia. It also pointed out the perils and detriments of being "blacklisted"[147].

[147] To elaborate, being blacklisted often meant that: one would be put under intense government surveillance (if they already were not), one would be stripped of many of their accomplishments and accolades they may have been awarded over the course of their life, and that most detrimentally, one might lose a lot of if not all of the things that were most important to them like their family, career, or good public image. Their name would often be dragged through the mud and every move put under great public scrutiny. Being blacklisted meant that one was being treated as a criminal and threat to public security in their own country of residence and citizenship – and this was in America no less, which was supposed to be considered the land of boundless freedom and place that guaranteed equality and liberty for all.

Ultimately then, what we can see in this formational period of the late 1950s and early 1960s are, the political underpinnings for the widespread social activism (and revolt) that was to come later on in the decade, coming to fruition. To reiterate, the Civil Rights Movement was perpetually gaining momentum, bringing more and more people to the cause, or at least making them aware of it, and American actions overseas were starting to create an ethos of paranoia amongst the older generation of Americans that would contribute to a larger generational divide. The dividing lines between the New Left and "The Silent Majority" were quickly and quietly being drawn in the sand, and those who were attempting to be by-standers were increasingly pressured by external forces to now pick a side. More than just resulting in an intensified political atmosphere, during these early actions of the 1950s and 1960s, America was also awakened with a fresh moral consciousness, particularly amongst those of the baby-boom generation who were increasingly becoming more aware of the disparity between liberal rhetoric and social reality.[148] In one case, Martin Luther King Jr. expressed sentiments of this incongruity when he stated, "we are taking the black men who have been crippled by our society and sending them eight thousand miles to guarantee liberties in Southeast Asia which they had not found in Southwest Georgia and East Harlem."[149] Furthermore, as the war in Vietnam and the Civil Rights Movement picked up, these social disparities grew larger and expanded into other areas of American social life furthering the rift between "traditional, conservative 1950s America" and the America that was

[148] Edward Morgan, *The 60s Experience: Hard Lessons About Modern America*, 35.
[149] Klaus Fischer, *American in White, Black, and Gray: A History of the Stormy 1960s*, 208.

being fought for on college campuses and protested for at street corners all across the country. Moreover, these events also helped fuse a widespread rejection of many long-standing, more traditional "American" values by members of the younger generation, the children of the baby boom, in their own subsequent maturation and move into adulthood.

Building on the above, the changing of the guard that was taking place during the formational period was also one of the unique and quintessential factors in the subsequent politicization of the baby-boom generation. For example, the fact is that during the period of 1946 to 1970, the number of American college students had quadrupled from two to eight million.[150] Quite simply, the fact that the sheer size of America's youth was growing at an almost exponential rate, combined with the fact that a lot of these youth were partaking in programs of higher education wherein they were taught to think critically about not only issues related to school but also worldly ones, accordingly resulted in a widespread politicization of America's youth, in what came to be known as the creation of "the New Left".

Members of the New Left renounced many of the "privileges" or social advantages that they had not only grown up with during their childhood, but were also seemingly entitled to as America's emergent elite. Furthermore, these representatives of the New Left took their responsibility for acting as the agents of change for future generations very seriously as they openly criticized and critically re-evaluated the "traditional" ways of American life in both its

[150] Ibid, 252.

ideological form hegemonic institutions, this traditionalism had been cemented in the prosperity and conformity of the 1950s. The individuals in the New Left did not value things in its traditional material sense either (as their parents did), as they favoured "things" such as: the equality of all individuals and equal treatment of everyone under the law; the personal empowerment and liberation of each person from situations of oppression; a moral politics based on compassion and the mutual recognition of all others humanity and freedom; and the importance of community.[151]

In contrast to these baby-boomers, the parents of members of the New Left "believed in *meritocracy* rather than equality. Most of them had supreme confidence in the essential goodness and integrity of American institutions and the people who represented them. If dishonesty or corruption existed, baby-boom parents rarely blamed the system or the establishment, but instead blamed the people who were corrupt"[152], amoral or could be generally considered "unworthy" of good things. However, one glaring problem with the US's meritocracy in the 1950s and early 1960s, was that the elite social positions were accorded based on race, colour and ethnicity more than they were (and ought to have been) on talent or hard work. This is what members of the New Left saw as their father's weakness: their stubbornness to cling to an old-world ideology in a world that was rapidly changing. Therefore, what the New Left mandate was interested in, was altering the very core of American politics. The American New Left favoured a system of participatory democracy and equal opportunity over

[151] Edward Morgan, *The 60s Experience: Hard Lessons About Modern America*, 9.
[152] Klaus Fischer, *American in White, Black, and Gray: A History of the Stormy 1960s*, 55.

the unfair meritocracy that they believed currently existed. Ultimately, due to the mass number of baby-boomers, and the aforementioned generational desire to change particular aspects of American social life and its system of democratic representation, the American New Left ended up putting considerable pressure on the forces of authority to get them to bring about socio-political reform.

Perhaps the sentiments of the New Left, their widespread rejection of US materialism and its longstanding mores of the Protestant work ethic, are best expressed most clearly in the 1962, *Port Huron Statement*, a political manifesto for and of the younger generation that was composed by Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) member, Tom Hayden. The *Port Huron Statement* lobbied for a new participatory democratic alternative, as it proclaimed,

> We are the people of this generation, bred in at least comfort, housed now in universities, looking uncomfortably to the world we inherit...The search for truly democratic alternatives to the present, and a commitment to social experimentation with them, is a worthy and fulfilling human enterprise, one which moves us and, we hope, others today.[153]

Though the *Port Huron Statement* may be the most obvious and overt expression of the New Left's growing discontent with the social stagnancy of "traditional, post-war America", it was certainly not the only critical cultural expression existent at the time. Rather, in the realm of popular culture, particularly within music, sentiments of change and a general generational rejection of conservative values began to be expressed, as music became a primary mode of expression for political engagement thus facilitating a musical public sphere.

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[153] John C. McWilliams, *The 1960s Cultural Revolution*, 127 + 129.

As American cultural historian Morris Dickstein noted, "folk music was the perfect expression of the green years of the early sixties, the years of integration, interracial solidarity...folk music was [the] living bridge between the protest culture of the New Left"[154] and the mainstream political discourse. Though music may not have yet been the quintessential form of full-out protest that it became later on in the decade, during these early developmental stages of the social movements, there is no doubt that music is much more important to the champions of change than was to members of the establishment.[155] In other words, though socially conscious music had started to blossom during this period, it was still only in its early form of cultural expression, only now beginning to intimately intertwine with the socio-political context and in so doing help set the table for the plethora of social activism to come.

There are many musical examples that helped develop this reflexive relationship between music and political during this period. A few less popular examples are Pete Seeger's early folk revivalist songs "Where Have All the Flowers Gone?" (1961), "If I Had a Hammer" (1962), and "Turn, Turn, Turn!"(1962). From Pete Seeger, the folk music movement came to focus on Bob Dylan. With his two first recorded albums, *Bob Dylan* (1962) and *The Freewheelin' Bob Dylan* (1963) which featured songs such as, civil rights songs "Blowin' in the Wind", "Bob Dylan's Dream", and "Oxford Town" as well as anti-war songs "Masters of War", "A Hard Rain's Gonna Fall", and "Talkin' World War III Blues", Bob Dylan set the stage for the commercial folk boom that would follow

[154] Edward Morgan, *The 60s Experience: Hard Lessons About Modern America*, 17.
[155] David Pichaske, *A Generation in Motion: Popular Music & Culture in the Sixties*, 30.

sewing together music with politics. Dylan was a pioneer for protest music as he was one of the first prominent folk artists of the 1960s to directly speak out against contemporary social and political issues. As Bob Dylan's regional audience in Greenwich Village grew to a national one with the release of these early albums, more doors were opened up for other folk musicians to do a similar thing. Tom Paxton and Malvina Reynolds were two artists in particular who directly benefited from the newfound interest in their music that Dylan had sparked. Tom Paxton's sarcastically critiqued the *knowledge* that was being imbued to the youth of American in his song "What Did You Learn in School, Today?" (1962). Malvina Reynolds critiqued the 1950s conformity, and the ideological and hegemonic complacency that went with it in her song "Little Boxes" (1962).

Though the majority of these songs had limited popularity, as they did not chart significantly or at all on any of the *Billboard* popular music charts, what they *did* do was help challenge a situation of repressive politics and oppressive social relations. These early movement shaping songs called attention to important social concerns as they were beginning to develop; issues such as nuclear (dis)armament, social (in)equality, and the perpetuation of a racially unjust American political system. In other words, through the mode of cultural expression (and in the heat of tumultuous 1960s American politics) folk music became a voice for the American New Left and its political agendas. Music became what Paulo Freire coined, a "pedagogy of the oppressed". (A "pedagogy of the oppressed", as Paulo Freire conceives of it is a mode by which oppressed

people can gain consciousness of their oppression so that they may begin to take action against it and reclaim their humanity.[156] It "is an instrument for their [the oppressed'] critical discovery that both they and their oppressors are manifestations of dehumanization...[it is a tool in the] struggle for their liberation."[157] Furthermore, as an antecedent to the oppressed fighting for their freedom, they must first perceive "the reality of their oppression, not as a closed world from which there is no exit, but as a limiting situation which they can transform."[158]) Early 1960s folk music was a pedagogy of the oppressed as it used the truth to not only unmask unjust social practices and ideologies, as well as also helped facilitate social progress by singing songs that encouraged citizens to, equally and fully, realize their common intrinsic humanity, freedom, and dignity. This music directly challenged America's unjust hegemonic structures of power, many traditional "American" ideologies and sought to reform the informal power relations upon which 1960s American society operated. In addition, this music also challenged people to enact their agency, as well as encouraged them, to help shape a better future, rather than condoned their non-action by sitting idly by as part of the silent majority of America. As R&B musician Nina Simone sang in her song entitled "Revolution" music challenged us to change not only our social surroundings, but also ourselves, the way we think about ourselves, in addition to changing how we think and act towards others. She sang:

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[156] Paulo Freire, *The Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Continuum Publishing Co; New York; 1970. 48-9.
[157] Ibid.
[158] Ibid, 49.

> we're singin' about a revolution because were talkin' about a change, it's more than just evolution, well you know you got to clean your brain ... The only way that we can stand in fact, is when you get your foot off our back.[159]

These early movement songs played an important role in critically questioning the knowledge base of 1950s society and, not only pointing out societal shortcomings or paradoxes, but more generally, what was considered conventional wisdom of the time.

In "Little Boxes", Reynolds offers her critical analysis of life in an American suburb typically consisted of, particularly heeding the cyclical conformity that she believe such a living experience would inevitably breed for those who occupied these "little boxes". According to Reynolds's depiction of American suburbia: in these small-little towns like Levittown that were blossoming all across the nation, a new brand of conformity and socialization was produced that was not only seemingly endless in its effect on one's social existence, but also worked in favour of to reify a particular, middle to upper class, ideology. According to Reynolds, these "little boxes" created Americans who unquestioningly accepted, as well as reproduced, the traditional "American" way of life, one that centered on the nuclear family, ideals of domestic life, and the pursuit of happiness.

Similarly, in Tom Paxton's "What Did You Learn in School, Today?" he pokes fun at the right-wing conformist ideology that he believes was being naturalized and instilled in the children of the baby-boom. In other words, Paxton offers a critical retrospective of his own education process, and attempts

[159] Nina Simone, "Revolution (Part I)", *To Love Somebody*, (1969).

to debunk some of the "myths" that forces of government tried to make seem natural to him and his classmates. Paxton sang:

> What did you learn in school today,
> Dear little boy of mine?...
> I learned that Washington never told a lie.
> I learned that soldiers seldom die.
> I learned our government must be strong.
> It's always right and never wrong.
> Our leaders are the finest men.
> And we elect them again and again...
> That's what I learned in school today.[160]

In "What Did You Learn in School, Today?" Paxton critiques everything from the (lack of) forthrightness of American politicians, to the shortcomings of the political system in general insofar as it is built to *maintain power* rather than to really serve the people. He also critiques the needless propagation and continuation of a pointless war, like for example the one American was waging in regions of the South Pacific.

What songs like the two aforementioned examples (as well as many others by such contemporary artists like Pete Seeger, Bob Dylan, and Joan Baez) did was offer the early musical and cultural articulations of the New Left's political agenda. Put simply, during this period the guidelines for proposed or idealized social and political progress were helped to be set out by these musician-activists and their songs. In other words, in the lyrics, and blossoming popularity of these songs, the political ideologies of the New Left began to take shape and spread to new segments of the American population. Ultimately, it was during this developmental or formational period that the bond between music and politics,

[160] Tom Paxton, "What Did You Learn in School, Today?", *Ramblin' Boy* (1964).

or between music and social movements more accurately, was not only forged but also cemented. This is demonstrated by the fact that, as the popularity of these and other songs continued to grow, so too did the social interest in, and awareness of, the events that these songs were singing about. Though, musically, politically, and commercially this was a period of great challenges, turbulence, and limited successes, it was also one of high hopes and great potential. In other words, though there were still a lot of obstacles to overcome in order to bring about real change to the America social system, in the emergence and popularization of these songs, one can view a growing interest in these trends that signifies the increased desire of many Americans to participate in the democratic process.

Intensification, Co-optation & Conservative Reaction, 1963 to 1966

> Don't try and get yourself elected:
> If you do, you had better cut your hair.[161]
> David Crosby

During the period between 1963 to 1966, socio-politically a lot was changing in America (as well as outside of America in the regions of the South Pacific) as the issues which had reared their head earlier in the decade, were now coming into full-force and were beginning to tear the country apart from both within and out.

The Civil Rights Movement was intensifying and becoming more of an exclusionary expression of black power. Civil rights activists who had been fighting for equality for almost a full decade now, had seen very little resolve

[161] Crosby, Stills, and Nash, "Long Time Gone", *Crosby, Stills, and Nash* (1969).

come from their actions and were growing increasingly frustrated, desperate, and angry with the intransigent system. Though formalized political advances were enacted by those in government with the administration of the *Civil Rights Act* in 1964 and the *Voting Rights Act* in 1965, at the grassroots level of everyday life experience, very little had actually changed for the oppressed segments of the population. In fact, if any tangible resolve could be noted from this formal political advancement, it came more in the form of a growing sense of resentment towards blacks for their social displacement and anger by some whites, and on the flip side, an increased anger and frustration with whites's intransigence towards black progress and equality on behalf of the black freedom fighters. In short, for every inch of black progress made during this period, it was met with an equal and opposite right-wing conservative reaction. To illustrate, in 1963, the first freedom rides for voter registration would take place as well Martin Luther King Jr. would organize the March on Washington, both great political advances, but in the same year NAACP field secretary for the Mississippi branch, Medgar Evers, would be assassinated for clear racially motivated reasons, and President John F. Kennedy would too be gunned down but this time in Dallas, Texas and for reasons unknown. Again, as aforementioned, in 1964 and 1965 respectively great formal political advances would be made with the amendments to the US constitution, but these formal advances were also met by staunch and violent informal opposition as race riots broke out in many densely black populated metropolitan areas such as Detroit and Los Angeles leading to what is commonly referred to as "the long, hot

summer" of 1964.[162] To compound this racial backlash, the political assassination of black-nationalist Malcolm X took place in '65, only fueling the fire of anger and protest. Over the next two summers, numerous racially inspired instances of civic disobedience would again erupt, this time in sixteen different US cities all across America – both the assassination and subsequent cycle of violent backlash functioned as indicators that America was not yet ready for widespread social reform.[163]

Similarly, during this period, the war in Vietnam was too escalating, which was in turn having a domestic ripple effect insofar as popular sentiments about the war (and their differences) became centrifugal social forces that began to divide those individuals who considered themselves "pacifists" from those who saw themselves as "patriots". To illustrate this point about the escalation of the Vietnam war and the shockwaves it sent through American political life , it is important to note that during the three-year span from 1963 to 1966, US troop commitment in South Vietnam skyrocketed from a mere 11,000 soldiers in '63, to 320,000 American forces by the end of 1966.[164] In other words, in order to support such a sizeable number of troops being committed to the cause overseas, the US government had to implement a draft system, which in turn, greatly affected the minds and psyches of many draft eligible candidates. Conscription for the Vietnam War was also particularly troubling for younger American men, as never before had America required so many of its young men to fight.

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[162] John C. McWilliams, *The 1960s Cultural Revolution*, xxii – xxv.
[163] Ibid, xxii – xxviii.
[164] Ibid, xx – xxviii.

Furthermore, as if the prospect of being shipped off to fight in Vietnam was not enough to terrify the American youth, this troubling reality was also compounded by the fact that many of these young men never returned home from duty to see their homes or families again. By the end this span of involvement in Vietnam alone, US fatalities had totaled (at the end of 1966) approximately 7000 deaths.[165] Moreover, this skyrocketing death toll was also particularly unsettling considering that only three years early at the beginning of 1962, there was approximately only that many American soldiers even stationed in Vietnam.[166]

Perhaps German historian Klaus Fischer put it best in his book *America in White, Black and Gray*, when he stated that, quite simply "between November 1963 and July 1965, [Lyndon B.] Johnson transformed a limited commitment to an open-ended one by significantly escalating the war and *Americanizing* it."[167] This "Americanization" or bringing home of the war resulted in a splintering of public opinion and was triggered by such events like the US's provocation with "Operation Rolling Thunder" carried out in 1965, an event which greatly escalated the war itself, and cemented the US's commitment to it to its bitter end. Though the United States declared that during this period their central objective was to assist the people and government of South Vietnam to win the war against "the externally directed and supported communist conspiracy", LBJ was acting in accordance with this objective, because they had done a lot more than

[165] Ibid, xxviii.
[166] Ibid.
[167] Klaus Fischer, *American in White, Black, and Gray: A History of the Stormy 1960s*, 181.

simply aide South Vietnam. Though some Americans viewed the US's actions as necessary insofar as they adhered to the logic of all being fair in war, the fact of the matter is that *not all* American's agreed on the urgency and magnitude of the communist threat overseas, nor did they even completely agree on whether it was even a threat. Therefore, this meant that, quite simply, not all Americans agreed with the war in Vietnam, and these recent escalations were resulting in that sentiment being expressed more openly. Put plainly, some Americans, (generally those who were predominantly younger and more politically involved), saw the American involvement in Vietnam and the mass toll in lives that it was taking, as an unnecessary and unjustified thing, while others (generally those of the conservative right) saw the American involvement in Vietnam as natural insofar as it was both part of their Manifest Destiny, and partially a result of their *responsibility* to act as international "globo-cop". Ultimately, during the years 1963 to 1966, "the shock waves of civil rights, Vietnam, youth rebellions, and cultural wars reached such intensity that America seemed on the verge of social collapse."[168]

As the project for black equality, and the war overseas, intensified, so too did the popular music of the time as, it not only expressed the growing anti-war sentiments among the younger generation, but it also offered a safe mode of cultural expression for black's for the expression of their continued political frustrations and goals. As noted in an earlier section, it was during these critical years that the *Billboard* Top 40 popular music charts opened up to become more

[168] Ibid, 18.

accommodating of the overt and abstracts musical expressions of American social discontent. Popular artists such as Bob Dylan, Peter, Paul & Mary, Trini Lopez, Simon & Garfunkel, The Byrds, The Beatles, The Rolling Stones, Barry McGuire and Sgt. Barry Sadler all reached the heights of musical popularity with their respective overtly or abstractly socially conscious hits within this time period. Importantly though, these Top 40 socially conscious popular hits were not the only socially conscious songs being written and performed publicly during this time. In fact, some of the *most overt* and *direct* of political protest songs were penned and performed during this period, all of it was just not on the popular music charts (as generally socially conscious songs were a bit *too* political, or at least too politically threatening for the established order, and for popular tastes). Though forces of co-optation began to take much interest in socially conscious music as early as 1963, to put it quite simply, there were some forms of socially conscious music that big capital was just not interested in.

To illustrate this point about the record industry's "selectivity" more clearly, I will make some anecdotal commentary on the careers of (arguably) the two most prominent and politically poignant folk musicians of this era, Bob Dylan and Phil Ochs. I will pay particular attention to the way in which each of these men were affected by the pressures of co-optation, insofar as each man was forced to make a series of decisions regarding his co-optation into, or rebellion from, mainstream forces. Dylan and Ochs were both affected uniquely by, as well as reacted differently to, the forces of co-optation throughout their career. As a result of both of their highly controversial musical messages and their

involvement in counter-cultural activity, these musicians, early on in their careers, were deemed too threatening and too subversive to the mainstream order – particularly during this stage of intensified American politics. Accordingly, during this period, these artists effectively became "by-products and castaways of co-optation" (respectively) as their forms of socially conscious music, ones that directly attacked dominant, longstanding "American" ideological beliefs and hegemonic practices, were either never marketed to the fullest of their potential, or were quite simply rejected by mainstream media outlets.

To consider the career of Bob Dylan first: when Dylan arrived in Greenwich Village in 1961 as a twenty year old fresh-faced musical prodigy, the folk music scene was on the verge of a boom, as it had been heating-up both in the political arena as well as the popular one. It was during this time, in this geographic region that music would re-emerge as a mode of expression for one's feelings of civic disobedience and discontent. By tapping into the context of the volatile times as well as giving expression to the frustrations of the underclass people of America, in 1963 and 1964 respectively, Bob Dylan wrote and released his two most politically significant albums, *The Freewheelin' Bob Dylan* and *The Times They Are A-Changin'*. With these two albums (and their critical lyrical content), Dylan cast issues of civil rights, freedom, peace and equality into the minds of many of his sympathetic, college-aged listeners with his wide array of "finger-pointing" and freedom songs. In turn, the localized popularity of Bob Dylan's music on college-campuses (and in the Greenwich Village scene) made

him, according to many of his more hardcore fans, a living legend and prophet – a person who would later be referred to as "the voice of the generation".[169] This reputation however, would not come in vain, as Dylan had seemingly earned it over the course of his previous two releases, with songs such as: "Blowin' in the Wind", "Masters of War", "A Hard Rain's Gonna Fall", "Oxford Town", "Bob Dylan's Dream", "When the Ship Comes In", The Lonesome Death of Hattie Carroll", "With God on Our Side", "The Times They Are A-Changin'", and "Only a Pawn in Their Game" to name a few. Almost immediately, Bob Dylan became an important part of the American New Left because he sang of America's foremost concerns and issues as a nation. Though Dylan's early finger-pointing songs indubitably helped educate its listeners about the political and social issues at-hand and dealt with in the songs, as well as helped frame the issues in the songs in a way that was intended to, and successfully often did, garner support for the social, political, and cultural causes of the America New Left, none of these songs (as recorded by Dylan himself) ever charted within the Top 100 of any of the popular music charts.[170] Moreover, the insult of being left off the popular music charts was augmented by the fact that, during this same period, popular musicians Peter, Paul & Mary took their respective cover version of Bob Dylan's "Blowin' in the Wind" all the way to number two on the popular charts where it peaked for a week in addition to covering other Dylan tunes like "All I Really Want To Do" & "Don't Think Twice It's Alright".

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[169] CBS Interview with Bob Dylan, http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2004/12/02/60minutes/main658799 Accessed on: August 18, 2009.
[170] Joel Whitburn, *Billboard: Top Pop Singles, 1955-2006*, 262-63.

It is my assertion that the most likely reason that Bob Dylan (at least in his politicized incarnation) was ostracized from the popular music charts was because he himself was a loose cannon, unpredictable and unwilling to be co-opted, and his music was, on one level, too radical for popular tastes. Moreover, much of Dylan's music was also aimed at the mainstream values, traditions, and institutions of power. Furthermore, his lack of mainstream success is particularly interesting considering the fact that Dylan was signed to Columbia Records, a major label that had the resources available to make Dylan a folk music superstar. Based on his own self-fulfilling prophecy and behaviours, it is my belief that Dylan's rejection by mainstream audiences was a natural fact because, Bob Dylan himself, not only helped facilitate it by making himself inaccessible to mainstream media and openly critiquing them, but he seemed to will his own alienation. This is evident in both his actions, and albums over the next few years, those between the period of mid-to-late 1963 to 1965.

By the end of 1963, Dylan felt both manipulated and constrained by the folk and protest movements, and he was beginning to lash back at them and resist their co-optation to not only his own personal detriment, but also at the earliest warning sign of it.[171] The first sign of Dylan's outright refusal to be co-opted would come in May of 1963, when, Dylan walked out on his scheduled performance on *The Ed Sullivan Show.* Dylan was mad about the ultimatum that the show's producers had given him to: either alter the lyrics of the song he Dylan had chosen to play, "Talkin' John Birch Society Paranoid Blues", or pick

[171] Robert Shelton, *No Direction Home,* New York; Da Capo Press, 1986. 200-205.

an entirely different song to play altogether. In the end, Dylan who flat-out refused to change his lyrics, was equally as stubborn about his choice in song, so he ended up walking out on the performance. By walking out on *The Ed Sullivan Show*, Bob Dylan not only passed up a nationally aired performance, and what could have been the first big break in his career, but also left a bad tastes in the mouths of many CBS executives, as well as in the mouths of many fans who had tuned in expecting Dylan to perform that night.

The second fatal flaw of Bob Dylan encounter with forces of co-optation occurred in late 1963 when, at a charity event being held by the National Emergency Civil Liberties Committee, (one at which Dylan was being given the Tom Paine Award for his role of facilitating social change through his music in years prior), a drunken, rambling, Bob Dylan showed up to accept his award. In his acceptance speech, Bob expressed sentiments of his complete disillusionment, frustration, and mistrust of the American political system when he, in somewhat of a drunken rage, accused everyone in the room, and all of America, of harboring a little bit of Lee Harvey Oswald in them.[172]

Beyond these self-sabotaging, public (non) appearances and comments, Bob Dylan's disillusionment and disenchantment with both the civil rights movement and the folk music movement also showed in the lyrics of many of the songs off his next three albums: *Another Side of Bob Dylan* (1964), *Bringing It All Back Home* (1965), and *Highway 61 Revisited* (1965). Regardless of the title of the album itself – which signified that Dylan was making a break with the past and

[172] Ibid, 200-205.

turning over a new leaf – *Another Side of Bob Dylan* was Dylan's first non-political, more introspective, esoteric and poetically charged album. It was riddled with romantic love songs and poetic ballads, songs that replaced the once sharp political attacks of Dylan's earlier music. One particular song off *Another Side of Bob Dylan* that clearly demonstrates Dylan's break with both the Civil Rights Movement and the folk music movement is his song "It Ain't Me, Babe". In "It Ain't Me, Babe", on the surface Dylan sings a song of a spurned lover, however, a deeper reading of this song suggests that Dylan's re-appropriation of this song is a sign of his rejection of the role of "generational voice", the role that had been thrust upon him years earlier.

> Go away from my window, and leave at your own chosen speed,
> I'm not the one you want, babe, I'm not the one you need...
> It ain't me babe, it ain't me you're looking for.[173]

This particular song served a unique function for Dylan, (or at least resonated quite closely with Dylan's emotions at the time) as it helped him break with the social movements he had been so closely associated with prior. And, if Dylan had not made in clear enough for those listening in '64 with "It Ain't Me, Babe", he again reiterated his sentiments towards those who made efforts to co-opt and appropriate his music, on his next album a year later – an album entitled *Bringing It All Back Home.* In the specific songs "Maggie's Farm", "Subterranean Homesick Blues", and "It's All Over Now, Baby Blue", Dylan commensurably expresses his growing resentment towards those who had piggy-backed off his success and were continually trying to control his musical endeavors at an arm's

[173] Bob Dylan, "It Ain't Me, Babe", *Another Side of Bob Dylan* (1964).

length. "Maggie's Farm" was a self-proclamation; a song in which Dylan announces his outright refusal to be co-opted any longer, by anyone or for any cause. In the particular example of "Maggie's Farm", Dylan talking about his previous participation within the folk music movement and his current refusal to work towards any end but that of his own again . "Subterranean Homesick Blues", released in 1965, is an esoteric expression of Dylan's complete disenchantment with the system as, in it, Dylan rhymes off a plethora of poetic (and borderline nonsensical) "tips" for how to avoid being sucked in by forces of conformity and co-optation. Finally, in "It's All Over Now, Baby Blue", Dylan makes a commitment to a make fresh start, as well as comes to terms with the end of one era of his musical career while celebrating the beginning of another chapter. Collectively, these songs (and albums) were for Bob Dylan, a message to his fans that his career was going to be taking a new direction, nobody but Bob was going to be calling the shots from hear on in, no matter what.

As if all of these actions and musical redirections were not enough, the final straw that would demonstrate Dylan's transformation of his public image from a movement intellectual and generational voice, to an introverted and isolated rock-star, would come in 1965 at the Newport Music Festival, when Dylan would "electrify" the crowd.[174] At the same place Dylan wooed the crowds two years earlier with the performance that essentially launched him into fame and fortune, in July of 1965, a few songs into Bob Dylan's set that he had been

[174] John C. McWilliams, *The 1960s Cultural Revolution*, 107.

playing with an electric guitar, he was booed off stage! The story, as Paul Rothchild tells it, goes that, Pete Seeger who was one of the concert organizers,

> is backstage, pacifist Pete, with an ax saying 'I'm going to cut the fucking cables if that act [Dylan's] goes onstage.' Eventually, Seeger dashed to his "car and rolled up the windows, [putting] his hand over his ears...Dylan angry and shaken [by the boos] stormed off the stage. Encouraged backstage by Johnny Cash and prodded onstage by Peter Yarrow, he returned a few minutes later, alone. Dylan asked from a D Harmonica from the crowd...sang "It's All Over Now, Baby Blue" and walked off the stage...'To me that night at Newport was a clear as crystal' explained Rothchild. "It's the end of one era and the beginning of another.[175]

Obviously this electrification would have larger effects than just at the Newport Music Festival itself. In fact, most of Bob Dylan's more hardcore, or at least traditionalist folk, fans felt abandoned by Dylan actions at Newport, and more generally, were wondering where the political content that they used to find in Dylan's albums had gone. Though Dylan was being ridiculed by old-time folksters and had been turned away by some long-time fans, Dylan had also secured a national audience with his new electric sound and apolitical, or at least obscurely poetic, lyrical content.[176] In other words, in 1965 with the song "Like a Rolling Stone", Bob Dylan for the first time in his career débuted on the popular music charts climbing as high as number two where it peaked for an outstanding twelve weeks. Dylan had achieved mainstream success, but in so doing had left many of his loyal fans feeling abandoned and disillusioned by their former idol.

Soon after, some of Dylan's more die-hard, the ones that had once used his music as a political weapon to educate themselves about the world around

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[175] David P. Szatmary, *Rockin' in Time: A Social History of Rock and Roll*, 97-8.
[176] Ibid, 98.

them, now became some of his staunchest critics. They now gazed upon their once-idol as a commercial "sellout". Some Dylan fans were even so disillusioned that they believed that the only reasonable explanation for his transformation was that he had been brainwashed by the FBI.[177] Other fans were just simply angry with Dylan as they the sting of his abandonment. In a 2004 interview, Dylan recalls this tumultuous time in his career and commented that:

> The image of me was certainly not a songwriter or a singer ... It was more like some kind of a threat to society in some kind of way ... It was like being in an Edgar Allan Poe story. And you're just not that person everybody thinks you are, though they call you that all the time. . "'You're the prophet. You're the savior.' I never wanted to be a prophet or savior. Elvis maybe. I could easily see myself becoming him. But prophet? No.[178]

As only a 24-year-old Jewish kid from Minnesota, being labeled the "voice of a generation" was probably a very scary thing. With that kind of a title, it is no surprise to me that Dylan wanted to escape his activist image – probably in fear for his own life. Additionally, Dylan may merely have wanted to escape the influences of the forces of co-optation could have also been that Dylan merely wanted to express more of his creative desires. He wanted to be free to express himself artistically and creatively no matter what and did not want to be pigeon-holed into any label – particularly one like that of a "protest singer".

Ultimately, Bob Dylan's early interactions with the pressures of co-optation (both from commerce and social movements) illustrate that Dylan desperately wanted to avoid having any outside forces controlling, or even influencing, his

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[177] CBS Interview with Bob Dylan, http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2004/12/02/60minutes/main658799 Accessed on August 18, 2009.
[178] Ibid.

own musical expressions. Accordingly, Dylan chose to "abandon" his original incarnation as a political protest movement singer, and began to explore other themes in his music as he gained the confidence to completely express *his* artistic freedom no matter what forces of inertia he encountered. Moreover, Dylan also chose to reinvent himself completely in lieu of just adapting to a more commercially conducive image, which many artists during this period, like Barry McGuire for example, did. Ultimately, though Dylan was a professional musician, in that he needed and wanted to make money from his music, he was not willing to sacrifice his integrity to do so, he was not willing to become a puppet for any movement or any force of commerce. Fortunately for Dylan, and as a result of his immense talent, Bob Dylan still found success even after his and break from his past music, in fact he found a new, more commercially viable but still independently created, type of music.

If Bob Dylan's career and musical transformation can be considered a positive example of the result of what happens when forces of co-optation are put on a musician, then the unfortunate career of Phil Ochs, and the result of his interaction with forces of co-optation, can be considered a negative example of this interaction as Ochs's story is littered with much tribulation and ends with great personal tragedy.

During the four-year span from 1963 to 1966, Phil Ochs penned a plethora of songs that were aimed at the education of mainstream society about the social issues of the American underclass. For Ochs, these songs were not as much about assigning blame to guilty parties or identifying enemies of the movement in an

effort to incite change, but were rather part of a process of critically re-assessing, or re-educating the minds of young Americans in order to make them radically aware of the hypocrisies existing within the both current American political system, and within many liberal, *middle-American* Americans themselves. In a 1964 interview with *Vogue* magazine Phil Ochs expressed these sentiments when questioned about his involvement in the Folk Revival and Civil Rights Movement to which he responded that:

> We're trying to crystallize the thoughts of young people who have stopped accepting things 'the way they are'. Young people are disillusioned; we want to reinforce their disillusionment so they'll get more involved and do something – not out of a general sense of rebellion, but out of a real concern for what's happening – or not happening![179]

Musically, during the period of 1963 to 1966, Phil Ochs released three albums: *All the News That's Fit To Sing* (1964), *I Ain't Marchin' Anymore* (1965), and *Phil Ochs in Concert* (1966). In the heated political atmosphere of the United States that was 1963 to 1966, Ochs wrote numerous topical songs that would comprise the content of these albums, as it was his idea that each album would function akin to a newspaper in that, each song, like a news report, would educate and inform people about a specific current event, and in doing so inform the listener so that they can act according to such newfound knowledge – if they chose to do so.[180] On the first of these three albums, *All the News That's Fit To Sing*, which was released by Elektra Records, Ochs wrote and recorded the overtly socially conscious political protest songs: "Talkin' Cuban Missile Crisis",

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[179] Ron Eyerman & Andrew Jamison, "Social Movements and Cultural Transformation", 449.
[180] Marc Eliot, *A Biography of Phil Ochs: Death of a Rebel*, New York: Omnibus Press, 1989. 70.

"Talkin' Vietnam", "Bound For Glory", "There But For Fortune" and "Too Many Martyrs". The former two songs concerned themselves with the escalating armed conflicts that the US was involved in both with the Cold War and with the situation in Vietnam. The latter three songs focused on the domestic activity of the Civil Rights Movement and the riptide that it was causing.

In his second album and 1965 release, *I Ain't Marchin' Anymore*, Ochs's mounting frustration with the stagnancy of social progress is demonstrative in the intensified urgency in his musical message, particularly in protest songs such as: "I Ain't Marchin' Anymore", "Draft Dodger Rag", "In the Heat of the Summer", and "Days of Decision".[181] One song of Ochs's that was exceptionally virulent in the expression of its anti-war sentiments was "Draft Dodger Rag." In the liner notes to "Draft Dodger Rag" Ochs describes his "typical American boy" – as a potential nineteen year-old American draftee "who is staying up nights thinking of ways to deceptively destroy his health, mind, or virility to escape two years"[182] of military service – in an effort to make a mockery of the draft system.

> Oh, I'm just a typical American boy from a typical American town
> I believe in God and Senator Dodd and a-keepin' old Castro down
> And when it came my time to serve I knew "better dead than red"
> But when I got to my old draft board, buddy, this is what I said:
> 'Sarge, I'm only eighteen, I got a ruptured spleen
> And I always carry a purse
> I got eyes like a bat, and my feet are flat,
> and my asthma's getting worse
> Yes, think of my career, my sweetheart dear,
> and my poor old invalid aunt
> Besides, I ain't no fool, I'm a-goin' to school
> And I'm working in a DEE-fense plant.
> I've got a dislocated disc and a wracked up back

[181] Ibid, 87-9.
[182] Ibid, 87.