

The use of music and song as a medium of human expression has been prevalent throughout history. Music has been used to explore and to give vent to a whole range of emotions, feelings and concerns- from the joyful to the disheartening. Music is therefore, a revelatory medium of not just an individual concern, but that of society as well. Protest music, whether through lyrics, performance or context, gives us an insight into discontent, both personal and societal. Basically, a protest song is a song which is associated with a movement for social change. According to Elizabeth J.Kizer, “to protest is to verbalize a dissatisfaction with the status quo”, and as such, a protest song verbalizes discontent, either overtly or covertly and calls for a change or rectification.

The song of dissent... may appear to represent the feelings of a sole lyricist, but if the discontent is widely felt, then the protest becomes a voice for and about many people. In some instances, the identity of the composer becomes of secondary importance, and the song is a collective cry for change. The originator, or message source, tends to be forgotten, to some extent, as the protest song evolves as a cultural message. No longer is the protest viewed as an individual message but as part of a larger, cultural or social one. (Kizer, np)

As an expression of cultural and political resistance, protest music has been prevalent as far back as the Peasant's Revolt of 1381 in England, wherein there was a movement for the reform of feudalism and the oppression of the working classes. The couplet, “When Adam

delved and Eve span/ Who was then the gentleman?" is the earliest confirmed example of a protest song. The couplet was taken from a speech made by John Ball, a priest, in which he questioned feudal rule and also called for the recovery of liberty. Early protest songs comprised of simple ballads, parodies, labour songs, spirituals and hymns, which were popularized by word-of-mouth. The earliest recorded protest songs were 'broadsides' - named after the one-sided sheets that bore ballads with topical lyrics, with the name of a well-known tune that would fit the lyrics suggested below the title.(Lynskey 686-7)

Until the eighteenth century, the processes of formal composition and of the printing of music took place for the most part with the support and patronage of the church and the aristocracy. As such, certain musical forms were available only to a certain audience. In Europe, music halls, cabarets and operettas catered to the populace during the nineteenth century. On the other side of the Atlantic, the United States of America adopted certain parts of European culture, while introducing variants of its own. Minstrel shows and Vaudevillian acts, consisting of comic skits, singing, dancing and music, served to bring music to the common masses in the United States. During the nineteenth century, Tin Pan Alley in Manhattan, New York became an influential source of popular music in that it was the breeding ground of music publishers and songwriters. However, with the invention of the phonograph by Thomas Edison in 1877, sheet music was gradually replaced by recorded sound, and along with it, the influences of places such as Tin Pan Alley and theatrical musical forms such as Minstrelsy and Vaudeville declined. By the early part of the twentieth century, the 'record industry' gained popularity over less

accessible live shows such as operas, concerts, clubhouses and vaudevillian performances (Lynskey 688). A number of record labels arose, and with it, music in all its forms became more accessible to the general public. Record companies then faced major losses by the latter part of the twentieth century with the invention of the internet and with it, free file sharing, whereby music became more and more accessible. The mass proliferation and easy availability of music has made it one of the most popular means of self-expression and also as a platform for addressing certain contemporary attitudes.

PROTEST MUSIC IN AMERICA:

The tradition of protest songs in the United States is a long one that dates back to the eighteenth century and colonial period, the American Revolutionary War and its aftermath. Nineteenth century protest songs dealt, for the most part, with three key issues: war, and the Civil War in particular; the abolition of slavery; and women's suffrage, both for and against in both Britain and the U.S. Perhaps the most famous voices of protest in America at the time were the Hutchinson Family Singers. From 1839, the Hutchinson Family Singers became well known for their songs supporting abolition. Much of their music focused on idealism, social reform, equal rights, moral improvement, community activism and patriotism. The Hutchinsons's career spanned the major social and political events of the mid-19th century, including the Civil War. They established an impressive musical legacy and are considered to be the forerunners of

the great protest singers-songwriters and folk groups of the 1950s and 60s, such as Woody Guthrie and Bob Dylan, and are often referred to as America's first protest band. (Averill 23-4)

Many Negro spirituals, which antedated the Civil War, have been interpreted as thinly veiled expressions of protest against slavery and oppression. For example, the spiritual, "Go Down Moses" draw implicit comparisons between the plight of enslaved African Americans and that of enslaved Hebrews in the Bible.

When Israel was in Egypt's land: Let my people go,

Oppress'd so hard they could not stand, Let my People go.

In the song "Israel" represents the African-American slaves while "Egypt" and "Pharaoh" represent the slavemaster. Perhaps one of the best known African-American spirituals is the anthem "Lift Every Voice and Sing", originally written as a poem by African-American novelist and composer James Weldon Johnson in 1899. The song has often been referred to as "The African-American National Anthem" and contains strong appeals to the ideals of justice and equality (Averill 24). Other songs that dealt with protest during this era was concerned with the labour movement and class discrimination.

Popular music as a vehicle of social and cultural protest only truly gained momentum with the rise of recorded music when its message could be more widespread. Prior to the invention of the phonograph, most musical forms had been mostly localized because of the

difficulty of propagation. The record industry brought music within the reach of the common masses and it quickly gained popularity, especially in the United States which proved to be a fertile ground for the proliferation of all kinds of musical forms. It was when popular music fully merged with politics and the record industry with Billie Holliday's "Strange Fruit" (1939) that protest music in the United States truly became a force to be reckoned with. Composed by Abel Meeropol, the song, which was about lynching, truly highlighted racism and the horrors that it propagated. With "Strange Fruit", popular music entered the realm of protest in definitive terms. The role played by Paul Robeson of the celebrity in protest cannot be overlooked either. A popular concert artist and singer, and member of the Harlem Renaissance, Paul Robeson became involved in the Civil Rights Movement and other social activism, and is credited for bringing popular Negro spirituals into the American mainstream. These songs would eventually become an integral part of the Civil Rights Movement, sung on almost every march, demonstration or protest. Robeson's support for Russia and Communism, coupled with his outspoken criticism of the US Government during the Red Scare led to him being blacklisted by the Government, with concert goers and the Ku Klux Klan burning his effigies and demanding that he be lynched. Woody Guthrie's "This Land is Your Land" (1944), further brought protest music into the realm of the common American man fighting against oppression, whether it be political, societal or cultural. The Vietnam War (1955-1975) and the Civil Rights Movement (1955-1968) proved a fertile ground for protest music, with artists such as Bob Dylan, Phil Ochs, Joan Baez, Pete

Seeger, Janis Joplin and Marvin Gaye, among others churning out songs which fed the Civil Rights Movement, the anti-war movement and the hippie counterculture.

... wars also create their unique antagonists who transform their empathy, concern, anger, and other emotions into poetry, prose, or in our time, popular music. This was particularly true of the war in Vietnam. (Candaele, np)

American involvement in Vietnam had evolved through the United States' support of French colonial rule after World War II. The United States saw the anti-communist Viet Diem and his regime as a "proving ground for Democracy," in the words of then US senator from Massachusetts John F. Kennedy. After being elected president in 1960, Kennedy increased military aid. Lyndon Johnson, Kennedy's vice president and successor, escalated American involvement in Vietnam throughout 1964 and 1965. By early 1968 there were 550,000 combat troops in Vietnam and rising casualties with no end in sight (Candaele, np) The anti-war movement, and the anti-war music, that ran parallel to the increasingly large numbers of young men drafted into the Army was also rooted in broader changes that were taking place in America, such as the rise of the Civil Rights movement, the ascendancy of counterculture groups such as "hippies" and the New Left, which was a political movement in the 1960s and 1970s, consisting of educators, agitators and others who sought to implement a broad range of reforms on issues such as rights, abortion, gender roles, and drugs.

Bob Dylan opened up a cultural space for an oppositional voice to the Vietnam War during the first half of the 1960s. He produced a number of landmark protest songs, such as "Blowin' in the Wind" (1962), "Masters of War" (1963), "Talking World War III Blues" (1963), and "The Times They Are A-Changin'" (1964). In "Masters of War", he wrote a venomous indictment of militarism, lambasting those in power for sending young men to die for their country while they sit safely in their offices and homes:

You that never done nothin'

But build to destroy

You play with my world

Like it's your little toy

You put a gun in my hand

And you hide from my eyes

And you turn and run farther

When the fast bullets fly.

The song's power lies in its contradictory emotions- an anti-war song with a decidedly non-pacifistic message, that of "hating violence so much that all you want to do is match it with violence of your own". (Lynskey 74) Dylan's concern was not just with the war but on what he perceived as wrong with the world. In "Blowin' in the Wind", Dylan asks a number of rhetorical questions that many young Americans were also asking, such as "How many times?", "How

many deaths?, 'How many years?' Dylan avoided specifics but, so soon after the Freedom Rides¹, few could have doubted the identity of the 'some people' who were not yet 'allowed to be free'. (Lynskey 71)

Many soul singers of the period, such as Sam Cooke ("A Change Is Gonna Come" (1965), Redding and Aretha Franklin ("Respect"), James Brown ("Say It Loud - I'm Black and I'm Proud" (1968); and Nina Simone ("Mississippi Goddam" (1964), "To Be Young, Gifted and Black" (1970) wrote and performed many protest songs which addressed the ever-increasing demand for equal rights for African Americans during the American civil rights movement (Gilliland, np). Soul music carried over into the early part of the 70s, in many ways taking over from folk music as one of the strongest voices of protest in American music, the most important of which being Marvin Gaye's 1971 protest album *What's Going On*, which included "Inner City Blues", which dealt with class and economic disparity, and also the anti-war title track "What's going on":

Picket lines and picket signs

Don't punish me with brutality

Talk to me, so you can see

Oh, what's going on.

Gaye's plea was for peace and understanding, his insight sharpened by letters that his brother sent him about the situation in Vietnam, and the social situation at home.

The Reagan Administration (1981-1989) came under attack because of the Cold War and the Iran-Contra² affair, with Bruce Springsteen lamenting on the common man's disillusionment with the American Dream in "Born in the USA" (1984), and punk rockers The Dead Kennedys launching a vitriolic outcry against the U.S government. "Stars and Stripes of Corruption" (1985) contains the lyric "Rednecks and bombs don't make us strong / We loot the world, yet we can't even feed ourselves". Punk music and lifestyle advocated freedom, individualism and an anti-establishment attitude that called for a protest against materialism and commercialism. The Dead Kennedys protested against what they saw as the government's plans to enrich itself by feeding off the spoils of the conflicts in smaller countries. This divide between the classes was no more apparent than in places such as the Bronx in New York City, just a few miles from Manhattan, one of the most upscale areas in the United States. The Bronx was plagued by poverty and crime, but it saw the rise of political hip-hop with Grandmaster Flash and the Furious Five, who veered away from lyrics about parties and good times, but talked instead of the struggles faced by those overlooked by the system. This in turn would lead to the birth of Gangsta-rap with the formation of NWA (Niggaz With Attitude) in Los Angeles whose lyrics talked about unemployment, racial profiling, gang violence and poverty still faced by so many Black Americans. *Straight Outta Compton* (1989), NWA's debut album introduced 'gangsta' lifestyle to a horrified public, and their mainstream success, and the attendant fame that it brought, projected gangsta-rap into the public eye. Latter artists such as Public Enemy, Nas, Wu Tang Clan and Tupac Shakur among others carried on in the same vein, using hip-hop's rebel soul to voice their dissent against

George Bush Sr. and his government, police brutality, racism, while also talking about life as a 'gangsta'.

The era also saw the rise and fall of the Grunge Movement, with artists such as Nirvana and Pearl Jam rebelling against corporatization and materialism, while at the same time battling an inertia borne of the knowledge that the 'establishment' will prevail. In the meantime, Rage Against the Machine, formed in 1991, railed against corporate America ("No Shelter", "Bullet in the Head"), government oppression ("Killing in the Name"), and Imperialism ("Sleep Now in the Fire", "Bulls on Parade"). The band used its music as a vehicle for social activism, as lead singer Zack de la Rocha espoused: "Music has the power to cross borders, to break military sieges and to establish real dialogue". (Woolridge, np)

After the 1990s, the protest song found renewed popularity around the world after the turn of both the century and the "Third Millennium" as a result of the 9/11 attacks in America, and the Afghanistan and Iraq wars in the Middle East, with America's former president George W. Bush facing the majority of the criticism. The Bush Administration (2001-2009) came under attack by musicians for the mishandling of the Middle East crisis, prompting punk rockers Green Day to launch their concept album *American Idiot* (2004) - a reference to President George W. Bush, along with the follow-up album, the rock-opera, *21st Century Breakdown* (2009).

Don't want to be an American idiot.

One nation controlled by the media.

Information age of hysteria.

It's calling out to idiot America.

Green Day's music focused on the dissemination of media-fueled propaganda which painted the United States as a freedom-loving, liberated nation, but which in actuality is controlled and brainwashed by the media and the government, both of which are only motivated by commerce.

Aside from these songs and artists previously mentioned, the music of protest found its way into many other causes- feminism, gender roles, alternate sexualities, environmental causes and religion. Worth mentioning is the music of reggae, with Bob Marley and the Wailers at the forefront with songs such as "I Shot the Sheriff", "War", "Buffalo Soldier", and "Simmer Down" to name a few, which tackles various issues such as racial profiling, violence, and social justice. Female artists such as Aretha Franklin with "Respect", and Lesley Gore with "You Don't Own Me" questioned gender roles, especially in the wake of the second -wave feminism in the 1960s. Later, artists like Bikini Kill with their Grunge anthem, "Rebel Girl" and hip-hop artist Queen Latifah with "U.N.I.T.Y" sang about female power and challenging male autonomy. Madonna, with inflammatory lyrics in "Papa Don't Preach" and "Like a Prayer" also raised the vanguard for female protest against perceived gender roles, especially as it pertains to women's sexuality. The tradition of using music as a vehicle continues to persist strongly, with artists using their celebrity status to champion causes close to their hearts.

SONGS AS CULTURAL ARTEFACTS:

Music has often been the medium through which cultural forces in opposition to the mainstream culture have expressed themselves. Countercultures and subcultures adopt different styles of self-expression- such as lifestyle, fashion, language, art and music- to rebel against and differentiate themselves from the conventional modes of expression. Theodore Roszak, who coined the term “Counterculture” in his 1969 book *The Making of a Counterculture*, uses it as an all-encompassing term to distinguish those who rejected the ‘technocracy’- the regime of corporate and industrial expertise that dominates industrial society. (Spates 872) A countercultural movement may be defined as a movement that runs counter to the social mainstream, and which reaches visible phenomena and persists over time. Perhaps the most famous countercultural movement is the American Countercultural Movement of the 1960s, brought on by the United States’ participation in the Vietnam War. This countercultural movement was characterized by student drop-outs, rallies, marches, and more significantly, the Hippie movement and the Civil Rights Movement.

Rock and roll, fully born in the 1950s, and called “noise” by parents, turned millions of these young people toward this rebellious new art. Along with the burgeoning Civil Rights Movement in the South, it created a youth culture that shared the black writer James Baldwin’s insight: “The American equation of success with the big times reveals an awful disrespect for human life and human achievement”. (Baldwin 61) Youth counterculture carved out new spaces

for experimentation and alternative views about what constituted a good society, while a New Left made up of civil rights and anti-war activists developed as the war in Vietnam dragged out and became increasingly bloody, confounding, and ultimately unpopular.

This was the context in which popular music in general, and certainly anti-war and protest music specifically, became a space for cultural and political conflict and dialogue, and at times a product and resource for a broad movement against the war. The Vietnam War was accompanied every step of the way by an anti-war soundtrack that touched on every tone—melancholy and touching, enraged and sarcastic, fearful and resigned—and that captured the long demoralizing impact of this war. And like the anti-war movement itself, it began without a significant audience in the early sixties, but grew to a critical mass by the war's termination. (Candaele) Folk rock was initially the musical platform in which the counterculture found its mode of expression, as illustrated by the amount of music produced by folk singers such as Bob Dylan, Joan Baez, Woody Guthrie and Phil Ochs, among others. Woody Guthrie was particularly famous for painting his guitar with the slogan, "This machine kills Fascists" (Lynskey 36), thereby driving home the power of music as a force to be reckoned with. Folk music, in many ways, was associated with feelings of solidarity against tyranny, of hope despite crushing odds, or as John Steinbeck describes it, "the will of a people to endure and fight against oppression... we call this the American spirit". (Lynskey 21)

Music's place in the Countercultural Movement of the 1960s, however, reached its apogee with the Woodstock Music Festival held in the town of Bethel, 43 miles to the south-west of Woodstock, New York in 1969. Thirty-two bands and musicians performed outdoors before an audience of 400,000 young people and Max Yasgur, who owned the site of the event, saw it as a victory of peace and love. He spoke of how nearly half a million young people filled with potential for disaster, riot, looting, and catastrophe spent the three days with music and peace on their minds. This festival saw many musicians linked with the anti-war movement; the more famous of these would be folk singer Joan Baez who included the Negro spiritual, "We Shall Overcome" in her set. A counter-point to Baez's folksy sentiment was found in Jimi Hendrix's electric guitar version of the American anthem, "The Star-spangled Banner". Unlike the folk tradition that played a huge part in the movement for civil rights, late-sixties anti-war music did not focus on solidarity and shared risk-taking. Hendrix's wordless version of the American Anthem was not a celebration of the honour of the United States, but was instead a loud, electric performance that seemed to evoke the horrors of the War in an angry, accusatory manner. (Candaele, np)

Subcultural movements differ from countercultures in that they are not directly oppositional to mainstream culture; subcultures, according to Dick Hebdige, bring like-minded people together to develop a sense of identity within the subculture.(81) Subcultures differ from countercultures in that they can exist within mainstream culture and they are united by common

interests and aesthetics, whereas countercultures run counter to mainstream culture, and they represent a social, cultural and political zeitgeist.

Perhaps the most famous subcultures would be the Punk and the Grunge subcultures. Punk rock developed between 1974 and 1976 in the United States, United Kingdom and Australia. Punk Rock bands eschewed what they perceived as the excesses of mainstream 1970s rock music, especially regarding the exorbitant costs of their musical production. Grunge music is a subgenre of alternative rock music which gained popularity from the mid-80s to the 90's and was heavily influenced by punk rock and its aesthetic of breaking away from the glamour and pretensions of Glam Rock. Both these genres embraced an ethic of informality and non-conformity to modes of commodification and their music usually featured a stripped-down instrumentation with minimal frills in stage production.

Punk music lyrics usually contained political, anti-establishment messages. An example would be The Dead Kennedys who infused their lyrics with irony and satirical allusions to attack political imperialism. "California Uber Alles" (1979), for example links the political atmosphere of California with Nazi Germany, with lyrics such as, "Come quietly to the camp, / you'd look nice as a drawstring lamp" referring to the horrifying human experiments carried out in concentration camps. The lines, "now it is 1984" also allude to George Orwell's novel *1984*, about life under a totalitarian regime, where 'Big Brother'- representing the establishment, watches and monitors not just your every move, but also your thoughts. Following in this

tradition, decades later punk rockers Green Day in their song “Holiday, from the album *American Idiot* (2004) criticized President George W. Bush’s regime and the American war on Iraq:

Sieg Heil to the President Gasman

Bombs away is your punishment

Pulverize the Eiffel Towers

Who criticize your government.

“Sieg Heil” refers to the Nazi salute, and the song suggests that, like the Nazis who claimed to be the master races and advocated ethnic cleansing, President Gasman, or George Bush, is himself a Nazi figure who advocates the ‘cleansing’ of any nation that dared to criticize or stand against his government. Grunge, unlike punk, was not inclined towards political protest, but more towards an unvoiced and unarticulated expression of dissatisfaction and apathy, as is epitomized by Nirvana’s, “Here we are now/ entertain us” from the song “Smells like Teen Spirit”.

Dick Hebdige, in his book *Subculture: The Meaning of Style* (1979) uses the term ‘style’ to explain the way that subcultures combined different elements to communicate a way of life. He gave the example of Punk music’s usage of fashions such as torn clothing, leather jackets, chains and spiky hair, by which they showed their dissatisfaction with society. All this came from working class men who, disillusioned with much in their lives, found alternative ways to

create meaning. The youths in these subcultures see music and its consequent expression as a symbol of themselves and how they stand in relation to the mainstream culture. Both punk and grunge broke away from the dominant rock scene, and their proponents created a space for themselves wherein they adopted a certain lifestyle, with their own modes of dressing, talking and acting which differentiates them from the mainstream culture. Music therefore, becomes not just a vehicle of expression for the countercultural or subcultural movements, but they in turn, are fueled and spurred on by the music too.

MUSIC AS A CRITICAL SITE FOR THE NEGOTIATION OF MEANINGS:

Any study regarding the examination of popular music as a form of social and cultural protest comes with the study of the culture itself which produces these songs. The intellectual promise of cultural studies lies in its attempts to “cut across diverse social and political interests and address many of the struggles within the current scene”. (Grossberg 2) The study of popular culture can be said to begin with Matthew Arnold’s *Culture and Anarchy* (1869) in which he defined culture as “the best that has been thought and said in the world”, (Arnold 2) whereas anarchy, though he never specifically mentioned it as such, was a synonym for the disruptive nature of working class culture. The Arnoldian perspective greatly influenced the way of thinking about popular culture up to the 1950s, where elitism in terms of culture continued to prevail and popular or mass culture was seen as a debilitating and corrupting influence. The

publication of Raymond Williams' *Culture and Society: 1780-1950* (1983), a predominantly Marxist critique on culture and the arts, proved to be a significant contribution to the study of popular culture. Williams claimed that the purpose of cultural analysis is to look for "the actual life that the whole organization is there to express". (Williams 37) While popular cultural studies had hitherto focused on cultural elitism, wherein 'high' culture faces the threat of being corrupted by 'low' mass culture, Williams denounces this view and claims instead that popular culture is not created by the working-class, but by those in power:

In fact the main source of this 'popular culture' lies outside the working class altogether, for it is instituted, financed and operated by the commercial bourgeoisie, and remains typically capitalist in its methods of production and distribution. That working class people form perhaps a majority of the consumers of this material...does not, as a fact, justify this facile identification. (Storey 425)

Following this, the Frankfurt School also claimed that popular culture is a means to maintain social authority. In his essay "On Popular Music" (1941), Theodore W. Adorno asserts that popular music has been standardized to fit a certain working formula. This, he claims, keeps the audience in line because they are not exposed to anything new, and therefore, they remain passive and satisfied. Therefore, according to Adorno, how a text is produced determines its consumption and significance, and thus, the meaning of a text depends on the producer. Walter Benjamin, however, suggests that meaning is produced at the moment of consumption and that

its significance is determined by the process of consumption rather than the mode of production.

(Storey 49-55)

This point was later taken up by Stuart Hall and Paddy Whannel in *The Popular Arts* (1964), in which they analysed the interaction between text and audience among youth culture. Hall and Whannel claimed that very often, there is a conflict between the use made of a text by the audience, and the use intended by the producers. This is nowhere more apparent than in popular music culture, where youths see popular music as symbols of themselves and their relation to the world. In analyzing the ways in which youths appropriate certain modes of dressing, talking and acting that would differentiate themselves from the adult world, Hall and Whannel observed that many of these adopted mannerisms of teenagers arose out of the interpretations they placed on a text, or in this case, the music they listen to. They also observed how these youth cultures have been commodified, their lifestyles turned into products. Hall and Whannel claimed that, “Teenage culture is a contradictory mixture of the authentic and manufactured: it is an area of self-expression for the young and a lush grazing pasture for the commercial providers”. (Hall and Whannel 276)

Following the work done by Marxist theorists, Post-Marxist theorists Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe seek to transform Marxist studies of culture by envisaging a partnership between Marxism and

The new feminism, the protest movements of ethnic, national and sexual minorities, the anti-institutional ecology struggles waged by marginalized layers of the population, the anti-nuclear movement, the atypical forms of social struggle in countries on the capitalist periphery. (Storey 66)

Post-Marxism incorporates Marxist theories with other fields of study so as to fully explore the negotiation of different ideologies present within a certain text. To fully understand the meaning of a text, one has to be aware of not only what is in the text itself, but also the assumptions that inform it and what may not appear in the text itself. For this, one has to look at Gramsci's concepts of hegemony which is

...a condition in process in which a dominant class (in alliance with other classes or class fractions) does not merely rule a society but leads it through the exercise of moral and intellectual leadership. (Storey 63)

Hegemony is not just power imposed by a dominant group, but most importantly, it is maintained by the negotiation of dominant groups and subordinate groups, and it is often marked by resistance as well as incorporation. Hegemony theory opens up the field of popular culture studies as not just a sign of social decline, nor a site of political manipulation, but rather as a field of negotiations wherein 'high' and 'low' cultural products, both authentic and commercial, are allowed to mix so as to give the encompassing meaning of a text. An example of this is found in youth subcultures where youths appropriate their own meanings from their consumption of the

texts and practices commercially produced. Dick Hebdige used the term “Bricolage” to explain the ways in which products are often transformed to produce meanings that are completely different and/or opposite of what they are originally intended for. Youth subcultures engage in symbolic forms of resistance to dominant groups through the adoption of their own modes of expression, and these modes of expression are, in their turn, commercially incorporated by culture industries who market these resistant lifestyles for general consumption.

Youth cultural styles may begin by issuing symbolic challenges, but they must end by establishing new sets of conventions; by creating new commodities, new industries or rejuvenating old ones. (Hebdige 96)

The negotiation of meanings is, thus, the focal point behind post-Marxist popular cultural studies. Laclau and Mouffe observe that culture is a site of ideological struggle, wherein articulation – the practice of affixing different meanings to a certain text- is a key concept. An example of the process of articulation may be found in the music of the American countercultural movement of the 1960s, wherein the music inspired people to resist the Vietnam War, but also this music was articulated in the economic interests of the war-supporting capitalist music industry.

Initially, the music industry’s concern for a song’s chart location each week, and the fear of upsetting large distributors, made radical anti-war statements in popular music a relatively rare occurrence. Songs by popular musicians were written for the radio and often with a popular

audience in mind. This growing and eventually gargantuan record business had its demands. Unlike modern superstars, the artists of this generation did not routinely sell millions of records or play to huge audiences in stadiums and arenas. They were not promoted by massive publicity campaigns nor could they benefit from the resources and support of the megacorporations that control the modern music industry. Commercial success was, and still is, dependent on the music industry's willingness to market a musician. But despite the anti-war sentiment of, for example, Bob Dylan's songs, the industry recognized a potential cash-cow and sought to promote him, as a result of which Dylan eventually was hailed as the spokesman of his generation, a term that he abhorred and which eventually led him away from his folk-rock roots and his music of protest. Thus, dominant groups negotiate with oppositional voices on to a terrain which would still secure for themselves a continued position of leadership. (Storey 68) Culture is thus, the production, circulation and consumption of meanings, where meanings can be both opposed to, and dependent on each other. Post-Marxist cultural studies draw two conclusions about the study of culture:

First, ...it is only in culture that the world can be made to mean. In other words, culture constructs the realities it appears only to describe. Second, because different meanings can be ascribed to the same text (anything that can be made to signify), meaning-making (i.e., the making of culture) is always a potential site of struggle and/or negotiation". (Storey 69)

Any study based on popular cultural forms, and specifically protest music is concerned with the interplay of various meanings and so, it is open to various interpretations and reinterpretations.

Since the study of popular cultural forms often transcends traditional approaches of literary and academic disciplines, it is difficult to assign to it a specific mode of study. John Storey highlights the various approaches towards popular culture analyses:

In production analysis, questions such as who owns the means of production, who produces the text, and why, and under what constraints, are asked. Textual analysis examines how specific works of popular culture creates meaning. Audience analysis is concerned with how different audiences relate to and interpret the same text. Historical analysis investigates how these three dimensions change over time. (Storey 302-3)

As such, the study of a popular cultural form such as a protest song would necessitate not only the exploration of the socio-cultural and/or political conditions that gave rise to its inception, but also its reception by its audience, as also the changes affected to those by time.

PROTEST MUSIC AND LYRICS AS DISCOURSE:

The process of musical composition, just like any other artistic form, has always been viewed as a creative process and an expression of the self. Some musicologists have also maintained that

music does come from a higher plane, that it was the sound of the gods communicating directly to the human soul. (Machin 2) However, music is not just about individual creativity, but the result of shared conventions and shared definitions, and so therefore, music is irrevocably inter-linked with society and culture. Tim Wall, in his book *Studying Popular Music Culture* (2003) has talked about ‘music culture discourses’, referring to the cultural influences of music as the discourses which shape the way music is composed, played, produced and received. Robert Walser has also suggested that music can also be thought of as functioning much like verbal discourse. He says that

... by approaching musical genres as discourses it is possible to specify not only certain formal characteristics of genres but also a range of understandings shared among musicians and fans concerning the interpretation of those characteristics.

(Walser 28-9)

The meaning of a song is not just in the sounds or the lyrics themselves but in the discourses we have for understanding them, that is, the meaning of a song is that which is attributed to it by the audience, and therefore, a song may have multiple interpretations. An example of this may be Nirvana’s “Smells like Teen Spirit”. Cobain himself said that he wrote this song because he was feeling "disgusted with my generation's apathy, and with my own apathy and spinelessness".

(Reynolds, 98)

And I forget just why I taste

Oh yeah, I guess it makes me smile

I found it hard, it's hard to find

Oh well, whatever, never mind”

Young audiences saw the song as a reflection of their own spirit of apathy and ennui against a world which seemed caught up in commercialism. Some viewed the lyrics as the ramblings of a heroin-addict, and that too connected with the growing drug culture of the era. Cobain viewed the title as a revolutionary message, but in actuality, the phrase actually came about when Kathleen Hanna told Cobain that he smelled like “Teen Spirit”, a popular female deodorant which Tobi Vail, Cobain’s then- girlfriend used to wear. Record executives and the media saw the song as a very marketable product that would appeal to young minds. So, a song can have multiple meanings depending on its audience.

It would be wrong to view a protest song merely as a collective voice raised against ‘the establishment’, an “us against them” mentality wherein the sole function is a broad resistance against an oppositional hegemony. Protest music instead offers complex dialectics which show the constant flux of society and its hegemonic structures. Protest songs show the complex interrelationship between and among music, media, commerce, political consent, and social dissent and how these has both shaped and reflected the crucial social and political movements of American history, profoundly impacted the lives of individual Americans, and provided an economic foundation for a protest music industry. By examining both topical and chronological frameworks, it is possible to examine musical practice, evolving media technologies, as well as

selected political, social, and commercial enterprises that are engaged in the creation and distribution of socio-political commentary and protest of which music is a central feature.

Because of the different processes of articulation that can be ascribed to a single text or a single song, there is always the potential of struggle or negotiation with regards to the interpretation of meanings. 1990s Grunge band Nirvana's "Smells Like Teen Spirit", for instance, has often been regarded as a protest against the miasma of apathy and helplessness that enveloped a generation caught between the contradictory backdrop of political conservatism and commercial excess. However, the signing of the band to a major recording label, the media glare that the band members were submitted to and the ensuing commercialization of Grunge subculture has provided a different reading from what the song initially represented. The very song that had once been lauded as a thematic protest against commercialization is now a commercial commodity itself, its political intent subverted by its commercial value. Thus, central to the interpretation of meanings in a song is the negotiation of power. Power provides the authority to define social reality, and through discursive formations, it produces the hegemonic truths that we live by. Discourse, according to Michele Foucault, can be "both an instrument and an effect of power, but also an hindrance, a stumbling block, a point of resistance and a starting point for an opposing strategy". (Storey 352) Protest music as a discursive medium can function as both an agent and a site for resistance of power.

The relationship between music and social change has often been a subject of considerable interest among both music critics and cultural theorists. Dorian Lynskey's 33

Revolutions per Minute: A History of Protest Songs, From Billie Holliday to Green Day (2010)

is one such book which seeks to examine this relationship. Lynskey studies thirty three songs which he felt were anthems that defined a generation, and in doing so, sought to prove how popular music could bring together the common masses to work towards the common good.

The Resisting Muse: Popular Music and Social Protest (2006) edited by Ian Peddie is a seminal work which contains a collection of essays in which the relationship between music and social protest is viewed as a complex dialectic where musical protest is as fluid as the audiences to which it appeals and the hegemonic structures it opposes. The book focuses largely on post-1975 popular music, which allows for a wide-ranging coverage of extremely diverse forms of music in relation to the creation of communities of protest. In this respect, the book examines how the forms and aims of social protest music are contingent upon the audience's ability to invest the music with the 'appropriate' political meaning. By holding onto a post 1975 focus, the book offers a detailed study of a number of significant genres and issues and their development, rather than a broad sweeping overview of twentieth century musical genres.

In *Subculture: The Meaning of Style* (1979) Dick Hebdige, focused on Britain's postwar youth subculture styles as symbolic forms of resistance. Drawing from Marxist theorists, literary critics, French structuralists, and American sociologists, Hebdige presents a model for analyzing youth subcultures. While Hebdige argues that each subculture undergoes the same trajectory, he outlines the individual style differences of specific subcultures, such as Teddy

boys, mods, rockers, skinheads, and punks. Hebdige emphasizes the historical, class, race, and socioeconomic conditions that surrounded the formation of each subculture.

A musicologist and cultural critic as well as a professional musician, Robert Walser, in *Running With the Devil: Power, Gender and Madness in Heavy Metal Music* (1993) offers a comprehensive musical, social, and cultural analysis of heavy metal. Walser explores how and why heavy metal works, both musically and socially, and at the same time uses metal to investigate contemporary formations of identity, community, gender, and power.

Analysing Popular Music: Image, Sound, Text (2010) by David Machin is a lively look at the semiotic resources found in the sounds, visuals and words that comprise the 'code book' of popular music. It explains exactly how popular music comes to mean so much. Packed with examples, exercises and a glossary, this book provides the reader with the knowledge and skills they need to carry out their own analyses of songs, soundtracks, lyrics and album covers.

The study of popular music and its role as a counter-hegemonic force is thus, an ongoing one. Its place within and against the hegemony of commercial culture industries as it navigates an increasingly interconnected and mediated world has been examined and debated upon. As such, various approaches have been posited since musical interpretation and its reception undergoes a constant flux. Therefore, the possibility of arriving at a definitive textually grounded interpretation is deferred because of the fluidity of the culture itself that produces the music that informs it. On the other hand, however, progressive critical and creative

interpretations reveal a history of ideology as well as a history of interpretation as well as reception.

As has been mentioned, American music is replete with songs of protest from various artists; this thesis looks at a select group of musicians from to particular subcultures to examine the relationship between society, culture and music. By examining their musical influences, their lyrics and performances, their legacies, and their celebrity status, it is possible to review emerging trends within protest music through time and societal shifts. The thesis has necessarily left out certain key figures in protest to narrow the field of research to better analyse the inter-relationship between the culture industry and certain music subcultures, and through them, the negotiation and shifting of power balances.

NOTES:

¹ Freedom Riders were civil rights activists who rode interstate buses into the segregated southern United States in 1961 and following years to challenge the non-enforcement of the United States Supreme Court decisions which ruled that segregated public buses were unconstitutional. The Southern states had ignored the rulings and the federal government did nothing to enforce them.

² The Reagan Administration had been selling illegal arms to Iran and using the proceeds to fund the Contras, a terrorist group in Nicaragua.

Many associations and images are immediately evoked with the words “Hippie” or “the Sixties”: Young people with long hair and unshaved beards, flowers in their hair, wearing tie-dyed shirts and flared jeans, smiling beatifically through marijuana-hazed smoke, driving around in colourfully painted vehicles and listening to folk singers like Bob Dylan or Joan Baez singing about war and peace. Although this image may be true partially, it is a stereotype. The Countercultural Movement of the Sixties and the Hippie Movement were far more complex and involved more than just young people sitting together in front of a military installation, chanting slogans such as “Flower Power” and “Free Love”. The movement did not appear out of nowhere; there were several reasons why such an uprising of young people had to take place – and several reasons why it had to fail in the end.

The Counterculture of the Sixties refers to an anti-establishment cultural phenomenon that developed and then spread throughout much of the Western world between the early 1960s and the mid-1970s, with London, New York City, and San Francisco being hotbeds of early countercultural activity. The movement gained momentum as the American Civil Rights Movement continued to grow, and became revolutionary with the expansion of the US government's extensive military intervention in Vietnam. As the Sixties progressed, widespread social tensions also developed concerning other issues such as human sexuality, women's rights, traditional modes of authority, experimentation with psychoactive drugs, and differing interpretations of the American Dream. Many key movements related to these issues were born or advanced within the period (Anderson 12).

To understand the culmination of the Countercultural movement of the Sixties, one has to take a look at the situation of the United States after the Second World War and in the 1950s. From an economical point of view, everything seemed perfect for the middle-class American. With the post-war affluence, low unemployment rates and growing personal assets, people could

have a big family without the risk of not being able to meet the basic needs of their children. The birth rates in the years directly after the war were extremely high; the generation born in the years between 1945 and about 1957-1960 is known as the “Baby Boomers”. What had been a dream in the years before now became reality- a house in the suburbs filled with modern amenities, a car in the garage, children playing in the backyard; in short, an affluent society that was living the American Dream (Kunkel 3).

For some people, however, this scenario only masked an ever-growing danger that threatened to engulf the United States. The Soviet Union (USSR), also a winner of World War II, had become the second superpower beside the USA. Without the threat of a Nazi empire in Europe, their coalition had no more common base. Instead, the differences became bigger and bigger: The contradictory systems of capitalism and communism weren't able to cooperate, culminating into the Cold War. The biggest threat to people not only in America but all over the world was the growing danger of a war led with weapons of mass destruction. Poor outcomes from some of these activities set the stage for disillusionment with, and distrust of, post-war governments. Examples included the Soviet Union's responses to popular anti-communist uprisings, such as the 1956 Hungarian Revolution¹ and the botched US Bay of Pigs Invasion of Cuba in 1961². The assassination of US President John F. Kennedy in November 1963, and the attendant theories concerning the event, led to further diminished trust in government, especially among younger people. This always-present sense of lurking danger impacted even the daily lives of the Americans. Shelters were built all over the country. School children were taught what to do in case of an atomic explosion in a way not far from indoctrination. The media constantly reported on the threat and consequences of a nuclear fall-out. (Kunkel 4)

It was this growing sense of mistrust in the government, as well as many social and political issues which led to the larger counterculture movement. In this atmosphere, the political culture in the United States began to radicalize: Communists or persons who were only thought to be too far left in political ways were persecuted by institutions such as the FBI under J. Edgar Hoover and the House of Un-American Activities (HUAC). Every employee in governmental institutions or agencies could fall under suspicion of having Communist leanings and could undergo investigation or persecution from the government. But it was not just the political situation that caused unrest in a growing number of young people and which eventually led to a growing number of subcultures that finally merged into the larger countercultural movement.

Culture is the "social heritage" of society. It includes the complex set of learned and shared beliefs, customs, skills, habits, traditions, and knowledge common to the members of society. Within a culture, there may be subcultures made up of specific groups that are somewhat separate from the rest of society because of distinct traits, beliefs, or interests. (Landis 2)

Blacks still suffered from racial oppression and segregation especially in the southern states. Slowly, an opposition to these circumstances began to rise which first caused public attention when the black inhabitants of Montgomery, Alabama, including a then unknown local priest called Martin Luther King, boycotted the buses of the city to protest against arrest of Rosa Parks for not sitting in the back of the bus, where Blacks had to sit. The success of this protest inspired a lot of people all over the country, especially the students in the universities. This event triggered the birth of the Civil Rights Movement.

The need to address minority rights of women, gays, the handicapped, and many other neglected constituencies within the larger population came to the forefront as an increasing number of primarily younger people broke free from the constraints of 1950s orthodoxy and

struggled to create a more inclusive and tolerant social landscape. The availability of new and more effective forms of birth control was a key underpinning of the sexual revolution. The notion of "recreational sex" without the threat of unwanted pregnancy radically changed the social dynamic and permitted both women and men much greater freedom in the selection of sexual lifestyles outside the confines of traditional marriage. (New York Times, 1994)

Communes were established in parts of the country as straightforward agrarian attempts to return to the land and live free of interference from outside influences. As the era progressed, many people established and populated new communities in response to not only disillusionment with standard community forms, but also dissatisfaction with certain elements of the counterculture itself. The emergence of an interest in expanded spiritual consciousness, yoga, occult practices and increased human potential helped to shift views on organized religion during the era. The perceived "Generation Gap", or the divide in worldview between the old and young, was perhaps never greater than during the counterculture era.

A large measure of the generational chasm of the 1960s and early 1970s was born of rapidly evolving fashion and hairstyle trends that were readily adopted by the young, but often misunderstood and ridiculed by the old. These included the wearing of very long hair by men, the wearing of natural or "Afro" hairstyles by Blacks, the donning of revealing clothing by women in public, and the mainstreaming of the psychedelic clothing and regalia of the hippie culture. Ultimately, practical and comfortable casual apparel, namely updated forms of T-shirts, often tie-dyed, or emblazoned with political or advertising statements, and Levi Strauss-branded blue denim jeans became the enduring uniform of the generation. (Cunningham 31)

Paul Willis (1978) first applied the term 'homology' to subculture in his study of hippies and motor-bike boys using it to describe the symbolic fit between the values and lifestyles of a group, its subjective experience and the musical forms it uses to express or reinforce its focal

concerns. Regarding the question of what fashion and style signified to the subcultures, the answer he arrived at was that the appropriated objects reassembled in the distinctive subcultural ensembles were 'made to reflect, express and resonate . . . aspects of group life' (Hall et al., 1976b).

The objects chosen were, either intrinsically or in their adapted forms, homologous with the focal concerns, activities, group structure and collective self-image of the subculture. They were 'objects in which (the subcultural members) could see their central values held and reflected' (Hebdige 124-5).

The fashion and lifestyle choices adopted by the Hippies and the youths were a direct statement of their difference against the establishment- the government, the consumerist society and the 'normal' social conventions of the day. The casual do-it-yourself clothing professed the choice of comfort and non-consumerism against the suit-and-ties uniform of the capitalist establishment; the long-flowing hair and beards worn by the men represented a breaking away from the traditionally groomed look favoured by the elder generation, who stressed that men should dress in a 'manly' fashion. It was therefore, also a statement against traditional gender norms that demarcated the dress and appearance of men and women.

This is what distinguishes the visual ensembles of spectacular subcultures from those favoured in the surrounding culture(s). They are obviously fabricated and displayed their own codes or at least demonstrated that codes are there to be used and abused. In this they go against the grain of a mainstream culture whose principal defining characteristic is a tendency to represent their own cultures as natural or normal (Hebdige 112-3) Fashion therefore truly became a statement for subcultures- a statement of their difference, as well as their identification as a group.

Clothing and fashion were a big part of the Hippie's self-identification. In the early period of the movement, Army clothing was very popular: The green and brown colours, originally thought for easier hiding in the woods and meadows, showed the mental connection to everything natural and in the same way, wearing camouflage clothing as a peace-loving rebel was something provocative. Later, when the Movement became more and more popular, the Indonesian tie-dyeing technique found its way into the culture. It was nearly perfect for the Hippie purposes - every fabric could be handled, everyone could do it at home, it gave the possibility to apply creativity, and in the end, extremely colourful cloths were created. Those colourful styles were applied to everything currently popular; women wore wide skirts, sometimes tie-dyed, sometimes with "normal" patterns, often showing flowers.

All those new styles caused the disapproval of the older generation – which surely was also a purpose, a radically new appearance to distinguish oneself from the narrow-minded parents and the conservative society. This provocation of course had its effect. A large number of young people ran away from, or were thrown out of their homes by conservative parents who disapproved of their long hair and provocative clothing. Those homeless teens were only assured in their attitude, believing that the society indeed didn't want them. They often found their way to the "promised land", to San Francisco, where the community grew bigger and bigger and no one complained about their lifestyle or appearance. (Kunkel 10)

The Free Speech Movement³ organised by the students of Berkeley, as well as San Francisco's relaxed attitude determined that it had to become the centre of the Hippie Movement. The town was already the home of the Beat Poets, or the 'beatniks'. Although it was only a subculture of literature, the beatniks had a big influence on the Hippie Movement. They called themselves "Beat Generation", with the meaning of both "beaten" and "beatific". Their poems were heavily influenced by the afore-mentioned political problems, religions of the Far East and

the experiences of World War II, with Jack Kerouac and Allen Ginsberg as their most popular and influential representatives

The young people coming to San Francisco adapted the bohemian lifestyle of their beat idols, whose philosophy and wisdom they admired, but in the eyes of the old beatniks, those youngsters' only purpose of life seemed to procure drugs. They called them "junior grade hipsters", or in short "Hippies"— a term the countercultural youth soon used for itself in a provocative way. In the Haight-Ashbury neighbourhood of San Francisco, they found a suitable home – old and cheap Victorian houses and liberal inhabitants, not too far away from the University of California in Berkeley. Soon, alternative cloths and drugs were sold everywhere and people made music on the streets and in the parks. The "Free Clinic" hospital was founded in which former military doctors cured ill people, often from drug abuse, for free. Experimentation with recreational drugs was rampant during the era, as the Hippies believed that these drugs heightened their senses and elevated them beyond the normal plane of existence. The term "Freak" comes from this hospital, first as a name for someone completely drugged who needed help, later as a self-description of the Hippies. The earlier years of the hippie movement was characterized by living in a way very close to their philosophy – communal housing, free love, which was an opposition of what they saw as an institutionalization of love and relationships, uncommon clothing, protesting for peace and against authorities and the Vietnam war, listening to new music and consuming a lot of drugs. (Kunkel 9)

The war in Vietnam was one of the most important factors in the whole Hippie movement and the central political event in the late sixties. The USA was never officially at war with North Vietnam; their whole military forces in the area had the status of "military advisors" of the Republic of South Vietnam. Jungle warfare against an enemy knowing the landscape, being at home in the "green hell", was terrible for the young American soldiers, who had been

drafted in big numbers, not wanting to fight a war against a country they had nothing to do with and against a big number of the people of the country they had protect from the enemy forces. So this war became the biggest target of the young people's rebellion. When the war became larger and larger in the years after 1965, the need for soldiers also grew. A lot of people were drafted, which caused the protest of the rebelling youth. Ironically, those who were the first ones to organize a sit-in or a demonstration against the policy of sending young men to a country far away were the students at the universities – who were all excluded from the draft. But the Hippie movement not only consisted of students, and soon, a lot of young men flew from the army, preferably to San Francisco, and “draft card burnings” were staged in front of the military installations, with a lot of media presence. In Vietnam itself, the situation was horrible. The war in the jungle, the fight against an often invisible enemy caused extreme psychological problems among the soldiers. Many of them would go on to develop drug problems and suffer from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). Thousands of young people went on the street in protest against the US's involvement in the War, blockading roads and governmental buildings, sitting there for days, leading to the famous sit-ins which soon became a Hippie myth of their own. Those demonstrations were mostly visited by university students or draft resisters. (Kunkel 12)

The period was indeed a time of great upheavals, change and turbulence.

Come gather 'round people

Wherever you roam

And admit that the waters

Around you have grown

And accept it that soon

You'll be drenched to the bone.

If your time to you Is worth savin'

Then you better start swimmin'

Or you'll sink like a stone

For the times they are a-changin' (Dylan, Times)

The 1964 song “The Times They are a-changin’” by Bob Dylan has often been quoted as the one that best exemplifies the growing spirit of change that marked the era. In this song, Dylan talks about the inevitability of change and mostly, the changing of the old guard for the new. As the song progresses, he addresses the media- ‘the writers and critics’, to watch and record history unfolding before their eyes. This history, however, will no longer be made by the politicians whom he addresses in the third verse. This revolution will be brought about by the ‘new people’, the youths, and he advises the politicians, “Don't stand in the doorway/ Don't block up the hall”. Finally he urges mothers and fathers to not criticize what they don’t understand; their children are beyond their reach: The line it is drawn / The curse it is cast ... /The order is Rapidly fadin’”. The world needs to be changed, and those who are willing to try are ready.

One of the most defining characteristics of the countercultural movement was the vast proliferation of protest and political songs. The instinct to voice political sentiments through music is by no means new or uniquely American. Music has been used to explore and to give vent to a whole range of emotions, feelings and concerns- from the joyful to the disheartening. Music is therefore, a revelatory medium of not just an individual concern, but that of society as well. Protest music, whether through lyrics, performance or context, gives us an insight into discontent, both personal and societal. The history of political communication in American

music predates the founding of the union of the English colonies. From West Africa, the British Isles, and Europe, colonists brought a rich musical tradition; and with that music came a social context. It is said that on their ships crossing to the new land, both the Puritans and the slaves each sang of their troubles and hopes. While their songs reflected different societies, power relations, and musical scales, the function of music and song was similar for both groups; it was 'the ultimate social glue'. (Dunaway 3)

Inasmuch as fashion and style was both a statement of difference and self-identification for a group, music and song was very much a defining part of the countercultural movement, with the proliferation of rock 'n roll, folk music and soul music as tools for social commentary and activism. The soundscape of this movement varied drastically, from all-American folk-rock songs like those of Pete Seeger, Phil Ochs, Crosby, Stills, Nash and Young, Joan Baez and Bob Dylan, to the full-fledged rock 'n roll revolution rockers like Jimi Hendrix and Janis Joplin, and finally to soul singers of the period, such as Sam Cooke, Aretha Franklin, James Brown, Nina Simone and Marvin Gaye. Pete Seeger, founding member of the Almanac Singers and The Weavers, was a major influence on Dylan and his contemporaries, and continued to be a strong voice of protest in the 1960s, when he composed "Where Have All the Flowers Gone", a song that employs a series of cyclical questions to emphasise the connection of nature and humankind, and how war could destroy both. His song "If I Had a Hammer" (1949), covered by Peter, Paul and Mary in 1962, went on to become one of the major Freedom Songs of the Civil Rights Movement. Phil Ochs was also one of the leading protest singers of the decade who performed at many political events, including anti-Vietnam War and civil rights rallies, student events, and organized labour events over the course of his career, in addition to many concert appearances. In a 1963 essay entitled "The Need for Topical Music", he talked about how, before the advent

of the mass media, folksingers were like travelling newspapers spreading tales through music. He continues,

It is often ironic that in this age of forced conformity and fear of controversy the folksinger may be assuming the same role.... One good song with a message can bring a point more deeply to more people than a thousand rallies... Every newspaper headline is a potential song. (Lynskey 75-6)

Bob Dylan has often been hailed as ‘the poster-child’ of the folk-singers and his songs are easily the most well-known of the era. As totemic as Dylan, perhaps, was Joan Baez, who initially took Dylan under her wing and introduced him to the world of Folk. A songwriter, musician and activist, Baez was a well-known figure in the Civil Rights Movement, using her popularity as a vehicle for social protest. Aside from her participation in marches and demonstrations, Baez was one of the fore-runners of the movement by performing not just her own songs but also renditions of other popular songs associated with the Movement. Folk music was the overwhelmingly popular genre of music during the counterculture movement, because, according to Jerome Rodnitzky,

While jazz had become increasingly complex and abstract and rock-and-roll had become more nonsensical and meaningless, folk songs were filled with meaning and integrity” (105).

This explanation is, of course, debatable; in fact, the term ‘folks’ is a controversial one, raising the question of who exactly it encompasses. Initially used to refer to rural folks who were idealised as the proletariat, folk music was often referred to as the ‘people’s songs’ (Lund and Denisoff 395). Often associated with ‘authenticity’, folk music focused a lot on a sense of solidarity rather than the individual, using ‘we’ rather than ‘I’, and the songs are usually meant to

have a 'singalong' style, with audience participation welcomed and encouraged. Another characteristic of folk music is a pared-down performance- the use of acoustic guitars, absence of amplifiers and stage lights. It was these elements of folk music that made it seem authentic and unmanufactured, and which appealed so strongly to the generation that actively tried to disentangle itself from the consumerist and commercialised aspects of their parents' generation. A result of the growing interest in folk music was the reemergence of the topical songwriter in the so-called "Seeger-Guthrie" tradition (Lund and Denisoff 398). Most of these individuals had begun by singing old-left songs, but many of them became involved in the civil rights movement, and they gradually began writing their own songs of protest. Folk music thus became interlinked with demonstrations and protests.

Robert Zimmerman, or Bob Dylan, as he later christened himself, arrived in New York in January 1961. He worshipped Woody Guthrie, and, with his new name, he recreated himself in the image of the folk-singer, cultivating Okie mannerisms and an anti-intellectual image. (Lynskey 70) He quickly forged a friendship with his idol, and established alliances with popular folk singers of the day, most notably Phil Ochs and Joan Baez. In January 1962, Dylan composed "The Ballad of Emmett Hill" about a black fourteen year old boy who had been beaten and then shot to death for whistling at a white woman. This marked the genesis of Bob Dylan, the protest singer. However, it was his 1962 song "Blowin' in the Wind" that would change his life and establish his fame as a protest singer.

Dylan wrote "Blowin' in the Wind" after a discussion about Civil Rights; he had written down the lines, "Your silence betrays you" and then had rushed home to write the song.

The central image, he later explained, was that of 'a restless piece of paper' which nobody thinks to pick up and read, an idea uncannily close to Guthrie's comparison of himself to a 'blowing' scrap of paper'. (Lynskey 71)

The song poses a number of rhetorical questions, related to war, freedom and the wilful ignorance of those that pretend not to see when a wrong has been perpetrated.

Yes, and how many years can some people exist

Before they're allowed to be free?

Yes, and how many times can a man turn his head

And pretend that he just doesn't see?

.... Yes, and how many deaths will it take till he knows

That too many people have died?

The refrain "The answer, my friend, is blowin' in the wind" has been described as "impenetrably ambiguous: either the answer is so obvious it is right in your face, or the answer is as intangible as the wind" (Mick 43). The song captured the gestalt of that period in American history by asking the same questions that so many people were asking. Dylan avoided giving specific answers but no one could have doubted whom the people who were not 'allowed to be free' were. And while the Vietnam War was never specifically mentioned, the many deaths he referred to resonated with the people who felt that there were far too many casualties of a futile war that they felt they had no business getting themselves involved in. And finally, by speaking about the apathy of those who pretend not to see or hear, the song evokes the image of a distant government too intent on its own agenda that it was deaf to the cries of its people. In the song's ambiguity lies its strength; by speaking so generally of such broad topics- empathy, apathy, war, death, bondage and freedom- Dylan subtly invites the audience to participate into the song by providing their own interpretations as to 'the answer'.

Songs, in context, reveal much about the culture which produces or circulates them. Dunaway examines three characteristics of protest songs which help to articulate the ideas and ideologies of the culture that produces them. Firstly, lyrics of songs inevitably express the world view of their authors and singers. This is particularly true for anonymous works, which often reflect a folk or popular consciousness. Songs make up the unofficial culture of their time, much as Dylan's "Blowin' in the Wind" does. Secondly, tunes themselves act as historical indicators. Musical forms have their own identifiable history, which tells us the origins and world view of those who choose them as means of exhortation. Dylan's choice of modelling himself and his music on the 'Okie' tradition of Woody Guthrie speak volumes about the message he wishes to impart and the audience he wishes to reach. In addition, the original function of the music adapted - dancing, entertainment, education - provides a further historical clue. A civil rights protest song based on gospel and one based on a Broadway show tune are likely to be received very differently among Black Americans - both were tried in the civil rights movement of the 1960s, but the gospel-based compositions were far more widely sung. Thirdly, songs reveal community dynamics and history, providing a cultural inventory of a group. (Dunaway 272-3)

The meaning of a song, then, rests both on the composer and his audience, the producer and the consumer. Folk music, in many ways, was associated with feelings of solidarity against tyranny, of hope despite crushing odds, or as John Steinbeck describes it, "the will of a people to endure and fight against oppression... we call this the American spirit". (Lynskey 21) It was these feelings that Dylan evoked with his "Blowin' in the Wind" and which led to his sudden fame, something that he personally struggled with. In the early sixties, in the small world of folk music, protest songs were the currency. They said that the world should be changed, even implied that songs could change it, and no one wrote better protest songs-or as many-as Bob Dylan. It was a way of getting on the train of his own career, he'd say years later-but to the tens

of thousands of high school and college students who had begun to listen to Bob Dylan because, they said, he could draw on their own unshaped anger and rage, terror and fear, and make it all real, even make it poetry. (Marcus 6) People started hailing him as a protest-singing prophet, a label that he tried unsuccessfully to discard. He refused to call himself a protest singer, claiming that his songs were just ‘something to be said, for somebody, by somebody’ (Lynskey 71). But his reputation as a prophet was reinforced with his song, “A Hard Rain’s a-Gonna Fall”.

The song uses a question and answer refrain pattern and contains imagery that suggests death, war, suffering and doom.

And what did you hear, my blue-eyed son?
 And what did you hear, my darling young one?
 I heard the sound of a thunder that roared out a warnin'
 I heard the roar of a wave that could drown the whole world
 I heard one hundred drummers whose hands were a-blazin'
 I heard ten thousand whisperin' and nobody listenin'
 I heard one person starve, I heard many people laughin'
 Heard the song of a poet who died in the gutter
 Heard the sound of a clown who cried in the alley
 And it's a hard, it's a hard, it's a hard, it's a hard
 And it's a hard rain's a-gonna fall.

The apocalyptic image of the song was further heightened by the timing of the song’s release; just a month after it was released, on October 22 1962, U.S. President John F. Kennedy appeared on national television to announce the discovery of Soviet missiles on the island of Cuba, initiating the Cuban Missile Crisis. Dylan’s reputation as a prophet was sealed as people associated his ‘hard rain’ to nuclear fallout. Dylan would insist that, by a ‘hard rain’, he meant,

generally to some sort of end, and not a specific event. In the last verse, Dylan also spoke about how “the pellets of poison are flooding their waters”; he meant this as a reference to the lies and propaganda that are spread by the media, poisoning the minds of people. However, his audience chose to interpret this as a foreshadowing of the Cuban missiles and atomic bombs killing them.

In his essay “On Popular Music”, Theodore W. Adorno asserts how a text is produced determines its consumption and significance, and thus, the meaning of a text depends on the producer. Walter Benjamin, however, suggests that meaning is produced at the moment of consumption and that its significance is determined by the process of consumption rather than the mode of production. (Storey, 49-55) A song, therefore, can have many layers of meaning, dependent on the producer, the audience, and even the time of reception. This point was later taken up by Stuart Hall and Paddy Whannel who analysed the interaction between text and audience among youth culture. They claimed that very often, there is a conflict between the use made of a text by the audience, and the use intended by the producers. This is nowhere more apparent than in popular music culture, where youths see popular music as symbols of themselves and their relation to the world. (Hall and Whannel 276)

This conflict between producer and consumer is nowhere more apparent than in Dylan’s “Masters of War”. While folk music protested the war, it did so in a way that was hopeful and reasonable, advocating pacifism instead of violence. Dylan broke away from this folk music tradition of peace and solidarity by recording his most evil-sounding record:

Come you masters of war
You that build all the guns
You that build the death planes
You that build all the bombs

... You that never done nothin'

But build to destroy

... Like Judas of old

You lie and deceive

... You might say that I'm young

You might say I'm unlearned

But there's one thing I know

Though I'm younger than you

That even Jesus would never

Forgive what you do.

The song is a harsh indictment of the warmongers, the heads of nations that plot and plan wars. Dylan uses the word “You” repeatedly, emphasising the malevolent hatred and anger he feels towards them. He lists out the evil and the wrongs perpetrated by these ‘masters of war’ and they are many. While traditional folk music lyrics contain messages for forgiveness and reparation, there is none in the song.

And I hope that you die

And your death'll come soon

I will follow your casket

In the pale afternoon

And I'll watch while you're lowered

Down to your deathbed

And I'll stand over your grave

'Til I'm sure that you're dead.

In the liner notes to *The Freewheelin' Bob Dylan*, Dylan admits, "I've never written anything like that before. I don't sing songs which hope people will die, but I couldn't help it with this one. The song is a sort of striking out... a feeling of what can you do? (Lynskey 73) In the song, there is no compromise or understanding. In this song Dylan "allows the listener no opportunity to see the issue from the masters' eyes. 'I' and 'you' are clearly established and 'you' are clearly wrong. The repetitive text and accompaniment's droning single harmony work in tandem to drive home relentlessly the singer's perspective" (Harvey 71)

The song was also a foreshadowing of how the prophet of protest would, in time, leave the fold for the more exciting and rewarding pastures of Rock. With this song, Dylan showed he no longer subscribed to the socialist models of the past. Rarely did the word "we" enter his lyrics. This was in juxtaposition to the well-known songs of the civil rights movement with which many New York "folk-singers" identified. More and more, the singular "I" predominated. Dylan's later songs were individual statements not conducive to group singing. Dylan would change all of the elements in the summer of 1965 when he adopted the techniques and styles of rock-and-roll at the Newport Folk Festival. For many this was heresy. For others it signalled the end of the folk music revival.

It is with Dylan, whose early songs like "Blowin in the Wind," "Masters of War," and "A Hard Rain's A-Gonna Fall" were used by the movement through the decade, that the cost of the migration of folk music into industrial culture may most clearly be seen. Dylan never mentions Vietnam specifically in any of his lyrics, and by the time the war was the major issue, he had rejected topical reference and folk music generally. For a performer, especially those of protest songs, audiences are eager to appear on the side of the singer. Folk music, as stated before, hinges on a ritual of affirmation- the audience knows when to join in, when to cheer or when to boo. For Dylan, this ritual was jarring because the songs that he had conceived with an element

of danger was tamed and smothered by the audience's self-congratulatory approval. He felt that the audiences were expecting something that he could, and would not deliver: "I was playing a lot of songs I didn't want to play. I was singing words I didn't really want to sing". (Lynskey 82)

Thus, when Dylan sang 'Dont follow leaders' on "Subterranean Homesick Blues", he didn't just mean the political leaders – he meant even himself and other leaders, such as Martin Luther King. Dylan then, subverts the "we" of the folk music culture, the individual asserting his own thoughts and beliefs against the collective community. The final break came at the Newport Folk Festival in 1965 when Dylan emerged, singing "Like a Rolling Stone" clad in black leather with an electric guitar. He was booed from the stage and returned only to retract his earlier moral outspokenness with an acoustic version of the fittingly apt song, "It's All Over Now, Baby Blue." (James,132).

In the subsequent controversy, arguments that Dylan had betrayed the folk tradition were matched by arguments that he had simply adapted it to an electronic age. While both blues and country singers had used electric guitars since the early forties, the introduction of electric guitars to folk music was a controversial and polemic issue because it symbolized the ambitions of the music industry, of rock and roll. Abandoning acoustic instruments summarized rejecting a music in which communalism was still possible for one which consolidated a categorical, industrial division between performer and audience. Folk-rock and eventually "rock", however, were at once central to countercultural utopianism and also so profitable for the corporations that musical content and function pass into new patterns of determination. (James, 133)

The counter culture, while including aspects of the folk revival such as the outdoor festival, gathering of the committed, and the like, is a much broader phenomenon. It is not one-dimensional or focused at a specific genre of music, politics, fashion, or ideology. As Theodore Roszak notes:

The counter culture "finds its own identity in a nebulous symbol or songs that seems to proclaim .., .we are outward bound from the old corruptions of the world. (Lund, 405)

As such, the counter culture does not necessarily promulgate a specific musical form or political ideology. The counter culture is eclectic in both taste and politics, and time bound. Folk music was a popular platform for protest, but other forms of musical genres did play their part in the counterculture.

This is evidenced by the Woodstock Festival, a music festival attracting an audience of over 400,000 people, scheduled over three days on a dairy farm in New York from August 15 to 18, 1969 held at Max Yasgur's 600-acre dairy farm in the Catskills in the town of Bethel. During the sometimes rainy weekend, 32 acts, representing diverse musical forms performed outdoors before an audience of more than 400,000 people. It is widely regarded as a pivotal moment in popular music history, as well as the definitive nexus for the larger counterculture generation. The Festival was organized by Joel Roberts and John Rosenblan who were both sons of rich families from New York and organized the event for financial investment. They formed the Media Sound recording studio was in New York, and through this studio, they met Artie Kornfeld and Michel Lang who were always fond of the idea of making a big festival in Woodstock, where all the famous artists like Bob Dylan and Joan Baez lived. Although the two Wall Street men didn't have a clue about music, artists and big festivals, they were immediately enthusiastic about the idea. But the town of Wallkill, next to Woodstock, which originally planned to host the festival, was far less enthusiastic. After weeks of struggling for the permission for the event, it was clear that another site had to be found. Rosenman and Roberts were driving around the hilly landscape of the area, and as they got into a big bowl, a natural amphitheatre, they immediately realized that this was the definitive place to stage a festival. And

thus, three days later, they stood in front of the land owner Max Yasgur's kitchen who allowed his farm to be used for the festival (Kunkel 23)

Woodstock has famously been touted as the antithesis to the capitalist recording studios and music labels in its stance towards free music. The concert was advertised as a free event, open to all people; indeed, a festival of music, love and solidarity. However, this was not truly the case. Woodstock was originally designed as a profit-making venture, aptly titled "Woodstock Ventures". It famously became a "free concert" only after the event drew hundreds of thousands more people than the organizers had prepared for. The organizers had intended tickets to be sold at recording shops around the country, but a few weeks prior to the concert, they realized they had only time and money left to either create a stage, or a fence. The absence of a fence would enable freeloader entry into the site, and the organizers did not want to expend more money towards security personnel, which would be useless anyway considering the size and scope of the festival. Besides this, a musical event would be impossible without a stage. And so the concert became a 'free' celebration of music, peace and love.

Woodstock was a big mark in the history of the Movement; it was its apogee – but it also marked the beginning of the decline of the Hippie Movement. It caused the creation of "Woodstock Nation": a nation only existing in the minds of people, far away from Wall Street brokers only looking for money, far away from blacks being beaten up by cops, far away from nuclear missiles appearing in the sky. It was a nation of love and peace and music, a home for everybody. Woodstock Nation only had and has one fault- it never existed outside the heads. (Kunkel 23) The organizers recouped their losses through investments and a documentary movie called "Woodstock" (1970) was shortly after directed by Mark Wadleigh, which won the Academy Awards the same year in its category. This, along with the increasing popularity of the Hippie lifestyle and its fashion, slowly propelled Hippie culture into the mass culture, until it

became something of a trend. The tie-dyed clothing, the faded and flared denims, the flowers, the free-flowing hair- the fashion of the Hippies became part of the popular trend, marketed both in glossy fashion magazines and in retail outlets. Mass culture assimilated most of the peripheral things of the Movement, but it did not adopt its essentials. The Hippie philosophies of peace, love and freedom was distorted as an escapist philosophy, a shirking of responsibilities and duties instead of actively doing something.

This selling out and distortion of their very own identification caused the real Hippies to become radicalized in several ways. The political faction became more and more extreme. Political demonstrations and sit-ins had started to resemble fairs rather than expressions of political will, with many young people participating not due to their opinion but because protesting seemed the fashionable thing to do, extreme New Leftists soon looked for new ways to gain public attention. A new group called the “Weathermen” was formed, borrowed from a line from Bob Dylan’s “Subterranean Homesick Blues”- “You don’t need a weatherman to know which way the wind blows”. Although it had nearly no support within the population and absolutely none within the peaceful Hippies, the “Weather Underground” caused a very bad publicity for the New Left and its political aims by doing a series of bomb attacks on US governmental installations such as the Pentagon. Another factor for Hippie culture’s decline was the rising experimentation with mind-altering drugs. While the original Hippies had indulged in marijuana, its latter members experimented and used a lot of drugs, especially heroin, cocaine and LSD. Famous casualties of this drug explosion included Janis Joplin and Jimi Hendrix, both extremely popular performers at the Woodstock festival. This rising unpopularity caused a lot of the Hippie culture’s fashionable young adherents to abandon the movement, in favour of the next big trend- Disco.

Side by side with Folk music and the Hippie counterculture, another sub-genre of music had involved itself with the culture of protest- soul music. Soul music is a popular music genre that originated in the United States in the late 1950s and early 1960s. It combines elements of African-American gospel music, rhythm and blues and jazz. Soul music became popular for dancing and listening in the United States, where record labels such as Motown, Atlantic and Stax were influential during the Civil Rights Movement. The social and political ferment of the times inspired many soul singers of the era towards social commentary in their music. Worth mentioning here are two artists who were both jolted and inspired by a singular event – the bombing of a Black Baptist Church in Alabama in 1963, where four young girls were killed. Sam Cooke, a popular Black singer was deeply affected by the event. Cooke had been increasingly uneasy with his lack of contribution towards the Civil Rights Movement, a feeling compounded when he heard Bob Dylan’s “Blowin’ in the Wind”. He was amazed that a “white boy” would write a song like that (Lynskey 101), and he was further spurred into action when, a few weeks after the Alabama bombings, Cooke and his companions were refused entry into a hotel in which they had booked. These events culminated into him composing the song “A Change is Gonna Come”. (Lynskey 99)

I go to the movie and I go down town
 Somebody keep telling me don't hang around
 ... Then I go to my brother
 And I say, "Brother, help me please."
 But he winds up knockin' me
 Back down on my knees

Cooke intersperses each instance of him being rebuffed, knocked down, discriminated against with the refrain, “It’s been a long , long time comin’/ But I know, a change is gonna come”. The

song is a statement of faith under pressure, a rendering of the Civil Rights struggle as one man's vacillation between hope and despair, until finally, he sings, "I think I'm able to carry on" with the conviction that a change will indeed, come.

In stark contrast to Cooke's message of hope is Nina Simone's "Mississippi Goddam". Simone had initially no plans to become a political singer, considering nightclubs and making records "dirty", especially when mixed with politics (Lynskey 93). She had had personal experiences with racial discrimination, when she was rejected as a student at the Curtis Institute in Philadelphia because of her race. She had never forgotten the experience but had stayed away from the Civil Rights Movement until she heard about the death of the four little girls in Alabama. She said:

All the truths that I had denied to myself for so long rose up and slapped my face... I suddenly realised what it was to be black in America in 1963, but it wasn't an intellectual connection... – it came as a rush of fury, hatred and determination. (Lynskey 92)

The song captures Simone's response to the murder of Medgar Evers in Mississippi⁴, and the Church bombing in Alabama. On the recording she cynically announces the song as "a show tune, but the show hasn't been written for it yet." (Lynskey 100) The song begins jauntily, with a show tune feel, but demonstrates its political focus early on with its refrain "Alabama's got me so upset, Tennessee's made me lose my rest, and everybody knows about Mississippi goddam." While Cooke's "Change" preached endurance and patience, Simone's "Mississippi" was a harsh indictment, full of impatience and violence.

Oh but this whole country is full of lies
You're all gonna die and die like flies
I don't trust you any more

... You don't have to live next to me
Just give me my equality
Everybody knows about Mississippi
Everybody knows about Alabama
Everybody knows about Mississippi Goddam
That's it!

The song implicated every white man with the words “you”, including them in the persecution, discrimination, deception and brutality that her people have suffered over the years. Her ending to the song brooks no argument; everyone knew the truth of what she was saying, everyone knew what had been done to her people and that was the irrevocable, plain fact. Cooke died soon after the recording of his song, but Simone would continue to involve herself in the Movement, eventually witnessing the face of the Movement, Martin Luther King being assassinated in 1968, amidst further riots, deaths and violence.

Another soul singer that was belatedly involved in the Civil Rights Movement was Marvin Gaye. Originally marketed as a sex symbol by his recording label, Motown, Gaye had chafed at Motown’s advice to their artists to not delve into political or social commentary, fearing alienation from their pop audiences. However, with the aftermath of the 1967 Race Riots in Detroit, a violent public disorder that lasted five days, Motown could no longer stay out of the Movement (Lynskey 184) Gaye had been affected by the violence erupting around him, but on a more personal level, he was deeply affected by the experience of his brother, who had returned after a three year long tour of duty in Vietnam, only to work at a series of menial jobs. Despite

protests from his label, the album *What's Going On* was produced in 1971, a concept album written from the perspective of a Vietnam War veteran returning to the country he had been fighting for, and seeing only hatred, suffering, and injustice. Gaye's introspective lyrics discuss themes of drug abuse, poverty, and the Vietnam War. "Inner City Blues" echoes his brother's story, with lines evoking a picture of life in the ghettos, with poverty, panic and violence in the streets, finally ending with the lines, "Everybody thinks we're wrong/ Who are they to judge us/ Simply cause we wear our hair long". "What's Happening Brother", is another song, dedicated to his brother Frankie, in which Gaye wrote to explain the disillusionment of war veterans who returned to civilian life and their lack of connection to the current cultural events. However, it is the title track, "What's Goin On" which elevated Gaye from a love-song crooning sex symbol and entrenched him firmly as a protest singer. Echoing Cooke's stance of hope and patience against despair, the song calls for understanding, addressing different people and trying to make them see the cost of the wars and violence that was so rampant at the time.

Mother, mother
 There's too many of you crying
 Brother, brother, brother
 There's far too many of you dying
 You know we've got to find a way
 To bring some lovin' here today
 ... Father, father
 We don't need to escalate
 You see, war is not the answer.

Like Cooke's "Change", Gaye also spoke for a nation through his perspective, urging them to see the light in the darkness. The message he delivers is one of peace and understanding-

Picket lines and picket signs
Don't punish me with brutality
Talk to me, so you can see
Oh, what's going on.

In the end, however, the recording label triumphed. The album was a huge commercial success and, despite how anthemic the album was to the Movement, this was the extent of Gaye's involvement in the Movement. (Lynskey 195-200) While he paved the way for other political theme-infused musicians, he himself was not involved in any social cause. Motown was merely catering to the public which had developed a taste for protest music and who, by listening to the music, felt themselves to be involved and supportive of the cause without actually doing anything for it.

As social groups and classes live, if not in their productive then in their 'social' relations, increasingly fragmented and sectionally differentiated lives, the mass media are more and more responsible for providing the basis on which groups and classes construct an image of the lives, meanings, practices and values of other groups and classes and also for providing the images, representations and ideas around which the social totality composed of all these separate and fragmented pieces can be coherently grasped. (Hall, 1977) So a credible image of social cohesion can only be maintained through the appropriation and redefinition of cultures of resistance in terms of that image. In this way, the media not only provide groups with substantive images of other groups, they also relay back to working-class people a 'picture' of their own lives which is 'contained' or 'framed' by the ideological discourses which surround and situate it.

As the subculture begins to strike its own eminently marketable pose, as its vocabulary (both visual and verbal) becomes more and more familiar, so the referential context to which it can be most conveniently assigned is made increasingly apparent. Eventually, the hippies and the

dissenters can be incorporated, brought back into line, located on the preferred 'map of problematic social reality' at the point where boys with long hair are 'just kids dressing up', and girls in their flowing dresses are 'daughters just like yours'. The media, as Stuart Hall (1977) has argued, not only record resistance, they 'situate it within the dominant framework of meanings' and those young people who choose to inhabit a spectacular youth culture are simultaneously returned, as they are represented on T.V. and in the newspapers, to the place where common sense would have them fit; perhaps not the perfect sons and daughters they might have wished for, but family, nevertheless. It is through this continual process of recuperation that the fractured order is repaired and the subculture is incorporated.

The process of recuperation, according to Hebdige, takes two characteristic forms:

Firstly, the conversion of subcultural signs such as dress and music, etc., into mass-produced objects i.e. the commodity forms; secondly, the 'labelling' and re-definition of deviant behaviour by dominant groups – the police, the media, the judiciary i.e. the ideological form (Hebdige 94). The hippies saw their 'identity markers' become commodified and mainstream- fashion magazines and retail outlets sold tie-dyed shirts and flared jeans, their slogans becoming brand tags, and their "free concert" becoming a commercial venture. Thus, as soon as the original innovations which signify 'subculture' are translated into commodities and made generally available, they become 'frozen'. Once removed from their private contexts by the small entrepreneurs and big fashion interests who produce them on a mass scale, they become codified, made comprehensible, rendered at once public property and profitable merchandise. In this way, the two forms of incorporation -the ideological and the commercial- can be said to converge on the commodity form. Youth cultural styles may begin by issuing symbolic challenges, but they must inevitably end by establishing new sets of conventions; by creating new commodities, new industries or rejuvenating old ones. This occurs irrespective of the subculture's political

orientation: the macrobiotic restaurants, craft shops and ‘antique markets’ of the hippie era were easily converted into, for example, punk boutiques and record shops.

As the Sixties wound down to a close, the times were indeed changing. The countercultural movement, which started off so promisingly started to fizzle as it broke off into its many different subcultures. The music that provided the soundtrack to the movement became nothing more than jingles played on record shops and the radio. In fact, as the years changed, the meaning of the song that was so representative of the era gradually changed too. Since the 1980s Dylan’s “The Times They are a-Changin’” has had more to do with advertising than political and social change. Steve Jobs used it in 1984 to unveil the Macintosh computer. Ten years later, an accounting company Coopers & Lybrand used it. Two years after that the Bank of Montreal also used it as an advertising jingle. By 2005, it was being used to advertise insurance. Finally, as if to show that there was a meaning in the song, but just never the one we imagined, Dylan’s handwritten notes for the song were put to auction for just under half a million dollars to a hedge fund manager. (Atwood, np) The times did change, and with it, the meanings attributed to the music too.

NOTES:

¹ The Hungarian Revolution of 1956 was a nationwide revolt against the government of the Hungarian People's Republic and its Soviet-imposed policies, lasting from 23 October until 10 November 1956. After announcing a willingness to negotiate a withdrawal of Soviet forces, the Politburo changed its mind and moved to crush the revolution. On 4 November, a large Soviet force invaded Budapest and other regions of the country. The Hungarian resistance continued until 10 November. Over 2,500 Hungarians and 700 Soviet troops were killed in the conflict, and 200,000 Hungarians fled as refugees. Mass arrests and denunciations continued for months thereafter. By January 1957, the new Soviet-installed government had suppressed all public opposition.

² The Bay of Pigs Invasion was a failed military invasion of Cuba, an ally of the USSR, undertaken by the CIA-sponsored paramilitary group Brigade 2506 on 17 April 1961. A counter-revolutionary military trained and funded by the United States government's Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), Brigade 2506 intended to overthrow the increasingly communist government of Fidel Castro. The invading force was defeated within three days by the Cuban Revolutionary Armed Forces, under the direct command of Prime Minister Fidel Castro.

³ The Free Speech Movement (FSM) was a student protest which took place during the 1964–65 academic year on the campus of the University of California, Berkeley under the informal

leadership of students. In protests unprecedented in scope, students insisted that the university administration lift the ban of on-campus political activities and acknowledge the students' right to free speech and academic freedom.

⁴ Medgar Wiley Evers (July 2, 1925 – June 12, 1963) was an American civil rights activist from Mississippi who worked to overturn segregation at the University of Mississippi and to enact social justice and voting rights. He was murdered by a white supremacist and Klansman

The sixties in American history is irrevocably linked to the countercultural movement and a proliferation of protest music, which found fertile ground as a direct result of the Vietnam War. While the music of the era is characterized by the music of folk-rock and soul music, by 1968, however, the number of anti-war songs released sharply declined and these seemed to lack immediacy and forcefulness of earlier material. H. Ben Auslander offers the following explanation for this decline:

"...performers and audiences alike were physically and spiritually exhausted by the war against the war and simply did not want to be reminded of the conflict any more than was necessary. Another possible reason may be that many shared the sense of manic resignation expressed by Phil Ochs in his last anti-Vietnam song, "The War is Over." The fervor with which the Nixon administration suppressed subversive behavior in general may well have also contributed to the protest song movement's loss of vitality. (Journal np)

Whether these reasons contributed to the gradual end of the countercultural movement and the decline of folk rock towards the end of the 1960s, the succeeding decades in American history never again experienced the kind of cultural cohesiveness as exemplified by the countercultural movement. Protest movements and along with it, protest music continued to be produced, but never again on the scale of the sixties. The early part of the seventies still produced a number of protest music. The Kent State shootings of May 4, 1970, in which four unarmed college students were killed during a protest march against President Nixon's Cambodian Campaign amplified the growing resentment against the United States' invasion of Cambodia and the Vietnam War in general, and protest songs about the Vietnam War still continued to grow in popularity and frequency. Another great influence on the anti-Vietnam war protest songs of the early seventies was the fact that this was the first generation where combat veterans were returning prior to the

end of the war, and even the veterans were protesting the war. Besides the Vietnam War, issues such as racism, women's liberation movement and other topical issues were also addressed in the music of protest.

The subsequent decades in American history, though a period of great social and political change, nevertheless did not have a common cause for the people to rally around, nor did it have a common voice or protest, such as that which folk music provided for the sixties. The largest batches of protest songs tend to appear in eras of large-scale social movements which have not occurred again after the Vietnam War. Therefore, while different musical styles, genres and subcultures developed during this period, a large-scale movement that was capable of unifying youth culture, such as that of the countercultural movement, did not occur again. The same may be said of a representative musical genre capable of capturing the public spirit. While soul music carried over into the early part of the Seventies, and the eighties saw the birth of rap and hip-hop, it was the alternative forms of rock music – that of punk rock and grunge which emerged as the strongest voices of protest during these decades.

Punk rock is a rock music genre that developed between 1974 and 1976 in the United States, United Kingdom, and Australia. Originating in the United States out of the raw and energetic music played by garage bands in the mid-sixties, punk bands typically use short or fast-paced songs, with hard-edged melodies and singing styles, stripped-down instrumentation, and often political, anti-establishment lyrics. (Charlton 267) The term 'punk' means many different things to different people. Greil Marcus described it as "a new music, a new social critique, but most of all, it was a new kind of free speech" (Lipstick 2) while Lauraine Leblanc claims its origins as a 'music-based subculture'. (Leblanc 23) Robert Christgau claims that it was "a subculture that scornfully rejected the political idealism and Californian flower-power silliness of hippie myth" (Christgau np).

The term "punk" was first used in relation to rock music by some American critics in the early 1970s, to describe garage bands and their devotees. Probably one of the earliest recognizable punk influences was Lou Reed and his band The Velvet Underground. Their music concentrated on harsh themes such as drug addiction and sadomasochism. At the same time, the lyrics projected an air of alienation from these concerns, which expressed the coldness and gloom that the band perceived in urban city life. Lyricist Lou Reed claims,

At that time, people thought that we were being very negative and bleak and dark and 'anti', where, as the lyricist, I thought that we were an accurate reflection of segments of New York that you can't ignore. (Charlton 268)

The band's efforts went on to influence the development of punk as a musical style. The juxtaposition of themes centering on alienation from human concerns and the emotional expression of anger through the use of shouted vocals and pounding, repetitive beats became characteristic of punk music and was later taken up by the band The Stooges. The Stooges' frontman Iggy Pop, who is sometimes referred to as the Godfather of Punk, interspersed his musical performances with visual effects that expressed his disgust with society. Dressed in ripped clothing, he would often hit himself with the microphone and cut himself with pieces of glass.

The first wave of punk rock aimed to be aggressively modern, distancing itself from the bombast and sentimentality of early 1970s rock. (Robb 62) One thing that tied together punk musicians was their departure from the optimistically or romantically themed mainstream pop music of the time. In sharp contrast, these groups displayed pessimism in some cases to the point of nihilism. It was in this dissatisfaction with the state of life that led to much of the politically charged music that punk has become known for. President Nixon's Watergate Scandal¹ further shook the American people's faith in their government, and the subsequent presidencies of

Gerald Ford and Jimmy Carter did little to alleviate their growing concerns. Ronald Reagan's presidency (1981-1988) further provided fodder for a slew of protest music, especially in connection with the Iran-Contra Affair, in which it was discovered that his administration was selling arms to the radical Islamic regime in Iran and using proceeds from the sales to illegally fund the Contras, a guerilla/terrorist group in Nicaragua. Punk music and alternative forms of rock music became strong voices of protest in the 1980s, especially in relation to the Cold War², nuclear fear, and conservative politics.

The socio-economic climate was ripe for the politically charged, working class, distrustful or downright angry message of punk rock. Punk artists were not afraid to include social commentary both in their lyrics and their actions on and off stage. Punk rock as a whole, then, has become defined by its strong ties to socialism, its social commentaries, and its sympathies with working class unrest. (Meissner np) Many in the punk scene adopted a nihilistic attitude summed up by the Punk band Sex Pistols' slogan "No Future" from the lyrics of their song "God Save the Queen"(1976), which presents a pessimistic attitude towards the future. Punk rock lyrics are typically frank and confrontational; a central goal of punk music was to shock and outrage the mainstream culture.

Grunge music, on the other hand, is a subgenre of alternative rock music which gained popularity almost a decade later, from the mid-80s to the 90's. Often referred to as 'Seattle rock music', referencing the city of Seattle, Washington from which the music originated, grunge is heavily influenced by heavy metal, punk rock and alternative rock. By the 90s, grunge came to be regarded not just as a musical subgenre, but as a subculture, with its own values, lifestyle and fashion. Grunge music and lifestyle was heavily influenced by punk rock and its aesthetic of breaking away from the glamour and pretensions of Glam Rock. Just as punk rock's 'working class' approach and earthiness ran counter to glam rock's verbosity, intellectual claims and

arrogance, grunge also advocated a more 'stripped-down' and authentic approach in terms of musical style and presentation.

Grunge came to fruition on Seattle's independent Sub Pop record label, founded in 1986 by Bruce Pavitt and Jonathan Poneman in Seattle, Washington. Sub Pop achieved fame in the late 1980s for first signing Nirvana, Soundgarden, Mudhoney and many other bands from the Seattle music scene. They are often credited with taking the first steps toward popularizing grunge music. The origins of Sub Pop can be traced back to the early 1980s when Bruce Pavitt started a fanzine called *Subterranean Pop* that focused exclusively on American independent record labels. By the fourth issue, Pavitt had shortened the name to *Sub Pop* and began alternating issues with compilation tapes of underground rock bands. Poneman soon became a full partner in the label. Pavitt focused on the label's artists and repertoire aspects, while Poneman dealt with the business and legal issues. Both men decided they wanted the label to focus on "this primal rock stuff that was coming out," according to Pavitt. (Azerrad, Story 423-4) The pair sought to create a cohesive brand identity for *Sub Pop*. The label's ads promoted the label itself more than any particular band and also sought to market a "Seattle sound", which later became known as grunge music.

Grunge lyrics, in contrast to punk's rebellious statement, often portray a sense of apathy and alienation towards mainstream culture and society. Grunge concerts were also free of the light arrays, visual effects, entourages, stage costumes and elaborate sets embodied by glam rock concerts. One of the philosophies of grunge music was authenticity and therefore, these stage performances were never elaborately staged. The performing bands wore the everyday clothes common to the area - flannel shirts, worn jeans and cheap, sturdy shoes.

Punk, for its part, took root in local scenes that tended to reject association with the mainstream. An associated punk subculture emerged from the musical scene, expressing youthful rebellion and characterized by distinctive styles of clothing and adornment, ranging from deliberately offensive T-shirts, leather jackets, spike bands and other studded or spiked jewelry, and a variety of anti-authoritarian ideologies. In fact, style- especially relating to clothing - became a major component of the punk subculture, which adopted these rebellious and shocking adornments specifically to stand apart and alternatively, to shock the mainstream. For punks, physical appearance was a chance to make a statement, to get someone's attention. Contradiction, mockery, and irony, as well as being important parts of the music itself were also applied to the fashion. The wearing of Fascist and Nazi symbols for the most part did not indicate a political or ideological affiliation with the groups but rather were intended to point out everything that was wrong with society or at worst, simply to shock. (Meissner np) These appropriated objects were chosen to reflect and express aspects of group life and were, either intrinsically or in their adapted forms, homologous with the focal concerns, activities, group structure and collective self-image of the subculture. They were objects in which the subcultural members could see their central values held and reflected. (Hebdige 114)

What was common, therefore, among these two subcultures was not just the stripping down of their musical styles as compared to popular music, but the appropriation of their own particular brand of style in terms of clothing, appearance, and expression.

Style in subculture is, then, pregnant with significance. Its transformations go 'against nature', interrupting the process of 'normalization'. As such, they are gestures, movements towards a speech which offends the 'silent majority', which challenges the principle of unity and cohesion, which contradicts the myth of consensus. (Hebdige 18)

By the latter part of the Seventies, punk rock had spread around the world, and it became a major cultural phenomenon. While British punk was anarchic and political from its very outset, speaking for angry youths who faced a dire economic situation, American punk focused more on personal freedom. Their anger was directed at their ex-hippie parents and their worn-out values and their government's involvement in the politics of Asian and South American countries, as well as its support of an oppressive regime in South Africa. The Dead Kennedys who formed in 1978 heavily condemned the U.S government and other institutions for a number of offenses, using humour and satire to drive their points across. The frontman Eric Boucher changed his name to Jello Biafra after he learned that his government had sent a shipment of Jello to the starving people of Biafra in Africa, calling it foreign aid. (Charlton 276)

The lyrics of the Dead Kennedys contain a number of literary influences and references, one of which was the song "California Uber Alles"(1979) which contains allusions to George Orwell's novel *1984* (1949) which depicts life under a totalitarian regime. The object of their satire was the then Californian Governor Jerry Brown, a seemingly liberal politician who advocated environmental issues and had opposed the Vietnam War. However, in a conversation, he had said that people "want a dictator these days, a man on a white horse... to ride in and tell them what to do". (Lynskey 406) In the song, the lines "Now it is 1984" indicates the fear that informs the sense of menace in which Governor Brown, the 'Big Bro' on a white horse' seem to represent. Biafra links the political atmosphere of California with Nazi Germany, with lyrics such as,

Come quietly to the camp,

You'd look nice as a drawstring lamp.

Don't you worry, it's only a shower
 For your clothes here's a pretty flower.

While the song's sinister content and Orwellian imagery might seem overdone in the light of Brown's progressive ideals, according to Biafra, he was a potent symbol of 'establishment hippiedom'. (Lynskey 406) For the punks, the word 'hippie' implied someone affluent, complacent and a sell-out, and Governor Brown seemed to advocate all of that, hence the song contains the hippie ultimatum, "Mellow out or you will pay".

It was not just American politics that the Dead Kennedys criticized, however. The song, "Holiday in Cambodia" was based on Pol Pot's communist Khmer Rouge government in Cambodia and the atrocities committed by them. In a bid to restart civilization, the Khmer Rouge had abolished currency, religious practices, schools and hospitals, and executed professionals, intellectuals, minorities and anyone who seemed to oppose their ideology. Typical of Biafra's macabre humour, he juxtaposed the events in Cambodia with another issue that he felt strongly about- that of the lifestyle found in colleges. The song was about "the bourgeois, comfortable, spoilt white kid" (Lynskey 408) and the fast, easy, careless lifestyle enjoyed by college-goers. Biafra's solution to making these college kids face up to reality was to give them a holiday in Cambodia. He lambasts these kids for their comfortable, sheltered existence:

On your five grand stereo
 Bragging that you know
 How the niggers feel cold
 And the slums got so much soul

The lyrics offer a satirical view of young, well-to-do and self-righteous Americans, contrasting such a lifestyle with the brutal dictatorship of the Khmer Rouge.

Another song with a strong literary influence is “Kill the Poor”. The lyrics satirically praise the U.S government for developing the neutron bomb that can kill people while leaving properties and buildings undamaged, and suggest that in order to save money that would be used on social welfare, the government should use the bomb to kill poor people.

Efficiency and progress is ours once more
 Now that we have the Neutron bomb
 It's nice and quick and clean and gets things done
 Away with excess enemy
 But no less value to property
 No sense in war but perfect sense at home.

Biafra’s satire was aimed at a government that neglected to give governmental aid to the poor and instead, used vast sums of money in creating weapons that would ultimately be used to kill people. This satirical approach is reminiscent of Jonathan Swift’s *A Modest Proposal* (1729) in which Swift proposed that the English should solve the problem of starvation in Ireland by eating Irish children.

Not everyone understood Biafra’s macabre satire, however. Concert goers often agreed enthusiastically in favour of killing the poor as a means to solve the world’s economic problems, and the band even received a letter from someone in South Africa who said that their solution of killing the poor was a much better prospect than transporting them to their homelands. While East Bay Ray, the band’s guitarist complained that the satire failed because it was too far over people’s heads, Biafra claims that, “One thing I always liked about good art was when parts of it doesn’t make sense so you go and figure out what the person is talking about”. (Lynskey 409) Deena Weinstein, writing on the lyrics of songs and the misunderstandings that may be found therein, complains that too often, protest songs fail to deliver their intended messages because

the meanings are sometimes too ambiguous or oblique. (Peddie 13) The problem of using sarcasm as a vehicle, as the Dead Kennedys have done, becomes problematic because the point of the sarcasm is undetected. When Biafra gleefully sings about “Unsightly slums gone up in flashing light”, his stinging indictment of America’s mistreatment of those in poverty ended up conveying the opposite of what he initially meant.

This age-old tendency to hear what we want or expect to hear is a significant cause of misconstruing lyrics. Our prejudices and resentments towards others, and our own ubiquitous neuroses, have always served to make human communication a dicey proposition. (Peddie 13)

It is this fear of being misunderstood, perhaps, but the veiled satire and humour that characterized the Dead Kennedy’s early songs were replaced by more direct and vitriolic lyrics. Their attacks ranged from Reagan’s administration to conformity, organized religion, the pharmaceutical industry. While punk musicians had often been dismissed as using anger merely as a prop and as ‘rebels without causes’, anger was an essential part of punk music. Punks were "linked by knowing [they] were not alone in [their] outrage and refusal to conform and accept the status quo" (Nehring 47). Anger has a universal message despite a listener's personal experience; it unites members of a group against a common enemy. The "noise" of punk was in a way a commentary on culture and society -- this was what the whole world was like to them. (Meissner np) Not being able to understand lyrics gave the words potential and universality they otherwise might have lacked; screaming allowed expression without the opportunity to be contained in a sound bite or to have the words twisted. Anger and moral outrage also sometimes could simply not be contained in mere words.

It is important at this point to note the difference between anger and (blind) rage. Anger is an emotion evoked by a certain state of affairs; it is a logical conclusion

of the circumstances one is exposed to and not hate for hate's own sake. The emotional makeup of the people is essential to hegemony; to maintain the status quo, the capacity for outrage must be suppressed. It is therefore in the best interests of the ruling class to demonize or ridicule anger in music, and this is exactly what happened in the case of punk. (Nehring 51)

By condemning anger, the public pointed the blame towards the disenchanting, jaded young people who made up the punk subculture. Indeed, punks were often objects of contempt. Due to negative publicity from the first days of punk, the public had formed a negative opinion of the subculture in general. Punks were seen as unnatural and violent. The subtlety of the social critique inherent in their music and appearance was often lost, leaving only the deviance to be seen by those outside of the movement. No one was interested in opening dialogues with a group as radical as punks were; the older generation's rejection of new generation's music was a missed chance to gain meaningful insight into the problems that created such music

Grunge music, in contrast, was characterized by a lack of outright protest and was characterized more by passive-aggression. Often regarded as the song that single-handedly popularized grunge music, the song "Smells Like Teen Spirit" had catapulted the band Nirvana into fame and success. In contrast to punk music's politically loaded messages, "Smells like Teen Spirit" was seen as the 'slacker anthem' of Generation X. Generation X, commonly abbreviated to Gen X, is the generation born after the Western Post-World War II baby boom. Demographers, historians, and commentators use beginning birth dates ranging from the early 1960s to the early 1980s. The media was obsessed with this generation of what they perceived as indifferent teenagers and twenty-somethings who couldn't be bothered with social causes, careers, or the general state of humanity. Ironically, the same media structure which had previously been upset with the sixties generation for being too rebellious was now upset with the

youths born in the seventies and the eighties for not being rebellious enough and branded them 'slackers'.

Nirvana was an American rock band that was formed by singer/guitarist Kurt Cobain and bassist Krist Novoselic in Aberdeen, Washington in 1987. Nirvana went through a succession of drummers, the longest-lasting being Dave Grohl, who joined the band in 1990. Despite releasing only three full-length studio albums in their seven-year career, Nirvana has come to be regarded as one of the most influential and important rock bands of the modern era. A large part of the appeal of "Smells Like Teen Spirit" among the generation was that the song's directionless, rambling lyrics mirrors the feeling of stagnation and apathy felt by them. Cobain himself said that he wrote this song because he was feeling "disgusted with my generation's apathy, and with my own apathy and spinelessness." (Reynolds 98) This feeling of detachment is what led to lyrics like

And I forget just why I taste
Oh yeah, I guess it makes me smile
I found it hard, it's hard to find
Oh well, whatever, never mind.

"Teen Spirit" is widely interpreted to be a teen revolution anthem, an interpretation reinforced by the song's music video. The concept for the video was a school pep rally concert which ends in riot, destruction and anarchy with cheerleaders wearing anarchist symbols and the school children destroying the bleachers, while Nirvana keeps on playing amidst the carnage. When discussing the song Cobain revealed that he felt a duty "to describe what I felt about my surroundings and my generation and people my age." (Azerrad, Story 211-12)

However, the song contains within it a number of contradictions and ambivalent themes. While the opening lines, “Load up on guns/ Bring your friends” would seem to suggest just such a revolution, a call to take up arms and to recruit others, they are immediately followed by the lines, “It’s fun to lose and to pretend”. This then suggests that the song is, as Azzerad points out, “alternately a sarcastic reaction to the idea of actually having a revolution, yet it also embraces the idea”. (Azerrad, Story 213) Perhaps the most famous line in the song is, “Here we are now, entertain us/ I feel stupid and contagious” which would seem to justify the media’s portrayal of the generation as a generation of unambitious, listless slackers, succumbing to a contagion of stupidity, who are not even bothered to seek out their own entertainment but demand it from others. Cobain seems to point out that if this then, is the “teen spirit”, then the ‘revolution’ seems to be doomed from the start.

Cobain further asks the listeners to ‘entertain us-

A mulatto

An albino

A mosquito

My libido’

There has been a number of interpretations about the meaning of this seemingly meaningless sequence of words. A mulatto is a term to refer to a person of mixed white and black parentage, which suggests the ambivalent nature of the ‘teen spirit’. An albino refers to a person or animal with a genetic abnormality which renders their skin white and their eyes pink. This could, perhaps refer to the teens’ feelings of difference and alienation from the mainstream society. ‘A mosquito’ is a parasitic blood-sucking insect, and the description of the generation’s youths as parasites living off society by the media is echoed by Cobain. The reference to the libido would seem to point to the raging hormones and sex drive of a typical teenager. The lyrics are a

sardonic reference to society's misfits who, amidst their confusion, seek meaning. The song finally ends with the refrain, "A denial", screamed hoarsely by Cobain until the song ends. This final refrain drives home the fact that Cobain, despite his sarcastic description of the teenagers and their spirit, demands a denial to the apathy, confusion, ambivalence, listlessness and the problems that beset them- in fact, a denial of the dilemma that Cobain himself seems unable to articulate or explain, let alone, solve.

The final twist to the song is in the ambivalence of the title itself. Kathleen Hanna, band-mate of Tobi Vail, with whom Cobain had a relationship, had spray-painted the words, "Kurt smells like teen spirit" on a wall. Since they had been discussing anarchism, punk rock, and similar topics, Cobain interpreted the slogan as having a revolutionary meaning. He thus, used it as the title to the song, even though the phrase is never mentioned in the song itself. What Hanna actually meant, however, was that Cobain smelled like the deodorant Teen Spirit, which his then-girlfriend Tobi Vail wore. Cobain later claimed he was unaware that it was a brand of deodorant until months after the single was released. Cobain's famous teen revolution song, therefore, actually references a woman's deodorant, the sales of which incidentally, soared enormously after the song was released.

"Come as you are" from the same album enjoyed the almost the same chart popularity as "Smells like Teen Spirit", and explores the same theme of confusion in meanings. Cobain described the lyrics of "Come as You Are" as contradictory, and said the song was about "people and what they're expected to act like". (Berkenstadt 71)

Come as you are, as you were

As I want you to be

As a friend, as a friend

As an old enemy

Take your time, hurry up

The choice is yours, don't be late

The song consists of contradictory and confusing messages with one line containing a well-meaning cliché, immediately followed by a rebuttal that Cobain suggests is the actual hidden meaning behind what people actually say out loud. The title “Come as You Are” sounds inviting, and echoes the laid-back ethos of grunge culture. One of the trademarks of a typical grunge concert was the low and sometimes, free admittance fees to concerts, which were usually held in clubs, warehouses or any convenient venue. The musicians were unidentifiable by appearance, because they wore the same sort of clothes that the audience did. There existed a bond and camaraderie between musician and audience, where the musician was not treated like a rock god, but as one of the crowd. So the title and opening line to the song sounds as if Cobain is inviting his listeners to come as they were- misfits, slackers and musicians all. Yet this is contradicted by the second line, “as I want you to be” which negates the first line. The constant refrain in the song, “And I swear that I don't have a gun”, while seemingly reassuring begs the question why he feels the need to assert that he does not have a gun. In “Teen Spirit”, Cobain mentions a gun but he takes away the implied threat by saying that it's fun to pretend. In “Come as you are”, he does the opposite, where his constant reassurance that he does not have a gun actually contain a veiled threat, implying, as the previous lines did, that what is said is not actually what is meant. Cobain thus comments on the ambivalence of meanings and the layers behind what is said and what is implied.

Dick Hebdige had coined the term “Bricolage” to explain the ways in which products are often transformed to produce meanings that are completely different and/or opposite of what they are originally intended for. (Hebdige 103-4) A youth subculture may start off by issuing a

challenge or engaging in forms of resistance to a dominant culture by their modes of behavior, dress, style of music and way of speaking. But,

They eventually move from originality and opposition to commercial incorporation and ideological defusion as the culture industries eventually succeed in marketing subcultural resistance for general consumption and profit. (Storey 65)

Subcultures like punk and grunge both attempted to disrupt and reorganize meaning in their own ways. The music of the Dead Kennedys and Nirvana, as representatives of their respective genres, exemplifies the ways in which youths try to convey their versions of what the world means to them. Both are in opposition to what may be called 'normal' culture; punk expresses this opposition through deviance and defiance, and grunge through a passive-aggressive listlessness, all of which is expressed in their music and lyrics. But as has been seen, their meanings undergo a transformation in the hands of their consumers, leading to what is one of the greatest fears of youth subcultures, that of losing their authenticity.

One of the defining characteristics of the early alternative rock music scenes was the importance of authenticity and not selling out. This meant being true to their musical and philosophical roots and not submitting to a giant conglomerate that would manipulate their music for commercial success. In keeping with the do-it-yourself ethics of punk music, the Dead Kennedys had formed their own record label called Alternative Tentacles in 1984, releasing their own music while also helping to record and release the music of other alternate independent bands. Nirvana had also initially signed under the independent record label Sub Pop. In April 1990, Cobain had stated that he had no interest in signing with a major label but by May the same year, he and his bandmates had started vehemently complaining about their label *Sub Pop*, with Cobain declaring that he wanted the backing of a major corporation behind him, which was

in contrast to most Seattle bands who felt that signing to major corporations was an act of 'selling out'. Nirvana eventually went on to be signed by the label DGC , and found commercial success with the label upon the release of *Nevermind*.

The idea of authenticity has its origins partly in the Romantic tradition where it was considered that artistic creativity comes from within the soul and is somehow connected to God. Authenticity suggests that creativity should be an individual expression and should be absent from the artifices found in mainstream culture. A work of art, if it is to be considered authentic, must therefore stand out from wider shared cultural practices. (Machin 15) The issue of authenticity is particularly important in the underground music scene which prides itself on its individualism and its anti-mainstream stance; in fact, the term "poseur" is applied to those who associate with punk and adopt its stylistic attributes but are deemed not to share or understand the underlying values and philosophy. Scholar Daniel S. Traber argues that "attaining authenticity in the punk identity can be difficult"; as the punk scene matured, he observes, eventually "everyone got called a poseur" (Traber 42). This was an issue that the Dead Kennedys and later, Nirvana both had to wrestle with. The hardcore scene, which had been a haven for free-thinking intellectuals and downtrodden nonconformists, was attracting a more violent audience that imposed an increasing level of brutality on other concertgoers and began to alienate many of the bands and individuals who had helped pioneer the movement in the early 1980s. In earlier years the band had criticized neo-Nazi skinheads for trying to ruin the punk scene and for trying to make punk a vehicle for their violent campaigns against other ethnic groups. Just as big a problem was the popularity of increasingly macho hardcore bands, which brought the group (and their genre) an audience that had little to do with the ideas or ideals they stood for. (Lynskey 413) Eventually, two songs from the Dead Kennedy's album *Bedtime for*

Democracy (1986) emerged, namely "Chickenshit Conformist" and "Anarchy for Sale", which articulated the band's feelings about the state of punk rock.

The two songs focused on two opposing themes- poseurs and purists within the punk music scene. In "Chickenshit Conformist", Biafra speaks against the rules that existed within the punk music scene that determined what is authentic and what is not. Punk music, which had originally been about individual freedom, had now become "a close-minded, self-centred social club" with its strict set of rules and regulations, and anyone who wanted to belong had to conform and lose the individuality that had characterized punk in the beginning.

If the music's gotten boring

It's because of the people who want everyone to sound the same

Who drive the bright people out of our so-called scene

Till all that's left is a meaningless fad.

This same political orthodoxy found in the punk music scene that Biafra railed against also found its way into grunge music a decade later. Nirvana, and in particular Kurt Cobain, had exemplified and then popularized grunge music. With mainstream popularity, however, the band came to be regarded as musical sell-outs. Cobain's romance and subsequent marriage to Courtney Love, the singer of the band Hole, plus his growing heroin addiction were all fodder for the media. Cobain had emerged as the reluctant face of grunge music but he felt constricted by the label and has stated in an interview that:

I'm a spokesman for myself... It just so happens that there's a bunch of people that are concerned with what I have to say. I find that frightening at times because I'm just as confused as most people. I don't have the answers for anything. (Azerrad, Heart np)

The stress of recording and touring, having his personal life plastered across magazines television, his growing heroin habit and his failing health, coupled with the stress of being the face of a generation, his secret lack of self-esteem and his being labeled a 'sell out' by his earlier fans were all taking their toll on him. He defends his commercial success, saying "I don't blame the average 17-year-old punk-rock kid for calling me a sellout... I understand that. Maybe when they grow up a little bit, they'll realize there's more things to life than living out your rock & roll identity so righteously." (Azerrad, Heart np)

In an interview with Michael Azerrad, Cobain downplayed media reports of his life and told him that he did not want to write a track that explicitly expressed his anger at the media. However, the song "Rape me" seemed to do just that:

My favorite inside source
I'll kiss your open sores
Appreciate your concern
You'll always stink and burn

Cobain's musical career is, like many of his songs, a contradiction. A reluctant hero who actively sought success and yet was angered by the attendant fame and loss of privacy, he credits the media with 'raping' him by violating his personal life. While Cobain said the song was written long before his troubles with drug addiction became public, he agreed that the song could be viewed as an expression of his anger towards the media circus that his life had become. (Azerrad, Heart np) His growing feelings of self-loathing, perhaps, and his growing heroin addiction finally culminated into his suicide on April 5, 1994. Cobain shot himself with a shotgun to his head, leaving behind a note that contained the lines, "It's better to burn out than to fade away" from a Neil Young song called "Hey hey, My my (Into the Black)" (1979).

The Dead Kennedys had never achieved the fame and media scrutiny that Nirvana enjoyed a decade later, but they too had enjoyed a cult status within the initially closed confines of the punk community because of their music and their lyrics. But punk music and especially, punk lifestyle gradually became popular, attracting a larger audience until the lifestyle became co-opted into the larger mainstream. While the Dead Kennedys had railed against the purism that existed in the punk scene which dictated not just how the music should sound, but how members should dress, act and behave, they were equally dismayed by the growing number of 'poseurs'- youths who dressed like punks and used the music and lifestyle as a means of creating mindless rebellion and violence without understanding or concerning themselves with the philosophy behind punk. This sentiment was echoed in their song "Anarchy for sale" in which Biafra, in his typical satirical fashion, urged the youths to 'be sure to rebel in proper style'. The band gradually became more and more alienated from their own audience, whether it was the orthodox purists who demanded conformity to what they perceived as punk rules, or whether it was the poseurs who religiously adopted the stylistic devices of the lifestyle. Punk which originally stood for anti-commercialism, non-conformism and personal freedom had become a commercially viable commodity, where the latest conformists to the lifestyle bought into all the visible trappings of punk without a true appreciation of the music or the philosophy that informed the music.

Anarchy for sale!

T-shirts only 10 dollars

Badges only \$3.50

I nicked the design, never asked the band

I never listen to them either

Punk had become a fashion for the youths, and the Dead Kennedys, growing more and more alienated and jaded by it, eventually disbanded in January 1986. Punk music, according to Biafra, had repeated the same mistakes of the hippies, becoming 'just like your parents':

Any form of underground culture that's good is gonna get co-opted eventually. When hardcore hit, the demographic was younger, which we all thought was cool until we realized there was the same macho jock mentality and gossipy back-biting hang-ups that we thought we'd left behind. (Lynskey 416)

The shock impact of both the music and style of dress had been diminished by a combination of exposure and the co-opting of punk fashion by popular designers and the music by the music industry. However, Nehring argues, "Punk... continued to seem both vital and volatile for [so long] because its ideals of rebellion [had] always included self-awareness regarding incorporation". (Nehring 61) Bands often "sold out" to larger labels, sacrificing some independence and the respect of the more extreme punks in return for having their message spread further and in some cases for monetary gains. The danger of commercializing punk, however, lay in that defiance had now become "trendy", and anarchy, as Biafra had suggested, had become a saleable commodity. The message of punk, therefore, became more distorted.

If the Dead Kennedys had thought punk had become commercialized, it was on a comparatively smaller scale with regard to the extent in which grunge became commercialised. Nirvana brought grunge music out into the mainstream, taking not just themselves but other alternative bands into success. But with the musical success came some negatives. Once the mainstream media started reporting on the grunge phenomena, the markets of the world needed to know how to sell grunge. Part of this was in conjunction with a question asked by several media outlets of the early 90s: "What is today's generation and what do they want?" And the most obvious answer to this was "Nirvana." However, the media was not specifically interested

in Nirvana the band, but the look and sound that came with grunge, which many people connected with Nirvana. The result is what *Entertainment Weekly* called the biggest “kind of exploitation of a subculture since the media discovered hippies in the ’60s.” (Kobel np) The marketing for young people to grunge was overwhelming. From fashion designers in New York who started making “The Grunge Look” and retail stores like Macy’s which had flannel shirt sections, grunge was being exploited to sell everything from high-end fashion to retail clothes, to cars to insurance.

The irony in the movement of Grunge from subculture to mass culture is that, the key elements of grunge lyrics are apathy, alienation and authenticity. Grunge manifested these elements by refusing to make a statement, expressing instead a mood of disinterestedness and lack of concern, alienating itself from the mainstream society and its commercial trappings and presenting itself as it was, unadorned. And yet, this five-letter word meaning dirt, filth and trash became synonymous with a musical genre, a fashion statement and a pop phenomenon. Fashion magazines churned out spreads and articles on grunge, fashion designers ‘introduced’ expensive grunge clothing labels, American department stores soon had sections of grunge clothing—knockoffs of the flannel shirts, thermal underwear, combat boots, and stocking hats favoured by Seattle bands and their fans. The thrift-store bought clothing, worn as a necessity among the lumberjacks, miners and manual workers of the Seattle area had become ‘high fashion’.

Thrifting is a verb in Seattle. Flannel and leatherette, the boho-hobo staples of second-hand attire, are the basics of a nonfashion statement. A flannel shirt worn around the waist is a precaution against the Pacific Northwest's mercurial climate. Army boots slog effectively through mud. "It wasn't like somebody said, 'Let's all dress like lumberjacks and start Seattle chic!' “Mr. Poneman said.” This stuff is

cheap, it's durable, and it's kind of timeless. It also runs against the grain of the whole flashy esthetic that existed in the 80's." (Marin 1)

Kurt Cobain in particular was seen as the poster child for grunge. His lank, dirty-looking, unkempt haircut was much emulated, with marketers advertising a slew of hair products that could accurately reproduce the look of Cobain's hairstyle when in actuality, Cobain's hair was actually the result of a total indifference to style and hygiene. His threadbare, worn clothing was reproduced by fashion designers through processes like acid washes, bleaching, softening, and sold at exorbitant prices. James Truman, the editor in chief of *Details* magazine comments on the irony of grunge becoming high fashion when he says that grunge was not even "... anti-fashion, it's un fashion. Punk was anti-fashion. It made a statement. Grunge is about not making a statement, which is why it's crazy for it to become a fashion statement." (Marin 1)

Laclau and Mouffe had stressed on the importance of 'articulation' in the study of culture, where the practice of articulation consists in the partial fixing of meanings. (Laclau 113) The way in which a dominant group – in this case, the music industry and the mass media- negotiate the voices in opposition to it- namely, punk and grunge- onto a terrain which secures for themselves a continued position of leadership is an excellent example of the process of articulation. The result is a paradox in which the politics of punk and grunge music and lifestyle have been articulated in the economic interest of capitalism. Through the distortion of the meanings ascribed to their music by the culture industry, they have ended up lubricating the very system that they sought to condemn.

The problem with using trendy music and imagery in marketing is that it rapidly loses its trendiness once it appears in advertisements. Barbara Lippert, an editor at *Adweek*, said, "Advertising keeps using things up that have an edge, that are new. But as soon as it's in an ad, it becomes mainstream. It's a cycle of American culture". (Kobel np) Grunge music, like punk,

with its do-it-yourself attitude, has been as much a critique of the corporate state of rock as a musical style, but with its massive success, grunge lost its alternative credentials and became mainstream music and subsequently, a corporate machine and a commercial cash-cow. A backlash against grunge began to develop in Seattle; in late 1992 Jonathan Poneman said that in the city, "All things grunge are treated with the utmost cynicism and amusement . . . Because the whole thing is a fabricated movement and always has been." (Marin 2) Many grunge artists were uncomfortable with their success and the resulting attention it brought. Cobain was always conflicted about the fame and success that he received, and his suicide on April 5th, 1994 was regarded by some as a direct result of his inability to cope with the media circus that his life had become, and that, "...Cobain's best career move was to die young and violently — and in a sense his self-annihilation did confirm an unwillingness to "compromise," to reconcile his self-loathing with his newfound fame and fortune..." (Olsen np)

During this period, acts with a "Grunge sound" that were not from Seattle were often denounced by critics, who accused them of being copycat bands. 1994 started to see the movement slide, especially after the sudden suicide of Kurt Cobain. What are forgotten is that even in the middle of the 1990's in between Nirvana's death and the upcoming bands trying to carry on the Grunge torch, the media and especially big music companies were still salivating over the prospect of the Grunge scene itself and even started pushing and expanding the music into unconventional areas to create hit superstars. A lot of the bands that came along in the middle 1990's often were derisively put down by fan purists of the Grunge movement as being bands that merely were following the leader in terms of the Northwest Grunge scene and the heavy reliance on the basics of the Grunge music technicalities such as down tuned guitars or utilizing certain producers who helped define the scene early on. This was mostly ignoring the fact that several of these bands had formed and even released material at the height of the

Grunge explosion of the early 1990's but there is still a stigma attached to them as being a lighter form of Grunge and riding the coat tails of a successful genre to make themselves millions while authentic members never quite profited the same way.

Just as Nirvana's lyrics talk about the distortion of meanings, grunge music also ultimately suffered this same distortion, its voice becoming lost under the onslaught of commercialism and corporatization. Punk music also came to suffer this same fate.

25 years after the original scene developed, a new US rock sound, using elements of the New York punk scene, has thrown up (new) bands ... although cynics say their retro looks are more important to them than their originality. As for the original punks, they are now middle-aged and left largely irrelevant by the passage of time. (Youngs np)

Hall and Whannel claimed that,

Teenage culture is a contradictory mixture of the authentic and manufactured: it is an area of self-expression for the young and a lush grazing pasture for the commercial providers. (Hall, Popular 276)

The irony implicit in this mix of the authentic and the manufactured in these subcultures is that, eventually, it is the manufactured elements that stand out more than the authenticity. Both punk and grunge subcultures sought to get their respective messages across, but the more effective their message, the more viably commercial they became. Youth subcultures, such as punk and grunge, engage in symbolic forms of resistance to dominant groups through the adoption of their own modes of expression, and these modes of expression are, in their turn, commercially incorporated by culture industries who market these resistant lifestyles for general consumption. Hall has pointed out that meanings are what "those who seek to govern and regulate the conduct

and ideas of others seek to structure and shape”. (Hall, Representation 4) Post-Marxist cultural studies are informed by the proposition that popular culture is made from the repertoire of commodities supplied by the culture industries and that the act of making popular culture can be empowering. Subcultures may derive power by creating their own meanings of their culture and lifestyle, but these meanings become distorted and restructured by the more dominant material culture, ultimately becoming the antithesis of what they originally sought out to express. The music and lifestyle of these subcultures then becomes a site for the negotiation of meanings between a dominant and a subordinate group, one which is marked by resistance and finally, incorporation.

NOTES:

¹ The Watergate scandal was a major political scandal that occurred in the United States in the 1970s as a result of the June 17, 1972, break-in at the Democratic National Committee (DNC) headquarters at the Watergate office complex in Washington, D.C., and the Nixon administration's attempted cover-up of its involvement. When the conspiracy was discovered and investigated by the U.S. Congress, the Nixon administration's resistance to its probes led to a constitutional crisis. The scandal led to the discovery of multiple abuses of power by the Nixon administration, articles of impeachment and the resignation of Richard Nixon, the President of the United States. The scandal also resulted in the indictment of 69 people.

² The Cold War was a state of political and military tension after World War II between powers in the Western Bloc (the United States, its NATO allies and others) and powers in the Eastern Bloc (the Soviet Union and its allies in the Warsaw Pact).

The period from the 1990s to 2000 in American history was a period of relative prosperity and peace broken perhaps by Gulf War in Iraq¹. The previous decade had seen the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, and the Cold War ended in 1991 as the USSR dissolved into different territories. Philosopher Francis Fukuyama had commented on these events that

... the worldwide struggle that called forth daring, courage, imagination and idealism will be replaced by economic calculation... and the satisfaction of sophisticated consumer demands. (Lynskey 626)

Fukuyama's statement may very well echo the state of protest music during the decade. The Countercultural Movement of the 1960s and the subsequent decade's nuclear scare and its politics had provided a common ground for people to rally around, and consequently, protest music proliferated in such an environment. The previous chapters in this thesis had talked about the commodification of dissent, and this trend continued into the 1990s, even as there was a growing dearth of relevant protest music.

During the early part of the 1990s, the band Rage Against the Machine (RATM) had to struggle with the conundrum of dissent in comfortable times. The band variously attacked cultural imperialism, corporatization and government oppression in their songs, focusing their anger against the American government and corporate America. Throughout its existence, RATM and its individual members participated in political protests and other activism to advocate these beliefs. The band primarily saw their music as a vehicle for social activism.

Singer Zack de la Rocha, who was of mixed American-Mexican ancestry, had been exposed since a very young age to politics due to his father's involvement in the Zapatista, a left-wing revolutionary political and militant group based in Chiapas, the southernmost state of Mexico. Lead guitarist Tom Morello also grew up in a deeply political environment; his father was a Kenyan freedom fighter, and his mother was a white activist. He himself would go on to graduate in Political Science from Harvard University and also worked briefly in the offices of a Democratic Party politician. Their first-hand experience with different politics informed their music and lyrics; musically, theirs was an innovative mix of rock and hip-hop.

RATM came into fame with the release of their song, "Killing in the Name", from their debut album *Rage Against the Machine* in 1992. Deena Weinstein classifies protest songs into two dimensions- the type that speaks out against an unjust authority, and the type that speaks against a specific injustice (Peddie 3). This song fits into the second category, inspired as it was by a specific event that to them emphasised police brutality, especially against Blacks and other minorities, and also the unfairness of the American judicial system. The song was released shortly after the Los Angeles Riots in April 1992 which was triggered by the acquittal of four white police officers who brutally beat Black motorist Rodney King. Video footage of the attack was circulated, and the lack of provocation from King, the brutality of the attack and the subsequent lack of justice triggered a massive outrage amongst viewers. The Los Angeles Riots, though initially peaceful, escalated into anarchy, resulting in the deaths of 55 people, as well as extensive damages to property.

“Killing in the Name” employs minimal lyrics, relying on repetition to simultaneously fill out the song, and also to emphasise its message. Lines such as, “Some of those that work forces/ are the same that burn crosses”, are repeated over and over again, emphasising on how those in authority are the very people that propagate racism. These lines allege that members of the US police force are not unlike the Ku Klux Klan, who were known to use burning crosses to terrify their Black victims. The song urges the listeners to resist those forces of brutality and racism with the refrain, “And now you do what they told ya/ Now you’re under control”. The political statement that RATM makes in the song is one of general resistance against the forces that propagate such injustice, essentially saying that by submitting to them, or by not resisting them, one is being controlled by them. The previous lines are eventually replaced by the words, “I won’t do what you tell me”, repeated a total of sixteen times, to emphasises the need to take back one’s power and to resist these controlling forces. The title of the song alludes to murders that are committed under the guise of maintaining law and order, where underlying issues such as racial violence are presented as governmental crack-downs against anarchic forces.

An important facet of this song, and in fact, many of the band’s songs, is the heavy use of profanity, as if the sentiments expressed in them are so powerful and violent that nothing but expletives are able express them. The song lyrics repetitively use the expletive, “Fuck you”, which serves to bring home its message in three ways. One is to emphasise the anger towards the perpetrators of the injustice and as a symbolic act of defiance against them. The second way is as an expression of extreme disdain towards the police by deliberately using the bluntest, most

explicit language against them. The third is as an expression of the breakdown of communication, in which civilized language is no longer sufficient as a means of expression, and only the most vulgar language can express the most vulgar of actions.

Another trademark of the band is the usage of either or both heavy whispering and screamed lyrics, accompanied by screeching guitar sounds which sometimes almost masks the lyrics themselves. In this song, singer Zack de la Rocha chants the line, “I won’t do what you tell me”, murmuring the first four times, building in a crescendo the next four times, until he finally screams the line the final eight times. This echoes how resistance is formed, first tenuously, then growing rapidly stronger. The ‘noise’ was also a commentary both on society and culture, implying that only through discordance can discordance be met. This politically charged and angry song launched the band into the public sphere, and its message is only reinforced by the controversial album cover art that the band used. The cover art featured a photograph taken by Malcolm Browne, wherein a Buddhist protestor named Thich Quang Dung immolated himself in Saigon in 1963 in protest of the murder of Buddhists by the then US-backed Prime Minister Ngo Dinh Diem’s regime. The usage of this photograph by the band for their album cover established their political stance, and the songs in the album left listeners in no doubt about the message they wanted to spread.

Another song from the same album, “Bullet in the Head” talks about how the government uses the media to propagate its propaganda.

A yellow ribbon instead of a swastika

Nothin' proper about your propaganda

Fools follow rules when the set commands ya

Said it was blue

When ya blood was red

That's how you got a bullet blasted through your head.

These lines talk about how the American government uses false propaganda to instill a false sense of patriotism in its citizens, especially relating to the wars in which it is involved. A yellow ribbon is used in the US to show support for their troops in foreign wars. The song alleges that this yellow ribbon is a symbol of blind patriotism, wherein supporters blindly support their troops without being fully aware of the reasons or motives for their government's involvement in war. The song compares this symbolic tying of the yellow ribbon to that of the Swastika symbol worn by Nazi supporters, who blindly support Nazism while turning a blind eye to the atrocities that are committed by its leaders. The US government, according to the song, glorifies wars fought in its name, and the song states that people who buy into this propaganda are nothing but fools. The media, as an instrument of the government, further propagates its message by glorifying American soldiers and portraying that it was noble to die in war. But the song contradicts this message, saying that the blood that is spilled is not a noble blue, but an ordinary

red, and that when one believes the government's propaganda, that is when one gets the literal and the figurative 'bullet in the head'.

The term 'bullet in the head' references George Orwell's *1984* (1949) wherein the protagonist Winston, who had originally been an independent thinker, is gradually brainwashed by his totalitarian government; Big Brother's government did not immediately execute rebels, but instead brainwashes them into total supplicancy, and only afterwards does the execution take place. Thus, they are already dead before their death-sentence is carried out. RATM's song references Orwell's description of Winstons' final mindless adherence to his government's propaganda as the 'long' hoped-for bullet' entering his brain (Orwell 297), saying that a figurative death had already overcome those that blindly submit to government propaganda.

Believin' all the lies that they're tellin ya'

Buyin' all the products that they're sellin' ya

They say jump and ya say how high

Ya brain-dead.

The band's debut album proved to be a massive hit; music journal *Kerrang!* described the album as, "... The true birth of rap-metal and nu-metal. A pan international multi-ethnic riot of pumping bass, utterly unique guitar sounds and spray paint-able slogans to unite the tribes and

incite a revolt” (Stenning 91). The band however, remained aloof from the media, refusing to grant interviews or speak to the press. It was only in 1999 that the band granted the aforementioned journal, *Kerrang!* an interview, citing their reasons for the band’s initial ban on interviews:

It was to ensure the protection of the band’s integrity. Our words had to be first backed up by actions because we’re dealing with a monstrous pop culture that sucks in anything culturally resistant in order to commodify and pacify it and make it non-threatening. It felt like we needed to raise the volume for those whose voices aren’t heard. (Stenning 91)

The band certainly took the matter of backing words with actions seriously; very often, performance is sometimes as important, if not more, than the lyrics itself. The band’s live performances and their demonstrations have done much to cement their political stance and to bring their message across. This is nowhere more apparent than at the Lollapalooza Tour, a travelling music festival which visited various cities across the US. The festival had become a commercial success and this success was most prominent in the merchandise stalls. RATM had set their own reasonable prices for their merchandise, with t-shirts selling for as low as ten dollars, but the organisers, whose own t-shirts were sold for twenty-three dollars felt that the band’s low prices would harm their profits, asked them to reconsider their prices. The band

ended up not selling their merchandise at all, but instead, went on to tell the audience where the money for the tour's merchandise was going, namely, to the promoters of the event.

This, however, was just a small part of the band's protest against the system. When the time came for the band's performance, they chose to use their time on stage to protest against the PMRC (Parents Music Resource Center)² for censorship of music instead. The band members alighted the stage stark naked with their instrument, but set them aside on stage. Emblazoned across the chests of the four members were the letters P-M-R-C. They kept their mouths shut with duct tape, silently standing on the stage for fifteen minutes, while their audience slowly grew more and more angry. This anger was exactly what the band was aiming for, because they wanted to let the audience know that if they did not take the issue of censorship in their own hands, they would not be able to hear bands like them, which stood for everything the PMRC wanted to censor. Morello would later go on to elucidate further on his views of the PMRC, stating that,

Normally, the kinds of music that are always attacked are black music, hip-hop, hard rock, and like, working class white music... because those things, I think not coincidentally, speak to the American underclass.... They don't like extreme music and they want to shut that down. And they want you to be obedient, and they want you to not veer from the mainstream (Stenning 96)

RATM have understandably been the focus of many controversies, and not just because of their incendiary lyrics; the band's affiliation to the major recording company Sony has been seen by many as hypocritical in light of their stance against corporatization. Of this, guitarist Tom Morello has said,

When you live in a capitalistic society, the currency of the dissemination of information goes through capitalistic channels. Would Noam Chomsky object to his works being sold at Barnes & Noble? No, because that's where people buy their books. We're not interested in preaching to just the converted. It's great to play abandoned squats run by anarchists, but it's also great to be able to reach people with a revolutionary message. (Stenning 142)

The position that RATM and many other commercially successful protest musicians occupy is indeed a problematic one. If an artist is commercially and/ or critically successful, then the threat of 'selling out' becomes a very real one. An unsuccessful artist cannot be accused of selling out since s/he has not sold anything, but with success inevitably comes commercialism. The artist needs a wider audience to propagate his/ her message, but the wider his/ her reach, the greater the risk of being labelled a sell-out, and thereby, losing his/ her credibility (A. Hall 83).

Guitarist Morello has compared the music industry to a building that is owned by a group of businessmen. The musicians, like tenants, inhabit the rooms in the building, and the concern of the owners, i.e, the Record Industries, was to ensure that the building remains profitable,

rather than the welfare of its tenants. The band claims to understand this ethos, and when they were approached by Epic Records, an offshoot of Sony, they came to the understanding that the band would have 100% creative control over their music (Hilburn np). The band had realized the inevitability of their art becoming politicised, especially with the act of signing onto a label that seemed to stand for everything they were against, but they decided to use the system to spread their message as far as possible.

However, despite their best intentions and stand against the system, RATM would continue to receive criticism from various quarters regarding their authenticity, especially when the band started to win the Grammy Awards. The Grammy Awards or the Grammys, originally known as the Gramophone Awards is an award presented by The Recording Academy to recognize achievement in the music industry. The annual presentation ceremony features performances by prominent artists, as well as presentation of awards for different musical categories. The Grammys have been criticized by a number of musicians and music journalists who claim that it celebrates commercial, rather than critical success, and that it is a means for the music business to promote and celebrate itself, and not the artists. The general feeling among its critics is that the focus of the Awards is “still on the old music industry model of cash-cow hits, major label investments and commercial radio” (Roberts). RATM’s affiliation with Sony, and their subsequent performances at, and winning of the Awards seemed to cement a lot of critics’ assertion that the band’s rebellion was nothing more than a staged act meant to cater to the rebellious teen market.

The song “No Shelter” is just such an example of this conundrum. The song was included among the soundtrack for the 2014 blockbuster movie, *Godzilla*, and given RATM’s political sensibilities, the inclusion of the song on this Soundtrack becomes very inconsistent with their musical mission. “No Shelter”, like many of the bands’ songs, is a mix of whispered or distorted sound interspersed with screamed lyrics. The first verse is barely decipherable to the listener, mixed as it is with screeching guitar sounds and bass drums. The chorus, however, is shouted, “There be no shelter here/ The front line is everywhere”. This is followed by the second, equally indecipherable verse, until after the chorus, the music fades and De la Rocha whispers,

American eyes, American eyes

See the world from American eyes

Bury the past

Rob us blind

And leave nothing behind

The music then crashes back aggressively with screamed vocals ordering, “Just stare!/ Relive the nightmare!”.

Lyrically, the song asks the listeners to view the world through an American perspective. The song speaks of the distortion of the American dream, wherein the right to ‘the pursuit of happiness’ has become equated with the pursuit of material wealth. Any pastime, be it watching

movies or listening to music, contains within it the presence of commercialism that binds the consumer to the distorted American dream- to buy, to consume, and then to become imprisoned. De la Rocha, in his interview with the music and entertainment magazine, *Rolling Stone* articulates that, “One of capitalism’s secret weapons is to equate freedom with the buying of products”(Fricke). Anything, even history, has become part of this consumer culture, as it is represented through the eyes of the entertainment industry through movies.

In this song, the entertainment industry and their misrepresentation of history is described as an act of pillaging and destroying the heritage of the very people who are being entertained. “Americana” is described as a “Fourth Reich Culture” in which the leaders are compared to the Nazi leaders who brainwashed their followers into blindly adhering to their propaganda. In the same manner, the American entertainment industry distracts its audience in order to “develop the taste” that would lead them to “empty your pockets”, and become addicted to the products they are selling. The film industry is not interested in a truthful or just representation of the past, but in incurring a profit through entertainment, and catering to the taste of a fickle public was more important than the truth. The song proclaims that the ‘thin line between entertainment and war’ is found everywhere from the “theatres to the malls on every shore”, and there is ‘no shelter’ to be found from this onslaught. Viewing the past through American eyes means to see the past as merely a commodity to be consumed and sold as entertainment; “Trade in your history for a VCR”, they decry. American history, particularly the wars that have been fought, whether it was for independence, for a better future or for noble purposes, are seen as nothing more than fodder

for the movie industry. The song points a finger at the audience by telling them to recognize their complicity in commodifying and abusing their history and culture.

The band, however, seems to overlook an important factor that may taint their rhetorical credence. The song lambasts both producers and consumers of the entertainment industry for their addiction to commercialism, and yet, they themselves are contributing to this commercialism by the very act of producing the song. By placing their song on a commercially aimed motion picture soundtrack, they open themselves to accusations of hypocrisy, as they themselves are part of the cogs in the wheel that promotes commercial conglomerates such as Sony Enterprise.

The same conundrum has been faced by many artists, the punk-rock band Green Day being one of them. Green Day is an American punk rock band formed in 1986 by lead vocalist and guitarist Billie Joe Armstrong and bassist Mike Dirnt, and they were joined later by drummer Tré Cool. Green Day was originally part of the punk scene at the 924 Gilman Street club in Berkeley, California, owned by Tim Yohannan. The club was founded on principles of equality and respect, which meant that there was to be no racism, sexism or homophobia amongst the artists and the clientele. Gilman's philosophy was that the spirit of punk was that of a community, and it tried to reflect that in the way the club was run (Myers 33-35). Green Day were also very much part of the scene at Gilman's, mixing freely with the other musicians and the audience alike. The band's early musical releases were with the independent record label

Lookout! Records. In keeping with the 'do-it-yourself' (DIY) ethos of Punk music, the band participated in the selling of their own album, at cheap, affordable prices. The band started to garner public interest through word of mouth, and they were eventually signed by Reprise Records, an off-shoot of the Warner Music Company. Under this major recording label, they released their album *Dookie* in 1994, which earned them critical and commercial success. With the breaking away from Gilman, and their commercial success, the band slowly came under attack by the purists within the punk music scene for bringing punk into the mainstream. Though Green Day had long-established underground credentials, their decision to sign to Reprise opened the doors of middle America to punk rock. The success of *Dookie* provided a leg up for a string of other pop-punk bands to break into the charts (*The Guardian* 1994).

While the band's early albums followed mainly traditional punk rock styles with their loud, discordant noises and lyrics of dissonance, the focus of their dissatisfaction was never fully articulated. Many of Green Day's lyrics have been termed as proclamations of an idiot or a slacker, and the feelings from which these lyrics have been penned down have a lot to do with lead singer Armstrong's own life. Armstrong had dropped out of high school to pursue his dreams and to better himself – the epitome of the American Dream. But the stigma of being a drop-out, a loser had stayed with him and informed his lyrics. Consequently, the Green Day lyrical lexicon contained statements of non-intent that was recognizable by many of their fans who had also often struggled with feelings of worthlessness- words such as 'loser', 'idiot' or 'boredom' (Myers 56). With their seventh and eighth studio albums, however, Green Day veered

towards a more defined direction while still staying true to these original themes of alienation and hopelessness. *American Idiot* (2004) and *21st Century Breakdown* (2009) are both concept albums, written as rock operas that serve as commentaries on contemporary American culture post September 11th, 2001, underscoring dissatisfaction with the presidency of George W. Bush II and America's economic policies as well as the media's promotion of mass hysteria following 9/11. Whereas the 1990s saw a decline in the production, and also a lack of reciprocation from audiences in terms of protest music, the September 11, 2001 attack on the US by the Muslim extremist group Al Qaeda³ brought with it resurgence in protest music. These voices of dissent ranged from protest against terrorist organizations, the upward surge in racist attacks against immigrants, religious persecution, and most significantly, the then President George. W. Bush's handling of the 'War on Terror' against Iraq and Afghanistan.

In music, a concept album is "an album that is unified by theme which can be instrumental, compositional, narrative or lyrical"(Shuker 5). Commonly, concept albums incorporate preconceived musical or lyrical ideas with all songs contributing to a single overall theme or unified story. A rock opera is a work of rock music that presents a storyline told over multiple parts, songs or sections in the manner of an opera. While the theme of *American Idiot* is one of 'rage and love' and alienation, *21st Century Breakdown* has been described by Armstrong as

...a snapshot of the era in which we live as we question and try to make sense of the selfish manipulation going on around us, whether it be the government, religion, media or frankly any form of authority. (Riley np)

The success of both albums has led to the production of the Broadway adaptation, *American Idiot: The Musical*, which opened on April 20th, 2010, and closed on April 24th, 2011 to mixed reviews.

American Idiot follows the life of the anti-hero Jesus of Suburbia. The title song, “American Idiot” is an introduction to the album itself as Jesus expounds on events in America following the 9/11 attacks.

Don't want to be an American idiot.

One nation controlled by the media.

Information age of hysteria

It's calling out to idiot America.

Initially, the attacks had created a sense of solidarity amongst most Americans as they tried to find comfort after the carnage they had witnessed. The Bush regime's War on Terror found great support among the masses as they rallied around a common enemy that was threatening to undermine the ideals on which the nation had been built. The regime, as well as the media, reported relentlessly on terrorist threats to the American nation, leading to a nationwide panic.

The subsequent was on Iraq in 2003, which Bush had declared as a war whose purpose was “to disarm Iraq of weapons of mass destruction, to end Saddam Hussein’s support for terrorism, and to free the Iraqi people” (Information np) slowly fed the growing unrest in the hearts of Americans as to the stance the Political powers were taking. WMDs were yet to be found, even with the arrest of Hussein, and more and more soldiers were losing their lives, and there were growing rumours that the purpose of this war was not to combat terrorist threats but to secure the rich oil reserves of the area. It was this mood of paranoia and dissatisfaction that forms the backdrop of the album, as it follows the life of Jesus of Suburbia.

The song “Jesus of Suburbia” introduces the main character as “the son of rage and love” and with it, we are introduced to the major theme of this album, about the nature of rebellion, and how it can be driven by rage, which ultimately leads to self-destruction, or love, in which one rebels because he is driven by his beliefs and love for something. Jesus is driven by these twin motivators as he takes stock of life in his suburban hometown. Another theme of the album is that of alienation and isolation-

Dearly beloved, are you listening?

I can’t remember a word that you were saying.

Are we demented or am I disturbed?

The space that’s in between insane and insecure.

Oh therapy, can you please fill the void?

The lines are evocative of communication gaps, insecurities and the need to fill the void caused by the emptiness of meaningful human relationships. Stifled and yet, alienated by his town and the people in it, Jesus leaves for the city, hoping to break free from the hypocrisies and half-truths that he associates with his suburban home. He refers to his home as “Redneck America”. The term ‘redneck’ is used to attack Southern conservative racists. Green Day refers to President Bush as a redneck because he comes from the South, and also because of his government’s crackdown on Muslims living in the US and their opposition to gay marriages.

Jesus wants to break free from his conservative hometown, and so he runs away to the city, hoping to find like-minded souls, claiming, in the song “Holiday” that he begs to ‘dream and differ from the hollow lies’. The song also carries within it another criticism of the Bush regime and the war on Iraq.

Sieg Heil to the President Gasman

Bombs away is your punishment

Pulverise the Eiffel towers

Who criticize your government.

Sieg Heil refers to the Nazi salute, and the song suggests that, like the Nazis who claim that they were the master races and who advocated ethnic cleansing, President Gasman, who represents

Bush, is a Nazi figure who advocates war on any nation that did not share his beliefs. The name 'Gasman' itself refers the usage of poisonous gases in military warfare, and at the same time, is an allusion to someone who is a 'gas' or a ridiculous, conceited figure.

The album's incisive, cutting lyrics, which effectively convey the paranoia and fear of living in American in days after 9/11, gradually veer into moving, intimate small-scale character sketches. As the album progresses, Jesus meets the characters St. Jimmy and Whatsername, in the songs named after them. The ironical usage of Christian names for the anti-heroes emphasizes the themes of discord and hypocrisy in the album. The name, Whatsername also suggests the intransigence of human relationships. There is nothing saint-like about St. Jimmy, who is a punk rock freedom fighter, a drug user and a pusher who represents the 'needle in the vein of the establishment' (Di Perna). St. Jimmy is driven by his rage and the need to wantonly destroy the forces of the establishment, while Whatsername is motivated by her love of her country, and she is a rebel fighting for her own personal beliefs. St. Jimmy uses drugs to feed his anger, and to soothe himself when the pain becomes too much for him. But this road leads him to self-destruction and he eventually commits suicide. With St. Jimmy's death, a part of Jesus dies, as the rage that had fuelled him burns away to be once again replaced by the very things he had tried to escape- isolation and loneliness, as encapsulated in the lines of childish fear, "Nobody likes you, everyone left you/ they're all out without you, havin' fun" from the song "Homecoming". He also loses his connection to Whatsername as well, leading him to 'disappear

for a while’, as he succumbs to his isolation, echoing what the band believes to be the ultimate American condition.

21st Century Breakdown continues the rock opera style of its predecessor, *American Idiot*. The album is divided into three acts: ‘Heroes and Cons’, ‘Charlatans and Saints’, and ‘Horseshoes and Hand grenades’, and is set in Detroit, Michigan. Each Act is self-explanatory, as the songs explore facets of modern life- the good and the bad, the true and the false, the destructive and the hopeful. The album’s loose narrative follows a couple, Christian and Gloria through the challenges present in the US during the Bush regime, focusing primarily on themes of abandonment and vengeance, and conversely, hope.

All the songs in the albums are credited to the three band members, but the album is very much Billy Joe Armstrong’s own in that the first-person narrative is strongly autobiographical. The first act, ‘Heroes and Cons’ opens with the song “21st Century Breakdown’ and introduces us to Armstrong’s character, Christian. It essentially ‘breaks down’ the atmosphere of the twenty-first century, as well as Christian’s background.

Born into Nixon I was raised in hell

A welfare child

Where the teamsters dwelled

The last one born

And the first one to run.

Richard Nixon's presidency, which started in 1972 was the year that Armstrong was born. His disconnected years as a 'welfare child' is also referenced here, where he was raised by his five elder siblings while his mother worked the graveyard shift as a waitress. Although the youngest, he was the first to break free from familial ties as he set out in search of a livelihood and to find meaning to his life. Thus, the character Christian is a portrayal of Armstrong, as he describes the root of discontent that marks his character. He says,

My name is no one

The long lost son

Born on the 4th of July

Raised in the era of heroes and cons.

The reference to the 4th of July, the American Independence Day alludes to the Constitutional freedom given to the Americans to achieve their American Dream. This dream is rooted in the American Declaration of Independence which states that all men are created equal, and are endowed with inalienable rights, which includes "Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness" (sic). The song, however, suggests that America is filled with nameless, faceless, alienated people whose American Dream has soured as they find themselves pitted against a ruthless establishment that cared not for them, but for its own commercial gain.

The character Gloria is introduced as the saint of all sinners, as someone who refuses to be silenced and as Christian's only tenuous hope against the hopelessness that pervades his existence. In "Before the Lobotomy", this hopelessness is expressed through Christian's anger at the complacency he sees around him, as he laments on how the minds of the people around him have been lobotomized by the plethora of false propaganda and ideas that have been circulated through the powerful and pervasive media.

We're lost like refugees

The brutality of reality

Is the freedom that keeps me from

Dreaming.

The people around him are inundated with pictures of the wealth and superiority of their nation as compared to others, but they fail to see that this nation of their dreams is just a figment of their imagination, and that, like refugees, the land that they inhabit is not theirs, but a fabricated nation sold to them by the media. The people have lost the critical ability to see that everything is not as it is painted, and that their nation might very well be the oppressor, rather than the champion of the oppressed.

The second act, 'Charlatans and Saints' juxtaposes Armstrong's beliefs in what is right and what is false. The titular song of this act reveals his views on fundamental religion and was written after he attended a church service where a friend's child was baptized.

Put your faith in a miracle

And it's non-denominational

Join the choir, we will be singing

In the church of wishful thinking.

He denounces how fundamental religion has spread the message of hate and separation, where religion becomes not a vehicle of peace but an agent of violence. He mocks how religions like Christianity, while purporting to believe in the same God, is divided into so many denominations, and he thinks that expecting any religion to be unbiased is only just 'wishful thinking'. He calls the spiritual leaders 'charlatans' and juxtaposes them against Gloria in the song, "The Last of the American Girls".

She's on a hunger strike for the ones who won't make it for dinner

She makes enough to survive for a holiday of working class

She's a runaway of the establishment incorporated

She won't cooperate

She's the last of the American girls.

Gloria represents the minority of idealistic, free-thinking individuals who steadfastly hold true to their beliefs and principles. The tag "American girl" usually refers to the idealised image of the happy and steadfast American girl who firmly hold on to her belief in Jesus, Country and Family; the American girl who uncomplainingly works in factories, or make do with rations and sack-cloths while her man is off to war; the American girl who, despite her innate modesty, fearlessly participate in marches and protests against wars, for the Vote, or for any cause close to her heart. Armstrong believes that people like Gloria are the real saints of the modern world, rather than the spiritual and political leaders who use their power to sow seeds of enmity against oppositional groups.

The last act, 'Horseshoes and Handgrenades' carries with it a tenuous thread of hope amidst violence. Horseshoes are symbolically used as lucky charms, and the belief in luck, or good fortune is an optimistic one that is grounded in hope. The song "21 Guns" carries with it a powerful plea to lay down arms for peace.

Do you know what's worth fighting for?

When it's not worth dying for?

.... 1, 21 guns,

Lay down your arms

Give up the fight.

By the end of the war on Iraq, most American people had become aware that their nation was in no way blameless for the death toll on innocents and atrocities of its own. Special Peacekeeping Forces sent there to restore order had been responsible for innumerable acts of violence against innocents, and, while the United Nations had pled for amnesty for prisoners of war, the inmates at Abu Ghraib Prison had suffered countless atrocities in the hands of American personnel. Many claimed that the war had been a needless one, its motivations more selfish than altruistic, and America, the Great Beacon of Hope, had actually been a harbinger of doom for many. Betrayed, bewildered and disillusioned, the American people had watched as their troops finally left Iraq in 2009. “21 Guns” is an appeal to the common man to identify what he is fighting for, and whether it warranted the death of so many innocents. The title of the song references the 21-gun salute given to soldiers who have died in battle, and also instances the violence that ushered in the 21st century.

The band’s stance against imperialism and violence raised a lot of voices, but these voices were not those of support or even opposition to their message. Instead, it was whether the band had become a sell-out to punk, and these questions came most markedly from within the Punk Community itself. Just as the Dead Kennedys and Nirvana before them, Green Day were accused of being part of the very thing that they themselves used to hate. Before the band signed on to Reprise, they had wrangled terms that would enable them a 100% creative control over

how their music would be produced and marketed. They also stipulated that their previous label, Lookout! would continue to own the rights to the albums released under their management. However, the band's decision to sign onto a major recording label, and their subsequent success has left them wide open to the punk purists in Gilman, who accused them of using the closed-knit network of the underground punk scene for their own gains, exploited it and had now moved on (Myers, 121).

By the nineties, the term "Punk rock" had started to mean different things to different people. One was that punk was something organic and exclusive that should never be a part of mainstream culture, and therein lay the very act of protest, through non-conformity. Another school of thought was that punk was founded on non-elitism, and the imposing of rules on how the music and the lifestyle should be carried out was in itself, a contradiction of the very ethos of punk. Punk's cacophony was reproduced visually by its performers and advocates, who created a "self-consciously profane and terminal aesthetic" (Hebdige 26-7). The result, as explained by Hebdige, emphasized alienation, "blankness" of expression, the self and its emotional states, and cosmetic rage (28).

Green Day's albums, their success and even their political activism had splintered the punk scene's opinions about whether the band had sold out or not. The band's appearances on MTV, their record industry awards and even their affiliation with singer Bono on the benefit song, "The Saints are Coming" (2006) for the survivors of Hurricane Katrina⁴ were seen as mere

pandering to the commercial aspects of the music industry. The band had spoken out on a number of occasions for a number of causes, including teaming up with the environmental group Natural Resources Defense Council to launch a campaign aimed at mobilizing young people. And yet, moves such as these, as well as the band's involvement in various charitable causes and activism were seen as carefully plotted political schemes to further ensure their popularity. The band's music has also been variously accused of either being bad copies of earlier punk songs, or sugary pop songs disguised as punk (Sheffield, *Rolling Stone*).

The previous chapter had dealt with the forms of recuperation that the culture industry employs against forces in opposition to it. Hebdige maintains that, first, the Other can be trivialised, naturalised, domesticated so that its Otherness is reduced to Sameness. Alternatively, the Other can be transformed into meaningless exotica, a 'pure object, a spectacle, a clown'. (Hebdige 97). One could argue that the appropriation of punk bands, styles, symbols, and sounds by the corporate music industry is evidence of the domestication of punk rock. But it would be a mistake to simply assume that the commodification and domestication of punk bands, signs, and symbols has nullified the cultural field's potential to disturb and disrupt established social orders. Green Day's example illustrates the complicated moves under discussion here. As mentioned, many of their original fans claimed that the band had forsaken their punk credibility. Yet, at the same time, numerous youths in America were suddenly exposed to a band and style that they would not have been aware of before. Many used Green Day as a stepping stone to explore other previously unknown and underground punk music. The complicated positions that Green Day

occupy in punk, corporate music, and systems of global communication is evidenced by their global tour for *American Idiot*. Aside from the pointed political critique of the George W. Bush administration and contemporary American life, the band combined their performances with calls for political action and involvement among the audiences. Moreover, they would regularly pull members of the audience on stage, hand them instruments, teach them a few chords, and have them join the band in some of their songs (Dunn 204). Yet, the fact remains that Green Day performed these political acts of resistance to large stadiums full of audiences that could afford the high price of the tickets. Rather than getting into a discussion of whether or not bands like Green Day actually qualify as authentic punk, they highlight the complex ways in which punk itself continues to offer the possibility for counter-hegemonic communication in the face of commodification, appropriation and domestication.

The function of major record labels, then, remains a hotly contested debate within not just punk communities, but to any protest musician. In part, the defence is about making money that can be used for various causes. This argument posits that refusing the money offered by these huge recording industries when so many causes are in need of funds would be self-defeating. The other argument made in defence of signing to major labels is the increased exposure the bands get, and thus their increased ability to get their message to larger audiences. In an interview, Jello Biafra of the Dead Kennedys noted the increased influence bands can exert when signing to major labels. Speaking of Green Day's high-profile benefit for "Food Not Bombs"⁵, he commented that the band raised 50,000 dollars and that a small underground show would

perhaps have raised 400 or 500 dollars, which the charity group would not have utilised as much (Dunn 204). In retaliation to claims like this, Ian MacKaye of Fugazi and Dischord Records has argued that signing to a major corporate label compromises both the artist and his message.

When a band signs to a major label, no matter how good a contract they think that have, no matter how much control they think their contract provides, it's unavoidable that you are conscious of being an investment. Somebody puts money into you and you have to pay it off somehow. And you want to pay off.

(Dunn 204)

The issue is certainly complex, and this space occupied by protest music and its musicians suggests that the divide between commodification and counter-hegemony is often a blurry space rife with contradictions. The question that arises then is whether the culture industries oil the hegemonic forces in opposition to them, or whether these very hegemonic forces feed the culture industries they are, in fact, opposing. From this perspective, then, popular culture, and by extension, protest music is a negotiated mix of both the commercial and the authentic, a shifting balance of forces between resistance and incorporation; in short, a 'compromise equilibrium' (Gramsci 86)

NOTES:

¹ The Gulf War (2nd August 1990- 28th February 1991), codenamed Operation Desert Shield was a war waged by coalition forces from 35 nations led by the United States against Iraq in response to Iraq's invasion and annexation of Kuwait.

² The Parents Music Resource Center (PMRC) was formed in 1985 with the goal of increasing parental control over the access of children to music deemed to have violent or sexual themes. One of the measures taken by them was to include "Parental Advisory" stickers on albums deemed to be unsuitable for children. They also released lists of objectionable songs called "The Filthy Fifteen". While some record stores refused to sell albums with the "Parental Advisory" stickers, they also had the effect of actually increasing sells among rebellious music audiences. The PMRC eventually shut down in the late 1990s.

³ Nineteen Al-Qaeda terrorists hijacked four planes and crashed them into the World Trade Centre buildings, the Pentagon Headquarters, and a field in Pennsylvania, killing nearly 3000 people and injuring over 6000.

⁴ Hurricane Katrina was an extremely destructive and deadly Category 5 hurricane that caused catastrophic damage along the Gulf coast from central Florida to Texas, much of it due to the storm surge and levee failure. The Bush government was harshly criticised for the large scale

destruction, deaths and casualties of the Hurricane. The criticisms of the government's response to Hurricane Katrina primarily consisted of criticism of mismanagement and lack of leadership in the relief efforts in response to the storm and its aftermath. More specifically, the criticism focused on the delayed response to the flooding of New Orleans, and the subsequent state of chaos in the city.

⁵ “Food Not Bombs” is a loose-knit group of independent collectives who share free vegetarian food with others. Their ideology is that corporate and government priorities are wrong in allowing hunger to persist in the midst of abundance. To demonstrate this, a large amount of the food served by the group is surplus food from grocery stores, bakeries and markets that would otherwise go to waste. One of the group’s fund-raising activities includes an annual concert. This Green Day benefit concert Biafra refers to was held in 1995. The band has also continued to contribute funds and resources to the group.

The study of protest music and the cultures it shapes, and those that are shaped by them, are irreconcilably linked with that of the larger mainstream culture. Due to the extreme concentration of ownership of the mass media in recent years, the culture industry has become a major site of centralized power, especially in the twenty-first century. Recorded music is one of the most concentrated global media market today: six leading firms-PolyGram, EMI, Warner Music Group, Sony Music Entertainment, BMG, and Universal Music Group -are estimated to control between 80 to 90 percent of the global market (McChesney 43). Most of these companies belong to larger conglomerates, which also hold ownerships of magazines, book publishing houses, film studios, television networks, cable channels, and so on. Opportunities for commodification, therefore, have massively expanded.

It is apparent that musical expression has always been more or less dependent on patronage and financial backing. In fact, music groups have no other option than to participate in the commercial music market. Even by creating independent labels, artists still rely upon some aspect of musical promotion, creation, and distribution. Popular musicians have long worked closely with the commercial music industry. For example, since the early days of radio, musicians have advertised products, sung jingles, signed deals with sponsoring corporations and record companies, and so on (Scherzinger 34). The musicians mentioned in this research have also, as illustrated, all signed on to major recording companies, and have used their status to market various products. The songs mentioned in this study, such as Dylan's "Blowin' in the Wind" may have greatly impacted the movements to which they were originally associated, but

their incendiary messages are reduced to impotency when they are “reframed as commercial jingles to aid and abet commercial sales” (Peddie 10). Even antiestablishment bands such as Rage Against the Machine have become lucrative investments in their own right. They have also become lucrative sites for mass-produced products, by, for example publicly endorsing products such as Wu-Wear, a clothing company and accessory company established by the Wu-Tang Clan. This commodification of dissent affected protest music and its subcultures as well, as has been explored.

Different forms of music are associated with a particular function; their audiences generally engage with the music in a particular social context, enabling it to fulfil that particular social function. These functional aspects of the music must be situated within the relevant musical community's collective representation of creative authenticity. The perception of creative control and integrity that an audience gains from an artist's recorded work stems more from ideology than from aesthetics (Zakorski-Thomas 252-3). Examples of these have been evidenced by the artists mentioned in this study, especially bands such as Nirvana or Green Day. While the message and the music of these bands remains basically the same, their affiliation to major recording companies and their commercial success has distorted their ideology, at least in the eyes of their original audience. The importance of these audience or consumer influences as contributing to the implicit forms of knowledge, rules and ideology that comprise the meaning of a song then becomes very apparent.

It is hence, interesting to note how executives in the business often refer to a song's distinctive attention-grabbing moment as the "money note." (Scherzinger 36). Thus, while the politics of protest music may seem to harm the music industry, music executives are willing to take the risk that these forms, like fashion, would sell to the public, and therefore, independence and dissent has become co-opted and branded. This seeming proliferation of adversarial perspectives would suggest a mutable exchange and interaction of ideas but closer inspection of the evidence suggests otherwise.

First, their popularity notwithstanding, the "progressive" artists outlined above are relatively marginal in the world of commercial music... (Bands like) Rage Against the Machine are not marketed and distributed with nearly the same financial resources as more industry-friendly artists. Second, record companies and radio stations tend to seek out "edgy" styles and ideas to systematize production on a mass scale, i.e., to manufacture cost-effective standardized versions of those styles for mass consumption. (Scherzinger 51)

The music industry, therefore, does not simply act negatively to prevent political participation- it can also promote it. An example of this can be seen in Marvin Gaye's struggle against his record company for the production of his album *What's Goin' On*. Gaye's political engagement became possible only after the 1967 Race Riots in Detroit. Motown had initially confined its support for

black power politics to a subsidiary, but current events forced it to acknowledge the need to address certain social and political issues; as a result, Gaye's album was approved.

Musicians have rallied against a number of causes, as has been traced throughout this study. From the countercultural movement of the 1960s, to the industrialization and commercialization of culture, to the Presidencies of Ronald Reagan, and later, that of George Bush Jr, the participation of musicians and protest music have always been present. Recent examples include the December 2003 protest of artists such as RATM's, Tom Morello, as well as other notable protest singers such as Steve Earle, Lester Chambers, and Boots Riley against the monopoly in media. Numerous strategies of resistance are employed: through a series of campaigns and drives, grassroots organizations have built coalitions and communities of dissent, which, in turn, have alerted the mainstream public and concerned politicians to the dangers of corporate consolidation of the mass media. These efforts are directed not only at state and local governments but also at the federal government (Scherzinger 62). Besides this, the 2004 pre-election period produced a range of musical activity in quest of political change. Especially noteworthy were the "Vote for Change" concert tour, sponsored by MoveOnPAC, which included Green Day and other musicians to encourage young people to vote (and to vote against George W. Bush) as well as the "Vote or Die" campaign (Myers 194-5) .

During this period, various rock musicians also contributed musically to independent documentaries critical of the mass media and other political developments. One of these

documentary-makers is Michael Moore who, with his documentaries *Bowling for Columbine* (2003), and *Fahrenheit 9/11* (2004) questioned the policies behind the US's policy on gun control, and also the Bush government's motives for the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. Moore had earlier gained notoriety when he directed the RATM music video for "Sleep Now in the Fire" from their 1999 album, *Battle of Los Angeles*. A few weeks after the release of this album, which spoke about everyday racial and economic tensions in Los Angeles, around 40,000 protestors converged on Seattle in protest of the latest meeting of the World Trade Organization. The event became known as 'the Battle in Seattle', with *Time* magazine captioning its report on the event as, "Rage Against the Machine". Just a couple of months later, on 26th January, 2000, the band filmed their music video for "Sleep Now in the Fire" under the direction of Michael Moore. Moore had gained permission to film on the steps of the Federal Hall, but as the shooting progressed, the band gradually strayed off the steps, prompting the NYPD officers to arrest Moore. As he was dragged away, Moore told the band to "take the New York Stock Exchange". Security guards had to use steel gates to bar its doors, but from all appearances, it appeared that Moore and RATM had closed down Wall Street (Lynskey 625). A culture of protest, therefore, seemed to be alive and kicking at the culmination of the twenty-first century.

A protest song cannot exist independently of a function; a protest song is effective only when there is a popular movement for social or political change. When such a movement does not exist, the messages of protest songs are "intellectualized without any possible social action" (Peddie 15). This was why, as has been indicated, the 1960s and the 1970s were such fertile

periods for the proliferation of protest music. The atmosphere was also rife with music journalism and music critics who shared the views of the Countercultural movements and who wrote about, as also promoted artists who shared similar views. When this common cause was absent, as in the late 1980s and 1990s, protest music and its impact dwindled, and it was in these eras that the domestication of deviant subcultures was most apparent. The music industry had also grown drastically, with innovations in music sharing technology and the wider reach of the media, thereby increasing the propagation of more media-friendly musicians. Since there was such a lack of potential audience for protest music, they were less likely to be written, released or played on the commercial media. Ronnie Pontiac commented on this unfriendly atmosphere towards protest songs thus,

By (the late 1970s) conditions in the music business had changed radically. For obvious reasons the new music business had little use for activism, instead ... punk rock was successfully repackaged as supposedly edgy New Wave acts ideal for ushering in the Reagan years. (Pontiac, 2004)

The policies and practices of the Bush administration, especially after the events of 9/11 once again presented a common ground for protest musicians to rally around, and thus, the resurgence in protest music and activism. Yet, despite the vast number of songs, activism and causes, they no longer have as much impact as they did during the Vietnam Wars.

One cannot blame a lack of platform or media coverage on this lessening impact of protest music. In fact, with the internet and social media explosion, musicians have more opportunities for getting their music and their views heard by a larger audience. Independent music artists, even without the financial backing of recording labels have, and had used, the internet to gain a foothold in the music industry. Websites such as MySpace and Youtube have been responsible for launching the musical careers of several artists. Musicians also use social networking sites such as Facebook and Instagram as platforms to voice their views, to inform audiences about upcoming events, and to promote their songs.

The mobility of the Internet... has produced new opportunities for musical production, distribution, and consumption, as well as new sites for political organization. New legitimate on-line music services are constantly appearing as the record labels scramble for new business models. In 2003, for example, sales for record labels fell dramatically: Worldwide sales for Universal Music Group were down by 22 percent, while on-line music sales, such as Apple's iTunes Music Store offering songs for ninety-nine cents, soared. Dozens of companies, including Sony and RealNetwork, opened on-line stores in 2004. At the same time, countless musicians use the Internet to get their music heard; Websites ... offer musicians space to place their music on-line. Likewise, technological transformations have their impact: Blogging (whereby users share observations and opinions at a Website) has the potential to approximate a virtual forum or

public space. Podcasting (whereby users share files from events, lectures, original music, and so on) has the potential to approach the condition of cost-free radio on demand. And satellite radio, although still not widely used or understood, has the potential to offer tailored stations for diverse musical expressions, as well as commercial-free news and information, to a global audience. (Scherzinger 62-63)

And yet, these developments have not allayed the impact of the corporate powers within the music industry. The industry continues to thrive, as does protest music; which brings us to the problem of protest in the age of the internet.

One of the problems behind the current ineffectiveness of protest music in the modern era is because protest music only sometimes preaches to the choir; they rally rather than recruit. The impact of the song is meaningful only to those able to appreciate the sentiments expressed in it. To a certain extent, protest songs may also work against actual social movements by functioning as a surrogate for actual activism. By participating in a concert, or listening to a protest song, the audience may feel that they were fighting for the cause. This problem had manifested itself even during the Countercultural Movements of the 1960s, especially within a musical space such as Folk Music that emphasized itself strongly as a community. Protestors did participate in marches and sit-ins, but they were already the converted; just as they stood firm in their beliefs, their opposers were also as firmly entrenched in theirs, despite the plethora of songs that urged them otherwise. This act of protest-by-proxy would go on to define later audiences of protest music-

Woodstock, despite being such a large gathering of like-minded individuals did little to change the policies of the era. The dilemma of the communal protest was also exemplified by Bob Dylan, who was no longer seen as an authentic figure once he started to veer from the collective 'we' to the singular 'I', and also incorporated electric guitars into his music. His protest was no longer seen as the protest of the community, and once again, one must examine the problem of authenticity, which is so problematic within the protest music scene. The same issue of authenticity underscores the musical careers of the artists mentioned in this research, as their audiences grapple with whether the message that is being put forward was genuine or not, and whether the messenger was authentic or not. Activism, even surrogate activism via an artist's performance rests largely on the meaning that is attributed to him and his message.

Coming back to the issue of protest-by-proxy, in the modern era of online protest, the dearth of actual activism, or change is even more apparent. People would rather protest via social media and get instant feedback, with the added benefit of finding like-minded individuals with whom they can protest with, all from the safety of their homes. In a study conducted by Bruce Bower on the impact of online causes, he has extrapolated the message that online causes may attract 'more clicks than commitments' (Bower 23). An example was given by the Save Darfur campaign¹, which amassed about 1.2 million Facebook members. While the effort managed to raise nearly 100,000 dollars after almost three years, the money came from less than 1 percent of the 1.2 million Save Darfur members. "Facebook conjured an illusion of activism

rather than facilitating the real thing," sociologist Kevin Lewis of the University of California, San Diego says about the Save Darfur campaign (Bower 23).

The campaign was not an isolated event in terms of the lack of actual participation with regard to online activism. The phenomena has led to the coinage of the portmanteau term, "Slacktivism" or "Slacktivists"- people with an activist's righteous intentions but a slacker's lack of follow-through. Social media makes it possible to assemble huge numbers of like-minded people into protest movements but organizers have yet to figure out how to convert bursts of Internet-fueled activism into sustained movements. Hands-on protest has given in to online protest as placards and marches have given way to wristbands and Facebook groups- gestures that appease consciences without risk or struggle. Naomi Klein posits that armchair activism has a safety-release valve which makes it so much more attractive than actual activism:

It's safer to mouth off on a blog than put your body on the line. The internet is an amazing organizing tool but it also acts as a release, with the ability to act and get instant catharsis. It's taken that sense of urgency away. (Klein 648)

While one can blame slactivism as the reason behind the decline of the protest song, it cannot be its only cause. The Iraq and Afghanistan Wars provided people with as much fodder to protest about as the Vietnam Wars, and protest songs did multiply during the era. The Vote for Change Campaign, for example which was launched prior to the 2004 Presidential elections saw various musicians trying to recruit voters to vote against the Bush regime. Aside from Green Day's

American Idiot, various artists came together, attacking the President from different fronts. Songs such as Public Enemy's "Son of a Bush" (2003), Eminem's "Mosh" (2004), the Beastie Boys' "In a World Gone Mad" (2003), among others attacked Bush's various policies, variously labeling him a trickster, a phony, and a 'weapon of mass destruction'. Several old protest songs, such as "We Shall Overcome" and John Fogerty's "Fortunate Son" were pressed into service. It would be safe to say that music was once again on the fore-front of the movement for change. And yet, despite all these, Bush walked away with a victory as he was re-elected President of the United States of America a second time.

The dream that music had the power bring about change seemed to die with the re-election of President Bush. People may enjoy poking fun at the 'American Idiot' but there were still many who claimed that they were 'proud to be an American Idiot' (Lynskey 670). Singer Wayne Coyne, one of the artists involved in the movement, tried to analyse the difference between protest in the 1960s and the twenty-first century:

I thought we'd reach this tipping point where everyone just went, "Oh my God, we have to do something". But it's not like Vietnam. My brothers knew guys at high school who got drafted, and two weeks later, they were dead. That's a powerful experience. When Green Day are singing a song, you're like, "Cool song, dude, I got my new iPhone". That's not a powerful experience. The youth

aren't dying in the same way. There's no protest, really. They weren't powerless- they just didn't give a shit. (Lynskey 679)

Perhaps Green Day were more accurate than they thought when they talked about the inertia and apathetic mindset of the youths living in modern America. The youths did perceive that there was something wrong with the world, but they were too apathetic to try to make a change. Or perhaps, the War in Iraq and Afghanistan no longer felt as real to them as the Vietnam War did to the 1960s generation; perhaps online activism felt enough to them; or perhaps, they had simply lost their faith in protest and in protest musicians. Detractors of protest music have variously blamed the music as causing sexual promiscuity, Satanism, suicides, homicides, drug abuse, and the like; yet, there is no evidence that music had such power, or even for motivating action to achieve the more noble ends advocated by the songs themselves. As mentioned before, protest music may only preach to the choir. Music is used by religious groups to reinforce faith in what the religion practices, and it is used to rally troops, rather than recruit them. The function and impact of protest music then, may work only in that regard- as an effective rallying force rather than a recruitment tool.

In the context of social movements, songs evidence the creation of moral reaffirmation rather than the function of building outside support (Denisoff 807)

Another aspect that has been explored is the perception of protest music and musicians as simply a 'trend' or 'fashion'. Protest music, just like fashion, does seem to go in and out of style,

as it is informed by current events and current trends. Some critics have posited the idea that the political engagement is not simply a product of their personal beliefs or a product of their times, but of the networks that organize them into political activity (Peddie 58). This argument carries that the capacity of an artist to be taken seriously as an activist is dependent on their careers as artists. Certain popular singers, such as the boy band Blue, or singer George Michael were derided when they expressed political opinions, because their political authority was threatened by their artistic credibility. The implication here is that musical genre is an important determinant of the credibility of an artist in terms of his political engagement. This might seem to be the case, given the musical genres and subcultures that have been explored in this study. Folk music was the preferred medium of expression for the politics of musicians during the countercultural movements. Rock music has always been seen as anti-establishment, and punk, grunge and the rock-rap of RATM seem to lend themselves favourably to songs of dissent.

But the findings of this research have shown that protest is hardly genre-specific. Not everyone within a genre will adopt the same political stance, and the artists that have been studied here are not always accorded the authority to represent their respective genres. In fact, they have been labeled as sell-outs or betrayers of the genre's ideologies.

(What matters then), is how these various artists perform their roles as musicians, the way they convey their politics in their art and in the other activities which connect to it (the interviews, the public appearances and so on. (Peddie 60)

Thus, it is not genre which defines an artist's credibility as a protest singer; being successful as a political representative depends on success as an artist, and not just an ordinary artist. The artists mentioned in this study, with the exception of Marvin Gaye who only delved into protest after gaining fame as a Soul singer, all made their mark first as protest singers before they were marketed as such. While their musical genres might affect their musical style, their credential as a protest singer of repute rests on their commercial success as musicians- which once again takes us back to the dilemma of being a commercially successful artist while being a protest singer. It is only when their message was circulated through commercial channels that their reputations as protest singers were cemented, but the circulation of their message through commercial channels adversely affected their credibility.

Critic Naomi Klein has defined the power dynamics between culture and sponsorship as a working alliance between the two-, "the brand is the event's infrastructure; the artists are its filler" (48). Mass marketing and advertising have infiltrated the world of music to an unprecedented degree such that corporate sponsorship and marketing, far from interrupting the flow of musical activity, has become the structural condition of possibility for communal events and music making. Adorno has defined the secret of success as a reflection of what one pays in the market for the product. What the culture industry has done is to convince the consumer that by paying for a band's merchandise, they are in fact, responsible for the band's success. He has also claimed that, with the commercialization of music, listeners have become regressive and have lost the capacity for conscious perception of music.

Regressive listening is tied to production by the machinery of distribution, and particularly by advertising. Regressive listening appears as soon as ... nothing is left for the consciousness but to capitulate before the superior power of the advertised stuff and purchase spiritual peace by making the imposed goods literally its own thing (Adorno 47-8).

Protest music and the subcultures they are associated with are therefore expressive forms but what they express is, in the last instance, a fundamental tension between those in power and those condemned to subordinate positions. In this context, one needs to reiterate Gramsci's 'compromise equilibrium' which may be defined as the process within which the text and practices of popular culture move; it is both historical (at one point in history a text might be labeled popular culture, and at a different point labeled another form of culture) and synchronic (moving between resistance and incorporation at any given historical moment).

Undoubtedly, the fact of hegemony presupposes that account be taken of the interests and the tendencies of the groups over which hegemony is to be exercised, and that a certain compromise equilibrium should be formed- in other words, that the leading group should make sacrifices of an economic, corporate kind (Gramsci 86).

Stuart Hall has defined culture as "... a set of practices. Primarily, culture is concerned with the production and exchange of meanings- the giving and taking of meaning" (Hall b, 2). Thus, there

is always this struggle that protest music and its subcultures face when it comes to its reception, interpretation and usage.

The bricolage of protest music and the attendant lifestyles described herein is testament to the negotiation of meanings that is found wherever art and culture converge. We have seen how the meaning of a song can become distorted as it undergoes the processes of production, assimilation and consumption. Examples of the process of articulation- affixing meanings to a text- is found throughout this study, where the very music that rages against the machine was articulated in the economic interests of the capitalist music industry. The research has analysed the means of production of these musical texts by tackling questions such as who owns the means of production, who produces the text, and why, and under what constraints. Textual analysis of the songs has been presented to show how these songs create meanings. It has also examined the consumption of these songs by its audiences, in terms of how they have interpreted the songs. It has also studied how history shapes, changes and restructures these three dimensions. These protest songs have shown the complex interrelationship between and among music, media, commerce, political consent, and social dissent and how these has both shaped and reflected the crucial social and political movements of American history, profoundly impacted the lives of individual Americans, and provided an economic foundation for a protest music industry.

In light of the many questions that can arise when it comes to the negotiation of meanings within a song, music idealists have often asked if music actually had the power to make a difference. The answer to this, as the previous chapters have shown, is that music's effect on the political process is subtle and virtually impossible to measure, even in retrospect. The meaning of a song cannot be confined to its moment of origin because of its transitory nature. When George Bush was finally defeated by Barack Obama in the Presidential elections in 2008, it seemed to some that protest music had a hand in the election of America's first Black president, especially when President Obama referenced the Sam Cooke song, "A Change is Gonna Come" in his speech:

It's been a long time coming, but tonight, because of what we did on this day, in this election, at this defining moment, change has come to America (Lynskey xi).

Whether protest music had a hand in the long struggle towards equal rights, and other social and political causes, its relevance, whether as ideology or practice cannot be denied. The act of protest, especially in music, has always been a gesture of hope and this is even more so in the twenty-first century, when there is such a dearth of actual participation. Despite these factors, protest music and its attendant subcultures continue to live on, which is testament to the resilience of the cultures that give birth to them. The research, finally, reinforces the impossibility of trying to quantify the impact of a protest song, but rather stresses the need to

look at the various political, creative and commercial processes that make socio-political engagements between song and audience possible.

NOTES:

¹ The Save Darfur Coalition was formed to raise awareness and to mobilize response to the atrocities in the war in Darfur, Sudan, which has claimed many lives due to its ethnic cleansing, starvation and displacement of its people. This campaign was backed by the UN, and many religious and human rights groups, including music artists.

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