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# A Narrative Inquiry of Protest Songs: Comparing the Anti-War Music of Vietnam and Iraq

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**A Narrative Inquiry of Protest Songs:  
Comparing the Anti-War Music of Vietnam and Iraq**

An Honors Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of Honors Studies  
in Sociology

by  
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Sociology

J. William Fulbright College of Arts and Sciences

**The University of Arkansas**

### Abstract

*This research examines the social role of protest music in wartime eras through lyrical content analysis. By analyzing songs across the Vietnam War era and the Iraq War era, the shifting role of protest music across generations reveals not only how this music influences and encourages different social aggregates, but also how it adapts to remain relevant in a continuously modernizing American society. This research thus serves to demonstrate the impact of narratives in social movements and the sway narratives have in shaping public perspectives through their encouragement of solidarity between diverse social groups. Methodology includes narrative analysis of two representative samples of protest music pertinent to each of the two war eras, and qualitative lyrical examination of these songs in comparison and contrast both within and across each era. This method of narrative analysis utilizes the structure of formula stories as a model for determining the effect of protest music through symbolic and emotion codes present in the lyrical melodramas, and how these melodramas depict the need for protest and anti-war sentiment by serving as passionate calls to action behind which audiences belonging to diverse social aggregates can rally in solidarity.*

Keywords: war, protest music, narrative analysis, melodramas, social movements

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## CHAPTER ONE

### **Introduction**

At the core of societal transitions are the social movements that drive them, and at the heart of these movements are individuals united in common cause: these individuals and the social groups to which they belong do not necessarily share similar backgrounds or experiences, so their unification requires an establishment and exposure of the ambitions they share. This determination of common objective has potential to be displayed in many forms, but its effect is only as influential as its relevancy to its temporal context: thus social movements require malleability, their rallying techniques evolving in appeal to current culture, adapting in response to and accordance with the very societal transitions they incite. The usage of songs as a means to unite diverse masses is a worthy component of social movements in its formidable appeal to the emotions of audiences and its ability to project common messages across various genres of music and levels of society. This influence exists in the popular protest music of the Vietnam War era and the Iraq War era, and a comparison of these two eras highlights how the rallying techniques of social movements shift to remain current and to appeal to the social groups who need a unifying pivot point for action and protest in times of war.

The musical and lyrical techniques that characterize the Vietnam War era and the Iraq War era are rooted in the influences of prior protest movements in the United States and often resemble each other through the mannerisms and sociological themes they employ to attract and energize a wide audience and encourage social solidarity. However, these efforts were successful not as a result of their content alone, but also as the result of their effective appeal to specific aspects of the social aggregates they targeted. The

protest songs of the Vietnam War era and those of the Iraq War era manifest through the conceptualization of music itself as well as the American social protest movements that preceded them, and further demonstrate music's contribution to maintaining the relevancy of messages present in these social movements through music's adaptability to current events.

Though this research emphasizes the role of anti-war popular protest music in the Vietnam War era and the Iraq War era, it specifically examines the narrative structures through which singer song-writers convey their melodramatic portrayals of war. Thus the examination of melodramatic narratives is a factor of this research in addition to the relevance of music as a driving force in successful social movements. Beyond their presence in music, narrative melodramas can serve as influential structures for rallying social support and can possess formidable political influence not only in anti-war efforts but in contests such as those that occur in presidential election cycles as well. In addition to the central focus on anti-war music in this research, the rhetoric of presidents and presidential candidates will be considered in addition to musical narratives and will further support the relevancy of narrative analysis. Considering narratives and music together highlights the emotive power of music as singer song-writers utilize their lyrics to incite calls to action and encourage recognition of the need for anti-war protest, and this power is evident in the protest music of the Vietnam War era and the Iraq War era.

## CHAPTER TWO

**Literature Review**I. An Introduction to the Conceptualization of Protest Music

Music is “a way of identifying ourselves” (Rosenthal & Flacks 2012:94), and thus a way to create solidarity in the thought processes of “group members and outsiders, often through reference to a collective... past that serves to frame the present” (:94). Music can both celebrate and reinforce identity values, and can combat opposition by reinforcing “identities that are being redefined and reclaimed” (:94) from their once socially stigmatized positions. This strengthening of identity can occur through the energy of the music and the unification of its listeners both in the music’s message as well as the audience’s interpretation and usage of the music. Such usage of the music can bring members of different social groups together and “[create] the feeling that various ideas, ideals, and lifestyles go together” (:94) in a way that encourages group identity. An important component of this identity-creating process is the social distinction that accompanies it, in which “musicking” (Roy & Dowd 2013) and the formation of group identity “helps [us] determine and express who we are – in part through helping us determine and express who we are *not*” (Rosenthal & Flacks 2012:95). However, it is possible that the identification process created via musicking not only defines this idea of who we are not, but also has the potential to bring together members of different social groups who would have not previously considered themselves to possess a common identity with their fellow musickers; in association with this, “[w]hen many individuals are involved, crossing is even more likely to become loaded with meaning, political and



otherwise” (:96). Interpretation of ‘meaning’ in music commonly takes into consideration the intention of the composer, the interpretation of the performer, the analysis of the scholar, and the reception of the audience (:93), but the weight given to each of these components can vary. Our understanding of music becomes limited when we choose to examine only one of these components without taking the others into context; static intention of a composer is not always reflected in the dynamism of the performer or the audience, and thus “[u]nderstanding audiences’ construction of meanings requires appreciating music as process as well as product, as activity as well as object” (:93).

The audience should not be considered passive receptors, existing distinctly from the music itself, because “[l]istening’ itself is a performance... [and] interpretation ‘is as much a process of construction as discovery’” (Frith, Footnote 5 quoted by Rosenthal & Flacks 2012:91). Shifting “from a focus on cultural *codes* to a focus on cultural *practice*” (Footnote 3 quoted by Rosenthal & Flacks 2012:91) in musical analysis will help our understanding of both the usage of music as well as the role an audience plays in musicking. In order to understand the impact of a song, we must go beyond examination of lyrics alone and examine the context the audience provides, for “[w]hat an individual brings to a song is at least as important as the manifest content the song brings to the individual” (Christenson & Roberts quoted by Rosenthal & Flacks 2102:92). Taking into consideration how music is received beyond its mere existence will help us to understand the manifestation of protest music.

The role of the participant in music making and music reception is not static, and it is not uncommon for an audience member on one occasion to be a performer on another. However, participation in the music as an audience member can occur as well,

and it is important to note that “audience members... are rarely entirely passive[:] ...we hum or sing along, or keep time” (:96) in some manner that draws us into involvement, whether voluntary or involuntary, with the music or the performance. Sometimes this participation can be symbolic, as can be the case with “moshing” in heavy metal concerts, with which Donna Gaines makes the parallel that “[i]f you were falling, your friends, peers, scene brothers, your *generation*, would be there to catch you, pick you up, and push you forward” (Gaines quoted by Rosenthal & Flacks 2012:97). Beyond elements of participation such as dancing and singing along in the context of performances, we can also consider people “who create their own ‘dubs’ and ‘mixes’ from what’s available commercially [as] partial creators of a final product” (Rosenthal & Flacks 2012:98), proving that participation can occur in a solitary setting as well as a group setting and thus reinforcing the impact of technology and the connection of social groups via the virtual methods of today.

Musicking and audience reception can impact culture, as well, especially between subcultures. This idea of “homology of subcultures,” as presented by Levi-Strauss, describes “the ways in which different parts [of] subcultures... fit together and reinforce each other” (:99). The symbolism of the music itself reflects its subculture: the “do-it-yourself ethos” in punk music (:100); the vision of a different future and “rebellion and sexuality” of rock and roll (:100); the “honoring and serving [of] ‘the people’” of folk music (:100); the feminist position of “[w]omen’s music in the 1970s and 1980s” (:100), and the “‘ghettocentricity,’ distrust of police, [and] a claiming of the streets” of rap (:100) are all examples of the structural similarities between music genres and their respective cultures.

The creation of group identity in music via audience reception does not begin with a shared ideology, but instead develops this ideology from a “structure of feelings’... involving ‘meaning and values as they are actively lived and felt’ by each individual” (Williams quoted by Rosenthal & Flacks 2012:100), thus leading to the creation of solidarity amongst participants in and receptors of the music. This driving force of music encourages energized unification, a powerful advantage in the framework of protest movements. Within its role as a driving force, music can be conceptualized both as an object and as an activity, with music as an object being “a thing that has a moment of creation, a stability of characteristics across time and place, and potential for use and effects” (Roy & Dowd 2013:37), and music as an activity being something “that never achieves full object status, something unbounded and open, something that is a verb (musicking) rather than a noun” (:38). Both of these concepts in their application to music can be examined for the ways in which they are socially relevant: objects of exchange and musical labor (:37) are examples of music as an object, while ongoing processes such as jazz (:38) are examples of music as an activity.

Beyond the definition of music itself is the question of its usage and the methods through which “people use music to give meaning to themselves and their world” (:38). The form of music remains prevalent in this examination of music, with *textualists* being those who see music as an object and *contextualists* being those who see music as an activity (:39). For textualists, music is often seen as “analogous to language” (:39) and thus is examined commonly through the effect of song lyrics. An example of this is evident in hip-hop songs in which lyrics “[helped] construct an interpretive environment where violence is appropriate and acceptable” (Kubrin 2005:366 quoted by Roy & Dowd

2013:39). However, while this interpretation reflects a textualist approach, the view of a contextualist would encourage the examination of these lyrics to go beyond the possible dictated intentions of the musicians and instead “focus on listeners, who, in the textual approach, are often ignored, imagined, or simply the academics themselves” (:39). Thus the issue of meaning within and surrounding music becomes relevant as the contextualist would argue that “meaning is never purely in the music because there is never ‘a’ meaning” (:39), and that it is perhaps more critical to examine the usage of the music by its listeners rather than the music itself. In the case of protest songs and movements, a successful analysis would require a social context and reaction that lyrics in the absence of their audience could not fully provide: in other words, the techniques utilized in the music should be considered alongside the ideologies and identities of the music and its writer’s target social group and audience.

Considering music as an identity involves taking into account the means through which “individuals construct an identity (a ‘me’) by using music to mark and document important aspects of their lives” (Denora 2000 referenced by Roy & Dowd 2013:40), as well as bearing in mind that music is “something by which to find oneself amid others” (:40). Embracing the music and thus embracing the group does not only “reflect [the] group but plays a performative role in defining it,” thus “signifying both their us-ness and their plight” (:40) which can ultimately lend a hand to the communal aspect of protest movements and the symbiotic sense of structure created by the shared musical experiences that encourage calls to action in protest. Though different individual backgrounds have potential to separate members of a social group, music as a

“technology of the collective” (Bourdieu 1984 quoted by Roy & Dowd 2013:40) can lead to group unification within respective subcultures against shared plights.

Music in a collective sense refers to the process through which “individuals and organizations with their own respective interests come together for delivery of music” (Regev 1998 referenced by Roy & Dowd 2013:41), which in a broader perspective can lead to “collective enactment of genre [highlighting] issues of classification” (Lamont & Molnár 2002 referenced by Roy & Dowd 2013:41). In other words, the collective approach to music has the potential to clarify stratifications and distinctions such as racialization of music via its initial genre in America of “minstrelsy” (:43), as well as the dichotomous gender restrictions women have endured in both popular and classical music (:44). Reaching beyond this, however, is Roy’s concept of “bridging,” which “blurs the linkage between distinctions, as when a musical genre once limited to a particular social group is embraced by other groups” (Lamont & Molnár 2002, Roy 2001, Zerubavel 1991 referenced by Roy & Dowd 2013:44), and which strives to combat underrepresentation of genres such as those associated with “race and hillbilly music” (:45) in favor of making racialization “less blatant and [providing] opportunities for once marginalized genres to reach new audiences” (:45). However, these groups that “are bounded and bridged by music are rarely socially equal” (:46), which provides music with an opportunity in both “sustaining and reconfiguring stratification” (:46). This broad range of social possibilities correlates with the role of music from the contextualist perspective, which would encourage the recognition that in the event of protest music and movements, music has a variety of influential branches that it may extend and thus needs examination within the context of its listener as well as within the specific intentions of its lyrics.

The notion of solidarity strengthens the energetic effect of music when we actually get the chance to express “the emotion that we feel in a group setting” (Collins 2004 referenced by Horsfall 2013:52). From here, this form of group expression can carry “to the next social encounter” via “symbolic objects” and the “memory of solidarity,” ultimately allowing us to “relive the experience” (Horsfall 2013:52) in our lives beyond the instance of the ritual itself. Emile Durkheim refers to this concept as a *collective consciousness*, his definition referenced by Horsfall as “an experience of being ‘in sync’ with others in your group” (:51). Whether in isolated context or in public experience of music, people “[create] a common group identity” (:52), and Durkheim’s collective consciousness can thus lead via the energy of music to his concept of collective effervescence and the belief that ritual “makes us think that others have the same views and the same feelings that we do” (:52). Consequently, the prolonged effect of music and its ability to linger beyond specific social encounters into the memory of individuals themselves can help to aid the efforts of protest movements via the impact of the songs that apply to them.

## II. A Brief History of American Protest Music

Examining the history of protest music in the United States can help us to understand music’s role in social conflicts and the part music plays in calls to action of protest movements today, evident through “the study of stratification and ethnic relations... not when music is treated like another form of signification or a vehicle for lyrics expression, but when it is treated as a special kind of activity that people do” (Roy & Dowd 2013:46). The application of this approach to protest movements in the United

States leading up to and including the Vietnam War reveals the influence of prior movements on the Vietnam War era protest music, and thus sets up a framework through which we may observe the influences of the Vietnam War era on that of the Iraq War. An apt starting point lies in the existence of folk protest music, its evolution across generations, and its effect upon protest movements and sense of community in social worlds, which reveals “the way that musicians and activists themselves explain the importance of singing to their social change work” (Brooks 2013:211-12). The experience of folk protest music possesses characteristics similar to “religious rituals or major popular cultural events” (:211), with rituals specifically involving “reference to overarching cultural codes, [having] a communicative intent, and [generating] powerful emotional responses among participants” (Smith 2007:1 quoted by Brooks 2013:212). The culture of group singing has existed for over 150 years (Brooks 2013:212) and this folk protest music that promotes collective memory includes “melodies of the common people that are easy to learn and sing, that are passed to different generations through oral transmission... and that have a political or social message” (:212), with the intergenerational aspect of folk protest music serving as a major proponent for the lasting impression this music has on its participants. The cultural representation this music can provide not only strengthens ties within a group but also solidifies the image of a “larger culture [, which] is a key aspect of music’s emotional power” (:213). The structure of music itself contributes to this energy.

The examination of American protest music has a necessary beginning in African American music as well as African musical heritage, and consideration of the Abolition Movement helps demonstrate how protest music has evolved throughout the last several

centuries in the United States. In this movement, we see music “encoded with double meanings that highlighted the injustice of slavery” (Brooks 2013:215), and thus provided African Americans with the opportunity to “tell their stories, record experiences, articulate aspirations for justice, vent anger, and protest the institution of slavery (Wright 2006:414 quoted by Brooks 2013:214). These “sorrow songs,” as labeled by W.E.B. Du Bois, encouraged solidarity and energy for protest via the “shared black consciousness among African Americans” (Brooks 2013:214) enslaved at the time. The Abolition Movement has its roots in African American spirituals, and Horsfall examines the emotional energy of the spirituals and the role of Durkheim’s collective consciousness within them. Both African American music and its African heritage were considered primitive upon their introduction (Horsfall 2013:53), which was an ignorant, racially-based notion: African heritage music, despite what appears to be simplistic instrumentation and notation, involves a “complexity and inherent subtlety that can only indicate sophisticated musical traditions” (:53). This music is also “intended for group participation” and involves syncopated rhythms, call-and-response forms, hypnotic and cyclic phrases, repetition (:53) and dense textures (Turino 2001 referenced by Horsfall 2013:53), with the drum being the most important instrument (:53). Thus, the aspects of this music not only are more complicated than otherwise considered as a result of Eurocentric bias, but also encourage the formation of social bonds and “cannot be separated out as an artifact—or a commodity” (:53) in the context of African culture. From this heritage music, early African American music arose in the form of spirituals and rituals for the newly enslaved Africans. These rituals were transformed into a new culture of music as its creators made “use of the common cultural skills they all brought



with them from Africa” (:54) and likewise developed a sense of community via the music. A prominent form of this music was the “ring shout” (:54) that developed as a result of the slaves’ exposure to Christianity. This music connects back in its structure via the pentatonic scale to “pentatonic African melodies... [so] they were easily learned and remembered” (:54), as well as the dance-like movement associated with the singing that was “reminiscent of African dances” (:55). The communal experience of music not only gave way to a sense of solidarity amongst its participants, but also served as a “reconstitution of a culture left behind” (:56). The music helped the slaves in their suffering, serving as a survival technique as well as a therapeutic one, “a cleansing process” (Boyer 1999-2000 quoted by Horsfall 2013:56). The solace that could be taken in the music not only strengthened the bonds of its participants in the moment itself, but was also effectual in a long term sense, as the usage of music progressed into a means by which the enslaved could rebel against their masters via their own coded understanding of their songs.

Ultimately, it is through these original expressions of African American music in slavery that “ragtime, blues, jazz, rhythm and blues, and rap” (:59) emerged. These mediums are strong examples of the longevity of protest songs and movements, and not only serve their specific purpose in history as methods through which slaves could emotionally – and often literally via the songs that held underlying messages concerning escape – experience freedom, but also remain prevalent in present day society both as reminder of their original significance and as encouragement in the face of contemporary social strife. The encouraged solidarity of this movement through music carries over to the collective singing techniques of the Early Labor Movement, during which activists

“wrote parodies of labor relations to the melodies of well-known Christian hymns” (Brooks 2013:214), promoting familiarity via recycled melodies and group energy through the new usage of the music.

It is not surprising that the above movements influenced the collective singing of the Civil Rights Movement, as music lent another form of inspiration to its “activists engaged in high-risk protest activities,” as well as a means for raising “[protestors’] spirits as they were held in lonely jail cells” (:215). Important to the Civil Rights Movement was the bridging element of the music that helped to bring together the variation of “groups that were involved in the... movement” (:215). Some of the key elements of this music were its “easily repeatable choruses” (:215) and songs reflecting on “universal themes of brotherhood and integration” (Eyerman & Jamison 1998 referenced by Brooks 2013:215), which in turn were also elements important to the usage of music during the Anti-Vietnam War Movement. Given its most recent historical origin in comparison to the other movements examined, it may not be surprising that in the Anti-Vietnam War Movement “many musicians and activists connected with the folk protest music of prior social movements,” which helped create a sense of participation in “a larger legacy of activism” (:216). Protest music often includes a nostalgic understanding of how society should be. Music has been linked to social movements wherein it serves as a medium for collective identity and memory. According to Eyerman and Jamison (1998:122), folk music especially provided an important outlet for protest: “it was in the songs that the critique of mass culture – with its homogenizing tendencies, its environmentally destructive products, its dependence on war and weaponry – could be most effectively articulated.” It follows then that the influence of the Vietnam War era on

the Iraq War era is a result of both the successful techniques specific to the Vietnam War era as well as the nostalgia that connects the two. Perhaps this connection is due to its potential to “recharge a part of society with renewed desire for what it [society] represents” (Pratt 1990:24).

In musical communities, nostalgia is not viewed “as simply a symptom of the fragmented past, but rather, a condition to be constructed in the present” (Holyfield et al. 2013:2). In their study of music festivals, Holyfield et al. (2013) found that communities are created and solidarity is experienced among attendees through performance of and participation in music. While this study does not focus upon protest movements and music, it does lend credence to the understanding of how music can influence emotional ties that bind audiences and musicians together. Accordingly, musical communities have the potential to create “heightened emotions and *liminality* (a temporary break in the rules and structures of routine life)” (:4). Perhaps this is because music has a “special status” in invoking memories, however elusive (DeNora 2003:80). Among all forms of art, music is most strongly associated with emotions (:80). Thus, music is a key provider of momentum in many social contexts, applicable as well to the momentum of protest movements and thus as a powerful aide to “the enduring appetite for community” (Holyfield et.al. 2013:20) that compels groups to action.

In conclusion, the early protest movements of the United States and the music that influenced them reflect the connection of the past to the present, and the characteristics of music in social solidarity settings is evident both in non-protest movement forms, such as with music festivals, as well as with larger social aggregates in protest movements, such as that of the Iraq War era. Important to the understanding of folk protest music as it is

carried across generations and across movements are the accounts of specific folk protest music singers: one, Pete Seeger, “explained that the definition of a folk protest song was constantly changing” and thus that “he updated protest songs with new verses to make them relevant” (Brooks 2013:216), a technique some musicians active during both the Vietnam and the Iraq War eras found necessary to employ as well. This dynamic quality of protest music reflects the important role of melodies grounded in the roots of the protest movements that provide the activists with an already familiarized means by which rituals, such as sing-alongs, can occur smoothly and with easy reception to fluctuation as social focus varies from issue to issue. As is evident in the musical and lyrical connections between the Vietnam War era and the Iraq War era, the intergenerational aspect of social movements aids many activists, in which “songs that are associated with one social movement [are] actually the musical legacy of older social movements” (:217) and thus help formulate a tradition between different eras of protest movements and the activists involved in them.

### III. Narrative Analysis: A Framework for Analyzing Protest Songs

Protest songs can be thought of as story-telling devices or narratives that say something about social life. According to Ewick and Silbey (1995:200), narratives are socially organized phenomena that are involved in both “the production of social meanings and the power relations expressed by and sustaining those meanings.” Narratives can be personal stories we tell to make sense of our own lives (Bochner 2002), or they may be collective stories that make their way into broader culture.

Loseke (2009) finds that narratives present in the public arena often include preferred emotional orientations and moral evaluations around “types” of people. In her 2009 study of presidential speeches, she reveals how these narratives influence the public in strategic ways. The study examines four of George W. Bush’s presidential speeches from the September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2001, attacks to reveal how the projection of emotional meaning and emotional appeal via discourse to an expansive audience can be successful by “[developing] a model for empirically examining emotional meaning as social phenomena” (Loseke 2009:497). In response to the September 11<sup>th</sup> attacks and in light of the charge that “[p]residents must persuade citizens that war is necessary” (Moerk & Pincus 2000 referenced by Loseke 2009:498), Bush formulated the narrative structure of the four presidential speeches noted as a means to present the events of September 11<sup>th</sup> as a “melodramatic tale about dramatic confrontation between evil and good” (:499). Loseke examines these speeches for evidence demonstrating how “widespread emotional appeal can be encouraged by the artful deployment of symbolic and emotion codes” (:516). Loseke defines *emotion codes* as “sets of ideas about what emotions are appropriate to feel when, where, and toward whom or what as well as how emotion should be outwardly expressed” (:498), and *symbolic codes* as “complex systems of ideas about how the world works, how it should work, [and] of the rights and responsibilities of people in the world” (:498). Emotion codes and symbolic codes play a role in explaining how “presidential speeches might be read as encouraging particular ways of *feeling*” (:498, original emphasis included) that are critical in the effort to emotionally bring together a nation comprised of people from all walks of life. In order to do this, President Bush utilized the melodrama narrative genre in his speeches through “an intense emotional and ethical

drama based on the manichaeistic struggle of good and evil” (Brooks 1976:279 quoted by Loseke 2009:503), “overwrought emotion” (Singer 2001:45 quoted by Loseke 2009:503), “a ‘vocabulary of clear, simple, moral and psychological absolutes’” (Brooks 1976:28 quoted by Loseke 2009:503), and melodramatic characters including “the morally faultless victim, the ruthless villain, and the heroic savior” (Anker 2005 quoted by Loseke 2009:503). In the speeches, Bush assigns the role of the ruthless villain to the “evil terrorists” (:497) and the roles of both the morally faultless victim as well as the heroic savior to the “good American” (:497). In these roles we see the emotion codes of “sympathy” (:505) for the victim, “hate” (:508) and “anger” (:512) toward and “fear” (:508) of the villain, and “pride and patriotism” (:515) for the hero.

Ultimately, Loseke’s examination of these speeches serves to demonstrate that “one way to emotionally engage citizens in a vast, heterogeneous audience is to cast a wide net by deploying numerous emotion codes and appealing to many emotions” (:516). While this “wide net” of emotions that Bush employed in his speeches brought him success in his presidential ‘duty’ of encouraging citizens to view war as a necessary response, it also demonstrates the power of emotion in narrative rhetoric on a larger societal scale beyond the individual impact. Loseke stresses that “while there has been considerable attention to emotion in individuals, there has been somewhat less attention to questions about the cultural productions of emotional meaning” (:519), and she considers this dearth the result of a lack of inquiry rather than a lack of evidence. The power of presidential speeches for the justification of war may also be found in protest music: narrative analysis may reveal that protest songs possess many of the same qualities in their narratives as these speeches do, and that they have the potential to

encourage via emotional and symbolic codes similar forms of activism and social unity in times of strife.

#### IV. A Comparison of Vietnam and Iraq War Era Protest Music

Louise Haynes defines *protest music* as “songs whose lyrics convey a message which is opposed to a policy or course of action adopted by an authority or by society as an institution” (Haynes 2008:1). Denisoff further argues that protest music “solicits outside support... reinforces the value structure of supporters... promotes cohesion and solidarity among followers... aims to recruit individuals... invokes solutions, and... highlights a social problem or discontent” (Denisoff 1972:2-3 quoted by Haynes 2008:4). Additionally, *magnetic* songs are songs that “hold the members of a movement together and... attract new members to the fold” (Haynes 2008:4), and *rhetorical* songs are songs that “[describe] some social condition, but... [offer] no explicit ideological or organizational solutions” (Denisoff 1972:6 quoted by Haynes 2008:4). These magnetic songs “often [adapt] new lyrics to well-known tunes” (Haynes 2008:8) as well.

The changes we see between the music of the Vietnam War era and the Iraq War era often results from the availability of broadcast media and the changes in technology, in that “[w]hereas radio was the main mode of broadcasting popular music during the years of the Vietnam War, today the Internet is one of the main sources for finding new music” (Haynes 2008:3). However, there are some similarities between the limitations placed upon artists of these eras: both eras saw censorship of what was allowed to be broadcasted on the radio or television, so the audiences of the music received its messages in various ways. For instance, in the 1960s listeners “bought LPs or 45 rpm

discs, and popularity ratings of songs was often based on record sales and on airplay” (:2), while at the turn of the twenty-first century certain Internet sources “offered protest songs which were free to download, copy, and disseminate” (:3) in opposition to corporate censorship. Correlated with this was the rise of websites that gave opportunity to “nonprofessional singers, songwriters, and graphic artists who [used] their skills to produce slideshows or short movies which [used] protest songs as background music” (:3), so not only did the source of the recordings shift, but the creation and distribution of the music itself shifted in its ease of accessibility as well. In conjunction with these shifts, the style of music took a heavier turn: while the protest songs of the Vietnam War era were often characterized by “folk singers strumming and picking their way through the relatively innocuous lyrics on guitars, banjos, and harmonicas” (:2), the style of the Iraq War protest music “turned electric[:] ...electric guitars, basses, and organs turned up the heat on the sound and on the lyrics as the content became more direct and confrontational” (:2).

The results of Haynes’ study reveal a variety of differences between the two eras, as well as some characteristics from the Vietnam War era retained in the Iraq War era. While the songs of the Iraq War era often “[contained] greater detail to specific events of the era, namely the ongoing war” (:6), the music of the Vietnam War era “[contained] fewer references to historical events and figures” (:7). The social issues present in the Vietnam War era music included references to “race, the rich, drugs, rioting... unemployment... population explosion, poverty... and environmental issues” (:7). Not surprisingly, the music of the Iraq War era featured these issues as well, but also highlighted more contemporary – and in some cases, less taboo – issues, such as “401Ks,



radioactive sites, job outsourcing... the working poor and increased poverty at home and abroad... political prisoners and the prison-industrial complex... animal rights, health care, and the KKK” (:7). The social issues of the protest music itself reflect both the changes between eras and the influences and retained aspects of the older era by the new. The specificity of these new topics in Iraq War music contrasts with the musical topics of the Vietnam War that “were generally vague with regard to the issues” (:8), and Haynes suggests the cause to be the lower levels of “censorship when distributing songs through the Internet or through the sales of CDs” (:9). However, the influence of the Vietnam War era on the Iraq War era is evident in the retained sense of idealism from the music of the former by the music of the latter.

## CHAPTER THREE

**Methodology of Narrative Analysis**

In my analysis of song lyrics in protest movements and music, I employ narrative analysis to examine the function of songs used as melodramas for anti-war activism. To understand and identify themes and concepts in an analysis, narratives demonstrate “how stories can be used as a source of data” (Baumgartner 2000, referenced by Lichtman 2014:325). Beneficial in that it does not rely upon self-explanatory data (Bochner 2002:88), narrative inquiry provides us with an opportunity to bridge the gap between quantitative results and conceptual interpretations of research so that we may examine “not only key actors and events but also cultural conventions and social norms” (Coffey and Adkinson 1996:80 quoted by Lichtman 2014:325). Narratives facilitate this form of connection and encourage the approach that “an individual’s experience [is] a central lens for understanding a person” (Dewey referenced by Ollerenshaw and Creswell 2002:331) and thus create a continuous connection between experiences. In these experiences we find meaning, and narrative analysis is useful for interpreting these experiences for the sake of meaning because “[s]tories are the narrative frames within which we make our experiences meaningful” (Bochner 2002:73). The narrators of these stories bring light to the meaning present in lived experience (2002:89).

The recent history and emergence of narrative analysis illuminates the growing popularity of this research method. The first consideration of narrative analysis as a viable method of research occurred in Theodore Sarbin’s 1986 collection of essays, *Narrative Psychology* (Bochner 2002:78), in which Sarbin referred to narrative analysis

as “the storied nature of human conduct” (Sarbin 1986 quoted by Bochner 2002:73). By the 1990s narrative analysis had risen in popularity, perhaps as the result of the new generation of students influenced by “postmodernism and poststructuralism[, which] have challenged and deconstructed our most venerable notions about scientific knowledge and truth” (:79). Concerned with a globalizing approach in academia to “a greater appreciation for divergent rationalities” (Schweder 1986 quoted by Bochner 2002:79) and aware that “neutrality, objectivity, and scientific detachment” (:79) can potentially have oppressive and dominating tendencies, this new approach of narrative analysis encouraged the “[minimization of] the power differential between researchers and participants” (:80). The conventional boundaries of social research do not bind the goals of narrative analysis; instead, this analysis process can push against these boundaries through methods such as an approach to content that undermines the importance of a distinction between fact and fiction (Banks and Banks 1998, Ellis 1995b, Krieger 1983). Thus narrative analysis can encourage an “experience of the experience” (Ellis and Bochner 1992), emphasize “emotion and emotionality” (Ellis 1995b), and promote a “therapeutic experience” (Bochner 2002:90) that allows a synthesis of research and therapy (all above referenced by (Bochner 2002:90).

Ollerenshaw and Creswell define a story in the context of narrative analysis as “a first-person oral telling or retelling of events related to the personal or social experiences of an individual” (Ollerenshaw and Creswell 2002:332). The emphasis on chronology (:332) in narrative analysis makes it unique as a method of research. Ollerenshaw and Creswell also examine two approaches to narrative analysis: the problem-solution approach (:333) and the three-dimensional space approach (:339). The problem-solution

approach involves five steps: these include audiotaping and transcribing the reviews, returning to the transcript to achieve an overall sense of the data (:333), coding for plot structure in the data (:334), organizing these data graphically into “events or attempts,” and sequencing these attempts (:335). The problem-solution approach allows interpretation of a narrative to resemble the interpretation of an actual story, complete with settings, characters, and a plot. Through this chronological and linear method the researcher attempts to “solve the problem” (:343) presented in the narrative. Bochner offers a similar structure for narrative analysis of stories that is comprised of “people depicted as characters in the story... an epiphany or crisis... a temporal ordering of events... and... a point or moral to the story” (Bochner 2002:80). This form of analysis can be useful in examining song lyrics that involve concrete directions or obvious characters: especially with regards to protest music, the problem-solution approach encourages the search for an answer in the problems presented in the narrative. The second model, the three-dimensional space approach, utilizes three different steps for examining narratives for their social interaction content. These steps include “both... personal and social” interaction in the story (Ollerenshaw and Creswell 2002:339), the continuity between events and their place in time before, during, and after the story, and the physical situation or places of the story (:339). This model utilizes a “broader, more wholistic lens” (:343) rather than a focus on structure, as with the problem-solution approach.

While the process of narrative analysis is “a type of research approach, a way to analyze data, [and] a way to present data” (Lichtman 2014:332) approachable through different structures, the goal of narrative analysis is also based on a variety of

assumptions of which the researcher should be cognizant. These assumptions include that “the researcher is part of the research data” (Bochner 2002:93) and that researchers and participants alike impose emotionality and subjectivity on the research (:93). Additionally it is important for researchers to “always be concerned about their obligations” to the individuals and groups they study, and to write their studies both “*for* participants as much as *about* them” (:93, emphasis added). Researchers should also consider the future implications of their research beyond those present and relevant to a specific study, and should encourage their audiences and readers to be considered as “coparticipants, not as spectators” (:93). Bochner professes the goals of narrative analysis and inquiry to be “to keep the conversation going, to activate subjectivity and feeling, to raise consciousness, to promote empathy, and to encourage activism” (:93). With these goals in mind, narrative analysis is an ideal approach for protest music analysis, as it promotes the generalized and conceptual aspects of this music in a multi-perspective and multi-dimensional manner.

### I. Sample Selection

To conduct my analysis I referenced a variety of Internet websites to guide an understanding of and to accumulate protest and anti-war songs of the Vietnam and Iraq War eras regarded as the most impactful and memorable. Within these parameters I sought the songs whose narratives best conveyed their messages through an anti-war lyrical melodrama. In order to make this selection I referenced Loseke and her examination of formula stories, which are story structures comprised of “plots, characters, and morals [that] are recognizable and predictable to audience members”

(Loseke 2012:253). Within the organization of formula stories she identifies two systems of codes: the first is the “symbolic code” (:253) that represents ideas demonstrative of how society functions and is expected to function in correspondence with the roles of its members (:253). Symbolic codes in the messages of protest song lyrics establish present day issues and social norms and serve as spoken means for challenging dominant paradigms. The second form of code is the “emotion code” that serves to evoke appropriate emotional response in the listener to members or aspects of society (:253), often with implication for specific moral judgment. These two codes are prevalent in narrative analysis of song lyrics. Beyond the codes of formula stories, Loseke identifies two main forms of these stories as well: the first form concerns stories of specific individuals about whom the narrative generalizes in order to highlight “features shared by many” (:256), thus encouraging empathy for many through the experiences of one. The second main form of formula stories involves narratives of generalized types and groups described in “non-storied form,” employing description to create a “holistic image” of the constructed character (:256). This involves character descriptions and generalized categories that help to identify groups of people. Because protest songs often utilize these forms through definitive plotlines or generalized sequences of events, I used these parameters as a guideline to select my song samples from the music of the Vietnam and Iraq War eras.

## II. Data Analysis

The process of coding occurs specifically within a cycle of “analyzing data and finding meaning, gathering data, and asking questions” (Figure 12.2, Lichtman

2012:332), and includes an orientation, an abstract, complicating action, and a resolution (Langellier 1989 referenced by Lichtman 2014:333). Lichtman suggests “three Cs of analysis: from coding to categorizing to concepts” (:328), in which the initial coding is created, revisited, categorized, subcategorized, and finally conceptualized (:329). Once the data are organized in this manner, the last part of narrative analysis also involves resolution and coda (Langellier 1989 referenced by Lichtman 2014:333), which summarize the outcome of the narrative and return to the initial and present question of the research. I utilize Lichtman’s “three Cs” in my analysis of Vietnam and Iraq Era protest music through cataloguing of songs based on symbolic codes, which are then equipped with correlating lyrical excerpts from each song and the emotion codes that accompany them. Once I coded these lyrics and categorized them with their respective symbolic codes, I conceptualized their role in anti-war melodramatic narrative and the emotion codes they evoke, drawing on these correlations to structure my findings section. Though my initial coding was comprised of fragmented lyrical excerpts, my findings section is structured to reflect the significance of each song sample as a whole.

To create a representative sample of these songs, I utilized a variety of websites to select ten significant songs from each war era, the frequency of the songs’ appearances raising their chance of inclusion in the sample. My factors for selection were based on release year and lyrical content: for Vietnam, I chose to limit my temporal range to songs from 1965 to 1972, and for Iraq, I limited my selection to songs of the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century that were released after the September 11<sup>th</sup> attacks. The twenty songs I have chosen to sample are listed below, the websites from which I drew them acknowledged as footnotes:

## i. Vietnam

1. Barry McGuire, “Eve of Destruction”<sup>1 2 3 4 5 6</sup>
2. Phil Ochs, “I Ain’t Marching Anymore”<sup>2 3 7</sup>
3. Tom Paxton, “Lyndon Johnson Told the Nation”<sup>2 3</sup>
4. The Fugs “Kill for Peace”<sup>3</sup>
5. Pete Seeger “Bring Them Home”<sup>1 2 3 4</sup>
6. Country Joe McDonald, “I-Feel-Like-I’m-Fixing-to-Die-Rag”<sup>1 2 3 7</sup>
7. Creedence Clearwater Revival, “Fortunate Son”<sup>1 2 5 7</sup>
8. Jimmy Cliff, “Vietnam”<sup>2</sup>
9. Martha Reever & The Vandellas, “I Should Be Proud”<sup>7</sup>
10. Edwin Starr, “War (What is It Good For)”<sup>1 2 6 7</sup>

## ii. Iraq

1. System of a Down, “Boom”<sup>8</sup>
2. Six Feet Under, “Amerika the Brutal”<sup>9</sup>
3. Green Day, “American Idiot”<sup>4 8 10</sup>
4. John Fogerty, “Déjà vu (All Over Again)”<sup>10</sup>
5. Anti-Flag, “Operation Iraqi Liberation” (O.I.L.)<sup>11</sup>
6. Bright Eyes, “When the President Talks to God”<sup>8</sup>
7. Dar Williams, “Empire”<sup>12</sup>
8. Neil Young, “Living With War”<sup>4 13</sup>
9. Michael Franti & Spearhead, “Light Up Ya’ Lighter”<sup>11</sup>
10. Tom Paxton, “George W. Told the Nation”<sup>2</sup>

Justification for these temporal parameters was an interest in representing the height of each war time, in which anti-war songs would be the most valuable for protest. In addition to this was a need for narrowing the song selection time frame to create a

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.examiner.com/article/10-top-anti-war-protest-songs-about-the-vietnam-war>

<sup>2</sup> <http://blogs.cfr.org/lindsay/2015/03/05/the-twenty-best-vietnam-protest-songs/>

<sup>3</sup> [http://www.shsu.edu/lis\\_fwh/book/american\\_renaissance/Protest%20Music2.htm](http://www.shsu.edu/lis_fwh/book/american_renaissance/Protest%20Music2.htm)

<sup>4</sup> [http://usatoday30.usatoday.com/life/music/news/2006-06-29-iraq-music\\_x.htm](http://usatoday30.usatoday.com/life/music/news/2006-06-29-iraq-music_x.htm)

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.nytimes.com/2003/03/09/arts/music-new-songs-old-message-no-war.html?pagewanted=all>

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.tcnj.edu/~unbound/features/protest.html>

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.gilderlehrman.org/history-by-era/sixties/essays/protest-music-1960s>

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.peoplesworld.org/the-best-protest-songs-of-the-decade/?commentSart=10>

<sup>9</sup> <http://www.peoplesworld.org/heavy-metal-s-progressive-journey/>

<sup>10</sup> <http://wiredpen.com/2011/04/23/mixing-media-social-movements-and-popular-culture/>

<sup>11</sup> [http://blogs.villagevoice.com/music/2013/03/top\\_five\\_antiwar\\_songs.php?page=3](http://blogs.villagevoice.com/music/2013/03/top_five_antiwar_songs.php?page=3)

<sup>12</sup> <http://folkmusic.about.com/od/toptens/tp/NewProtestSongs.htm>

<sup>13</sup> [http://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/2013/01/31/was-it-worth-it-iraq-ten-songs-inspired-by-iraq\\_n\\_2589795.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/2013/01/31/was-it-worth-it-iraq-ten-songs-inspired-by-iraq_n_2589795.html)



more concise sample. Song selection for Vietnam was more accessible and uniform as a result of the longer span of time during which the music of Vietnam has solidified into a discernible selection of remembered protest songs. Coupled with its recent place in history and the role of modern technology in the widespread access to different genres of protest music, song selection for the Iraq War era was more complicated and required more sources as fewer collective songs have been deemed demonstrative of the era. This complication was exacerbated by the lack of a single, unified protest movement against the Iraq War in comparison to a greater sense of solidarity present in Vietnam. This dilemma not only affects my sample discretion, but was in fact a point of contention in the music itself that will become evident in the lyrical analyses in the findings section and that I will address in the discussion section of this paper.

## CHAPTER FOUR

**Findings: Themes of Vietnam and Iraq**

The Vietnam War era and the Iraq War era saw a variety of approaches that singer-song-writers used in their anti-war music to rally the public against the war effort. These songs contextualized for the American people the reasons they should be against the war. In order to do this, anti-war musicians recurrently mold a melodrama between social and cultural victims and villains, relevant to both eras but manifested in varying ways. Within the melodramas, several themes arise that point to the villains of war and depict the victims of each era with accompanying symbolic and emotion codes. The main themes found in the Vietnam and Iraq eras include *class and age exploitation*, *distrust of government*, *imperialism* and *blind patriotism*. *Class and age exploitation* includes the young and poor males of the narratives who are targeted for military service; *distrust of government* refers to the implication in the narratives that the listener should be aware of the government's deceitfulness and true intentions; *imperialism* at the hands of the government concerns the efforts of the United States to globally advance itself regardless of detriment to the American people; lastly, *blind patriotism* is described here as over-submission to authority or to military action without reservation.

I. Vietnam War Era Protest

In the context of Vietnam, despite some acknowledgment of the Vietnamese as victims, the cultural context and incorporation of a mandatory draft, the denial of the War by government, and the civil unrest are focal points in anti-war songs of the era. The war

machine itself serves as a more abstract masculine villain (e.g., Uncle Sam, Big Daddy) for the Vietnam era accompanied by the exploitative motivations of the government. The findings are organized to address the themes identified by songs in each era, with the songs analyzed in chronological order of their release (United States release years, when possible), and will include a comparison and contrast at the end of the chapter. Throughout is the overarching theme of villain and victim.

#### i. Vietnam War Era Song Analyses

In his 1965 song “Eve of Destruction,” Barry McGuire urges the listener to recognize the dangers of the looming war and the class and age differences that permeate the setting as precarious elements of the destruction McGuire depicts as imminent.

Barry McGuire, “Eve of Destruction” (July 1965)

The eastern world it is exploding  
 Violence flarin', bullets loadin'  
 You're old enough to kill but not for votin'  
 You don't believe in war but what's that gun you're totin'?  
 And even the Jordan River has bodies floatin'

But you tell me  
 Over and over and over again my friend  
 Ah, you don't believe  
 We're on the eve of destruction

Don't you understand what I'm tryin' to say  
 Can't you feel the fears I'm feelin' today?  
 If the button is pushed, there's no runnin' away  
 There'll be no one to save with the world in a grave  
 Take a look around you boy, it's bound to scare you boy

And you tell me  
 Over and over and over again my friend  
 Ah, you don't believe  
 We're on the eve of destruction

Yeah my blood's so mad feels like coagulating  
 I'm sitting here just contemplatin'  
 I can't twist the truth it knows no regulation  
 Handful of senators don't pass legislation  
 And marches alone can't bring integration  
 When human respect is disintegratin'  
 This whole crazy world is just too frustratin'

And you tell me  
 Over and over and over again my friend  
 Ah, you don't believe  
 We're on the eve of destruction

Think of all the hate there is in Red China  
 Then take a look around to Selma, Alabama  
 You may leave here for four days in space  
 But when you return it's the same old place  
 The pounding of the drums, the pride and disgrace  
 You can bury your dead but don't leave a trace  
 Hate your next door neighbor but don't forget to say grace

And tell me  
 Over and over and over and over again my friend  
 You don't believe  
 We're on the eve of destruction  
 Mmm, no, no, you don't believe  
 We're on the eve of destruction

Present in these lyrics is the symbolic code of *class and age exploitation*, and the exposure of the fact that many of those old enough to fight in the war and experience the gravity of an event such as the taking of another human being's life are at the same time not even old enough to vote in the elections of the politicians who send them into these deadly settings. In this narrative, a portrayal of the government as an abstract villain coincides with the soldier as a specific victim. The song implies that the "boys" are needed to accomplish the acting of killing, and that this exploitation reveals that the government cares more about the soldiers' physical value than their opinions as civilians.

While these lyrics initially provide for an emotion code of resentment of the villain through the symbolic code of *distrust of government*, McGuire repeatedly invokes the symbolic code of *blind patriotism* in the chorus, and directs it to the soldier carrying out the government's work: "You don't believe in war but what's that gun you're totin'?" For the American people, the hypocritical correlation between Red China and Selma, Alabama, is an example that places the United States in the context of the world and reminds us of the disgrace of domestic hatred and discrimination within our own borders that we may like to ignore but ultimately cannot. The narrative encourages anger and self-realization of the danger looming, and continues on to demand a call for action through warning that there will be no going back if the nation and its citizens continue in the same mindset, reminding us that "there'll be no one to save with the world in a grave." It also warns that our current actions are not enough, such as the "legislation" passed by senators and the "marches alone" for integration: here, the narrative implies that too few people working toward an abstract cause cannot be successful in bringing about concrete results, adding a call to interaction between both the government and civilians in order for the best decision to be made and enacted. Thus, through this narrative and call to stronger protest efforts the song presents us with the shortcomings and dangers of both the civilian victims and the political villains in order to demonstrate that compromise and interaction between these two parties will help us end the conflict.

A juxtaposition is presented in the narrative of Phil Ochs' song below: whereas the above narrative serves as a reminder that marching alone cannot bring the social change needed to solve a conflict as great as that of the Vietnam War, marching transforms into resistance on the part of soldiers used up by war. "I Ain't Marching

"Anymore" also depicts a generational dichotomy that exists between previous eras and Vietnam but also serves as an anecdotal depiction from the perspective of the timeless young soldier who blindly participates in wars of imperialism and destruction, but finally resists the fighting.

Phil Ochs, "I Ain't Marching Anymore" (August 1965)

Oh, I marched to the battle of New Orleans  
 At the end of the early British war  
 Young land started growing  
 Young blood started flowing  
 I ain't marchin' anymore

For I've killed my share of Indians  
 In a thousand different fights  
 I was there at the Little Big Horn  
 I heard many men lying, saw many more dying  
 But I ain't marchin' anymore

Well, it's always the old to lead us to the war  
 It's always the young to fall  
 Now look at all we've done with the saber and the gun  
 Tell me was it worth it all?

For I stole California from the Mexican land  
 Fought in the bloody Civil War  
 Yeah, I even killed my brothers, so many others  
 But I ain't marchin' anymore

For I marched to the battles of the German trench  
 In war and I was bound to end all wars  
 Oh, I must have killed a million men  
 Now they want me back again  
 I ain't marchin' anymore

Yeah, it's always the old to lead us to the war  
 It's always the poor who die  
 Now look how far we've come with the saber and the gun  
 Tell me was it worth it all?

For I flew the final mission in the Japanese sky  
 I set off the mighty mushroom roar

When I saw the cities burning I knew that I was learning  
That I ain't marchin' anymore

'Cause I saw into the hearts of the President's men  
I saw money pound like bodies on the floor  
I saw tears traded for dead men's  
Fears made for the buyin'

In the final verse, the Vietnam era becomes a narrative of war that is financially fueled, and equates money and trade, production and consumption with death and sorrow, as if the turmoil is just a product to be bought or sold by the villainous war machine. The lyrics provide a chronology of various wars leading up to Vietnam: the first two stanzas of this song, in which he describes the battles and the deaths he has experienced in the past, preface his assertion that he “ain’t marching anymore.” However, his repeated statement that he “ain’t marching anymore” brings the first two stanzas and the third together to remind us of the government’s misuse of young people as the victims and the ones who are actually doing the fighting. The refrain for each verse and thus each war reminds us that war is fought by the young and the poor but created by the old. The symbolic codes of *class and age exploitation*, *imperialism*, and a *distrust of government* are predominate themes: these codes then guide the listener to think of war in these ways and coincide with emotion codes of sympathy for the young and poor victim marched off to war, but also directs the listener to an emotion code of anger and betrayal toward the villain – the old, the government, and the wealthy. Aimed at the timeless soldier, the narrative is a call to action for soldiers and citizens of the Vietnam War era to resist and question war itself.

The implication that the villains of war act as they do for the sake of profit often occurs through a euphemistic portrayal of a fight for freedom and patriotism that the

government – the villain – itself facilitates. These narratives of “freedom” in relation to war are not new, and can be used to justify participation in war. For example, in President Bush’s victim/hero portrayal of the September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2001 attacks, his speeches imply that freedom is at stake. Loseke’s (2009) analysis of Bush’s speeches points out that Bush “[emphasizes] the enormity of the harm” (2009:513) these attacks caused for the American people, and then appeals to the strength of America through his following call for battle. This form of initial encouragement for war support was seen also with President Johnson in the early days of the Vietnam “conflict.” When Americans became aware the “conflict” in Vietnam was in fact a war that had been escalating, members of the government were targeted more specifically, as seen in Tom Paxton’s 1965 “Lyndon Johnson Told the Nation.”

Tom Paxton, “Lyndon Johnson Told the Nation” (1965)

I got a letter from L.B.J  
 It said, "This is your lucky day"  
 It's time to put your khaki trousers on  
 Though it may seem very queer  
 We've got no jobs to give you here  
 So we are sending you to Vietnam

Lyndon Johnson told the nation  
 Have no fear of escalation  
 I am trying everyone to please  
 Though it isn't really war  
 We're sending fifty thousand more  
 To help save Vietnam from the Vietnamese

I jumped off the old troop ship  
 And sank in mud up to my hips  
 I cussed until the captain called me down  
 Never mind how hard it's raining  
 Think of all the ground we're gaining  
 Just don't take one step outside of town



Lyndon Johnson told the nation  
Have no fear of escalation  
I am trying everyone to please  
Though it isn't really war  
We're sending fifty thousand more  
To help save Vietnam from the Vietnamese

Every night the local gentry  
Slip out past the sleeping sentry  
They go to join the old V C  
In their nightly little dramas  
They put on their black pajamas  
And come lobbing mortar shells at me

When Lyndon Johnson told the nation  
Have no fear of escalation  
I am trying everyone to please  
Though it isn't really war  
We're sending fifty thousand more  
To help save Vietnam from the Vietnamese

We go round in helicopters  
Like a bunch of big grasshoppers  
Searching for the Viet Cong in vain  
They left a note that they had gone  
They had to get down to Saigon  
Their government positions to maintain

And Lyndon Johnson told the nation  
Have no fear of escalation  
I am trying everyone to please  
Though it isn't really war  
We're sending fifty thousand more  
To help save Vietnam from the Vietnamese

Well, here I sit in this rice paddy  
Wondering about Big Daddy  
And I know that Lyndon loves me so  
Yet how sadly I remember  
Way back yonder in November  
When he said I'd never have to go

And Lyndon Johnson told the nation  
Have no fear of escalation  
I am trying everyone to please  
Though it isn't really war

We're sending fifty thousand more  
To help save Vietnam from the Vietnamese.

The narrative is a specific targeting of President Johnson serving to rally the public in protest against the war effort via the appeal to an emotion code of betrayal at the hands of President Johnson, and the lies told to the American public concerning the United States' level of involvement in Vietnam. The soldier is the victim of *blind patriotism* to the untrustworthy "Big Daddy," leading to the symbolic code of the *distrust in government* that results from the information the government kept from the American people in order to maintain early support of the war. The song provides a villainous portrayal of President Johnson's war propaganda through lines such as "We're sending fifty thousand more / to help save Vietnam from the Vietnamese." This combines the positive connotation of phrases such as "saving" Vietnam to both sardonically state we are saving the Vietnamese from themselves as well as to demonstrate the insidiously hidden actual intentions of the American government. "We're sending fifty thousand more" is presented in cold juxtaposition to the trivialization of the war's purpose. Thus, these lines again evoke the emotion codes of betrayal and anger toward the government.

The symbolic code of *class and age exploitation* is present in the narrative use of "This is your lucky day" to portray how the government manipulates young men into accepting their draft. Through the eyes of the soldier in the battlefield, the lyrics put the listener in the militaristic mindset of the soldiers being instructed to think of the ground they are gaining rather than to focus on the terrible conditions, encouraging a sense of masculinity as a defense mechanism against the situation. Lyrics such as the third verse's lighthearted description of the Vietcong donning "black pajamas" to engage in warfare

with the soldiers also buttress this euphemistic trivialization of the battlefield and the reality the soldier is enduring. The sardonic depiction of the soldier in a rice paddy “Wondering about Big Daddy / And [he knows] that Lyndon loves [him] so” shows the soldier’s theoretically groundless hope and misplaced trust in President Johnson exacerbated in his isolation. The soldier’s first person point of view evokes an emotion code of sympathy for him as a victim, as well as an emotion code of anger toward and a sense of betrayal by both the government and Lyndon Johnson, villains who are exploiting the soldiers.

Like Paxton’s depiction of Lyndon Johnson’s cunning exploitation of the soldier and mockingly lighthearted villainization of the Vietnamese, The Fugs’ 1966 song “Kill for Peace” directs lyrics to the soldiers and specifically targets a hatred cultivated toward enemies of war that can lead to *blind patriotism*.

The Fugs, “Kill for Peace” (March 1966)

kill, kill, kill for peace  
 kill, kill, kill for peace  
 near or middle or very far East  
 far or near or very middle East

kill, kill, kill for peace  
 kill, kill, kill for peace  
 if you don't like the people or the way that they talk  
 if you don't like their manners or the way that they walk

kill, kill, kill for peace  
 kill, kill, kill for peace  
 if you don't kill them then the Chinese will  
 if you don't want America to play second fiddle

kill, kill, kill for peace  
 kill, kill, kill for peace  
 if you let them live they may subvert the Prussians  
 if you let them live they might love the Russians

kill, kill, kill!  
kill 'em! kill 'em! strafe them gook creeps!

the only gook an American can trust  
is a gook that's got his yellow head bust

kill, kill, kill for peace  
kill, kill, kill for peace  
kill, kill, it will feel so good  
like my captain said it should

kill, kill, kill for peace  
kill, kill, kill for peace  
kill, it will give you a mental ease  
kill, it will give you a big release

kill, kill, kill for peace  
kill, kill, kill for peace  
kill, kill, kill for peace

kill! kill! kill! kill! kill!

Throughout this song there is a shifting narrative of different means to encourage war support for the soldier. The Fugs' repetition of the word "kill" clashes with the lighthearted tone of the music that does not match the connotation of the word "kill." This constant reiteration serves to demonstrate the soldiers' desensitization to the acts of killing, fighting, and death that is useful in the military as a means to encourage obedience to command. Along with the song's repetition of the irony in "kill for peace," there is directed recognition of cultural *imperialism* through racism whose presence represents the Fugs' demand for a *distrust of government*. The song's first four stanzas employ a narrative perspective regarding imperialism that addresses both justification of killing for peace through disdained cultural differences of those who will be killed ("...the people and the way they talk" / "... their manners or the way they walk") as well

as justification simply as a means to show global prowess over other nations. These misplaced justifications for hatred of the enemy as well as fear of their political associations show the American people that their emotional reaction to the war should be a sense of betrayal as a result of the government's villainy and deceitfulness, rather than hatred and fear.

The "captain" embodies a military culture that represents *distrust of government* as well, and the symbolic code of *blind patriotism* present in the next four stanzas depicts the government and the military's appeal to the excitement for war that they want to elicit from the soldier. Here justification is presented through a narrative of vulgar slang ("strafe them gook creeps!;" "a gook that's got his yellow head bust") and a promise of pleasure ("it will feel so good;" "it will give you a mental ease;" "it will give you a big release") implying that fighting in war is proof of masculinity in the military. The narrative's intentionally heinous portrayal of the Vietnamese implies that the United States is victimizing the Vietnamese people as well. Nevertheless, this song's overall narrative is meant as a condemnation of the rationalizations used for war.

Though the above song utilizes an explicitly dreadful display of patriotic and nationalistic motivations for war participation, the following song appeals to peace by transforming the narrative of American patriotism.

Pete Seeger, "Bring Them Home" (1966)

If you love your Uncle Sam,  
Bring them home, bring them home.  
Support our boys in Vietnam,  
Bring them home, bring them home.

It'll make our generals sad, I know,  
Bring them home, bring them home.

They want to tangle with the foe,  
Bring them home, bring them home.

They want to test their weaponry,  
Bring them home, bring them home.  
But here is their big fallacy,  
Bring them home, bring them home.

I may be right, I may be wrong,  
Bring them home, bring them home.  
But I got a right to sing this song,  
Bring them home, bring them home.

There's one thing I must confess,  
Bring them home, bring them home.  
I'm not really a pacifist,  
Bring them home, bring them home.

If an army invaded this land of mine,  
Bring them home, bring them home.  
You'd find me out on the firing line,  
Bring them home, bring them home.

Even if they brought their planes to bomb,  
Bring them home, bring them home.  
Even if they brought helicopters and napalm,  
Bring them home, bring them home.

Show those generals their fallacy:  
Bring them home, bring them home.  
They don't have the right weaponry,  
Bring them home, bring them home.

For defense you need common sense,  
Bring them home, bring them home.  
They don't have the right armaments,  
Bring them home, bring them home.

A unique song of the Vietnam War era, Seeger's "Bring Them Home" does not fall directly into the definition of narrative melodrama as it appeals to the ethos of the American people through a call to consider the notion that peace is true patriotism. The narrative encourages the listener to consider the possibility of patriotism existing in the

context of the anti-war effort as well. The opening lines of the song reflect a societal love of country and an individual and possessive love of “our boys” as reason to end the war. Through gentle but firm reminders, such as the “right to sing this song,” the lyrics encourage Americans to think of protest as patriotic in an attempt to transform *blind patriotism* into activism as a result of the American people’s recreation of the definition of patriotism, rather than the definition with which the government has already provided them. Seeger clarifies that were it the United States itself being invaded then he would be eager to defend his country, both alluding to the combatant efforts of the Vietnamese against the United States as well as alluding to the military and the government’s misguided position that is not as villainous as it is merely unrepresentative of a fight for the preservation of American society.

Seeger’s lack of an explicit villain is supplanted by his focus on the rationality of the anti-war effort and the irrational techniques of the military that are the reason for their failings in Vietnam: though several stanzas provide examples of concrete weaponry (“test their weaponry;” “planes to bomb;” “helicopters and napalm”), the overall narrative is that the lack of “common sense” itself has created a misguided, though not villainous war. Thus the narrative calls for support of the anti-war movement because the United States’ problems are social rather than technological: the narrative serves as a reminder to the listener that a possession of material weaponry does not justify reckless action.

In contrast to the temperate and rational narrative for peace that Pete Seeger employs in a call to protest, Country Joe and the Fish returns to the mocking narrative in “Kill for Peace” with their 1967 song “The Fish Cheer / I Feel Like I’m Fixin’ To Die Rag.”

Country Joe and the Fish, "The Fish Cheer/I Feel Like I'm Fixin' To Die Rag" (November  
1967)

Gimme an F! F!  
Gimme an U! U!  
Gimme an C! C!  
Gimme an K! K!  
What's that spell? FUCK!  
What's that spell? FUCK!  
What's that spell? FUCK!

Yeah, come on all of you, big strong men, Uncle Sam needs your help again  
He's got himself in a terrible jam, way down yonder in Vietnam  
So put down your books and pick up a gun, we're gonna have a whole lotta fun.

And it's one, two, three, what are we fighting for?  
Don't ask me, I don't give a damn, next stop is Vietnam  
And it's five, six, seven, open up the pearly gates  
Well there ain't no time to wonder why  
Whoopee! we're all gonna die.

Well, come on Wall Street, don't move slow, why man, this is war a-go-go  
There's plenty good money to be made by supplying the Army with the tools of the trade  
Just hope and pray that if they drop the bomb, they drop it on the Viet Cong.

And it's one, two, three, what are we fighting for?  
Don't ask me, I don't give a damn, next stop is Vietnam  
And it's five, six, seven, open up the pearly gates  
Well there ain't no time to wonder why  
Whoopee! we're all gonna die.

Well, come on generals, let's move fast, your big chance has come at last  
Gotta go out and get those reds, the only good commie is one that's dead  
And you know that peace can only be won when we've blown 'em all to kingdom come.

And it's one, two, three, what are we fighting for?  
Don't ask me, I don't give a damn, next stop is Vietnam  
And it's five, six, seven, open up the pearly gates  
Well there ain't no time to wonder why  
Whoopee! we're all gonna die.

Well, come on mothers throughout the land, pack your boys off to Vietnam  
Come on fathers, don't hesitate, send 'em off before it's too late  
Be the first one on your block to have your boy come home in a box.



And it's one, two, three, what are we fighting for?  
 Don't ask me, I don't give a damn, next stop is Vietnam  
 And it's five, six, seven, open up the pearly gates  
 Well there ain't no time to wonder why  
 Whoopee! we're all gonna die.

Following the public utilization of a taboo and anti-establishment expletive, the light and spirited melody of this song significantly contrasts with the ominously sardonic nature of its lyrics. Throughout the lyrics, the villainous masking of the government's true intentions combines with the satirical trivialization of the war, guiding the listener with the symbolic code of a *distrust of government*. The lyrics and movement of the song depict a hurried propaganda for the war reflecting the *class and age exploitation* apparent in the government's aim to manipulate college men, many of who were able to avoid being drafted if enrolled, into participation in the war. In turn, the song also warns of *blind patriotism*, which is present from the opening verse with the initial depiction of patriotic "Uncle Sam" who "needs your help again." While the first appeal is to a sense of generational duty to country, the narrative shifts immediately to persuasion through the lure of thrill ("we're gonna have a whole lotta fun"). The fatalistic turn in the chorus speaks to the deadly consequences of blind patriotism with "Don't ask me, I don't give a damn" and "open up the pearly gates... we're all gonna die."

The song progresses in a quick, sing-song fashion to mirror the excitement that masked the jumbled confusion and lack of social solidarity behind the war effort for both the citizens in America and the soldiers fighting overseas. This theme of speed recurs throughout the song: the emphasis on "don't move slow" demonstrates that the war is also a chance for Wall Street to make money, and "supplying the Army with the tools of

the trade” is in reality supplying American with a pro-war mindset. The urge to “move fast” is also an example of the “generals” emphasis on militaristic speed without thorough consideration of the consequences, and the mandate that we need to bomb “those reds” reflects the symbolic code of *imperialism* with an emphasis on absolute annihilation (“blown ‘em all to kingdom come”). The hope that a bomb would fall on the Viet Cong rather than on the Americans cultivates an “us versus them” mentality and reveals the danger to which America is exposing its soldiers.

Important as well is the omnipresence of masculinity beginning with a call to “big strong men,” but ending with boys returning deceased to their parents. This shift in male characterization is perpetually accompanied by a folksy tone, as though the war is a commercial competition for the American people to win (“this war’s a go go;” “there’s plenty of good money to be made;” “Be the first one on your block to have your boy come home in a box”). The propagandized language is a satirical warning to parents who allow their children to be used by the government for the war, as well as an appeal to the emotion code of sympathy for the victims of war, parents and children alike, and finally as an outrage directed toward the government for facilitating this victimization.

In the following song, the narrative returns to the voice of the soldier. Creedence Clearwater Revival’s “Fortunate Son” draws upon all the major themes with a more concentrated attention to the soldier as a victim.

Creedence Clearwater Revival, “Fortunate Son” (September 1969)

Some folks are born, made to wave the flag  
 Ooo, their red, white and blue  
 And when the band plays "Hail to the Chief"  
 Ooo, they point the cannon at you, lord

It ain't me, it ain't me, I ain't no senator's son, son  
 It ain't me, it ain't me, I ain't no fortunate one, no

Some folks are born, silver spoon in hand  
 Lord, don't they help themselves, y'all  
 But when the taxman comes to the door  
 Lord, the house looks like a rummage sale, yeah

It ain't me, it ain't me, I ain't no millionaire's son, no, no  
 It ain't me, it ain't me, I ain't no fortunate one, no

Yeah, yeah  
 Some folks inherit star spangled eyes  
 Ooh, they send you down to war, lord  
 And when you ask 'em, "How much should we give?"  
 Ooh, they only answer "More! More! More!", y'all

It ain't me, it ain't me, I ain't no military son, son  
 It ain't me, it ain't me, I ain't no fortunate one, one  
 It ain't me, it ain't me, I ain't no fortunate one, no, no, no  
 It ain't me, it ain't me, I ain't no fortunate son, no, no, no

John Fogerty wrote “Fortunate Son” during the Nixon era and stated in a 1993 interview with the Rolling Stone (Goldberg 1993) that he was motivated by what he considered preferential treatment for the wealthy, explicit through this narrative. *Class and age exploitation, blind patriotism* and *distrust of government* are all evident in this song, as socioeconomic status becomes a means for some to avoid war. The wealthy, especially those who inherited their wealth, and the politicians are the clear villains who order the young working class males to war while protecting their own children from participation. The narrative reveals the irony that those firing the metaphorical cannon at the less “fortunate ones” are not the ones who will be fighting and dying in the war.

The emotion code of resentment and anger builds throughout the song in response to this *class and age exploitation*, and the *blind patriotism* of “star spangled eyes” and waving of the flag is portrayed as a luxury for those privileged enough to maintain an

illusion of the mythic “warrior” and the “just warrior” while at the same time distancing themselves from the mortal price and physical toll of the war. The “military son” is a blind patriot and product of the older generation most vulnerable to the myth of just warrior, allowing the villain a further justification for his political stance, as the sons are able to fixate upon a desire for their generation’s chance at the essence of ‘dulce et decorum est’ American glory. The symbolic code of a *distrust of government* expands to include politicians and the wealthy, and guides the listener to view them as exploitative villains who remain exempt from the war. The emotion codes direct the listener to see them as worthy of collective anger and resentment and to feel bitter about the class divisions while guiding the listener to opposite emotions of sympathy for the poor, the uneducated, and the young males driven to war through the draft.

Resembling “Fortunate Son” in its upbeat and uplifting melody that clashes with the gravity of its lyrics, “Vietnam” by Jimmy Cliff provokes sympathy in its listeners through the narrative of a soldier writing home from the war.

Jimmy Cliff, "Vietnam" (1970)

Hey, Vietnam, Vietnam  
 Vietnam, Vietnam  
 Vietnam, Vietnam, Vietnam

Yesterday, I got a letter from my friend fighting in Vietnam  
 And this is what he had to say  
 "Tell all my friends that I'll be coming home soon  
 My time'll be up some time in June  
 Don't forget", he said, "To tell my sweet Mary  
 Her golden lips are sweet as cherry"

And it came from Vietnam, Vietnam  
 Vietnam, Vietnam  
 Vietnam, Vietnam, Vietnam

It was just the next day, his mother got a telegram  
 It was addressed from Vietnam  
 Now Mistress Brown, she lives in the USA  
 And this is what she wrote and said  
 "Don't be alarmed", she told me the telegram said  
 "But Mistress Brown your son is dead"

And it came from Vietnam, Vietnam  
 Vietnam, Vietnam  
 Vietnam, Vietnam, hey, Vietnam  
 Somebody please stop that war now

Vietnam, Vietnam, Vietnam, Vietnam, oh  
 Vietnam, Vietnam, oh  
 Vietnam, oh oh, oh oh  
 Somebody please stop it

Vietnam, Vietnam, oh  
 Vietnam, Vietnam, oh oh, oh oh  
 Vietnam, hey, Vietnam, aha  
 Vietnam, oh oh, yeah

I wanna say now somebody stop that war  
 Vietnam, oh yeah, aha

The narrative begins with a humanization of the soldier, introducing a personal perspective that aids the emotion code of sympathy in his message. The friend's letter lightens the mood of the song and places the listener in a context in which he or she can empathize with the every-day desires, hopes, and dreams of the soldier, revealing the *class and age exploitation* present as the non-elite citizen is drawn unwillingly into a conflict that the politicians and the upper class created. The government and military's trivializing suggestion in the telegram of "don't be alarmed" undermines the tragedy of the war, reflective of their callous effort to maintain support of their pro-war agenda and evocative of a *distrust of government* and the emotion code that the listener should be outraged at the government's insincerity and heartlessness as they strive to retain that

support. The light style and major key of the song contrasts with the lyrics, “somebody please stop that war now,” and not only does the gravity of lyrics conflict with the cheeriness of the song, but also the lack of a stylistic shift away from this cheeriness at the occurrence of the soldier’s death in the narrative represents the atrocity of the war continuing on as though nothing has happened. This absence of stylistic shift to fit with the solemnity of the soldier’s death creates a sense of pity and sympathy for the soldier and his family and friends, as well as a sense of hopelessness and helplessness at the lack of control over the consequences of the war that the American citizens suffer. The narrative thus encourages the listener to feel shocked and angered at the absence of an appropriate reaction to death on the part of those in control (the government and military leaders) while at the same time encouraging a call to action against the war as a means to contest the conflict’s lethal futility. Thus, the unstated government embodied in the “telegram” is the negligent villain of this narrative, unwilling and uninterested in taking responsibility for its victimization of the soldier whom it has lured into this war and then buried with an unsympathetic written notice.

War telegrams are utilized in other protest songs of Vietnam for sympathetic appeal, as seen in the next song. Significant both in the fact that it was Motown’s first release of an anti-war song as well as that it is sung by an African American female vocalist, “I Should Be Proud” provides perspective of a soldier’s significant other enduring loss during the Vietnam War.

Martha Reever & The Vandellas, “I Should Be Proud” (February 1970)

I was under the dryer when the telegram came:  
 "Private John C. Miller was shot down in Vietnam"  
 Through my tears I read: "No more information at this time

He's missin' in action somewhere on the Delta Line"

And they say that I should be proud; he was fightin' for me  
 They say that I should be proud, those too blind to see  
 But he wasn't fightin' for me, my Johnny didn't have to fight for me  
 He was fightin' for the evils of society

Now I prayed night & day that my Johnny wouldn't die  
 Love, faith & hope was all that kept me alive  
 Then six weeks later came that cold and heartless letter:  
 "Private Johnny was killed in action, number 54327"

And they say that I should be proud; he was keepin' me free  
 They say that I should be proud, those too blind to see  
 But he wasn't fightin' for me, my Johnny didn't have to die for me  
 He was fightin' for the evils of society

They shipped him home with medals of honor and glory  
 Even our local paper ran a front-page story

But the whole time gave him praisin' & said how honored I should be  
 But I don't want no superstar, just the good man they took from me

And they tell me I should be proud; he was fightin' for me  
 They say that I should be proud, those too blind to see  
 But he wasn't fightin' for me, my Johnny didn't have to die for me  
 He's a victim of the evils of society  
 I should be proud of my Johnny  
 They tell me that I should be proud; they just don't want Johnny for me  
 They tell me that I should be proud of my Johnny...

This narrative emphasizes that the government does not know the soldier's intentions for participation in the war, rather than that the soldier is fighting without understanding why he is there. By depicting the soldier as "fightin' for the evils of society," the narrative humanizes the blind patriotic soldier as "Private John C. Miller," whose desires are neither ill-intended nor significantly different from the desires of the American people. By providing the soldier with a name, the narrative encourages a strong emotion of sympathy as the listeners can imagine their own loved ones as soldiers, and

calls for the listener to feel angry not only as a result of *distrust of government*, but also because of the government's ignorance of the soldier's desire to serve his country. This emotion of sympathy is depicted as well through the medals of "honor and glory" Private Miller receives that to the narrator are a misrepresentation of the "good man they took" from her, as his attentions are truly patriotic while those of the government are not. *Age and class exploitation* is also evident as it becomes clear that the government values the soldier not for his ideologies and principles concerning his purpose as a soldier, but rather for his role as a mechanized pawn in its war; this is furthered by the numeric identification of him ("54327"). Thus the narrative implores the listener to resent the government for its exploitative techniques as well as feel outrage at the government for neglecting to show compassion to the soldiers who have died.

The soldier is a victim not because he is in a position of helplessness as we would see when sympathy is evoked for those drafted against their will. Instead, because he is humanized through his principle of fighting "for the evils of society" to which he succumbs as victim in the final verse, he is enshrined as a hero for the American people and for his cause, and as a patriot whose courage and morality has been undermined and masked by the villain of the narrative, the government. To have his significant other as the narrator for the story of his death highlights his bravery and invokes sympathy in the listeners as they picture themselves in her position.

Released just months after Martha Reeves and the Vandellas' premier anti-war song for Motown, Edwin Starr's 1969 Motown release of "War, What is it Good For?" addresses the war itself as an abstract villain.



Edwin Starr, "War (What is It Good For?)" (June 1970)

War, huh, yeah  
What is it good for  
Absolutely nothing  
Uh-huh huh  
War, huh, yeah  
What is it good for  
Absolutely nothing  
Say it again, y'all

War, huh,  
What is it good for  
Absolutely nothing  
Listen to me

Ohhh, war, I despise  
Cause it means destruction  
Of innocent lives

War means tears  
To thousands of mothers' eyes  
When their sons go to fight  
And lose their lives

Ooh, war, huh  
Good God, y'all  
What is it good for  
Absolutely nothing  
Say it again

War, whoa,  
What is it good for  
Absolutely nothing  
Listen to me

War, it ain't nothing  
But a heartbreaker  
Friends only to the undertaker  
Ooooh, war  
It's an enemy to all mankind  
The point of war blows my mind  
War has caused unrest  
Within the younger generation  
Induction then destruction  
Who wants to die

Aaaaah, war-huh  
Good God y'all  
What is it good for  
Absolutely nothing  
Say it again  
War, huh  
What is it good for  
Absolutely nothing  
Listen to me

War, huh, yeah  
What is it good for  
Absolutely nothing  
Come on, let me hear ya

War, it ain't nothing but a heartbreaker  
It's got one friend  
That's the undertaker  
War has shattered  
Many a young mans dreams  
Made him disabled, bitter and mean  
Life is much too short and precious  
To spend fighting wars these days  
War can't give life  
It can only take it away

Ooooh, war, huh  
Ooh yeah  
What is it good for  
Absolutely nothing  
Say it again, y'all

War, whoa,  
What is it good for  
Absolutely nothing  
Come on, sing it

War, whoa,  
Come on and shout it, y'all  
What is it good for  
Absolutely nothing  
Come on, come on now

It ain't nothing but a heartbreaker  
Friends only to the undertaker

Peace, love and understanding  
 Is there no place for them today  
 They say we must fight to keep our freedom  
 But Lord knows there's got to be a better way

Ooooooh, war, huh  
 Good God y'all  
 What is it good for  
 absolutely nothing  
 Say it again, y'all

War, huh  
 What is it good for  
 Absolutely nothing  
 Say it again, y'all  
 What is it good for  
 Absolutely nothing

In this narrative there is an “induction” of soldiers into the war by the government with a positive and honorable connotation followed by a “destruction” and tarnishing of that honor. Although the villain of the narrative is more abstract, the victim is specific, and lyrics provide an emotion code to sympathize and grieve with the families of the lost soldiers. Additionally, the lyrics direct the listener to feel anger and disgust toward war in general, alluding at the end to the soldier’s victimization as a fatal result leading to the “destruction of innocent lives.” However, this song appeals best to civilian emotional fears and focuses on the death of the soldiers rather than the suffering they endured in the aftermath of the war: addressing the soldier’s return from war that makes “him disabled, bitter and mean,” the narrative depicts a civilian perspective of the veteran rather than the reasons for the veteran himself to feel alienated and broken through his personal perspective and experiences. The narrative presents reason for a *distrust of government* in response to the misguided political figures who “say we must fight to keep our freedom” as a means to encourage public support of the war. The irony of ‘peace through war’ and

the symbolic code of *imperialism* reveal that our fight for freedom may in reality be a fight for a nationalistic stronghold over another country irrelevant to domestic American safety, providing a dichotomy in mindset between the focus on “freedom” that may be more relevant to an older generation in contrast to the desire for “peace, love, and understanding” that was a focus of the younger generation in their protest against the war. However, because of the narrative’s lack of specific reasons to oppose the war, the lyrics facilitate an all-encompassing song for an audience of protestors with many different backgrounds and motivations for anti-war activism; because the lyrics remain abstract and speak to the pathos of war in general, the narrative appeals to this variety of perspectives. The song’s repetitive style encourages participation and serves as a resounding protest song, applicable not only for Vietnam but for war time protest in general.

## ii. Conclusion of Vietnam War Era Song Analyses

Singer song-writers of the Vietnam War era voiced their calls to protest through a variety of techniques, as seen in the ten songs examined from the time period. Through the utilization of narratives that evoke a range of emotion codes frequently for sympathetic, angered, resentful, and outraged reactions, these narratives guide listeners to rally against the war and the villains authorizing the conflict. Symbolic codes arise in the narratives for *age and class exploitation* as well as for *blind patriotism* and a *distrust of government*; singer song-writers encourage the American people to recognize and understand these symbolic codes so that citizens may have motivation to rally against the villains directing these codes. An emphasis on *imperialism* as a symbolic code in these

songs exposes the political incentives for the war that the government masked in patriotism, honor, and civic duty. In addition to the government, villains of Vietnam War era protest music also manifest as corporations and the wealthy elite who exploit and victimize American citizens, most notably American soldiers who had no choice but to succumb to the draft. These symbolic and emotion codes present in the melodramas of Vietnam War era protest songs return to protest music of the Iraq War era as contemporary singer song-writers use them as points of reference for their own anti-war music.

## II. Iraq War Era Protest

The media, corporations and imperialism, and the complacent American public arise as villains in the Iraq War era in addition to the government and wealthy elite present in the Vietnam War era. In the Iraq era the villain often solidifies into singular members of government, policies, and political battles, reflective in a shifting lyrical focus to technological and social modernization. In addition to these specified villains, the rise of this passive villain of the American public couples with the emotion codes of ridicule of and resentment toward the public who are turning a blind eye to the problem, continuing about their lives without real concern to the actions of the United States against the Iraqi people, and allowing the media to desensitize them to the violence. From here stems the rise of the Iraqi people as victims of American imperialism depicted in Iraq War era anti-war music, in addition to the victimized soldier reminiscent of the Vietnam War era. Symbolic codes of *class and age exploitation, distrust of government, imperialism, and blind patriotism* arise in the narratives of this era as well, with a

growing emphasis on imperialism and potency of the distrust in government. Still present is the emotion code of sympathy, as well as a sense of betrayal, anger, and outrage in this era that becomes more prominent both in the narratives as well as the musical styles themselves. The passive villain of civilian complacency reflects the problem of deficient participation and activism against which many singer song-writers of the Iraq War era fight.

#### i. Iraq War Era Song Analyses

System of a Down's narrative in their 2002 song "Boom!" represents the presence of unfocused anger in the voices of many anti-Iraq War musicians, and a sense of resentment directed at those who either do not share the singer song-writers' viewpoints or are unwilling to embrace and concern themselves with the messages and intentions of those against war.

#### System of A Down, "Boom!" (November 2002)

I've been walking through your streets,  
 Where all your money's earning,  
 Where all your building's crying,  
 And clueless neckties working,  
 Revolving fake lawn houses,  
 Housing all your fears,  
 Desensitized by TV,  
 overbearing advertising,  
 God of consumerism,  
 And all your crooked pictures,  
 Looking good, mirrorism,  
 Filtering information,  
 For the public eye,  
 Designed for profiteering,  
 Your neighbor, what a guy.

BOOM, BOOM, BOOM, BOOM,

Every time you drop the bomb,  
You kill the god your child has born.  
BOOM, BOOM, BOOM, BOOM.

Modern globalization,  
Coupled with condemnations,  
Unnecessary death,  
Matador corporations,  
Puppeting your frustrations,  
With the blinded flag,  
Manufacturing consent  
Is the name of the game,  
The bottom line is money,  
Nobody gives a fuck.  
Four thousand hungry children leave us per hour  
from starvation,  
while billions spent on bombs,  
creating death showers.

BOOM, BOOM, BOOM, BOOM,  
Every time you drop the bomb,  
You kill the god your child has born.  
BOOM, BOOM, BOOM, BOOM  
BOOM/BOOM/BOOM/BOOM/BOOM/BOOM/BOOM

Why, why, why, why must we kill, kill, kill, kill, our own, own, own, own kind...

BOOM, BOOM, BOOM, BOOM,  
Every time you drop the bomb,  
You kill the god your child has born.  
BOOM, BOOM, BOOM, BOOM  
BOOM/BOOM/BOOM/BOOM/BOOM/BOOM/BOOM/BOOM  
Every time you drop the bomb.

The depiction of the American people in System of a Down's song "Boom!" reveals a passively malicious version of *blind patriotism* manifested as blind every-day social processes. The "blinded flag" presents an alternative phrasing of "blind patriotism;" furthermore, the "matador corporations" in competition are causing this blind patriotism through their "manufactured consent" so that they can promote their own messages and motivations. Thus, though the narrative depicts the American people as

passive villains in this era, the government still merits blame for creating an environment conducive to this complacency: through this *distrust in government* the narrative presents, there arises emotion codes of outrage toward the government and a resentment toward and ridicule of the complacent American public. The fury in the tone of the narrative demands the American people recognize the harm their apathy has caused, as well as open their eyes to the government's facilitating their lack of participation for its own corporative benefit.

By addressing the "four thousand hungry children" who die while money is spent on defense, the narrative urges the listener to see these children as indirect victims of war, not because of the war itself, but because the war turns us away from addressing issues in need of attention. Through this imploring of sympathy for those suffering as a result of this neglect, the narrative also facilitates emotion codes of outrage and anger toward the government. The narrative blames this neglect on capitalist *imperialism* and a lust for money through the expanding control of the government and corporations, as well as through reference to the "modern globalization" that is "coupled with condemnations:" this globalized expansion and competition reflect the means through which the government justifies its spread of power and oppression in the Middle East. The variety of voices shouting the word "boom!" throughout the song reflects the message of the narrative that it is a multiplicity of individuals, organizations, and institutions who are ultimately exacerbating the same problem, thus distributing the blame of the war to many different characters. Through this, System of a Down can call for activism against the war by laying blame and responsibility on the Americans themselves, as well as on the American government.



The representation of media and corporations as deceptive villains for the blindness they perpetuate for the American people appears in Six Feet Under's 2003 song "Amerika the Brutal," in which the narrative specifies the president as a villain, draws on past knowledge of Vietnam, and declares a right to freedom of speech as a means to encourage protest.

Six Feet Under, "Amerika The Brutal" (September 2003)

I'd rather die, than to live in this fucked world  
Mr. President, I'm not here to do your dirty work  
Alone, I think I'm fighting a losing battle  
Worth dying, not for oil

No war, Amerika the brutal  
Listen, it's a fucking joke  
And they make you believe it, on the TV

That's how they deceive you  
I watch and I listen and I question their reasons  
You know what, I don't fuckin' believe em

No war Amerika the brutal  
When I want to know the future  
I look into the past, I think of my best friend  
And his stories of Vietnam

And now I got a cousin fighting  
In Iraq and I want her, coming back  
I'm not afraid to speak my own mind  
I don't use the first amendment to hide behind

I'm guaranteed that freedom, I'm born with that right  
And for that I'm ready to fight  
I'd rather die than to live in this fucked world  
Fake president, I'm not here to do your dirty work

Alone, I think, I'm fighting  
This losing battle, worth dying  
No war, Amerika the brutal

Opening with an address to “Mr. President,” the narrative immediately addresses the theme of *imperialism* and the fight for oil as an element of deception the government uses to justify war in Iraq, the angry lyrics calling for a sense of outrage and unrest from the listener toward the *exploitation* of the soldiers used to carry out this agenda. The narrative draws upon a *distrust in government* as it encourages listeners to watch, listen, and question the government and the president as “they deceive” the America people and perpetuate *blind patriotism* through television and the media. A dark play on America the Beautiful, the repetition of “Amerika the Brutal” reinforces the anger in this narrative and the brutality of the exploitative methods of the government upon its own people “to do [its] dirty work,” as well as the insensitivity and carelessness of the imperialistic desires for oil through the war.

In addition to a call for anger and outrage, the narrative invokes sympathy and reasonableness by drawing a correlation between a veteran from Vietnam and a family member currently in Iraq. This encourages the audience to oppose the war via appeal to historical evidence as well as to sympathize with the timeless effect of war upon the soldiers who fall victim to the consequences of illegitimate conflict. The narrative continues from this correlation to remind listeners the first amendment is not only a mechanism through which to protest the war, but also a right that should be used in active protest rather than as a passive protection “to hide behind.” The lack of fear the narrative conveys concerning censorship and repercussions of speaking out in protest helps encourage listeners to do the same, now with an appeal to an alternative approach to patriotism: after the narrative’s focus upon the problems with the political motivations of the war, it shifts to giving an incentive to fight against the war in favor of the country,

freedom, and the rights available to the American people in the Constitution. This narrative of unafraid but outraged patriotism not only provides listeners with a reason to be angry, but also provides them with a patriotic justification to take action in solidarity against the conflict in Iraq.

The deceptive villain present in Iraq War protest songs often adapts to include complacent American citizens as villains because of the *blind patriotism* they embrace: Iraq War singer song-writers frequently vocalize their anger toward these Americans who choose to embrace the appearance of blindness as a façade for their lack of desire to address the iniquity of the war. Green Day encapsulates this anger toward complacent American citizens and the manipulations of the villainous media in their 2004 song “American Idiot.” Most clearly anti-war when taken in context of their 2004 album of the same title, the song “American Idiot” is an appropriate choice for this sample as a result of its popularity and anti-government nature.

Green Day, “American Idiot” (August 2004)

Don't wanna be an American idiot.  
 Don't want a nation under the new mania  
 And can you hear the sound of hysteria?  
 The subliminal mind fuck America.

Welcome to a new kind of tension.  
 All across the alienation.  
 Where everything isn't meant to be okay.  
 Television dreams of tomorrow.  
 We're not the ones who're meant to follow.  
 For that's enough to argue.

Well maybe I'm the faggot America.  
 I'm not a part of a redneck agenda.  
 Now everybody do the propaganda.  
 And sing along to the age of paranoia.

Welcome to a new kind of tension.  
All across the alienation.  
Where everything isn't meant to be okay.  
Television dreams of tomorrow.  
We're not the ones who're meant to follow.  
For that's enough to argue.

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.

Welcome to a new kind of tension.  
All across the alienation.  
Where everything isn't meant to be okay.  
Television dreams of tomorrow.  
We're not the ones who're meant to follow.  
For that's enough to argue.

Beginning with immediate accusations about the tumult in American society, the narrative implies a drastic shift in news coverage that is happening at a rapid rate and surreptitious manner, desensitizing the American people as an “idiot population” embracing the “new mania” of overhyped live news. Though the narrative directs insults toward the citizens, it does so to reflect also that the nation itself has become a victim to this hysteria and hypertension prevalent in the face of war with Iraq. The theme of the nation being victim to the media’s control repeats throughout the narrative, drawing on the media’s utilization of modern technology and digital resources to entrance its audience. The narrative blames the possibility of this manipulation on the increasingly individualized and alienated population that is thus more susceptible to falling victim to single sources of news. The narrative labels the modernization of this news coverage through lines such as “new kind of tension,” wherein the heavily digitalized and constantly updating media serves as a villain captivating the susceptible American public.

In turn, the narrative accuses the nation of *blind patriotism* as its gullible citizens focus on the sensationalized coverage of the war from the battlefield, embracing the media's romanticized promise of a uninterrupted feed of televised war coverage.

The narrative also depicts the polarization of American values by pitting the "faggot America" and the "redneck agenda" against each other, demonstrating the manner through which the public is turning against itself at the hands of the tense and fear-mongering propaganda of the media and the government. This language could also reflect the stereotypes associated with anti-war versus pro-war mindsets, with those against the war weakened and feminized through the term "faggot" and those for the war hyper-masculinized through the term "redneck agenda." These accusations serve to evoke outrage and betrayal from its listeners toward the media and ultimately the government, thus calling for a *distrust of government* that encourages these emotions of anger as listeners are expected to recognize that they have embraced their own deception. Through this rage and the declaration that "we're not the ones who're meant to follow," the narrative calls for protest against the war effort itself that the government maintains through the media's manipulation of the war into a sensational spectacle to which the American citizens have complacently fallen victim.

The depiction of the war as a spectacle arises in other narratives of Iraq War era protest music, as in John Fogerty's 2004 song "Déjà vu (All Over Again)" in which Vietnam's historical precedent functions as a parallel to the baseless losses and malicious intentions of the conflict in Iraq.

John Fogerty, "Deja Vu (All Over Again)" (September 2004)

Did you hear 'em talkin' 'bout it on the radio

Did you try to read the writing on the wall  
 Did that voice inside you say I've heard it all before  
 It's like déjà vu all over again

Day by day I hear the voices rising  
 Started with a whisper like it did before  
 Day by day we count the dead and dying  
 Ship those bodies home while the networks all keep score

Did you hear 'em talkin' 'bout it on the radio  
 Could your eyes believe the writing on the wall  
 Did that voice inside you say I've heard it all before  
 It's like déjà vu all over again

One by one I see the old ghosts rising  
 Stumblin' 'cross Big Muddy  
 Where the light gets dim  
 Day after day another Mamma's crying  
 She's lost her precious child  
 To a war that has no end

Did you hear 'em talkin' 'bout it on the radio  
 Did you stop to read the writing at the wall  
 Did that voice inside you say  
 I've seen this all before  
 It's like déjà vu all over again  
 It's like déjà vu all over again

Drawing repeatedly on the notion of déjà vu allows this narrative to describe the Iraq War from a perspective of lived experience, reminding the listener that the shadowy intentions of the Vietnam War can be relevant to the Iraq War as well. The narrative oscillates between a somber description of the dying soldiers and a depiction of the “networks” and radio talks keeping score as though the war is an innocuous numbers game. The modernization of news coverage arises as an element in the lyrics through the myriad media outlets covering the war, competitively vying for views through sensationalist stories of body counts and violence. The multitude of networks serves as the villain in this narrative with their callous coverage of the soldiers who have fallen

victim to the conflict. Furthermore, the soldiers are depicted as “old ghosts rising” as though these are the same soldiers who fought in Vietnam, alluding to the symbolic code of *age and class exploitation* as contemporary boys from the same historically subjugated social classes fight in their government’s ill-intentioned war. This depiction of the victim ends with an appeal to sympathy from the listener for the soldier’s mother. The description of the victimized “child” to the “war that has no end” serves to blur the lines between the reasons for the Vietnam and Iraq Wars. Through this, the narrative bids the listener to view the tragedies of the two wars as one and the same on a perpetuated continuum of violence and death, across generations and without the context of a specific time.

This narrative of weary nostalgia calls less for rage and anger and more for a sense of betrayal and resentment from the listener in addition to a sense of sympathy for the soldiers. The narrative evokes these emotions in response to a *distrust of the government* for allowing history to repeat itself with the Iraq War. The utilization of second person inquiry encourages the listener to embrace the sense of déjà vu the narrative references, reinforcing the narrative’s call to protest against the Iraq War.

Characteristic of the angry music that permeates the Iraq War era, Anti-Flag’s 2003 song “Operation Iraqi Liberation (O.I.L.)” fuels indignation against the government in the harshness of the music and the blunt and sardonic character of the lyrics’ narrative:

Anti-Flag, "Operation Iraqi Liberation (O.I.L.)" (October 2004)

This is a tale of liberation, this dedication song  
Broadcast it from all stations!

This tribute, this salute  
cold hard facts one can't refute

#1 liberators in the world  
can kill better than ice is cold!

To save you WE MAY HAVE TO KILL YOU!  
For freedom YOU MAY HAVE TO DIE!  
#1 at liberation  
liberating life from bodies, helping spirits fly...  
Freedom from... LIFE!

This is a tale of liberation, this dedication song  
Broadcast it from all stations!

This tribute, this salute  
cold hard facts one can't refute  
number one liberators in the world  
can kill better than ice is cold!

To save you WE MAY HAVE TO KILL YOU!  
For freedom YOU MAY HAVE TO DIE!  
Number one at liberation  
liberating life from bodies, helping spirits fly...

THE GOVERNMENT LIES!  
THE MASSES DIE!  
THE MILITARY LIES!  
AND WE ALL DIE!

BROADCAST IT FROM ALL STATIONS!  
THIS IS OUR LIBERATION SONG!  
BROADCAST IT FROM ALL STATIONS!  
THIS IS OUR LIBERATION SONG!  
BROADCAST IT FROM ALL STATIONS!  
THIS IS OUR LIBERATION SONG!  
BROADCAST IT FROM ALL STATIONS!

THIS IS OUR LIBERATION SONG!

Opening with a repeated line concerning Iraq's liberation, the song title itself plays on "Operation Iraqi Freedom," reworded to accuse the government of placing its true intentions in oil rather than freedom, thus invoking a *distrust of government* as well as *imperialism*. Already from the beginning of the narrative is a call for an outraged and



angry emotional response to these symbolic codes on the part of the listener. A clear victim and villain arise near the bridge of the song, creating an ideal melodrama as the narrative directly labels the “government” and the “military” as those who lie and the “masses” and ultimately everyone (“AND WE ALL DIE”) as the victims who are killed as a result. In this specific narrative of the Iraq War era, the mass victims manifest as the Iraqi people. By addressing the civilian casualties of Iraq, the narrative provides the listener with an incentive to protest the war that is not in relation to the war’s effect on American citizens, evoking sympathy for these civilians coupled with outrage at the United States for their deaths. Nevertheless, the final line claiming that “we all die” serves as an urgent reminder that should the war continue and not be protested, its lethality will take a toll upon Americans, whether civilians or soldiers, as well. The symbol of imperialism endures as the first person narrative labels itself and thus the United States as the “number one liberators,” using this ranking as synonymous to the United States being the “number one” killers. The all-caps lines are shouted, with the narrative uncompromisingly emphasizing the connection between “helping” the people and murdering them. By “broadcasting” their message “from all stations,” the government seeks support for American presence in Iraq through utilization of widespread media and information outlets, allowing the narrative to draw in the element of modern technology and the immediacy with which their message can spread.

The narrative is referred to as a “tribute” and “salute” to the liberating United States government, in a sarcastic nod to the honor that the United States and President Bush embrace as they “save” and “liberate” the Iraqi people. The “cold hard facts” reflect the manipulation of the government’s presentation of the Iraq War to the American

people as though it is the best and only answer, allowing the narrative to allude to the ways through which the government maintains a sense of *blind patriotism* in its citizens. Ultimately, despite the government's "liberation" that the narrative sardonically addresses, the repetition of the line "This is our liberation song" is Anti-Flag's technique for rousing the listener to protest the war.

In addition to the continued focus on *imperialism* in Iraq War era protest music, Bright Eyes addresses the war through the role of religion in their 2005 song "When the President Talks to God," relevant as a broader contemporary cultural topic and as a tool of manipulation in the government's effort to invoke war support from the American public.

Bright Eyes, "When The President Talks To God" (May 2005)

When the president talks to God  
 Are the conversations brief or long?  
 Does he ask to rape our women's rights  
 And send poor farm kids off to die?  
 Does God suggest an oil hike  
 When the president talks to God?

When the president talks to God  
 Are the consonants all hard or soft?  
 Is he resolute all down the line?  
 Is every issue black or white?  
 Does what God says ever change his mind  
 When the president talks to God?

When the president talks to God  
 Does he fake that drawl or merely nod?  
 Agree which convicts should be killed?  
 Where prisons should be built and filled?  
 Which voter fraud must be concealed  
 When the president talks to God?

When the president talks to God  
 I wonder which one plays the better cop:

“We should find some jobs. The ghetto's broke.”  
 “No, they're lazy, George, I say we don't,  
 Just give 'em more liquor stores and dirty coke”  
 That's what God recommends

When the president talks to God  
 Do they drink near beer and go play golf  
 While they pick which countries to invade  
 Which Muslim souls still can be saved?  
 I guess God just calls a spade a spade  
 When the president talks to God

When the president talks to God  
 Does he ever think that maybe he's not?  
 That that voice is just inside his head  
 When he kneels next to the presidential bed  
 Does he ever smell his own bullshit  
 When the president talks to God?

I doubt it, I doubt it

Central to this narrative is a *distrust of government* specified through President Bush, who serves as the narrative's villain in alliance with God. Additionally the narrative addresses *class and age exploitation*, present in the opening stanza with “poor farm kids” depicted as victims of military conflict, as well as the *imperialistic* political and economic intentions of the government as with an “oil hike” the narrative wonders if God suggested. The victim manifests as many different members of society, mostly lower class citizens and racial minorities, to include prisoners and Muslims. While the audience might expect a conversation with God to be a symbolically sacred personal connection, the narrative's materialistically political and economic discussion between President Bush and God contradicts this expectation. Through this image the narrative highlights the atrocities occurring under the watch of the president, evoking emotions of betrayal toward and resentment of the president's usage of religion as justification. This is

furthered in the second stanza in which the narrative poses questions concerning a “black and white” approach to conflict, imploring the listener to take issue with the president’s encouragement of American citizens to maintain and defend a specific opinion without giving thought to the gray area that can exist between contrasting viewpoints. The vitriolic melodrama of this narrative thus invokes an emotion code of resentment toward the president.

The passive voice of the third stanza allows the narrative to depict President Bush as unaccepting of accountability and responsibility for his actions, utilizing phrasing such as who “should be killed,” what “should be built,” and what “fraud must be concealed.” Because of the role of religion in American society, the *blind patriotism* of these lines manifests to demonstrate how through religion the president has shifted blame from himself to God for giving him orders he must follow, and in turn how the American citizens have accepted this as a justifiable and arguably patriotic excuse. As the narrative continues, the trivialization of the issues discussed between President Bush and God evokes an emotion of anger toward the president for his misuse of religion in search for illegitimate validation. The narrative furthers this anger by presenting God and the president as equals, but ends by shifting this relationship between the president and God to depicting the president as God himself, drawing again on *blind patriotism* in that the president is not even aware that he is convincing himself of his own lies. With this shift in the president’s divinely righteous role and the ending line of “I doubt it,” the narrative closes by warning of the danger in allowing the president too much control, as well as the risk the American people pose for themselves should they remain compliant and not

recognize the need to organize against the manipulative efforts of the president and the government.

Deviating from the characteristically angry music of the Iraq War era though continuing Bright Eyes' reference to religion and its role in Bush's decisions concerning the Iraq War, Dar Williams addresses the government's approach to the war and its citizens through political exploitation in her 2005 song "Empire."

Dar Williams, "Empire" (September 2005)

Who's afraid of the sun?  
 Who would question the goodness of the mighty?  
 We who banish the threat,  
 When your little ones all go nighty nighty?  
 Well there's no time for doubt right now,  
 And less time to explain.  
 So get back on your horses,  
 Kiss my ring,  
 And join our next campaign,

And the Empire grows  
 with the news that we're winning,  
 With more fear to conquer,  
 more gold thread for spinning,  
 Till it's bright as the sun,  
 Shining on everyone.

Some would say that we've forced our words,  
 And we find that ingenuously churlish.  
 Words are just words.  
 Don't be so pessimistic, weak and girlish.  
 We like strong, happy people  
 Who don't think  
 there's something wrong with pride,  
 Work makes them free,  
 And we spread that freedom far and wide,

And the Empire grows the seeds of its glory,  
 For every five tanks,  
 Plant a sentimental story,

Till they worship the sun,  
 Even Christ loving ones.  
 And we'll kill the terrorizers  
 and a million of their races,

But when our people torture you,  
 that's a few random cases.  
 Don't question the sun.  
 It doesn't help anyone.

But the journalists cried out,  
 When it was too late to stop us.  
 Everyone had awakened  
 To the dream they could enter our colossus.  
 And now I'm right, yeah, you said I'm right,  
 There's nothing that can harm me,  
 Cause the sun never sets on my dungeons or my army,

And the Empire fell on its own splintered axis,  
 And the Emperor wanes as the silver moon waxes,  
 And the farmers will find old coins  
 In their strawberry fields,  
 While somebody somewhere twists his ring  
 And someone kneels.  
 Oh, where is the sun Shining for everyone?  
 Where is the sun Shining for everyone?

This narrative begins from the perspective of the “Empire” – presumably with President Bush as its representative – and poses rhetorical questions that serve to suppress citizen dissent and encourage *blind patriotism* through its equating of the empire to religious command with the unquestionable “goodness of the mighty.” By the end of the narrative the people have “awakened” to their blind patriotism and the Empire’s treachery, but ultimately fall back into the cycle of submission to imperialistic authority. With the government portrayed as a clear villain, the narrative depicts the “Empire” and its instillation of fear in its citizens concerning their children’s safety, encouragement of hasty action, and request for submission to the “campaign.” This hurried image gives the

narrative means to evoke a *distrust of government* in its audience, thus encouraging emotions of wariness and resentment in reaction to the government's rash demands. The chorus of the narrative depicts the growth of the Empire through the news of victory, propaganda of fear, and strategically placed "sentimental [stories]" that help to preserve blind patriotism as the government expands its efforts. Furthermore, the "few random cases" of torture reflect a justification of evil for the greater good in stark contrast to the mass genocide of the terrorists' "races" described in the previous stanza. This frames Americans themselves as terrorists and evokes emotions of shame and anger from the listener, and also casts the citizens of the countries exploited at the hands of the American government as victims in this melodrama.

Through reference to Auschwitz's infamous motto, *Arbeit macht Frei*, translated in the lines "Work makes them [other countries' citizens] free," the narrative utilizes a euphemistic usage of the word "freedom" that in reality refers to American *imperialism*. The word "freedom" appears on the surface as innocuous and well-intended, but develops darker connotations as the extended metaphor of the "Empire" that is "shining bright as the sun" corresponds with the masculine means of persuasion the government uses to justify American imperialism. The narrative utilizes the negative connotations of "pessimistic, weak, and girlish" to represent traits that Americans are meant to see as uncharacteristic of themselves, depicting the government's *exploitation* through masculine propaganda as a tool of influence to maintain public support. Williams calls for protest against this, vocalizing an emotion of betrayal rather than of anger and rage, not in the song's melody but in the message of its narrative.

Many musicians who experienced the Vietnam War era re-arose in the music scene with songs newly adapted to and addressing the conflicts of the Iraq War era. As seen previously with John Fogerty, Neil Young characterizes this comparative approach to the Iraq War and the techniques of historic reference these musicians utilize to encourage their listeners to action in his 2006 song "Living with War."

Neil Young, "Living With War" (May 2006)

I'm living with war everyday  
I'm living with war in my heart everyday  
I'm living with war right now

And when the dawn breaks I see my fellow man  
And on the flat-screen we kill and we're killed again  
And when the night falls, I pray for peace  
Try to remember peace (visualize)

I join the multitudes  
I raise my hand in peace  
I never bow to the laws of the thought police  
I take a holy vow  
To never kill again  
To never kill again

I'm living with war in my heart  
I'm living with war in my heart in my mind  
I'm living with war right now

Don't take no tidal wave  
Don't take no mass grave  
Don't take no smokin' gun  
To show how the west was won  
But when the curtain falls, I pray for peace  
Try to remember peace (visualize)

In the crowded streets  
In the big hotels  
In the mosques and the doors of the old museum  
I take a holy vow  
To never kill again  
Try to remember peace



The rocket's red glare  
 Bombs bursting in air  
 Give proof through the night,  
 That our flag is still there

I'm living with war everyday  
 I'm living with war in my heart everyday  
 I'm living with war right now

Through a theme of war as it is experienced in everyday life, this narrative addresses the Iraq War through a communal first person perspective and presents blame and mistreatment as inclusive of both the narrator and his “fellow man,” rather than pitting people against each other as separate villains and victims. This merging of the villain and victim into a generalized group through lines such as that “we kill and we’re killed again” establishes the narrative as a lament for mankind. Reference to the “flat screen” highlights the sensationalizing of war in the media, through modern technology and the immediacy of contemporary social connections, evoking the image of *blind patriotism* that desensitizes citizens and discourages action against the war. The narrative exposes the need for a *distrust of government* as the “multitudes” fall into a cyclical relationship with war in which they fool themselves into never bowing “to the thought police” through vowing “to never kill again,” while in reality they are allowing themselves through blind patriotism to constantly return to war as an answer to conflict. This cycle serves not only as explanation for the Iraq War, but also for how “the west was won” in general, diverting blame away from specific natural (“tidal wave”) and manmade (“mass grave”) instances and toward the reciprocal violence of mankind itself.

In conjunction with this cycle of violence is a cycle of vows for peace shared across different classes. Whether socioeconomically or religiously different, this narrative

attributes responsibility to all members of society with the backdrop of history (“the old museum”) that is meant to provide lessons from which society is supposed to learn but continuously fails to do so: for Neil Young, this history lesson is that of the Vietnam War. Through its generalized depiction of guilt, the narrative provokes the listener to feel shame and resentment toward this cycle of violence. The lines from the “Star Spangled Banner” demonstrate not only the Americanization and romancing of war, but also how even through the violence the nation still stands. However, the connotation of “our flag” that “is still there” may be darker than the original verse’s intention, representative of the narrative’s warning to its audience that continuous usage of violence as a basic premise for addressing conflict can only lead to more human suffering. Through this admonition the narrative demonstrates the need for enduring activism against war and violence in the context of the Iraq War era.

Reference to Vietnam appears in other songs of the Iraq War era, as well. Through this form of historical reference and specific indication of the victims and villains in the Iraq War era, Michael Franti and Spearhead confront the questionable elements of the Iraq War in their 2006 song “Light Up Ya Lighter,” with comparisons of class differences driving their narrative.

Michael Franti & Spearhead, "Light Up Ya Lighter" (August 2006)

It never makes no sense  
 It never makes no sense  
 Fire, fire, fire, light up ya lighter, fire, fire, fire

Armageddon is a deadly day  
 Armageddon is a deadly way  
 They comin’ for you everyday  
 While senators on holiday

The army recruiters in the parking lot  
Hustling kids there jugglin' pot  
"Listen, young man, listen to my plan  
Gonna make you money, gonna make you a man  
Bom bom here's what you get... an M-16 and a kevlar vest  
You might come home with one less leg but this thing will surely keep a bullet out your  
chest"

So, come on, come on, sign up, come on  
This one's nothing like Vietnam  
Except for the bullets, except for the bombs, except for the youth that's gone

So we keep it on 'til ya comin' home  
Higher and higher  
Fire, fire, fire, light up ya lighter, fire, fire, fire

So we keep it on 'til ya comin' home  
Higher and higher  
Fire, fire, fire, light up ya lighter, fire, fire, fire

Tell me, President, tell me if you will  
How many people does a smart bomb kill?  
How many of 'em do you think we got?  
The general says we never miss a shot  
And we never ever ever keep a body count  
We killin' so efficiently, we can't keep count  
In the Afghan hills, the rebels still fightin'  
Opium fields keep providing'

The best heroin that money can buy and  
Nobody knows where Osama been hidin'  
The press conferences keep on lyin'  
Like we don't know

So we keep it on 'til ya comin' home  
Higher and higher  
Fire, fire, fire, light up ya lighter, fire, fire, fire

So we keep it on 'til ya comin' home  
Higher and higher  
Fire, fire, fire, light up ya lighter, fire, fire, fire

Some say engine, engine number nine  
Machine guns on a New York transit line  
The war for oil is a war for the beast  
The war on terror is a war on peace

Tellin' you they're gonna protect you and  
Tellin' you that they support the troops

And don't let them fool you with their milk and honey  
No, they only want your money

One step forward and two steps back  
One step forward and two steps back  
Why do veterans get no respect  
PTSD and a broken back

Take a look at where your money's gone seen  
Take a look at what they spend it on  
No excuses, no illusions  
Light up ya lighter, bring it home

So we keep it on 'til ya comin' home  
Higher and higher  
Fire, fire, fire, light up ya lighter, fire, fire, fire

So we keep it on 'til ya comin' home  
Higher and higher  
Fire, fire, fire, light up ya lighter, fire, fire, fire

So we keep it on 'til ya comin' home  
Higher and higher  
Fire, fire, fire, light up ya lighter, fire, fire, fire

So we keep it on 'til ya comin' home  
Higher and higher  
Fire, fire, fire, light up ya lighter, fire, fire, fire

Fire, fire, fire, yeah, you know, so light up ya lighter  
Fire, fire, fire, fire, no, light up ya lighter

Characterizing this narrative is a sense of urgency for war participation through lines such as “come on, come on, sign up, come on” and “higher and higher,” further encouraged through reference to the Vietnam War and governmental denial of the present war’s similarity to the past. However, the narrative mocks the president and the role of modern technology in the Iraq War, asking President Bush, “how many people does a

smart bomb kill?” and referencing the bullets, bombs, and destroyed youth reminiscent of Vietnam. This mockery stages a *distrust of government* through the emotional codes of anger and resentment the narrative encourages from the listener, blaming the media and the president for dishonesty. At the same time the narrative implies the *blind patriotism* of American citizens, referencing media dishonesty but accusing Americans for acting “like [they] don’t know” the truth. *Imperialism* is also present in the narrative’s reference to the fight for oil as a fight for the “beast” of American global presence, the message of the narrative succinctly stating that a “war on terror is a war on peace.”

The senators mentioned in the next stanza create an image in the narrative of the government officials who actively distance themselves from the problems they create, villains who are removed from the conflict but in command of the violence. The narrative follows this image of the senators “on holiday” with the image of the “army recruiters” recruiting youthful males who appear vulnerable to the lure not only of money, but also to the desire for a path in life the narrative stereotypically portrays them as lacking. This critical view of directionlessness from older generations toward younger generations conveys social legitimacy to the *class and age exploitation* of the narrative, and lines such as “Gonna make you a man” imply the masculine ‘*dulce et decorum est*’ honor of fighting for one’s country. However, the next lines depict the soldier as a victim who has lost limbs but not his life, protected by technology from physical wounds but vulnerable to lifelong emotional suffering. The narrative’s reference to PTSD turns blame away from the soldier, focusing instead on the government’s utilization of him as a pawn of war and the emotional victimization that results. From this, an association between drug usage and the military evokes sympathy from the narrative’s audience and exposes them

to a timeline of drugs and war that the victimized male endures: beginning with the young males “jugglin’ pot,” this association carries on to the soldiers’ usage of opium in the “Afghan hills,” and finally to the implication of PTSD and the struggles of traumatized veterans.

The repeated lines of “fire, fire, fire, light up ya lighter” juxtapose the experience of war with the act of waving a lighter at a concert, framing a sensationalist depiction of war while at the same time carrying a message for protest as an act of defiance. Through the image of waving a lighter, the narrative calls to the American people for action in solidarity against the war.

In addition to John Fogerty and Neil Young, Tom Paxton returns to the scene of anti-war activism not with new material, but instead with an adaptation of his 1965 song, “Lyndon Johnson Told the Nation.” Retaining its same musical style, this narrative shifts in its lyrical content from an original critique of President Johnson and the Vietnam War to an updated critique of President Bush and the Iraq War.

Tom Paxton, “George W. Told the Nation” (January 2007)

I got a letter from old George W.,  
It said, "Son, I hate to trouble ya,  
But this war of mine is going bad.  
It's time for me to roll the dice;  
I know you've already been there twice,  
But I am sending you back to Baghdad."

Hey! George W. told the nation,  
"This is not an escalation;  
This is just a surge toward victory.  
Just to win my little war,  
I'm sending 20,000 more,  
To help me save Iraq from Iraqis."

And, so, I made it to Iraq

In time for one more sneak attack,  
 And to my old battalion I was sent.  
 We drive around in our Humvees,  
 Listening to The Black-Eyed Peas  
 And speaking fondly of the president.

Hey! George W. told the nation,  
 "This is not an escalation;  
 This is just a surge toward victory.  
 Just to win my little war,  
 I'm sending 20,000 more,  
 To help me save Iraq from Iraqis."

Celebrities all come to see us,  
 Grateful they don't have to be us,  
 Politicians show their best face card.  
 Where is Bubba? Where's our leader?  
 Where's our favorite lip reader?  
 AWOL from the Texas National Guard

Hey! George W. told the nation,  
 "This is not an escalation;  
 This is just a surge toward victory.  
 Just to win my little war,  
 I'm sending 20,000 more,  
 To help me save Iraq from Iraqis."

If you're hunkered in Fallujah  
 Wondering who it was who screwed ya,  
 Wondering what became of 'shock and awe!'  
 You are feeling semi-certain  
 It has to do with Halliburton,  
 Dick Cheney's why you drew that fatal straw.

Hey! George W. told the nation,  
 "This is not an escalation;  
 This is just a surge toward victory.  
 Just to win my little war,  
 I'm sending 20,000 more,  
 To help me save Iraq from Iraqis."

Beginning with President Bush's stereotypically masculine letter of request for war participation, the narrative draws upon the symbolic code of *class and age*

*exploitation* as it faults Bush for negligently sending boys to fight for his war. The continued trivialized phrasing of “just 20,000 more” being sent for the “little war” minimalizes the problem and depicts the war as frivolous and easily won. This belittling language, reminiscent of the Vietnam War era protest music, is followed by popular culture references to cars and pop music as depictions of *blind patriotism*, blaming the American people for admiring Bush and his war efforts. The classism of the war is mentioned again through reference to the “celebrities” and “politicians” who participate in their own forms of negligent nationalism as they show support for the soldiers and the war, the government all the while benefitting from the exploited lower classes they victimize through their political corruption. Reference to the Iraqi people whom America is ironically depicted as “saving” draws upon the symbolic code of *imperialism*, evoking anger from the listener and a *distrust of government*.

Shifting from its accusations concerning the civilian complacency of the American people, the narrative addresses the soldiers in the last verse who wonder “who it was who screwed” them and what became of the “shock and awe” that accompanied the passionate origination of the Iraq War. Through this image the narrative transitions from a “fond” public image of Bush to one of anger and resentment toward the government’s betrayal and insidious intentions, targeting Dick Cheney and Halliburton for commoditizing the war while the victimized soldier draws “the fatal straw” for his involvement. The narrative evokes anger from its audience as it reveals to them why they should feel ashamed and betrayed by the government’s persuasiveness and corruption, thus demonstrating the need for action against American involvement with the conflict in Iraq.



## ii. Conclusion of Iraq War Era Song Analyses

These ten songs that call for protest against the Iraq War retain traits of their predecessors from the Vietnam War era while at the same time create their own techniques for rallying the public to action. In addition to emotion codes of sympathy, anger, outrage, and resentment, these songs cast shame upon their listeners as they accuse the American people of being complacent villains in this conflict. Retained in these songs is the victim of the soldier, but added is an emphasis on the victimized Iraqi people who suffer as a result of America's violent presence in their country. This emphasis reflects a heightened attention given to the symbolic code of *imperialism*, retained from the Vietnam War era along with the codes of *age and class exploitation*, *blind patriotism*, and a *distrust of government*. These codes serve to create blame in the narratives directed toward the era's villains: while inclusive of the Vietnam era villains of the government and corporations, Iraq War era protest music also depicts the media as a villain for its encouragement of blind patriotism, civilian complacency, and an overall lack of activism the Iraq War era narratives seek to combat.

## CHAPTER FIVE

**Discussion**

The lyrical narratives of the Vietnam and Iraq War contain similar structural techniques as their singer song-writers strive to convey anti-war messages; however, the components of these messages vary across each era. The characters present in each narrative's melodrama may reflect specific or abstract villains of its respective era, but the lyrical exigencies reflect the varied emphases that singer song-writers place on these characters and their roles in the wartime melodrama. Villains and victims of these eras are mutually shared by or exclusive to either Vietnam or Iraq, and the focus upon these different characters reflects the usage of symbolic codes of *class and age exploitation*, *distrust of government*, *imperialism*, and *blind patriotism*, as well as the emotion codes of anger, resentment, sympathy, outrage, betrayal, and the like that these symbolic codes provoke. In order to understand the differences and similarities between the Vietnam War era and the Iraq War era, an analysis is necessary of the victims and villains present in each era's narrated themes.

I. Villains

The villains of the Vietnam War era and the Iraq War era manifest in some cases through the same societal characters for both eras: these common characters include the government and the wealthy. Through these villains the symbolic codes of a *distrust of government*, *class and age exploitation*, and *imperialism* are evoked most often in correlation with the government as a villain, while *blind patriotism* along with *class and*

*age exploitation* serve to highlight the villainization of the wealthy and privileged members of society in both eras.

The villain in some cases is exclusive to each era: for instance, the narratives of the Vietnam War era often include older members of society as villains, as is evident in Ochs' piece in which he states that it is "always the old who lead us to war" (1965). In contrast to this age emphasis, the narratives of the Iraq War era depict imperialistic corporations, the media, and the complacent American public itself as villains. Different too is the specificity of the villain itself: in Vietnam, the villain is often abstract, a generalized depiction, personified through Loseke's second and more general structure of formula stories (Loseke 2012) that appeals to a general group rather than a specific individual as a means of creating a more broadly applicable range of understanding for an audience. In Iraq, this villain instead is expressed through reference to a single member of a small group of government actors, demonstrating Loseke's first form of formula stories in these narratives' depictions of specific individuals as representative of a larger aggregate. In the case of the villain, this is evident in references to George Bush through accusations directed toward "the president," as seen in Iraq War era songs such as those of Six Feet Under, Bright Eyes, Michael Franti & Spearhead, and Tom Paxton. This individual representation of the villainous government via reference to the president is more prevalent in the Iraq era in comparison to the Vietnam era, the latter of which sees utilization of direct reference to the president only in one song (Paxton 1965) in the selected sample.

The rise of the media and of the complacent American public that exists in Iraq War era protest narratives reflects the increased role of modern technology in the

expanding globalization of the twenty first century, an element to be addressed later as important, as well as to the shifting victimized character of these narratives. While protest in the Vietnam War era occurred across broader social aggregates, this solidarity was lacking in the Iraq War era. In this era, the augmentation of public access to news and cultural outlets complicated and inhibited the rise of a single voice in solidarity against the Iraq War. As a result, protest was not as rampant as protest against the Vietnam War, and thus this dearth of unified discontent became a focus of Iraq era music, addressed through anger and fury in the lyrical narratives toward the American public in a manner absent from the Vietnam era anti-war music. This anger is not necessarily present in all sampled songs, as with Fogerty (2004), Williams (2005), Young (2006), and Paxton (2007), but is important as a characteristic of the era because of the rising popularity of genres in which this harshness and bitterness are prevalent, as with metal, punk rock, and rap (System of a Down, 2002; Six Feet Under 2003; Green Day, 2004; Anti-Flag, 2004; Franti, 2006). These genres are significant in their permeation of the Iraq War era, and while they are not always the representative majority of songs of the era, they are critical for understanding the anger of the narratives that was less necessary in the Vietnam War era.

*Freedom* and *patriotism* also manifest differently across eras. For instance, the freedom referenced at the end of Starr's "War, What is it Good For?" serves as a means through which the government encourages the American people to embrace a pro-war mindset: by referencing "freedom," the government can give the public a guideline by which they can search for their own motivation, structured through the desire to maintain democracy in the United States. This differs from the freedom referenced in Williams' "Empire," which is a component of the extended metaphor regarding the "Empire" and

serves as a euphemism for the spread of American dominance. In addition to freedom, patriotism appears in different form but for similar purpose across the anti-war narratives. For instance, the patriotism of Seeger's 1966 "Bring Them Home" urges the listener to see anti-war activism as patriotic, and reveals that the most patriotic way to support the troops and America is to bring the soldiers back from Vietnam. Starkly different in tone but similar in utilization of the concept of patriotism is the conclusion of Anti-Flag's 2003 narrative in "Amerika the Brutal," which references the first amendment and the narrator's right to speak his mind and to fight against the war. In these two ways, many of the anti-war songs of these eras serve as a demonstration to listeners that protesting the American government can and should be embraced as a legitimate form of patriotism.

## II. Victims

The victims of each era differ more significantly than the villains, and the most commonly shared victim of each era is the soldier. However, the reason for the soldier to play the role of the victim in these narratives differs across eras: in Vietnam, the soldier is a victim to demands of the draft, blind patriotism, and government dishonesty, while in Iraq, the soldier is victim to the corporate spin of the war effort. Both of these instances of soldier victimization occur as a result of *class and age exploitation* as well. The emphasis on these politically exploitative methods of the government that were used to encourage lower class boys to join the war movements furthers the villainization of the government and the victimization of the soldier. These techniques of political exploitation often led to misplaced patriotism and thus a desire to fight for an American

cause that was in reality a politically insidious deception on the part of the American government and American corporations.

The public victims of each era vary as well as a result of globalization in modern society. The victims of the Vietnam War era included the American public itself; later, the American public actually shifts to the position of a passive villain in the Iraq War era. Replacing the American public as victims, the civilians of the countries – namely the Iraqi citizens – who have fallen prey to American imperialism and warfare often become the Iraq War era victims in the lyrical melodramas, and this shift demonstrates why an emphasis on the symbolic code of *imperialism* becomes more prevalent in the Iraq War era than in the Vietnam War era. This is a result of the corporate involvement villainized in this era, as well as a global justice ethos that was largely absent from the Vietnam War era. These two causal factors are intertwined, the rise of multinational corporations and technological growth allowing global awareness and global justice ethos to emerge at the forefront of the Iraq War era narratives as Americans against the war began to focus on foreign rather than domestic consequences of their country's imperialistic warfare. For those protesting via appeal to foreign consequences is a predisposition to feel anger toward the American people as a result of a modern wasteful and over-consumptive nature. Reference to the victims of foreign nations does occur in the Fugs' 1966 narrative through an intentional dehumanization of the Vietnamese; however, it is the single representative of its era in this sample, and the foreign victim is more frequently referenced in Iraq War era narratives (System of a Down 2002): thus a national justice ethos in the Vietnam War era transitioned into a global justice ethos in the Iraq War era.

As with Loseke's formula story structures reflected in the characterized villains, the formula stories of the Vietnam and Iraq War eras shift as well. In Vietnam, the usage of Loseke's first formula story structure through the depiction of an individual's narrative (Loseke 2012) aides emotion codes of sympathy through songs addressing the victimized soldier and his family and friends, told from a variety of perspectives (Ochs 1965; Paxton 1965; CCR 1969; Cliff 1970; Reeves 1970). This is in contrast to Iraq, where reference to specific soldier narratives occurs only in two songs sampled (Franti 2006, Paxton 2007); instead, the second form of formula stories and its emphasis on a generalized group (Loseke 2012) occurs more frequently in Iraq War era songs. In the Iraq era, second person is more prevalent in the persuasive elements of the narratives, utilized in eight of the ten sampled songs as a means to address the audience and incite awareness of the need for opposition to the war. This utilization of second person to address the audience also serves as a vocative mechanism through which Iraq War era singer songwriters can demand their audiences' attention, so that they may condemn the complacent American public's melodramatic role in the war as a passive and enabling villain.

John Fogerty's song in the Iraq War era (2004) synthesizes approaches to the villain and the victim of the two eras. This includes an appeal to the American victim of the soldier and his mother as seen in the Vietnam War, but further includes a framing of the media and news networks as villains, as is common to the Iraq War era. Though Fogerty speaks of Iraq, he utilizes references to the generalized and abstract villain characteristic of Vietnam War era music as well as a tone neither angry with nor blameful of the complacent American public, as is common with the Iraq Era. Similar to Fogerty in his usage of a generalized lament to address the Iraq War, Neil Young draws upon his

memories from the Vietnam War era in his nostalgic 2006 Iraq War era song, and uses his narrative to parallel the characteristics of the two wars as representative of the perpetual suffering that all wars induce. Like Fogerty, Young recognizes the shifting role of media as the usage of television became more prominent in the Iraq War era, referencing television in his narrative while keeping his main focus on the qualities that both wars share as his primary technique for encouraging protest. Similar to Young and Fogerty, Tom Paxton's two songs are unique from the rest of the sample in that he rewrote his 1965 song "Lyndon Johnson Told the Nation" to become "George W. Told the Nation," providing a useful insight into the content shifts of both eras since he retains the frame of his original melodramatic narrative. Most notable is Paxton's effort to include modern references, such as to "Hum-Vees" and the Black Eyed Peas, in his 2007 rendition. However, Paxton is in a unique position in that he can maintain his original narrative structure that addresses a *specific* villain because it mirrors the rising tendency in Iraq War era protest music to focus upon specific villains, as opposed to the preferred *abstract* villains of the Vietnam War era and the utilization of generalized characters in the Vietnam War era to which Paxton's 1965 narrative does not conform.

### III. Conclusion

Within this comparison of Vietnam and Iraq War era protest songs there emerges a distinct parallel between the exigency of popular music and the rise of social solidarity in protest against contested current events. When songs function as stories that incite empathy and captivate their audiences, a collective consciousness can arise between groups that otherwise lack commonalities. However, the respective genres of these songs



serve as critical dispersion points for messages of protest and solidarity: this is apparent in the shared emphases on patriotism and freedom that can stimulate a similar sense of encouragement despite a stark contrast in musical genre as seen with the differences in songs across the Vietnam and Iraq War eras. As addressed, it was significantly more difficult to accumulate a collectively representative sample of Iraq War era songs, but this difficulty cannot be ignored in this research because it is demonstrative of how such similar messages can be conveyed across such different genres. The symbolic codes of a *distrust of government, class and age exploitation, imperialism, and blind patriotism* did not fail to appear intra-genre any less than they did inter-genre, and these common themes in all the melodramas examined reveal how a single, generalized message of anti-war protest can form in the minds of the American public despite the myriad sources from which the public receives this call to activism. The discourses of these narratives serve similar roles for society as the public sphere depicted by Immanuel Kant does: because “engaging the public sphere was the means by which the conflicting private wills of rational people could be brought into harmony” as politics were turned into morality (Calhoun 1992:18), these narratives allow for solidarity to arise through the conceptualization of a central conflict merged through many branching viewpoints and perspectives. Thus, though globalization and modern technology enter the playing field in the Iraq War era on a much more widely dispersed scale than as during the Vietnam War, the potential for societal cohesion against the war effort is unremittingly possible even as modern society becomes more widely diffused and stratified.

Beyond its role in music, the presence of narratives in culture is a timely subject when considered with the current presidential election cycle. The rhetoric of George

Bush's speech following the September 11<sup>th</sup> attacks that Loseke addresses remains relevant beyond its service to incitation of pro-war mindsets in the American people: the candidates of the 2016 presidential race employ similar tactics of melodramatic pathos, fear, strength, and the like in order to rally the public behind them in solidarity despite the diverse background of the myriad supporters to whom the candidates direct their messages. Narratives of presidential campaign discourse drive public opinion as the candidates utilize their speeches and debates to frame themselves as strong, capable, and relevant leaders, furthermore pitting themselves against their fellow primary candidates as well as candidates across party lines. Emotion is a key element to these narratives, serving to connect the public with each candidate in a manner that depicts the candidate not only as a strong leader but also as a relatable person. In Loseke's analysis of Bush's presidential speeches, words drive emotion codes in direct response to symbolic codes (Loseke 2009:500). However, in the protest music examined it becomes clear that symbolic and emotion codes happen simultaneously rather in response to one another in song, suggesting that the power the listener derives from these songs is reinforced by the constant appeal to emotional experience and reaction that music itself can evoke, perhaps more readily and instantaneously than a speech. This comparison of speeches and songs suggests that music can carry an affective message, through combining music and lyric, that carries a more emotional weight. Though often different in exigency, the protest songs of the Vietnam and Iraq War eras emphasize the need for collective empathy just as Bush did in 2001 and the candidates do today in 2016. Acknowledgement of this connection demonstrates the importance of this type of narrative research analysis and its effect upon diverse social groups, both in the unification and polarization it can incite.

The popular songs that existed and exist in the Vietnam and Iraq War eras are not merely frivolous components of various sects of American culture, or passing sources of insignificant entertainment: instead they and their writers are critical contributors to the shaping of those eras, playing irreplaceable roles as they spur collective mindsets of protest across many social aggregates through their appeal to the desires, the morals, the lamentations, the angers, and the passions of the American people.

#### IV. Limitations and Future Research

Though my sample of ten songs from each war era serves for the sake of this analysis as representative of Vietnam and Iraq War era protest music, it is critical for me to acknowledge the wide range of songs from which I had to make a selection, and the inevitability that some of the potential songs that could have been appropriate for this analysis had to be left out in the interest of clarity and sample size. Though numerous other songs serve as messengers of protest against the two wars, and are well known to their listeners for their contestations against the wars, this sample focuses most specifically on songs that present active calls to protest and activism in their narratives and melodramatic content. Thus, many songs and singer song-writers whose focus was upon peace without reference to anti-war activism are not included in this sample for the sake of the analytical purpose to examine songs urging protest. This limitation suggests the usefulness that future research of war time peace music and other strains of wartime songs could provide for a more inclusive understanding of emotion in social movements as it is conveyed in popular music.

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