

Pete Seeger, 20th Century American Singer:
His Music Activity for the Betterment of Society

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Acknowledgements

While doing my undergraduate studies in English linguistics at Daito Bunka University, one of the main motivations was to understand the lyrics of Western popular music. As a result, I was able to gain some basic knowledge of phonetics as well as having a study abroad experience. After graduation, I had the opportunity to become involved with the music industry creating songs, and this increased my desire to do more research on song lyrics.

Eventually, I came back again to university to do a master's degree and ended up studying the issue of Japanese and English prosody and song text underlay. At that time, I realized that I wanted to challenge myself to do more detailed research, and at the same time that I needed to be serious about gaining various kinds of knowledge and work hard to become a good researcher. As I moved on to the Ph.D. level, I encountered the song "Where have all the flowers gone?" by Peter Seeger thanks to Professor Nakagome. The more I learned about this anti-war song, the more I became fascinated with how Seeger had been using the power of music to combat social problems in the U.S. and beyond. The following dissertation is my first step toward being a multidisciplinary researcher in language, music, and sociocultural issues, and I would like to pursue a career in this particular field of research.

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Finally, as I continued to learn about the great singer-songwriter Pete Seeger, I came to realize what a truly remarkable person he was, and that I had a mission to tell people about him and how he used music to help those in hardship. He always said he did not even want to be called a folk singer, but rather that he was only one link in a chain. I am honored to be another link in that chain to pass down what he left us, and to share his legacy with my generation and future generations. I believe we human beings need music for the betterment of society and hope that my research can provide another opportunity for people to have a better life with music.

Abstract

This study focuses on American singer Pete Seeger (1919-2014) and his political involvement with social issues through various musical activities. In addition to his lifelong work as a social activist, Seeger passed down the tradition of folk music and contributed to the folk music revival in the U.S. during the 1960s. Folk music in the U.S. developed especially through singing about discontent with society, and its dominant form of expression was the protest song. In terms of addressing social problems, Seeger's musical activities ranged from involvement with the labor movement in the 1940s and the civil rights movement in the 1960s to antinuclear, pacifist, and environmental issues in later years. The power of his performances, as well as his music, had a profound influence on public opinion in the U.S. despite his being blacklisted by the government during the McCarthy era and disappearing from the major media for seventeen years. Nonetheless, Seeger eventually regained his reputation with various awards, and his dedication to the U.S. and his contribution to society was reevaluated.

Given that the study focuses on those facets of Seeger's activities that were most effective in influencing the lives of American people in the 20th century, the research question is as follows: How did Pete Seeger go about directing the various aspects of his musical activity toward contributing to the betterment of society? In order to seek an informed answer to this question, three frameworks—singer, singing, and songs—have been used as the vantage points

from which to survey Seeger's long and illustrious career in music. In addition, a broad range of preexisting sources were utilized in the study that can be divided into the following seven categories: (1) biographical information on Pete Seeger, (2) autobiographical and other original source readings by Seeger himself, (3) songbooks and song collections that he was associated with, (4) research on folk music from the standpoint of social movements, (5) folk music as viewed from the perspective of the anthropology of music, (6) existing studies of Pete Seeger's songs, and (7) research methods for conducting qualitative research into the lyrics of popular songs.

For each of the three frameworks, a unique data set was selected. For the singer framework, a selection of reader responses to his January 2014 obituary that appeared in the *New York Times* were chosen from which to gather information on the impact of his life and work on people living in the geographical area where he spent the greater part of his career. For the singing framework, the data set consists of a complete live concert performance from 1963 that has been issued as a video recording on DVD. Lastly, for the songs framework, the data set consists of a selection of song lyrics chosen from the performance just mentioned, plus four additional audio recordings of live performances.

In order to analyze these three very different sets of data, it was concluded that each set required a unique research approach while also having a sense of

unity. The overall paradigm that seemed best suited to this task is that of qualitative research, and under this umbrella, three specific approaches were identified. For the reader responses to Seeger's obituary, thematic analysis was applied to the texts in order to identify the significant aspects of his character and musical activities that had the greatest impact on those people who had come in contact with him and his music in one way or another. For the live concert recording, performance analysis was applied in order to identify how his role as a performer had such a powerful effect on his audiences. Finally, for the fifty-nine songs selected from five concerts, content analysis was applied in order to discover the manifest and latent messages that were so central to Seeger's work as a musical journalist and social activist.

The primary value of employing a grounded approach to qualitative research is to give the data a chance to "speak" in order for new insights to emerge that truly reflect the unique nature of the object of research. Whereas the current study is centered primarily on Pete Seeger as a singing journalist and political activist, his importance as a musical icon of the 20th century cannot be underestimated. The impact of his life on both the national and international levels was vast considering the strong message of his singing and the songs that he wrote and performed. In order to discover more about the man himself and his importance, a triangulation pattern of research was established by which Seeger's personal characteristics (singer), his manner of performing (singing), and the

message of the texts that he sang (songs) were examined through the paradigms of thematic analysis, performance analysis, and content analysis.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Chapter Overview

Pete Seeger (1919-2014) was an American folksinger whose life was dedicated to participating in various important social movements in the United States. He used music as a way of sharing his message with the audience because he believed that it could serve as a powerful tool to make the world a better place. Throughout his long and active career, Seeger held onto this policy consistently while approaching various social problems in the United States. This study focuses on Seeger's musical activities, and how he used music to focus attention on the major social issues of the 20th century. The first chapter focuses on two main topics: 1) biographical information on Seeger in order to provide a proper context for the study as a whole, and 2) information on folk music as the genre to which Seeger dedicated his life.

Biographical Background

A Singing Journalist

In his youth, Seeger had wanted to become a journalist. However, the economy was in a bad situation for everyone in the 1930s as a result of the Great Depression, so he could not get involved in such a field as his occupation. Instead, his journalistic ability came to be expressed through his songwriting and his performance style. Furthermore, Seeger channeled his enthusiasm for journalism into a passion for creating and spreading topical songs in publications such as

Broadside Magazine. Over the years, Seeger's social involvement combined with his musical activities into a unique career as what could be called a “singing journalist.” During the era of the American folk music revival, he was able to spread his deeply-held convictions to the public through this unique style of media that dealt with sensitive political topics in ways that television, radio, and newspapers often could not accomplish.

Pete Seeger’s Early Years

Although he grew up in a musical family—his father was a musicologist and his mother a classical violinist—Seeger had never considered becoming a professional musician. His remarkable musical talent was obvious from the age of eight when he started to play the ukulele and subsequently learned various other instruments on his own without taking any formal lessons. Even so, when he enrolled at Harvard University, Seeger majored in Sociology. Unfortunately, he soon found the field to be a great disappointment in that he did not agree with how it dealt with society and was particularly irritated by the academic jargon he heard in class:

Seeking out his professor in his office, he asked why sociologists could not use simpler language. More comfortable himself with natural, straightforward forms of expression, he was incensed by the candid response he received: to impress people. “If this is the sort that’s teaching

here,” he thought to himself, “I’m not going to bother studying anymore.”¹

In the end, Seeger dropped out of school to seek a job in journalism; however, it was not easy to find employment during the Great Depression, so his solution was to invent the role of “singing journalist” mentioned above.

Influence from the Greats

About this time, Seeger had the good fortune of meeting two important folk music legends that were to have a significant influence on his career: Huddie “Lead Belly” Ledbetter, and Woody Guthrie. Musicologist Alan Lomax provided the opportunity for Seeger to meet Lead Belly, a well-known blues singer from whom Seeger learned songwriting and how to play the twelve-string guitar.

Knowing Seeger’s musical talent and wanting to support his career, Lomax also asked him to help organize the collection of folk songs he was in charge of at the Library of Congress in Washington, DC. This activity led to Seeger meeting and working with Woody Guthrie, a great pioneer of folksong writing and the creator of many topical songs especially related to 1930s Dust Bowl era. Guthrie's song “This land is your land” has come to be considered an unofficial national anthem by the American people. By traveling and performing with Guthrie, Seeger established his musicianship and the basis of the style for his original songs.

Though he eventually decided to be a professional singer, his passion for

¹ Allan M. Winkler, *“To Everything There is a Season”: Pete Seeger and the Power of Song* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 10.

journalism was never forgotten, so it is accurate to say that both of these abilities combined naturally in him to create his unique niche in American history as a singing journalist.

Folk Music

What is Folk Music?

Seeger's musical career was dedicated to furthering the cause of the musical genre of folk music; thus, some of the chief characteristics of this genre will now be discussed in terms of how it functioned in American society at the time. There are various opinions on how folk music should be defined. The commonly held notion is that “folk song is music of the people: passed on by oral transmission and usually of rural provenance.”² From this perspective, folk music can be seen as the music people always have had in their lives, especially as the means of passing down stories to the succeeding generations within the same community. The noted British musical folklorist Cecil Sharp held a broader, more inclusive view of folk music that emphasized what he considered to be its evolutionary tendency based on the following three principles: continuity, variation, and selection.³ The notion of continuity is obvious enough, though Sharp's emphasis

² Marvin E. Paymer, *Facts Behind the Songs: A Handbook of American Popular Music from the Nineties to the '90s* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1993), 111-112.

³ Cecil J. Sharp, *English Folk Songs: Some Conclusions* (London, Simpkin & Co., 1907), 16.

on variation and selection go beyond the standard definition by suggesting that folk music is more about participating in a process than merely collecting artifacts. Seeger's own way of defining folk music also includes the concept of variation: "folk music is not so much any particular group of songs or singers but rather it is a process, an age-old process of ordinary people making their own music, reshaping old traditions to fit new situations."⁴ We shall now examine ways in which Seeger strove to reshape music both old and new to meet the needs of society as he found it.

Folk Music as Media

To discern the original connection between folk music and media, we need to go back to 16th-century England and the advent of inexpensive printing. At that time posters known as "broadsides" were displayed in the streets as a way of spreading the news to the public as a free form of print media. Eventually popular songs, especially ballads, were also made into broadsides and sold at modest cost.⁵ Moreover, it is interesting to note that musical broadsides were often used in the same way as the non-musical ones: to tell about current events, though in a more powerful way due to being combined with music. In this way, they can be seen as paving the way for the tradition of topical songs that was such an

⁴ Pete Seeger, *Pete Seeger: In His Own Words*, ed. Rob Rosenthal and Sam Rosenthal (Boulder, CO: Paradigm Publishers, 2012), 68.

⁵ Natascha Würzbach and Gayna Walls. *The Rise of the English Street Ballad 1550-1650* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

important part of Seeger's repertoire as a 20th-century folksinger and songwriter.

Musical anthropologist Alan Merriam likewise has stated that "not only are music and language interrelated in the formation of song texts but also that the language of texts tends to take special forms."⁶ If we consider the broadside ballad to be one of these "special forms," topical songs, especially in the form of protest songs such as those composed and sung by Pete Seeger, can be seen as a modern-day continuation of the broadside tradition. Seeger's involvement with writing, singing, and publishing topical songs also confirm his direct involvement in political activities during the 1940s to 1980s when he was active in the labor, civil rights, pacifist, anti-nuclear, and environmental movements. In a sense, protest songs can be seen primarily a means of empowering people to build solidarity with one another, and thus claim ownership of their common problems. In the 20th century, electronic media such as television and radio, as well as print media such as newspapers and magazines, came to the fore and resulted in commercial sponsors acquiring primary control over the content.

By way of contrast, protest songs were a form of non-commercial media aimed at sending a message to the public by sharing certain stories. As a way of helping people remember these stories, they were made into songs. A good example of this is the case of the 1949 Peekskill Riots, an important event in U.S.

⁶ Alan P. Merriam, *The Anthropology of Music* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1964), 190.

social history that involved violence between labor union supporters and anti-black, anti-communist elements organized by the American Legion and the infamous Ku Klux Klan after a concert by black singer Paul Robeson. Seeger, along with his family, and Robeson experienced a life-threatening incident when their car was ambushed and pelted with stones by protesters organized by the groups mentioned above. Soon after, Seeger and Lee Hays, a fellow member of The Weavers, wrote the song “Hold the Line” in order to remember the event in a way that the mass media could not.⁷

Topical Songs and Publications

After coming home from serving in the U.S. Army during World War II, Seeger had established a low-budget publication *People's Songs, Inc.* that issued mimeographed bulletins containing lyrics and music scores for topical songs. This publication soon developed into *Sing Out!* that still exists today. Seeger also took a leading role with another topical song publication, *Broadside Magazine* (1962-1988), founded by folk song enthusiasts Agnes Cunningham and her husband, Gordon Friesen. Seeger served as an advisor, columnist, and contributor of lyrics and melodies. The first issue put forth the following policy that serves as a clear statement of the aims of topical songs and their writers:

⁷ Pete Seeger, *Where Have All the Flowers Gone? A Singalong Memoir*, rev. ed., ed. Michael Miller and Sarah Elisabeth (New York: W.W. Norton, 2009), 35-36.

Topical songs have been an important part of America's music since early Colonial days. Many people throughout the country today are writing topical songs, and the only way to find out if a song is good is to give it wide circulation and let the singers and listeners decide for themselves.

BROADSIDE's aim is not so much to select and decide as to circulate as many songs as possible and get them out as quickly as possible.

BROADSIDE may never publish a song that could be called a "folk song."

However, let us remember that many of our best folk songs were topical songs at their inception.⁸

The most important aspect of this statement is that it puts the onus on the readers to decide whether the songs are of valuable or interest to them or not. This statement from the inception of the publication does much toward building a sense of ownership and solidarity among the subscribers and places the editorial staff in the role of simply passing things along rather than passing judgment before a song has had a chance to reach a wider audience.

Although topical songs can be classified as belonging to many different subtypes, Seeger was especially eager to promote folk music to be used as protest songs that addressed the pressing social problems of the current day. His vision of what it means to be a writer and singer of protest songs for social change can be discerned from the following statement:

⁸ *Broadside Magazine*, 1 (February 1962), 1.

There are tens of thousands of singers like me, using songs to teach history to young people, to help workers organize unions, to help all people organize for peace, and to save this world from pollution. Tens of thousands of songs are being made up. Most will be forgotten, but the best will be remembered, changed, added to by “the folk process.”⁹

As mentioned above, the idea of viewing the folk song as a process rather than a product was central to Seeger’s belief system, as well as being central to the way he practiced the traditional craft of being a folksinger and songwriter. Thus, for Seeger, it was necessary for folk music to be expressed as protest songs and it was natural to follow the nature of the folk process through which traditional words, melodies, and/or styles of music are adapted to new situations. The technique of writing new words to familiar folk song melodies was not simply a matter of expediency, but rather it allows the audience to sing a new song right away. In this way, a folk song stays forever new as it continues to change for the needs of generations to come.¹⁰ Seeger also held that the folk process “includes not only the song but the singer and the listeners, and their situation.”¹¹

The Commercialization of Folk Music

In time, the music industry took a new direction, and the folk music genre

⁹ Seeger, *Pete Seeger*, 67.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 68.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

also had a role to play in this change. In the 1950s, Seeger formed a new group known as The Weavers that was to have great commercial success with hit songs like “Goodnight Irene.” This period can be described as the second folk music revival that was likely a reflection of the American people's desire to seek their roots in the aftermath of WWII.¹² In addition, it was during this period the use of folk music was shifting primarily to satisfy the profit motive of the recording industry. Although the genre was still that of folk songs, their function was changing significantly as well, and Seeger felt that folk music was being exploited just to have hit songs, and he did not enjoy such commercial-based musical activities. In fact, he ended up not having much of a say in the matter since it was about this same time that he was blacklisted during the McCarthy era due to his socialist political views and his involvement with the Communist Party while a student at Harvard University. Because he was banned from performing on national television and radio, and denied access to many concert venues, Seeger began holding concerts for the younger generations by singing for children in schools and performing on university campuses. In retrospect, these activities had a vast influence toward encouraging young Americans to enjoy folk music, while at the same time introducing the idea of using songs as a way of expressing their opinions.

Most important to the current study is the fact that Seeger incorporated

¹² Ibid., 72.

significant amounts of social commentary into his songs to express the central message of various protest movements. Seeger's approach to media was as a singer, an editor, and as a columnist in the publications mentioned above, thus his work had a positive influence on many people who were oppressed and in trouble. His singing style and involvement with folk song publications were in a way folk music itself, and when he died at the age of ninety-four in 2014, and words of appreciation came in from around the world to reevaluate his activities.

Use and Function in Folk Music

Thus far, we have observed folk music as having some specific purposes in society. In his landmark volume *The Anthropology of Music*, Allan Merriam applied the terms “use” and “function” to different aspects of how music and social groups interact.¹³ Merriam held that “Music is used in certain situations and becomes a part of them, but it may or may not also have a deeper function”.¹⁴ For example, when a person confesses his or her love for someone with a love song, the “use” of the music is simply the act of making a proposal. Taking this to a deeper level, the “function” of the song could be described as helping continue the biological group.

This concept can be applied to Seeger’s formation of his first ensemble in New York, The Almanac Singers, that included the legendary folk singer Woody

¹³ Merriam, *Anthropology of Music*, 209.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 210.

Guthrie. The group's main purpose was to create original protest songs related to the labor movement and then sing them at labor rallies. In this context, the “use” of the songs and the singing was to give a voice to the discontent of working class people; however, the “function” was that of creating a sense of solidarity among the workers that attended the meetings. Whereas the lyrics were of primary importance and written in response to current labor situations, the melodies were often borrowed from existing songs. As mentioned above, by adding new lyrics to well-known melodies, audiences could sing along right away. They were carrying on an old tradition in the labor movement that had begun in the early 20th century with songs such as the famous Civil War song “The Battle Hymn of the Republic” being transformed into the labor union song “Solidarity Forever.” In Seeger’s words, “What’s good about folk music is that it is not show business” but rather something that should be part of everyday life. Examples of the most basic uses of folk music are laborers singing songs to accompany their work, and parents making up their own music as they sing their children to sleep.¹⁵

Chapter Summary

In this chapter, Pete Seeger’s special talent as a singing journalist has been recognized as an important aspect of disseminating American folk music. His role in creating and performing many powerful protest songs cast him in a central role in several of the most important social movements during his lifetime. For many

¹⁵ Seeger, *Pete Seeger*, 225.

centuries folk music has served as media in society; however, the 20th century saw a major shift in the use and function of folk music since the music industry focused on selling music as a product as various new technologies developed. Even so, Seeger stayed true to the roots of folk music as a genre and stuck with the idea of using music for expressing opinions of minorities and other marginalized groups as we shall see in the chapters ahead.

Chapter 2: Review of the Literature

Chapter Overview

The preexisting literature that formed the foundation of the current study can be divided into the following seven categories: (1) biographical information on Pete Seeger, (2) autobiographical and other original source readings by Seeger, (3) songbooks and song collections with which he was associated, (4) research on folk music from the standpoint of social movements, (5) folk music as viewed from the standpoint of the anthropology of music, (6) existing studies of Pete Seeger's songs, and (7) research methods for conducting qualitative research into the lyrics of popular songs.

Types of Literature Consulted

Authorized Biographies

The primary source of biographical information on Pete Seeger is David Dunaway's *How Can I Keep from Singing?* that was based on the author's 1981 doctoral dissertation in the field of American Studies at University of California, Berkeley.¹⁶ The current edition of the book has been updated to include information on Seeger up to 2008.¹⁷ As would be expected of a book based on a doctoral dissertation, the subject matter has been carefully researched and brings

¹⁶ David K. Dunaway, *Pete Seeger and Modern American Topical Song Movements* (University of California, Berkeley, 1981).

¹⁷ David K. Dunaway, *How Can I Keep from Singing? The Ballad of Pete Seeger* (New York: Villard Books, 2008).

together information from print and electronic media, personal communications, and public documents as well as excerpts from the lyrics of selected songs by Seeger and other songwriters. Dunaway's volume is of central importance to the current study due to the wealth of detailed and authoritative information it contains on Seeger's music, while also offering valuable insights into his personal life and professional career.

Another important source of biographical information is Wilkinson's *The Protest Singer: An Intimate Portrait of Pete Seeger* that focuses on Seeger's upbringing as well as his life from the 1930s up to the 1970s.¹⁸ Writing in a more casual, narrative style than Dunaway, Wilkinson offers the reader an "intimate portrait" of his subject based on extensive interviews conducted with Seeger while working on another project in 2007.¹⁹ Moreover, the appendix to this book contains two important documents: (1) a statement by Seeger's father, musicologist Charles Seeger, regarding the purpose of music in society dating from his work with the Federal Resettlement Administration during the Great Depression, and (2) a complete transcript of Seeger's testimony before HUAC (House Un-American Activities Committee) in 1955 that offers a valuable firsthand glimpse of Seeger's views on his musical activities at that time.

A third source, Allan Winkler's *To Everything There is a Season* provides yet

¹⁸ Alec Wilkinson, *The Protest Singer: An Intimate Portrait of Pete Seeger* (New York, Vintage Books, 2010).

¹⁹ Alec Wilkinson, "Hearing Pete Seeger," *The New Yorker*, July 19, 2012.

another perspective on Seeger's life story that brings together aspects of the two volumes just described, as well as offering some unique perspectives as well.²⁰

Winkler's approach was to take pivotal songs from across Seeger's career as the structural points for constructing a biographical narrative. By analyzing song lyrics and documenting how they came to be written, Winkler's volume is at once informative and compelling, and thus leaves the reader with a much deeper understanding of Seeger's personality.

Autobiographical and Other Original Source Readings

In addition to the official biographies just mentioned, three additional sources are noteworthy in that they contain a significant amount of material written by Seeger himself. *The Incomplete Folksinger* can be described as a family scrapbook of sorts in that it contains photos, songs, stories, letters, and more all combined into a personal and introspective narrative.²¹ This book can also be regarded as a "biography" of the American folk song given Seeger's central role in helping preserve this important oral tradition, while also breathing new life into the genre through his activities in various social movements. Yet another volume, *Pete Seeger in His Own Words*, is essentially a compilation of selected letters, and

²⁰ Winkler, *To Everything There is a Season*.

²¹ Pete Seeger, *The Incomplete Folksinger*, ed. Jo Metcalf Schwartz (New York, Simon and Schuster, 1972; the editor explains that the spelling of "incomplete" is an allusion to the famous 17th-century book on fly-fishing by Izaak Walton entitled *The Compleat Angler*).

articles from Seeger's personal archives that were assembled by sociologist Robert Rosenthal, and his son Sam Rosenthal, a writer and musician.²² Through this collection, it is possible to get a fairly unfiltered view of Seeger's personal thoughts on the issues connected with his musical activities as well as other aspects of his life.

A final source belongs with the two just mentioned in that it contains a mixture of writings by Seeger himself, as well as articles written about him by other authors: *The Pete Seeger Reader* edited by Ronald Cohen and James Capaldi.²³ This volume is an important contribution to the Pete Seeger literature in that it includes a number of articles from publications long out of print, or that were of limited circulation to start with. The editors have selected articles dating from 1939 to 2009 and arranged them chronologically for easy reference.

Songbooks and Song Collections

The next category consists of songbooks authored or coauthored by Seeger, and a major compilation of songs from a periodical to which he made many contributions. The first one, *Everybody Says Freedom: A History of the Civil Rights Movement in Songs and Pictures*, was written by Seeger in collaboration with Rob Reiser and focuses on the role music played in the American civil rights

²² Seeger, *Pete Seeger*.

²³ Ronald D. Cohen and James Capaldi, *The Pete Seeger Reader* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013).

movement.²⁴ In essence, this volume is an annotated songbook with entries spanning from 1955 to 1968 that includes lyrics, melodies, additional and alternate verses, plus photos and commentaries. Another book by Seeger, *Where Have All the Flowers Gone: A Singalong Memoir*, is a collection of songs that were important to Seeger's activities as a folksinger.²⁵ This volume contains extensive commentaries about the meanings of the texts and the circumstances of their creation, as well as relevant biographical commentary. Both sources owe a great deal in terms of style and approach to a collection of songs from the Great Depression that Seeger had worked on with Alan Lomax and Woody Guthrie back in the 1940s entitled *Hard Hitting Songs for Hard-Hit People*.²⁶ Although it did not see publication until 1967, while working on this project Seeger learned a great deal from the acts of transcribing and editing the songs that Lomax had collected, and the commentaries that Guthrie had written.

A final source of this type that is an important compilation of songs selected from the pages of *Broadside Magazine* with which Seeger had a long and close relationship. *The Best of Broadside* is a publication of the Smithsonian Institution's recording division Smithsonian Folkways Records includes five CDs containing

²⁴ Pete Seeger and Bob Reiser, *Everybody Says Freedom: A History of the Civil Rights Movement in Songs and Pictures* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2009).

²⁵ Pete Seeger, *Where Have All the Flowers Gone? A Singalong Memoir*, rev. ed., ed. Michael Miller and Sarah Elisabeth (New York: W.W. Norton, 2009).

²⁶ Alan Lomax, Woody Guthrie, and Pete Seeger, *Hard Hitting Songs for Hard-hit People* (Lincoln, NB: University of Nebraska Press, 2012).

eighty-nine songs and a companion volume of lyrics, photos, commentaries, and artist profiles.²⁷ The songs are arranged by the following topics: atomic bombs and nuclear concerns, migrant labor, labor, Vietnam, social injustice, black power, feminism, and women's rights.

Folk Music and Social Movements

The next three sources are related to the study of the folk music and 20th-century American social movements. The first, *Rainbow Quest*, was written by historian Ronald Cohen is a carefully-documented work that reflecting nearly twenty years of Cohen's painstaking research into many aspects of the movements and the people that made them happen.²⁸ The information on Seeger is woven throughout the book in a way that the reader gets a good sense of just how central he was to the movement on musical, political, and personal levels. Moreover, it also discusses the musical activities both of Seeger's family members and musicians that he worked with over the years.

Another book in this category was written by Seeger's biographer David Dunaway in collaboration with Molly Beer entitled *Singing Out: An Oral History*

²⁷ Jeff Place and Ronald D. Cohen, eds., *The Best of Broadside 1962-1988: Anthems of the American Underground from the Pages of Broadside Magazine* (Washington, D.C., Smithsonian Folkways, 2000).

²⁸ Ronald D. Cohen, *Rainbow Quest: The Folk Music Revival & American Society, 1940-1970* (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 2002).

of America's Folk Music Revivals.²⁹ The authors interviewed sixty-five individuals that were directly involved in the folk music movement, thus a great deal of information on Seeger and his family is included. The third and final work of this type is *Playing for Change: Music and Musicians in the Service of Social Movements* by sociologists Rob Rosenthal and Dick Flacks.³⁰ This volume strives to explain the roles that musicians and their work played in fostering the causes of numerous social movements.

Socio-historical Approaches to the Folk Song

The next two sources are academically-oriented volumes on the genre of folk music from socio-historical perspectives. The first is Alan Merriam's *The Anthropology of Music*, a classic text written in the mid-20th century just as the disciplines of anthropology and sociology were first seriously being applied to the study of music.³¹ Merriam's most lasting contribution to the foundation of the field was the distinction he made between the "use" and "function" of music.³² Though these terms are more commonly used in the field of ethnomusicology to describe

²⁹ David Dunaway and Molly Beer, *Singing Out: An Oral History of America's Folk Music Revivals* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011).

³⁰ Rob Rosenthal and Dick Flacks, *Playing for Change: Music and Musicians in the Service of Social Movements* (Boulder, CO: Paradigm Publishers, 2012).

³¹ Alan P. Merriam, *The Anthropology of Music* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1964).

³² *Ibid.*, 209-227.

the music of indigenous cultures, they are employed in the current study to explain important points about the folk music revival in which Seeger played a major role.

The second important source is Bruno Nettl's *The Study of Ethnomusicology* written some four decades after the Merriam volume just mentioned.³³ In this book, Nettl builds on Merriam's ideas by discussing recent interpretations of the use/function dichotomy as well as articulating the relationship between this model and the ideas of "coin theory" and "pyramid theory"³⁴ The first of these is a metaphor for the insider and outsider views experienced by participants and observers when doing field observations in the fields of anthropology, cultural anthropology, sociology, and ethnomusicology.. By way of contrast, the notion of "pyramid theory" situates music's role in society with "function" at the tip of the pyramid while various examples of "use" serve as the base. As the scope and nature the current project does not lend itself to developing these theories in depth, knowledge of their basic tenets has been instructive in the overall discussion of Seeger and the role of his music in a social context.

Song Studies

The next category of literature is that of previous research projects that had studied the songs of Pete Seeger and other musicians of his type. Knupp's article,

³³ Bruno Nettl, *The Study of Ethnomusicology: Thirty-one Issues and Concepts* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2005).

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 248-254.

“A Time for Every Purpose Under Heaven: Rhetorical Dimensions of Protest Music” served as a valuable model of how to apply the process of content analysis to the lyrics of folk songs written for the labor movement as compared with anti-war songs of the 1960s.³⁵ The title of the article is based on a phrase from Seeger’s song “Turn! Turn! Turn!”³⁶ Knupp, a scholar in the field of communication studies, looked especially at the rhetorical dimensions of protest music by making a detailed analysis of the content of thirty songs: fifteen from the labor movement, and fifteen from the anti-war movement.³⁷ His approach to analyzing the lyrics of these songs was to establish a series of content categories (personal references, temporal orientation, action, reflection, criticism, praise) that could be applied to each song.³⁸ The main finding of Knupp’s investigation was that, although the act of singing protest songs had a positive effect on building a sense of solidarity among group members, it was “of little use in recruiting new members from those who do not sympathize with the movement.”³⁹

Another source by James Schnell focused on protest songs from the

³⁵ Ralph E. Knupp, “A time for every purpose under heaven: Rhetorical dimensions of protest music,” *Southern Journal of Communication* 46, no. 4 (1981): 377-389.

³⁶ Pete Seeger, “Turn! Turn! Turn! (To Everything There Is a Season)” (New York: Melody Trails, Inc., 1962).

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 380.

³⁸ Further details on Knupp’s research approach appear below in Chapter 3.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 388.

anti-nuclear movement of the 1960s.⁴⁰ As his starting point, Schnell used the 1979 “No Nukes” concerts held in New York that were sponsored by Musicians United for Safe Energy (MUSE). As his data set, Schnell chose twenty-eight songs from the album that was made of the concert.⁴¹ In addition, he refers to Knupp’s study as part of his analysis, noting that it “documented the tendency of protest songs to use various rhetorical shortcuts that are not consistent with deliberative public discourse.”⁴² Schnell also uses theoretical concepts and criteria gathered from the work of two of the most important writers on the topic of the countercultural movements in the mid-20th-century, historian Theodore Roszak, and social scholar Charles Reich.⁴³ As with Knupp’s approach discussed above, Schnell subjected a select group of songs to the process of content analysis through which he found that eight of the songs were related to counterculture, three of which were overtly a part of the antinuclear movement.⁴⁴ Schnell’s approach was especially useful in the segments of the current study that deal with Findings (Chapter 4) and Discussion (Chapter 5).

⁴⁰ James A. Schnell, “No Nukes: Music as a Form of Countercultural Communication,” chap. 12 in *Qualitative Method Interpretations in Communication Studies* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2001).

⁴¹ Ibid., 116.

⁴² Ibid., 115.

⁴³ Ibid., 113.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 116.

Analytical Approaches

Thematic analysis

The final category of literature includes books related to the three analytical approaches employed in the current study: thematic analysis, content analysis, and performance analysis.⁴⁵ Although the term thematic analysis is sometimes used interchangeably with “content analysis,” as Vaismoradi et al. have pointed out, there is actually an important difference that is often overlooked: whereas content analysis includes both coding the data and counting the frequency of those codes, “thematic analysis provides a purely qualitative, detailed, and nuanced account of data” that seeks to identify common ideas across more than one excerpt.⁴⁶ Braun and Clarke’s article *Using Thematic Analysis in Psychology* has been particularly helpful as a source of a step-by-step method for conducting thematic analyses.⁴⁷

Content analysis

The two studies by Knupp and Schnell both employ an analytical process known as content analysis which can be defined as “any technique for making inferences by systematically and objectively identifying special characteristics of

⁴⁵ These procedures will be described in greater detail in Chapter 3 in conjunction with the research methodology.

⁴⁶ Mojtaba Vaismoradi, Hannele Turunen, and Terese Bondas. “Content analysis and thematic analysis: Implications for conducting a qualitative descriptive study.” *Nursing & Health Sciences* 15, no. 3 (2013): 398-405.

⁴⁷ Virginia Braun and Victoria Clarke. “Using thematic analysis in psychology.” *Qualitative Research in Psychology* 3, no. 2 (2006): 77-101.

messages.”⁴⁸ Content analysis can also be explained as “a method for describing and interpreting the written productions of a society or social group.”⁴⁹ As Seeger’s songs were products of a certain society at a certain point in time, while also containing strong messages about his views on important social issues, in the current study the meaning of “content analysis” is a composite of the two definitions just offered. Further information on both thematic and content analysis will be found in Chapter 3.

Coding in qualitative analysis

The technique used to accomplish detailed thematic analysis and content analysis is known as “coding.” Saldaña defines a code as being “a word or short phrase that symbolically assigns a summative, salient, essence-capturing and/or evocative attribute for a portion of language-based or visual data.”⁵⁰ Developing a solid and consistent approach to coding is one of the essential techniques needed for doing qualitative research, thus Saldaña’s *Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers* has been used as the basis for coding in this study. Further

⁴⁸ Ole R. Holsti, “Content analysis.” *The handbook of social psychology* 2 (1968): 596-692, quoted in Bruce L. Berg, *Qualitative Research in the Social Sciences*, 4th ed. (Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon, 2001), 240.

⁴⁹ Catherine Marshall and Gretchen B. Rossman. *Designing Qualitative Research* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2016), 166.

⁵⁰ Johnny Saldaña, *The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers*, 2nd ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2013), 3.

information is included in Chapter 3 to follow.

Performance analysis

The research procedure of performance analysis is less well known than the procedures of thematic analysis and content analysis. Moreover, its roots are not actually found in the field of music, but rather in theatre studies. Performance analysis also draws on the disciplines of oral interpretation, sociology, and anthropology.⁵¹ Philip Auslander, one of the primary advocates for the use of performance analysis in studying popular music, has described the intention of this research procedure as follows:

I am interested primarily in finding ways of discussing what popular musicians do as performers—the meanings they create through their performances and the means they use to create them.⁵²

Auslander further describes the performance analysis of popular music as involving the following elements:

close readings of performances by popular musicians, readings that attend to the particulars of physical movement, gesture, costume, and facial expression as much as voice and musical sound.⁵³

Auslander also posits a theory of the singer's personality (or presence) as

⁵¹ Philip Auslander, "Performance Analysis and Popular Music: A Manifesto," *Contemporary Theatre Review* 14 (2004): 1.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 3.

⁵³ *Ibid.*

consisting of three layers: (1) the real person, (2) the performance persona, and (3) the character.⁵⁴ In short, the performance persona refers to singers' ongoing images that they project throughout their careers, whereas the character is the role they assume for the sake of portraying the lyric of a given song.

Chapter Summary

This chapter has offered a survey of the major books, journal articles, and other print resources that were used in the course of conducting the current research project. While many of them were directly related to Pete Seeger's career as a singer-songwriter and political activist, some are from various other fields in which qualitative research paradigms such as thematic analysis, content analysis, and performance analysis are currently being done. One of the most rewarding parts of working on this project has been to experience first hand how qualitative research is helping build bridges among the social and natural sciences as the trend toward multidisciplinary study continues to gain popularity and credibility in the academic world.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 6.

Chapter 3: Research Method

Chapter Overview

In Chapter 1, three aspects of Pete Seeger's musical activities were identified as being fundamentally important to the current study. First, his personal characteristics were discussed in terms of how an early desire to become a journalist shaped the direction of his eventual career in music. Second, his role as a song leader at union meetings during the years he was involved with the labor movement was identified as having led to a style of performing that emphasized audience participation. Third, it was noted that Seeger's song selection for live performances was aimed not only at entertaining and educating his audience, but also at sharing particular messages with them about important social issues.

From this initial survey of Seeger's musical activity, three analytical frameworks emerged that will be used throughout the study to assess how he directed his music making toward the betterment of society: the singer, the singing, and the songs. This analytical framework finds a ring of authenticity in Seeger's own philosophy when he wrote the following advice: "If you think of folk music as a process, you know that words and melodies may not be so important as the way they are sung or listened to. For the process includes not only the song but the singer and the listeners, and their situation."⁵⁵

⁵⁵ Seeger, *In His Own Words*, 68.

Description of the Research Plan

Research Question

As Winkler has noted, Seeger was convinced that songs were a powerful tool to “empower people to act on their own behalf” by mobilizing them to “bring about social and political change.”⁵⁶ Therefore, the research question that this study addresses is as follows: How did Pete Seeger go about directing the various aspects of his musical activity toward his intention of contributing to the betterment of society? In order to seek an informed answer to this question, the three frameworks just described—singer, singing, songs—have been used as the vantage points from which to survey Seeger’s long and illustrious career in music.

Data Sets

In support of the research needed to seek answers to this question, three types of data were collected—one for each of the three frameworks. However, the three data sets have one important thing in common: they all consist of qualitative rather than quantitative data, a fact that steered many decisions along the way. The following definition will help clarify what is meant by the term “qualitative data” in the context of the current study: “Qualitative data, with their emphasis on people’s lived experiences, are fundamentally well suited for locating the *meanings* people place on the events, processes, and structures of their lives and for connecting these meanings to the *social world* around them.”⁵⁷

⁵⁶ Winkler, *To Everything There is a Season*, 25.

⁵⁷ Matthew B. Miles, A. Michael Huberman, and Johnny Saldaña,

For information about Seeger himself (the singer), a single body of text was examined, the collected reader responses that appeared in the *New York Times* in reaction to Seeger's obituary by Jon Pareles published on January 28, 2014.⁵⁸ Over one-thousand readers responded to Pareles's article; from those, the editorial staff of the *Times* selected fifty-eight that met the newspaper's stated criteria in terms of the range of perspectives they expressed, as well as concentrating on individuals with first-hand knowledge of Seeger and his career in music.⁵⁹ These fifty-eight responses were then examined according to the procedures of thematic analysis.

For information on Seeger's performing style (the singing), a DVD of Seeger's 1963 concert at Town Hall in Melbourne, Australia served as the sole source for constructing the data set. This is an especially rich resource for investigation in that it captures a complete public performance from beginning to end both in terms of sight and sound.⁶⁰ This important source of information was examined according to the procedures of performance analysis.

Qualitative Data Analysis: A Methods Sourcebook, 3rd ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2014), Kindle edition, location 848.

⁵⁸ Jon Pareles, "Pete Seeger, Champion of Folk Music and Social Change, Dies at 94," *New York Times*, January 28, 2014, www.nytimes.com/2014/01/29/arts/music/pete-seeger-songwriter-and-champion-of-folk-music-dies-at-94.html

⁵⁹ *New York Times*. <http://www.nytimes.com/content/help/site/usercontent/usercontent.html#usercontent-nytpicks>

⁶⁰ *Pete Seeger: Live in Australia 1963* (Silver Spring, MD: Acorn Media, 2009), DVD.

TABLE 1. Live Performance Recordings Examined

Year	Venue	Location	Media	Timing
1960	Bowdoin College	Brunswick, ME	CD	112”
1963	Carnegie Hall	New York, NY	CD	119”
1963	Melbourne Town Hall	Melbourne, Australia	DVD	105”
1965	Carnegie Music Hall	Pittsburgh, PA	CD	111”
1980	Sanders Hall, Harvard University	Cambridge, MA	CD	122”

The data set for the third and final category (the songs) is a compilation of the lyrics from all of the songs that Seeger performed in the 1963 Melbourne concert, plus the songs from four live concert recordings as shown in Table 1 above. Whereas the manner of Seeger’s singing, teaching, and song-leading was the object of the previous analysis, the texts themselves are the center of attention here. The full corpus of lyrics amounts to one hundred forty songs in total with a few favorites appearing in more than one concert.⁶¹ As this was a large amount of text to examine closely, selection criteria were established in order to create a more manageable data set. Considering that the emphasis of the current study is on how Seeger used his role as a performer of folk songs to promote various social causes, songs from the following categories were omitted: (1) traditional folk songs not related to contemporary social issues, (2) songs in languages other than English, (3) song fragments sung as a part of Seeger's commentary, and (4)

⁶¹ A full list of the songs and the concerts in which they were sung appears in the Appendices.

instrumental numbers with no singing. These fifty-nine songs have been examined according to the procedures of content analysis.

Research Approaches and Tools

The current study, as mentioned above, falls into the category of qualitative research, a type of academic inquiry in which “the researcher’s ability to interpret and make sense of what he or she sees is critical for an understanding of any social phenomenon.”⁶² Rather than striving for an ideal of impersonal objectivity, qualitative researchers relish the opportunity to relate subjective observations and perceptions that arise from a close reading of the artifacts and phenomena under observation. To this end, it can be considered that “the researcher is an instrument” much in the same way that standardized testing measures are used in quantitative research.⁶³ Moreover, the qualitative approach allows researchers to evaluate their chosen issues in finer detail and to a greater depth than is possible in a purely quantitative approach.⁶⁴ All in all, the basic goals of qualitative research are an especially good match with the aims of the current study in their emphasis on meanings, contexts, unanticipated outcomes, processes, and causal explanations.⁶⁵

⁶² Paul Leedy and Jeanne Ormrod, *Practical Research Planning and Design*, 7th ed. (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Merrill Prentice Hall, 2001), 147.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Michael Quinn Patton, *Qualitative Evaluation and Research Methods*, 2nd ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 1990), 13.

⁶⁵ Joseph Maxwell, *Qualitative Research Design: An Interactive Approach*, 2nd ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2005), 22-23.

Procedures

Thematic analysis

Under the general umbrella of qualitative analysis, a number of specific analytical approaches exist that can be tailor-made to fit the unique qualities of individual research projects and particular types of data. In the current study, each of the three data sets also required the use of a different analytical procedure: thematic analysis, performance analysis, and content analysis. For the data set that corresponds to the singer framework, thematic analysis has been used to evaluate and explore the reader comments from the *New York Times*. As stated in Chapter 2, whereas content analysis is primarily concerned with looking deeply into the content of one excerpt of text, thematic analysis is more concerned with seeking common ideas that connect across more than one excerpt. To accomplish this aim, the fifty-eight *New York Times* staff picks were analyzed with the assistance of the Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software (CAQDAS) called *Dedoose*.⁶⁶ Each of the responses was treated as a unique text excerpt that was then coded according to the principles of thematic analysis by means of the approach known as “values coding” that is especially effective for investigating texts for “values, attitudes, and beliefs” that represent a person’s “perspectives or

⁶⁶ *Dedoose* (version 5.0.11), web application for managing, analyzing, and presenting qualitative and mixed method research data (Los Angeles, CA: SocioCultural Research Consultants, LLC, 2014).

world-view.”⁶⁷ The *Dedoose* software program facilitated the cross-checking of each code for its occurrence in other excerpts, as well as the co-occurrence of codes across the data set as a whole. The results of this analysis will be reported in Chapter 4 in both tabular and narrative form.

Performance analysis

The procedure of performance analysis historically has been applied mostly to theatrical productions to the exclusion of musical events.⁶⁸ Moreover, the few examples of performance analysis directed at musical events have been limited to the pop genre rather than the genre of folk music. That being the case, it was necessary to develop a customized approach to performance analysis based on Auslander’s work that was adapted to the unique features of Seeger’s folk music performances.

As mentioned in Chapter 2, Auslander includes the following particulars in his list of elements to be analyzed: “physical movement, gesture, costume, and facial expression” as well as “voice and musical sound.”⁶⁹ These elements are in addition to the three layers related to the performer he identifies as the real person, the performance persona, and the character.⁷⁰ To properly analyze the performances by Seeger examined in the current study, another element that

⁶⁷ Saldaña, *Coding Manual*, 110.

⁶⁸ Auslander, *Performance Analysis*, 1.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 3.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 6.

Auslander excludes has been included: the reception of the performance by the audience.⁷¹ Whereas the very nature of Seeger's "hootenanny" style involves teaching the audience how to sing along and even add their own harmony and countermelodies, the category of "audience participation" has been added to those gleaned from Auslander. The results of this research will be reported both in tabular and narrative forms in Chapter 4 below.

Content analysis

In the current study, the term "content analysis" is used to indicate that inferences have been made about the intention of Seeger's "by systematically and objectively identifying special characteristics" of the messages they contain.⁷² As in the case of the process of thematic analysis applied to the reader comments, as described above, a data set consisting of song texts selected from the CDs and DVD was examined with the assistance of the *Dedoose* software program. Excerpts were created from each of the lyrics, then coded according to the coding method known as "motif coding" that was originally developed for use in the field of folklore.⁷³ The results of this analysis will be reported in Chapter 4 in both tabular and narrative form.

⁷¹ Ibid., 3.

⁷² Holsti, "Content analysis," 240.

⁷³ Saldaña, *Coding Manual*, 128.

Delimitations

Finally, a brief note must be made about two aspects of the topic of Pete Seeger's career as a singing journalist and musical social activist that have not been covered in the current study. First, although the focus has been on Seeger's activity in order to effect social change, there has been no attempt to investigate whether or not his songs and his singing actually had an impact on the activism of his audience, or on public policy. As intriguing a notion as this is, it is far beyond the scope of the present study.

Second, the particulars of his activities as a member of the Communist Party of the USA has been omitted as have the details of his testimony in front of the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC) that led to his subsequent blacklisting. This information can be found in the biographical and autobiographical sources mentioned in Chapter 2. As with the topic of how his musical activities may have had a direct influence on the course of U.S. history, this topic has been left for another time.

Chapter Summary

This chapter has outlined both the theoretical and practical aspects of the research project by describing the research question, the nature of the data sets, the research approaches, tools, and procedures employed, as well as what was omitted intentionally. In addition, it describes the three frameworks of "singer," "singing," and "songs" that reoccur throughout the study on both the macro and

micro levels. Finally, information has been offered on how each of the specific research paradigms were chosen and adapted to the nature of the three frameworks.

Chapter 4: Findings

Chapter Overview

The section that reports the “findings” of a research project is quite rightly the heart of any piece of academic writing as it is here that we learn what the researcher discovered, uncovered, supported, disputed, and so forth with regard to the research question. The following chapter reports on (but does not analyze or discuss in detail) what was “found out” about Pete Seeger’s personal characteristics as a singing journalist and political activist, his approach to singing concerts in public, and the songs that he sang. The findings of each of the three frameworks have been described separately within the context of its unique data set and matching research paradigm.

The Singer Framework

The *New York Times* Obituary

Pete Seeger’s death on January 27, 2014 was announced in a *New York Times* obituary the following day by veteran music journalist Jon Pareles.⁷⁴ In the succeeding weeks, nearly twelve-hundred readers responded with their personal eulogies based on their having attended his concerts, met him on the street or in a train, or listened to his broadcasts and recordings. The following part of this study examines selected portions of the text that harmonize with the reader responses analyzed below. In the opening portion of the obituary, Pareles sets the tone by

⁷⁴ Jon Pareles, “Pete Seeger Dies at 94.”

noting the major aspects and segments of Seeger's career:

Pete Seeger, the singer, folk-song collector and songwriter who spearheaded an American folk revival and spent a long career championing folk music as both a vital heritage and a catalyst for social change, died on Monday in Manhattan...

Mr. Seeger's career carried him from singing at labor rallies to the Top 10, from college auditoriums to folk festivals, and from a conviction for contempt of Congress...to performing on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial at an inaugural concert for Barack Obama...

For Mr. Seeger, folk music and a sense of community were inseparable, and where he saw a community, he saw the possibility of political action.

...His agenda paralleled the concerns of the American left: He sang for the labor movement in the 1940s and 1950s, for civil rights marches and anti-Vietnam War rallies in the 1960s, and for environmental and antiwar causes in the 1970s and beyond. "We Shall Overcome," which Mr. Seeger adapted from old spirituals, became a civil rights anthem.

It is hard to think of a more precise and concise way of summing up Seeger's life in music than the observation that, "where he saw a community, he saw the possibility of political action."

The next section is entitled "A Generation's Mentor" in which Pareles shifts

his attention to a younger generation of musicians whom Seeger had inspired to find their own way to continue the tradition of music as an instrument for social change:

Mr. Seeger was a mentor to younger folk and topical singers in the '50s and '60s, among them Bob Dylan, Don McLean and Bernice Johnson Reagon, who founded *Sweet Honey in the Rock*. Decades later, Bruce Springsteen drew from Mr. Seeger's repertory of traditional music about a turbulent America in recording his 2006 album, "We Shall Overcome: The Seeger Sessions," and in 2009 he performed Woody Guthrie's "This Land Is Your Land" with Mr. Seeger at the Obama inaugural. At a Madison Square Garden concert celebrating Mr. Seeger's 90th birthday, Mr. Springsteen introduced him as "a living archive of America's music and conscience, a testament of the power of song and culture to nudge history along."

Bruce Springsteen's description of Seeger as a "living archive of America's music and conscience" compliments the Pareles quotation mentioned above.

At this point the obituary shifts its attention to biographical information on Seeger's upbringing, his discarded career in journalism, and the details of how he came in contact with the likes of Alan Lomax, Lead Belly, and Woody Guthrie who were to have such a profound influence on his career. It also recounts the circumstances of Seeger's musical activities that eventually attracted unwelcome attention by the anti-Communist fanatics in the U.S. government during the

post-WWII era:

Mr. Seeger met [Woody] Guthrie, a songwriter who shared his love of vernacular music and agitprop ambitions, in 1940, when they performed at a benefit concert for migrant California workers. Traveling across the United States with Guthrie, Mr. Seeger picked up some of his style and repertory. He also hitchhiked and hopped freight trains by himself, learning and trading songs.

When he returned to New York later in 1940, Mr. Seeger made his first albums. He, Millard Lampell and [Lee] Hays founded the *Almanac Singers*, who performed union songs and, until Germany invaded the Soviet Union, antiwar songs, following the Communist Party line. Guthrie soon joined the group.

During World War II the *Almanac Singers'* repertory turned to patriotic, anti-fascist songs, bringing them a broad audience, including a prime-time national radio spot. But the singers' earlier antiwar songs, the target of an F.B.I. investigation, came to light, and the group's career plummeted.

The next part of the article recounts the parallel history of the next group that Seeger formed, *The Weavers*:

In 1949, Mr. Seeger, Hays, Ronnie Gilbert and Fred Hellerman started working together as the *Weavers*...In 1950 and 1951 the *Weavers* were

national stars, with hit singles and engagements at major nightclubs...

Their commercial success was dampened, however, when "Red Channels," an influential pamphlet that named performers with suspected Communist ties, appeared in June 1950 and listed Mr. Seeger, although by then he had quit the Communist Party. He later criticized himself for not having left the party sooner, though he continued to describe himself as a "communist with a small 'c.' "

By the summer of 1951, the "Red Channels" citation and leaks from FBI files had led to the cancellation of television appearances. In 1951, the Senate Internal Security Subcommittee investigated the *Weavers* for sedition. And in February 1952, a former member of People's Songs testified before the House Un-American Activities Committee that three of the four *Weavers* were members of the Communist Party.

Once again, a singing group that Seeger had formed lost its commercial viability due to volatile political atmosphere of the Cold War era. However, Seeger did not give up on his goal to promote folk music as well as his political beliefs:

Shut out of national exposure, Mr. Seeger returned primarily to solo concerts, touring college coffeehouses, churches, schools and summer camps, building an audience for folk music among young people. He started to write a long-running column for the folk-song magazine *Sing Out!* And he recorded prolifically for the independent Folkways label, singing

everything from children's songs to Spanish Civil War anthems.

The article continues with a concise account of Seeger's being called in front of Congress during the "red scare" age of McCarthyism:

In 1955 he was subpoenaed by the House Un-American Activities Committee. In his testimony he said, "I feel that in my whole life I have never done anything of any conspiratorial nature." He also stated: "I am not going to answer any questions as to my association, my philosophical or religious beliefs or my political beliefs, or how I voted in any election, or any of these private affairs. I think these are very improper questions for any American to be asked, especially under such compulsion as this."

Mr. Seeger offered to sing the songs mentioned by the congressmen who questioned him. The committee declined.

Mr. Seeger was indicted in 1957 on 10 counts of contempt of Congress. He was convicted in 1961 and sentenced to a year in prison, but the next year an appeals court dismissed the indictment as faulty. After the indictment, Mr. Seeger's concerts were often picketed by the John Birch Society and other rightist groups. "All those protests did was sell tickets and get me free publicity," he later said. "The more they protested, the bigger the audiences became."

Pareles' continues with the familiar story of his involvement with the Folk Revival in the United States that occurred in the 1960s, including his association

with the Newport Folk Festival and brief mentions of his world tour in 1963.

The article also includes one detailed account of the history of a song with which Seeger will always be identified that bears inclusion at this point in that it shows how he was truly committed to folk music as a living tradition, and his sense of fairness and honesty in terms of the financial aspects of his work:

Like many of Mr. Seeger's songs, "We Shall Overcome" had convoluted traditional roots. It was based on old gospel songs, primarily "I'll Overcome," a hymn that striking tobacco workers had sung on a picket line in South Carolina. A slower version, "We Will Overcome," was collected from Lucille Simmons, one of the workers, by Zilphia Horton, the musical director of the Highlander Folk School in Monteagle, Tenn., which trained union organizers.

Ms. Horton taught it to Mr. Seeger, and her version of "We Will Overcome" was published in the People's Songs newsletter. Mr. Seeger changed "We will" to "We shall" and added verses ("We'll walk hand in hand"). He taught it to Frank Hamilton, who would join the Weavers in 1962, and Guy Carawan, who became musical director at Highlander in the '50s. Mr. Carawan taught the song to the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee at its founding convention.

The song was copyrighted by Mr. Seeger, Mr. Hamilton, Mr. Carawan and Ms. Horton. "At that time we didn't know Lucille Simmons's name," Mr.

Seeger wrote in his 1993 autobiography, "Where Have All the Flowers Gone." All of the song's royalties go to the "We Shall Overcome" Fund, administered by what is now the Highlander Research and Education Center, which provides grants to African-Americans organizing in the South.

The next section relates the details of Seeger's last major project for the public good, the Clearwater NPO that succeeded in helping clean up the badly-polluted Hudson River:

During the late 1960s Mr. Seeger started an improbable project: a sailing ship that would crusade for cleaner water on the Hudson River. Between other benefit concerts he raised money to build the Clearwater, a 106-foot sloop, which was launched in June 1969 with a crew of musicians. The ship became a symbol and a rallying point for antipollution efforts and education.

In May 2009, after decades of litigation and environmental activism led by Mr. Seeger's nonprofit environmental organization, Hudson River Sloop Clearwater, General Electric began dredging sediment containing PCBs it had dumped into the Hudson. Mr. Seeger and his wife also helped organize a yearly summer folk festival named after the Clearwater.

The obituary concludes with an account of the eventual awards that came to Seeger after many years of blacklisting and political persecution fueled by those who did not understand the kind of social activism he had stood for throughout his

lifetime:

He was elected to the Songwriters Hall of Fame in 1972, and in 1993 he was given a lifetime achievement Grammy Award. In 1994 he received a Kennedy Center Honor and, from President Bill Clinton, the National Medal of Arts, America's highest arts honor, awarded by the National Endowment for the Arts. In 1999 he traveled to Cuba to receive the Order of Félix Varela, Cuba's highest cultural award, for his "humanistic and artistic work in defense of the environment and against racism."

Mr. Seeger was inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, in the category of early influences, in 1996. Arlo Guthrie, who paid tribute at the ceremony, mentioned that the Weavers' hit "Goodnight, Irene" had reached No. 1, only to add, "I can't think of a single event in Pete's life that is probably less important to him." Mr. Seeger made no acceptance speech, but he did lead a singalong of "Goodnight, Irene," flanked by Stevie Wonder, David Byrne and members of the Jefferson Airplane.

Mr. Seeger won Grammy Awards for best traditional folk album in 1997, for the album "Pete" and, in 2009, for the album "At 89." He won a Grammy in the children's music category in 2011 for "Tomorrow's Children."

The “NYT Picks” Reader Responses

Background

Before beginning a discussion of what was found in the reader responses, we should first consider what a eulogy is, and what it is not. The word eulogy comes to the English language from Greek via Latin meaning “a speech or piece of writing that praises someone or something highly, especially a tribute to someone who has just died.”⁷⁵ By definition eulogies are not unbiased appraisals, thus true to the adage, “De mortuis nihil nisi bonum” (of the dead say nothing but good), the *New York Times* reader responses were overwhelmingly positive. Even so, the style of discourse common to contemporary social media encouraged a few respondents to try to “set the record straight” about Seeger’s socialist views, information that was already familiar territory for the *NYT* readership. In the end even his harshest political critics speaking well of his musicianship and his lasting influence on the folk song movement.

There were in total 1184 reader responses to Pareles’s article, 984 of which appeared as “Readers Picks” according to the number of “recommend” hits by other readers. The smallest group is known as the “NYT Picks” which were chosen by the editorial staff of the newspaper based on the following criteria:

NYT Picks are a selection of comments that represent a range of views and are judged the most interesting and thoughtful. In some cases, NYT Picks

⁷⁵ *Oxford English Dictionary*, (online version), s.v. “eulogy.”

may be selected to highlight comments from a particular region, or readers with first-hand knowledge of an issue.⁷⁶

All fifty-eight of the NYT Picks are given at this point in their entirety to facilitate understanding of the thematic analysis below.⁷⁷

The responses

[1] Michael Agostino; Highland Park, IL; 30 January 2014. In this response we see Seeger's "down to earth" personality coming through in a situation where he sang for sang for the waiter at a hotel where he was staying:

In 1965/66 (?) I was an art student working part time at the Logan Hotel at the airport in Boston and Pete Seeger came in around 1:00 a.m. after a performance. He was poolside with two other people in his party. I serve him his food and drink and I tell him how much I dig his music. He pulls out his guitar and plays a song for just me. There was nobody else around so this wasn't an act of self-promotion, just a kind act for a young man. He's been with us all of our lives, we'll all miss him.

[2] Steve Davidowitz; Las Vegas; 29 January 2014. The writer of this response concentrates on expressing his appreciation both to the author of the obituary, but

⁷⁶ *NYT* website.

⁷⁷ The bylines of the reader responses have been standardized as follows: [number] user name; location; posting date.

mostly Seeger himself:

Must thank Jon Pareles for this excellent perspective on the life of Pete Seeger, a truly great and humble man who gave us so many gifts through his music and friendships.

Pete enjoyed who he was, as so many enjoyed knowing him—a great personal achievement—and we certainly are a better people for having seen and heard him speak up and sing out for what he believed in throughout his natural born life.

I knew him only briefly, but remember vividly the passion he brought to small coffee houses, to high school gymnasiums, to the Music Barn in Massachusetts, to the Minneapolis State Fairgrounds (with Arlo Guthrie), to his library of recordings and to his too few but profound television appearances.

While he mortally leaves us, Pete Seeger will remain truly immortal as long as humans listen and sing his songs that speak to our hopes, our dreams and our desires to savor and improve life on this planet.

[3] Crystal Kofke; Massachusetts; 29 January 2014. The circumstances of this reader's contact was through her husband's having met Seeger's wife, Toshi:

Pete's music has been part of my life for so many years. My late husband took Toshi's picture at the Beacon Sloop Club in 1976, and in return she

gave us 4 tickets to Pete's Carnegie Hall concert. He was best at bringing people together with his music and getting everyone to sing along. There was a great concert in Heaven last night, and my husband, Jim, was singing along.

[4] R.D. Eno; Cabot, Vermont; 29 January 2014. The point of this response is Seeger's avoidance of hero worship by his fans:

I once told him he was a hero of mine. He walked away in disgust. I would tell him again, if I could.

[5] tosten; Swan Valley, Montana; 29 January 2014. This reader relates a fascinating story about having heard a large group of students, parents, and members of the Communist Party in China singing a song by Woody Guthrie that Seeger often sang:

When I was growing up in Minnesota in the depths of the cold war I had the chance to travel to New York and hear Pete Seeger at Madison Square Garden. I remember him alone in the spotlight singing This Land is Your Land to a rapt crowd. A few years ago I was teaching in China and we led an assembly of 2000 students, parents, teachers, and even a few party representatives singing that song in Mandarin using Chinese locations that a group of students had written. Seeger's influence with the music industry

was important but his influence with kids was especially significant to him. As I walked in the dark from that auditorium I heard a young boy singing in Chinese, this land is your land, this land is my land as he walked back to his classroom. Pete Seeger would have liked to have been there for that. I think in a lot of ways he was. His machine had surrounded hate and caused it to surrender. We had all won the cold war not by defeating any enemy other than hate and were left with singing kids. Thank you for believing in that result Mr. Seeger. It made a difference.

[6] Victor; Idaho; 29 January 2014. This response attests to the universality of Seeger's message in that a Jewish reader gave him a great honor by considering him one of the thirty-six "hidden righteous ones" thought to live in each era:

According to the Jewish tradition, our world is sustained in each generation by the presence of 36 good people, the "Lamed Vavnicks". Well, we just lost one. That might be scary if you think about it. Pete Seeger's spirit was so strong, it could shake mountains, and did! I am so saddened as are many and hope there is someone out there to fill his shoes in the next generation.

However, at this moment in time that seems impossible.

[7] sundarimudgirl; Seattle, WA; 29 January 2014. Although this is the shortest comment, it speaks volumes about the personal impact Seeger had on people:

I don't want to face the rest of the 21st century without him.

[8] Working doc; Delray Beach, FL; 29 January 2014. This reader recalls his reluctance at hearing Seeger the first time:

At my first concert (a no-nukes one in 1981 or so), I was disappointed to hear Pete Seeger (popular with my parents), not Bob Seger the rock star popular with us kids at the time.

Now has time turned the tables on what I value. I'll remember Pete's great smile...and sing along in this great land.

[9] Robert McEwan; California; 29 January 2014. This reader pays tribute by quoting the text of one of Seeger's lesser known songs:

A life well lived. An inspiration. A beautiful, talented man. His not so often heard song "Oh had I a Golden Thread," tells of his desire to "weave a magic strand of rainbow design." He did. Beautiful man.

"Oh, had I a golden thread

And a needle so fine

I would weave a magic strand

Of rainbow design, of rainbow design

In it I'd weave the bravery

Of women giving birth

And in it I would weave the innocence
Of children of all the earth, children of all the earth
Show my brothers and sisters my rainbow design
I would bind up this sorry world
With hand and my heart and mind
Hand and heart and mind
Oh, had I a golden thread
And a needle so fine
I would weave a magic strand
Of rainbow design, of rainbow design”

[10] christmann; New England; 29 January 2014. This reader had met Seeger when he was a teenager, forty-five years earlier:

When I was 18, I went to my first big national anti-war demonstration in D.C. There was a huge march to the Pentagon, with people carrying signs with the names of casualties of the war; I had chosen the name of a North Vietnamese village that had been destroyed by U.S. bombs. Each person walked up to a microphone in front of the Pentagon and shouted the name on the sign he or she carried. As I walked away after my turn, there was Pete, singing and greeting each of us (there would have been tens of thousands that day). I thanked him (I was so in awe I could barely speak); he said

“C'mon down to the boat!”- with that big Pete smile. Those few seconds, 45 years ago - never forgotten. A man of grace and courage who exemplified the best in this country. Thank you Pete, again and ever.

[11] Todd Fox; Earth; 29 January 2014. This reader emphasized Seeger's commitment to the idea of people working together for the common good:

To sing along with Pete was to have your heart filled with love and a clear vision of a better way of life — where people work hard together for the common good and genuinely love one another.

I kind of figured when Toshi died that Pete would soon follow. I imagine she told him today that he needn't have hurried when there was still so much to be done. But he'd sung his song and played his part and it was time to go home. If indeed there is a heaven I'm sure that Pete Seeger rose up today, singing.

[12] Constance Porteous; Evanston, IL; 29 January 2014. This reader benefitted from Seeger hearing Seeger sing at her summer camp when she was a child, and that she considered him to be a part of her family:

Pete Seeger was part of my childhood. At age six, he came and sang at a camp in Phoenicia, N.Y. I sat and listened, sang along and watched with awe as he engaged us with his song. His Adam's apple went up and down. It was

a wonderful experience. Because of that time and later times when I heard him sing, I have loved folk music as well as championed along with him the causes of peace and protecting the environment. I loved listening to him when he played in the Village, in N.Y. and at my school, City and Country. So he is like a member of my family and he will be missed.

[13] Scott Hammer; Richmond, VA; 29 January 2014. This reader also recalls his resistance to Seeger's folk music during his teenage years, and then having the chance to meet him in person many years later:

In the summer of 1969, Pete came to Northport, NY, my hometown, on the Clearwater, and played a free concert in the Village park. I was fourteen at the time and was way too cool for folk music, but my parents made me go to the concert. I was determined to have a bad time, and succeeded, until Pete sang "The Devil and the Farmer's Wife" - after that, I was hooked on folk music and have been for the last 45 years.

Coda - in 1999, I met Pete again at vocal week at the Augusta Heritage Center. He was talking about engaging the audience, and mentioned that he frequently used "The Devil and the Farmer's Wife" to achieve exactly the effect it had on me. I'll be singing "Somos El Barco" as I go to sleep tonight. Goodbye Pete; we love and miss you.

[14] Anna from Canada; Ontario, Canada; 29 January 2014. This comment comes from from a Canadian who also encountered Seeger's music during her childhood, and focuses on the truly ethical nature of his character:

As a non-American I can say that Pete Seeger was the first singer/songwriter that I was introduced to by my father when I was 8 years old. Pete stood for then as so many of us stand for now, what is right: not popular, but right. He was of the people for the people and he made personal sacrifices and stood up for what he believed in. He was a freedom fighter along with Martin Luther King Jr. and others in the 50's and 60's and continued to be in his own way right up until the end.

You may be gone Pete, but your music and your passion for people and your message will never be forgotten. Thank you.

[15] Sam; San Francisco; 29 January 2014. This is one of several comments on Seeger's involvement in environmental issues:

I saw the comment that we should name the new Tappan Zee Bridge after Seeger, but really, when you think about it, we should be renaming the RIVER after him. I cannot think of anyone who has done more for that body of water.

[16] Claire; Riverton, NJ; 29 January 2014. This reader actually worked as a volunteer on the Clearwater sloop that figured so predominantly in Seeger's environmentalist activities:

DAVID O'REILLY, Riverton, NJ: I first set foot on Clearwater in 1971 as a volunteer crew member, and instantly fell in love with its creaking rigging and smell of tar and wood smoke. It took me a few years with Clearwater to realize I had actually stepped into the moral universe of Pete Seeger: a utopian, communal "we can fix the world's problems if we all join hands" spirit that seeped into everything he did. I was in my early 20s, and Clearwater and Pete gave me a sense of community and worthy purpose I sorely needed back then, and for which I've always been grateful. To my great joy, our son Chris is a part of Clearwater crew today, and as touched by Pete's death as I am. Thanks, Pete.

[17] Carol Goldstein; New York; 29 January 2014. This is a humorous account of an incident at the airport in Washington, D.C. on the way back to New York after a protest rally:

A funny thing happened that Sunday late afternoon at National Airport. My then-husband and I were waiting to board a plane to NYC as part of a crowd that had dressed in good clothes for the protest. [We were in our early 20's; my parents from Ohio had sprung for our air tickets to the protest, "Because

we can't go ourselves.”] Towards the front of the boarding line was a couple; he was carrying a guitar case. The gate agents were trying to tell him he could not use the ticket he had bought for the guitar because they needed all the seats; the flight was overbooked. They were speaking very loudly, probably supposing that would elicit sympathy for them from the other passengers. Whispers spread through the crowd about what was happening. I wasn't close enough to hear exactly who said what, but the agents became aware that it was them that the crowd was turning against. I would guess that someone said that until Pete Seeger's guitar got on the plane (with its own seat!) none of the rest of us would be boarding. Pete, Toshi and the guitar boarded.

[18] Red Pill; Washington, DC; 28 January 2014. This reader quotes a section from one of Seeger's songs in which he addressed the natural state of our mortality:

Pete wrote a song that sounds like it was meant to be played after his death, “To My Old Brown Earth.” He tells us not to cry but I don't find it possible. We've lost one of the greatest.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8VHVY8KOzuw>

“To my old brown earth

And to my old blue sky

I now give these last few molecules of I.

And you who sing

And you who stand nearby

I do charge you not to cry.

Guard well our human chain

Watch well you keep it strong

As long as sun will shine.

And this our home

Keep pure and sweet and green

For now I am yours

And you are also mine”

There is song in heaven today!

[19] Thomas Zaslavsky; Binghamton, N.Y.; 29 January 2014. This comment speaks for itself:

We've lost a great man, but the eloquence of so many readers' tributes surpasses anything I've ever seen in comments. That is a most fitting tribute to Pete.

[20] JS; NYC; 28 January 2014. This reader expresses a common theme of the responses, the hope that someone will come forth to replace Seeger:

We're going to need future Pete Seeger's in this nation. I have no doubt they will appear.

[21] Howard G; New York; 29 January 2014. This reader relates a story of having sat down directly across from Seeger on the Hudson Line train, and their ensuing discussion about music:

About fifteen years ago, on a sunny, mid-week summer afternoon, I boarded a Metro North train at the Spuyten Duyvil station on the Hudson line.

I was on the way up to see the guy who made and repairs one of my instruments.

I boarded the train, walked into an almost-empty car, put my instrument up on the rack in its case, and sat down.

Suddenly--coming from the seat directly across from me--I heard the sound of a banjo.

I looked over, and was greeted by a smile - which I immediately returned because he made it all so natural and easy.

We chatted for a few minutes and I told him about my instrument - which peaked his interest and curiosity because, as he told me, a member of his family had just taken it up and was trying to learn how to play.

Our conversation drifted naturally to its end, and he turned back to his banjo - softly strumming and singing.

He would have been perfectly happy to talk more, had I wanted to carry on - but I realized that it wasn't necessary for us to talk to each other in order to continue sharing our company together.

I arrived at my destination and, as I stood up to leave, he smiled at me again and we said goodbye - wishing each other well.

As I walked the few blocks from the station to the repair shop, I felt as if - on the one hand - I had just spent a few moments with an angel...but on the other hand...I had spent it with someone who embodied the true spirit of everyman.

Thanks Pete. It was a great ride.

[22] Christopher Cavanaugh; Ossining, NY; 28 January 2014. This reader relates another story about hearing Seeger making music on a Hudson Line train:

I had the wonderful experience of a semi-private concert by Pete. I had been working closing a magazine, and took the 11:50 PM out of Grand Central home. My wife and I lived in Cold Spring, NY at the time. There were very few people in the first car. Around Yonkers I heard a guitar playing toward the front of the car, and it sounded very good. I moved up to be closer, and sat directly across the aisle from Pete Seeger. He played all the way up the Hudson Line, and was still playing as I reluctantly got off the train at Cold Spring.

[23] Bernie Krause; Glen Ellen, CA; 29 January 2014. This reader is one of the lucky few to have actually performed with Seeger, and to have received the gift of a banjo from him:

This dear, inspired man and voice will be sorely missed. When I joined The Weavers their last year, together, in 1963, Pete handed me one of his long-necked Vega banjos as a present. That was just one indication of his grand spirit of generosity...a spirit that was never defeated and is a legacy for all of us.

[24] Betsy; New Jersey; 28 January 2014. This reader recalls Seeger's great musicianship as well as his hard work on the behalf of social issues:

Pete Seeger may be the last of the best of the greatest generation. It's hard to see him go. He lived his life not guided by the terms of a tightly drawn contract, but instead, ready to share a meal. He leaves us with cleaner water, greener gardens and full-throated singing-along for our souls. That's his communism with a small c. He was Inspirational with a capital I. Today I'll be singing along to the old records and thinking about Pete Seeger, his values, his actions and his spirit. Somewhere "way out there", I suspect folks are being treated to the best banjo playing I ever heard. So long, Pete. It's been good to know you

[25] Paul Feiner; Greenburgh, NY; 29 January 2014. This reader is one of several to call for naming a new bridge over the Hudson River for Seeger in honor of his environmentalism:

The new Tappan Zee bridge should be named for Pete Seeger. Pete Seeger fought to save the river from pollution long before many others. He founded Clearwater and he inspired many to look for ways to keep the river clean. If the Tappan Zee bridge would be named for Pete Seeger, motorists would continue to reflect on the importance of a clean river everytime we cross the bridge.

PAUL FEINER

Greenburgh Town Supervisor

[26] Dave; New York City; 28 January 2014. This reader emphasizes that Seeger's voice made people want to sing along:

Godspeed, Pete Seeger...if a deity ever played a role in the unyielding nature of his principled, caring, loving, and talented life. A voice immediately recognizable, a sound always welcome, songs you sang along with. Deity or no, a blessing.

[27] Pedro; Arlington, Va.; 29 January 2014. The anecdote depicted in this response tells of the writer seeing Seeger in Washington, D.C. on the day of a

concert strolling along the Mall picking up litter:

Saw Pete on the National Mall in Washington hours before he was to play the annual Smithsonian Ralph Rinzler concert in '98. Nobody recognized him. He looked simply like a tall older man. No instrument hanging from his shoulder.

As he walked, he would pick up garbage and put it in his pockets. The real deal.

[28] Mark; Ann Arbor, MI; 28 January 2014. This reader poetically remarks that Seeger was able to “distill what we were all thinking into a few melodic lines”:

Where have all the flowers gone, indeed...Pete Seeger was one such flower. He was one of the few surviving connections to times that were both challenging yet hopeful. Today, it seems we still have the challenges but not the hope. It was his music, it was his message, it was his ability to distill what we were all thinking into a few melodic lines. Now it takes a bit more than the “love between my brothers and my sisters”, but it is probably a good place to start.

[29] JB; New England; 29 January 2014. This reader rightly notes the importance of these comments to the fields of music history, political science, and

so forth:

These comments are so moving - I hope historians of music, World and American History, political science and community organizing will preserve this magnificent testimony so Pete's life is remembered alongside his music.

Remember: Sing Out!

[30] Slowriter59; Chandler, AZ; 28 January 2014. This contributor relates an anecdote from his/her childhood when Seeger was a frequent guest in their home:

My father hired Pete when he was blackballed by the House Un-American Activities Committee, and Pete stayed with us and bounced me on his knee.

Just the other day I mentioned to someone that I had been taught union organizing songs at the age of three by the unofficial national curator of labor movement music.

Pete left an indelible mark on our Nation and will be sorely missed as a man whose life was a celebration of the hope incumbent in the American Dream.

[31] Brendan; New York, NY; 29 January 2014. This reader tells of hearing Seeger in New York at an outdoor antiwar demonstration in 2002, and what he considered to be an odd choice of song:

Saw Pete Seeger play just once. On 2nd Ave before about 250 000 people stretching from 42nd up to the upper eastside. It was February 2002 and we

were engaging in the largest anti-war protest the world has ever seen.

He played a few songs, but I remember a sort of odd sadness crept over me as he played 'Somewhere over the rainbow'. My friends remarked what an odd choice it was. Still, we sang along.

Thinking back, perhaps there was a kind wistful, sad, almost melancholic element to that performance. As though even Pete Seeger's will could be tempered by the War machine springing to life once again...

[32] adirondax; mid-state NY; 28 January 2014. The following remarks are on the authenticity of Seeger's patriotism in comparison with the current day:

A real live American patriot. Not the Kraft cheese food, xenophobic, homophobic, faux family values variety that the .1% wrap in the American flag and try to sell us daily.

Pete was the genuine article. He actually cared about the land, its people, and the country in which he lived.

Pete helped the bell of freedom ring all across this nation, and lived his life with a sense of grace and dignity.

This is a lesson for us all.

[33] glenshaw1; Lyme, NH; 29 January 2014. This reader is one that never had the pleasure of hearing Seeger perform live, but felt as if they had sung together

because of the genuineness of his performing through recorded media:

Thanks, Pete, for being a voice in my head and an inspiration for my heart for nearly fifty years. Others met you in person, but I knew you from concerts and recordings that stretched from my childhood to adulthood and then to my own children's lives. Whether it was on an mp3 or an old LP, your voice rang true and we sang along with you -- clapping, laughing, and calling out the big and little truths in your songs. And though you have died, your songs and recordings will continue to inspire and delight us for another hundred years, and maybe longer. So, old friend, take it easy...but take it.

[34] MizB; New York, NY; 28 January 2014. The following response contains so many levels of praise and admiration for Seeger, it defies summarization. Their point of contact is unique in that it was in the form of a telephone interview regarding Seeger's receiving the Kennedy Center Honor in 1994:

Pete Seeger was and will always be one of [the few] great heroes of my life. His music was an inspiration, particularly because his life was an ongoing testament to principle, commitment, and an unwavering belief that personal action, especially in concert with others of like mind, can effect enormous positive social change.

He was a unique tower and shimmering beacon of progressive light. But he was also a man with a private heart. When his wife Toshi died last year, I

knew Pete wouldn't be far behind.

One of the proudest moments of my life came in 1994 when Mr. Seeger was among those receiving The Kennedy Center Honor and I was on the outside public relations team promoting the event. It gave me the opportunity to interview him by phone and not only did he speak freely and candidly, he spoke to me as if I were an old friend and even sang two songs to me. We were on the phone for half an hour!

May the great yet humble Pete Seeger rest in peace and live on in spirit. And may his death motivate the rest of us to re-examine our values and re-ignite our activism.

[35] Mr. Atoz; Red Hook, NY; 29 January 2014. This response contains no commentary, but rather an excerpt from the transcript of Seeger's testimony in front of the House Unamerican Activities Committee (HUAC) on August 18, 1955:

House Unamerican Activities Committee August 18, 1955

Mr. SEEGER: I am not going to answer any questions as to my association, my philosophical or religious beliefs or my political beliefs, or how I voted in any election, or any of these private affairs. I think these are very improper questions for any American to be asked, especially under such compulsion as this. I would be very glad to tell you my life if you want to

hear of it.

Mr. TAVENNER: My question was whether or not you sang at these functions of the Communist Party. You have answered it inferentially, and if I understand your answer, you are saying you did.

Mr. SEEGER: Except for that answer, I decline to answer further. . . .

Mr. SCHERER: Do you understand it is the feeling of the Committee that you are in contempt as a result of the position you take?

Mr. SEEGER: I decline to discuss, under compulsion, where I have sung, and who has sung my songs, and who else has sung with me, and the people I have known. I love my country very dearly, and I greatly resent this implication that some of the places that I have sung and some of the people that I have known, and some of my opinions, whether they are religious or philosophical, or I might be a vegetarian, make me any less of an American. I will tell you about my songs, but I am not interested in telling you who wrote them, and I will tell you about my songs, and I am not interested in who listened to them.

[36] Bruce Saffran; 28 January 2014. The writer of this response tells a wonderful story of running into Seeger and his wife at Penn Station in New York, and then the three of them singing a famous antiwar song together on the way to their trains:

I met Pete and Toshi in 1991 (?) outside of Penn Station. I told him he was “a great man,” knowing him to be much more deserving of that title than our leaders of that period. We sang a few rounds of Down by the Riverside, “Ain't gonna study war no more! Ain't gonna study war no more!”..as we walked together into the station toward our trains. Thanks Pete!

[37] Michael Keats; New York, NY; 29 January 2014. This reader simply quotes from one of Seeger’s more humorous songs that is especially appropriate to the occasion:

“I wake up each morning
and dust off my wits...
open the paper,
read the obits...
if I am not there,
I know I'm not dead,
so I eat a good breakfast
and go back to bed!”

I've known that song since I was five years old. Now I am 44.

Sleep well, dear Pete. We will miss you.

[38] Brock Walsh; Cambridge, MA; 28 January 2014. This is one of a handful of comments from readers that had the good fortune to have performed as a backup musician with Seeger. It also offers a glimpse into Seeger's warm and generous personality in terms of his treatment of young musicians:

Long as this list of achievements is, it could go on for many pages. I was a young musician in Poughkeepsie, NY, when first introduced to Pete. He was always warm and self-deprecating, never seeking any praise or publicity, ready with a song, a smile, and a two-handed handshake. We played many gigs together, on stage at the Last Chance or on the deck of the Clearwater. He was endlessly patient with my questions, a great teacher and friend.

[39] BillyBopNYC; UWS; 29 January 2014. The anecdote shared in this response shows not merely an eccentric side of Seeger, but this total lack of pretention:

My wife is an Art Director in Children's Literature and did a book with Pete Seeger a number of years ago. She and her Editor had a lunch meeting with Pete and his agent on a posh midtown restaurant. Pete arrived carrying a large Hefty trash bag. When the Editor started discussing the story line for the book, Pete reached onto the bag and pulled out a notebook with his drafts of the text.

His "briefcase" was a Hefty Heavy Duty size Large.

She has worked with many other celebrities doing a kids book, and says he was the nicest and always treated her staff with courtesy and respect. A true gentleman.

[40] Kevin; Northport, NY; 28 January 2014. In this response we hear a story of Seeger's amazing enthusiasm for performing as well as his focus on the audience's enjoyment rather than his own comfort:

Pete played a concert in Ithaca NY on an extremely cold night in the winter of 1970 at a small hall holding less than 2,000 people. At 11PM, a security guard came onstage and whispered into Seeger's ear. Pete went over to the sound man (sidestage) and exchanged a few words, then came back to the microphone. He announced that the concert hall was officially closing but the sound man said they could set up a PA system outside, and would the audience like to continue outside. The audience cheered, so we all exited to the bitter 10 degree (F) winter night. Nearly 1,000 people stood freezing for more than 40 minutes while the equipment was being set up. Pete came back on and sang for nearly an hour more until almost 1AM in the cold winter air.

Farewell, Pete.

[41] Don Drake; Portland, OR; 29 January 2014. The writer of this response expresses his thanks to Pareles for the quality of the obituary:

Great, sensitive, thorough obit equal to the man, his work, and his impact on generations of folk musicians, the environment and the continuing struggle for justice and peace in the world. Thank you, Jon Pareles.

[42] Nancy Lederman; New York City; 28 January 2014. This respondent compares the house that Seeger built in Beacon, NY to his life and, metaphorically, the “view” it offered others:

A towering life. In his autobiography, Pete Seeger wrote, "When my wife and I were about 30 and very broke, we built our own house, inch by inch, on a mountainside." He spoke of being glad they did so, while they were young, not waiting until they had money or time.

That's what he did for us, not waiting but moving forward, his life was an American house, built inch by inch on a mountainside. What a view he gave us!

[43] Lynne Gawlas; Pittsburgh, PA; 29 January 2014. The writer of this response relates the experience of he and a friend being the only two people who showed up to hear Seeger sing in Pittsburgh in the summer of 1970:

My friend and I met Pete Seeger on the riverbank of the Monongahela in Pittsburgh one evening in the 70's. We had heard he would be there. No other people came. I felt bad that we were the only ones there. He was very

congenial. He had wooden flute-like instrument that he had carved himself that he showed us and played for us. He spent time with us and it was a one of those charmed moments. I feel fortunate to have talked to him.

[44] Dave K; Cleveland, OH; 28 January 2014. This respondent recalled hearing Seeger lead a certain song when he was seven years old, and could still remember the lyrics:

One of my favorites, which I remember hearing Pete lead when I was about 7:

“Just when I thought

All was lost, you changed my mind.

You gave me hope (not just the old soft soap)

So we could learn to share in time (You and me and Rockafeller)

I'll keep traveling on

Your face will shine through all our tears.

And when we sing another little victory song,

Precious friend, you will be there (singing in harmony)

Precious friend, you will be there.”

And to give you an idea of how effective he was, I just wrote that out from memory.

[45] NGM, Astoria, NY; 29 January 2014. This reader wrote his response after having watched a video of Seeger at the office, but none of his office mates had ever heard of him:

Wish I didn't watch the Seeger/Springsteen video of "This Land" in the office. My eyes are tearing up and nobody here even knows who he is.

[46] Jim Rosenthal; Annapolis, MD; 28 January 2014. This respondent recalls having attended a concert by Seeger (in 1978) at Knox College in Galesburg, IL, and mentions that "he radiated the power of his beliefs":

A great obituary for a great man. I heard him live, many years ago, at Knox College, in Galesburg, IL—a tall skinny man standing by himself on stage, accompanying himself on the banjo. He didn't need anything else; he radiated the power of his beliefs.

He knew who he was, and what he wanted to tell people. He had enormous courage, and inspired it in others. Godspeed, Mr. Seeger, to a well-earned rest after a life lived with humor, conviction, and strength.

[47] Thoughtful Observer; New York; 29 January 2014. This reader recounts the experience of Seeger and the *Weavers* performing at the summer camp he and his brother attended in Beacon, NY in the 1950s:

My brother, cousin and I were lucky enough to attend University Settlement

Camp in Beacon, NY in the mid to late 1950's. Pete Seeger's father-in-law was the caretaker of the grounds and most evenings after dinner, Pete Seeger and the Weavers would perform their songs for us outdoors on a tiered semi circular embankment where we would sing along with our arms wrapped around each other our and bodies swaying to the sounds. Wherever we went we sang his songs. And when we came home from camp, our parents received a full concert by us. It was a magical time. We have always known how lucky we were.

[48] Michael Kennedy; Portland, OR; 28 January 2014. This rather lengthy entry shares his memory of observing Seeger on foot on his way to a concert he was singing that evening:

Twenty years ago I saw Pete Seeger crossing a street near the University of Minnesota. He had a concert that evening and was walking to the venue with his banjo slung over his shoulder. In a time, both then and now, when so many flash-in-the-pan celebrities travel via self-serving entourages, here was one of Americas greats, whom I rank right up there with Walt Whitman. He was saving some money, getting some exercise, and strolling along without drawing attention to himself. Today, they day of his death, someone will probably say, “they don’t make them like that anymore.” I think Pete Seeger would say the opposite. “They make people like me all over the

place, you just have to have your eyes open to see them.” In our time of battling politicians rather than statesmen, and of news entertainers rather than journalists, and a culture that celebrates money rather than art, it may be hard to find people like Pete Seeger, but I think he’d laugh at that idea. They’re out here; you just have to be ready to see. So don't worry, Pete Seeger remains such a vital part of America, he is always going to be with us. Just take the time to look and to listen.

[49] Michael S; Wappingers Falls, NY; 29 January 2014. This respondent is one of only two out of the fifty-eight “NTY Picks” that is critical of Seeger’s involvement with the Communist Party:

I was raised on Peter Seeger's music and living near Beacon he was ubiquitous (indeed I first ran into him at the University Settlement Camp in Beacon in the 1940s as a little kid from Brooklyn). Nevertheless, I have a great deal of difficulty with the fact the Seeger only broke with Stalin very late in the game - long after Stalin's death and after the world fully understood that Stalin was a murderous tyrant. I doubt that Pete Seeger was such a hero to the long suffering people of Eastern Europe.

[50] f.azzarto03parknyc; Newton, MA, 28 January 2014. This reader has a very different perspective from the last in that he/she regrets that the U.S.

government has yet attained the level of “real freedom” that Seeger advocated:

Pete Seeger was part of the soul of an America that is slowly disappearing or now gone. Fortunately, his songs and music will always be with us.

“Where Have All the Flowers Gone” and “If I Had a Hammer” speak to a time when peace and justice were not just meaningless media drivel. He brought real Change. I can and will always hear his voice singing

“Goodnight Irene”, Lead Belly's gift to him from the prison walls that still to this day keep Black America bound by inequality and poverty and a racism that still we have not overcome as a nation. Pete lived for real freedom, if only our government had matured and done the same.

[51] Steve Scheiber; Slingerlands, NY; 29 January 2014. This reader quotes the famous words that were written on his banjo:

One more comment.

On Pete's banjo you saw the words, “This machine surrounds hate and forces it to surrender.”

A fitting epitaph.

Rest in peace, Pete.

[52] AmericanAbroad; Toronto, ON; 28 January 2014. This reader had the experience of being a white minority student in a traditionally black elementary

school in Chicago:

I learned Pete Seeger's "We Shall Overcome" when I was eight years old, one of a handful of white kids at Shoemith elementary school in Chicago. My memory is that we sang it often at school assemblies. In some ways, those occasions were uncomfortable for me. I understood, even as a young person, that the song was not written for or about me: that it was about an experience I did not share with my classmates. But the song itself is transcendent: You can't sing it without feeling for yourself a profound sense of struggle, longing and hope that anyone can share. Whether this made me a more empathetic person, I don't know. But forty years later, I still tear up when hear it. As a postscript: In 2008, in the very school gymnasium where we held those assemblies, Barack Obama cast his ballot in that year's presidential election. Yes, we shall overcome.

[53] John G.; Rumson, NJ; 29 January 2014. This respondent is an elementary school teacher that introduced his students to Seeger and his role in the civil rights movement:

I shared my memories and impressions of Pete Seeger with my third graders this morning. I think I reached them, and I told them that I hoped that the message that he brought to us all would stay with them. Maybe when they're older, they'll be moved to explore on their own the lessons of love and hope

that will be Pete's legacy. Mine were not the only moist eyes in the classroom as we listened to his stirring version of “We Shall Overcome” from the 1963 Carnegie Hall album.

[54] Bucky; Seattle; 28 January 2014. This reader tells of sailing on the Clearwater Sloop with his father in the 1970s, and that despite his father being an arch-conservative, he had nothing but admiration for Seeger as a musician in spite of their differing politics:

I remember sailing on the Clearwater one sunny afternoon, probably more than 40 years ago, with my father, Pete Seeger, and a whole crew of other people. I can't recall the context or the larger events. I just remember feeling surprise that my father, a Goldwater Republican, was so fond of Pete and so committed to his cause. He'd already been involved with the Clearwater for years. But all my dad had to say in that regard was, “I believe he's the best banjo player alive.”

[55] Dennis; NYC; 29 January 2014. This entry is by the other reader who has taken it upon himself to remind everyone of what he regards as inconsistencies or, worse yet, hypocrisies in Seeger's political views:

Please note - this comes from a longtime fan of his *music*. The blind pro-Pete ideologues display appalling ahistoricity and unforgiveable moral

lapse: Seeger, a little more honest and educable than many artistic proponents of the old hard left, was slow and incomplete in understanding Stalinism was totalitarianism was severe oppression was genocide. Approached by the free Czech Solidarity movement circa 1980, he tried to sing the Internationale, oblivious to the fact that Czech freedom-fighters hated the paean to communism. Similarly, in his anti-Vietnam war hymn, he sang, “You know I must confess/Bring 'em home, bring 'em home/I'm not really a pacifist/Bring 'em home, bring 'em home/If somebody invaded this land of mine/Bring 'em home, bring 'em home/I'd be out there on the firing line/Bring 'em home, bring 'em home—yet he and the "folk left," if you will, abdicated in supporting our military when we were invaded on 9/11. Let us praise him for his impressive good deeds and incredible music, but honestly critique him for his very real and very significant shortcomings.

[56] Dual USA/Canada; 28 January 2014. This reader calls attention to Seeger’s great contributions “to the art of the folk song”:

When you think of Pete Seeger's uncompromising commitments to the art of the folk song (and the originators of much of American folk music), and his uncompromising courage in the face of injustice and even personal political persecution, he seems to me nothing less than a heroic, pure soul. Some of the contrasts to the commercialism of the "entertainment" world and

celebrity culture today are instructive. Seeger's legacy is large and will last.

[57] nfnmg; NYC; 29 January 2014. This writer regrets Seeger's passing since he/she had been immersed in his music "from birth":

He was one of those people who just knowing he was somewhere out there, chopping wood up in Beacon, made me a little bit happier down here in NYC. Raised on his music from birth, to playing it myself on guitar, to watching him perform for Clearwater, my world feels changed without Pete.

[58] Mauiyankee; Haiku, HI; 28 January 2014. The final comment is by someone writing from the island of Maui in Hawaii:

I am truly grateful to have lived in a time of Pete Seeger.

He has been a bridge to an American/Human spirit and values not only worthy of reflection, but of continuing on, albeit without his presence, but in the music.

Qualitative Analysis of the Reader Responses

Thematic analysis and values coding

Returning again to Braun and Clarke's explanation of thematic analysis, "a theme captures something important about the data in relation to the research question, and represents some level of *patterned* response or meaning within the

data set.”⁷⁸ In the current study, seeking patterned responses and meanings in the “singer” data set was facilitated by two research tools: the online CAQDAS program *Dedoose*, and the sage advice on coding systems and techniques contained in Saldaña’s volume mentioned in the previous chapter.

The first step was to establish a set of descriptive codes (“descriptors” in *Dedoose* parlance) in order to register the individual characteristics of each of the readers whose responses to the *New York Times* obituary was included in the fifty-eight staff picks (see Table 2). The descriptor “Year” refers to the year in which the respondent had encountered Seeger, either directly or indirectly. Some mentioned their age at the time of the encounter rather than the year, hence the descriptor “Age.” The descriptors “City” and “Location” are easy enough to understand without further explanation, though the breakdown according to “Type of event” requires a bit of further information.

The full range of descriptors was developed in the midst of the coding process as the types of situations in which the respondents first met, heard, or became aware of Seeger began to emerge. In addition to attending live concert performances, a number of respondents mentioned first hearing Seeger sing at either antinuclear or antiwar demonstrations. A few also mentioned having had the pleasure of performing with him. Likewise, the descriptor “Chance meeting” was included to describe those times when respondents had run into Seeger in a hotel,

⁷⁸ Braun and Clarke, *Using Thematic Analysis*, 82.

an airport, on the train, or simply walking about in the vicinity of a venue on the day of a concert.

For those that never had the opportunity to hear Seeger perform, let alone meet him in person, recordings were one of the ways that many people became familiar with his songs, hence the descriptor “via recordings” was added. Finally, categories for “Other” and “Details” were added to record information unique to one respondent’s experience. The final descriptors allow for up to three song titles to be entered that were mentioned in one reader’s response.

Evaluation and categorization

The next step in the coding process was to evaluate and categorize the actual substance of the readers’ responses according to the principles of values coding. Saldaña suggests three constructs as being essential to understanding this type of coding: values, attitudes, and beliefs.⁷⁹ Values are described as being “the importance we attribute to oneself, another person, thing, or idea,” whereas “an attitude is the way we think and feel about ourselves, another person, thing, or idea.”⁸⁰ Finally, Saldaña refers to beliefs as being “part of a system that includes our values and attitudes, plus our personal knowledge, experiences, opinions, prejudices, morals, and other interpretive perceptions of the social world.”⁸¹

As the coding of the “singer” data set got under way, it became apparent that

⁷⁹ Saldaña, *Coding Manual*, 111.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ Ibid.

a considerable amount of the content of the reader responses centered on affective descriptions of Seeger's personality traits thus it made sense to start with Saldaña's attitudes construct. Another reoccurring aspect of the responses was the importance ascribed to certain ideas that the Seeger held dearly, thus these statements suggested the use of the values construct. Finally, statements in which attitudes and values were seen to be coming together as part a larger system suggested the beliefs construct. The analysis of the singer data set was structured according to these three constructs: attitudes, values, and beliefs.

TABLE 2. Descriptor Codes

Year	
Age	
City	
Location	
Type of event:	Concert
	Demonstration: antinuclear
	Demonstration: antiwar
	Performed together
	Chance meeting
	Via recordings
	Other
Details	
Song 1	
Song 2	
Song 3	

Application of the codes

A three-layered process for applying the codes was used based on Saldaña's "streamlined codes-to-theory model for qualitative inquiry."⁸² The headings in Tables 3-5 below are derived from this model reflecting the relative levels of detail and degree of general to the specific: (1) primary coding, (2) emergent categories, and (3) emergent themes.

One further theoretical framework has been integrated into the qualitative analysis of the *attitudes* construct, the theory known as the *lexical hypothesis* in the discipline of interpersonal psychology that studies personality traits. In his pioneering paper based on this theory, Lewis Goldberg describes the hypothesis as follows: "the most important individual differences in human transactions will come to be encoded as single terms in some or all of the world's languages."⁸³ Though it is beyond the scope of the current study to discuss this hypothesis in depth, four of Goldberg's five "factors" were indispensable as a way of organizing the personality traits attributed to Seeger: surgency, agreeableness, conscientiousness, and intellect. (see Table 3.)

In the field of psychology, the term "surgency" has come to mean "a personality trait characterized by cheerfulness, sociability, trustworthiness, and

⁸² Ibid, 13.

⁸³ Lewis. R. Goldberg, "An Alternative 'Description of Personality'. The Big-Five Structure." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 59, no. 6 (1990): 1216.

social responsiveness.”⁸⁴ As can be seen in the table, the factor of surgency embraces many of the most salient positive characteristics of Seeger’s public personality, characteristics that were indeed themes of his life as a singing journalist who refused to run away from adversity, and had the courage and commitment to call attention to social injustice wherever he saw it.

The personality traits coded under “agreeableness” are more reflective of the warmth and kindness of his private personality which were also communicated through his public performances and recordings. The last two factors, conscientiousness and intellect round out the familiar picture of Seeger who walked wherever he could, took public transportation, and whose talents as a singer, songwriter, storyteller, and teacher brought so much hope and inspiration to all those who attended his concerts or listened to his recordings

Turning now to Table 4, we continue on to the *values* that can be seen as the driving force behind Seeger’s career. From a close analysis of the reader responses, two main categories emerge: social activism, and personal convictions. Under the first category of social activism, four themes emerged: his opposition to nuclear weapons, his opposition to war, his support of labor unions, and his work in protecting the environment. However, what set Seeger apart from many other musicians of his day, even those who shared similar views on these major social

⁸⁴ J.P. Chaplin, *Dictionary of Psychology*, 2nd ed., 2010, (New York: Random House), s.v. “surgency.”

issues, was his whole-hearted commitment to taking action. The second category of personal convictions leads us to themes related to what he did in response to his views by speaking up and singing out to call attention to the issues just mentioned.

TABLE 3: Values Codes (Attitudes)

Primary codes	Emergent categories	Emergent themes
Attitudes	Surgency	commitment/committed
		courage/courageous
		passion/passionate
		patriot/patriotic
		principles
		progressive
	Agreeableness	beautiful person
		caring
		congenial
		courteous
		dignity/dignified
		generosity/generous
		grace
Conscientiousness	humble/humility	
	kind	
	lacking self-promotion	
Emotional stability	love/loving	
	patient	
	smile/smiling	
	warm	
	health-conscious	
Intellect	frugal	
	dignity/dignified	
	made personal sacrifices	
	strong spirit	
Intellect	uncompromising	
	willing to face injustice/persecution	
	hope/hopeful	
	inspiration/inspiring	
	talent/talented	
	teacher	

In the third and final construct of the values coding analysis brings us to the *beliefs* that underlie both Seeger’s personality as well as his professional work as a performer and social activist (see Table 5). As in the case of the *values* construct above, the categories listed here are ones that emerged through the process of analyzing the respondents’ writing: (1) fundamental beliefs, (2) the importance of folk music, (3) striving for a better way of life, (4) the conviction that the real enemy in any conflict is not the other party, rather the enemy is hate, and (5) his blind spot concerning the faults of Joseph Stalin.

TABLE 4: Values Codes (Values)

Primary codes	Emergent categories	Emergent themes
Values	Social activism	antinuclear antiwar labor unions protecting the environment
	Personal convictions	spoke up/sang out for what he believed in -stood up for what is right, not what is popular

Although the reoccurring appearance of the terms “freedom,” “peace,” and “justice” regarding Seeger is not surprising, it is reassuring to see that he continues to be remembered in that way. Likewise, Seeger’s core belief in the importance of singing together as a way of uniting people for a common purpose

and as a way of bridging the generation gap is indeed one of his greatest legacies. We also can see that the idea of doing things together rather than in isolation is not limited to music alone, but rather it is part of his overarching belief that the road to a better way of life can only be built and travelled together. Seeger's intrinsic trust in the power of collective action and collective thinking led him to join the Communist Party during his brief college career at Harvard, as well as a lifelong belief in the efficacy of socialism even after breaking official ties with the party itself.

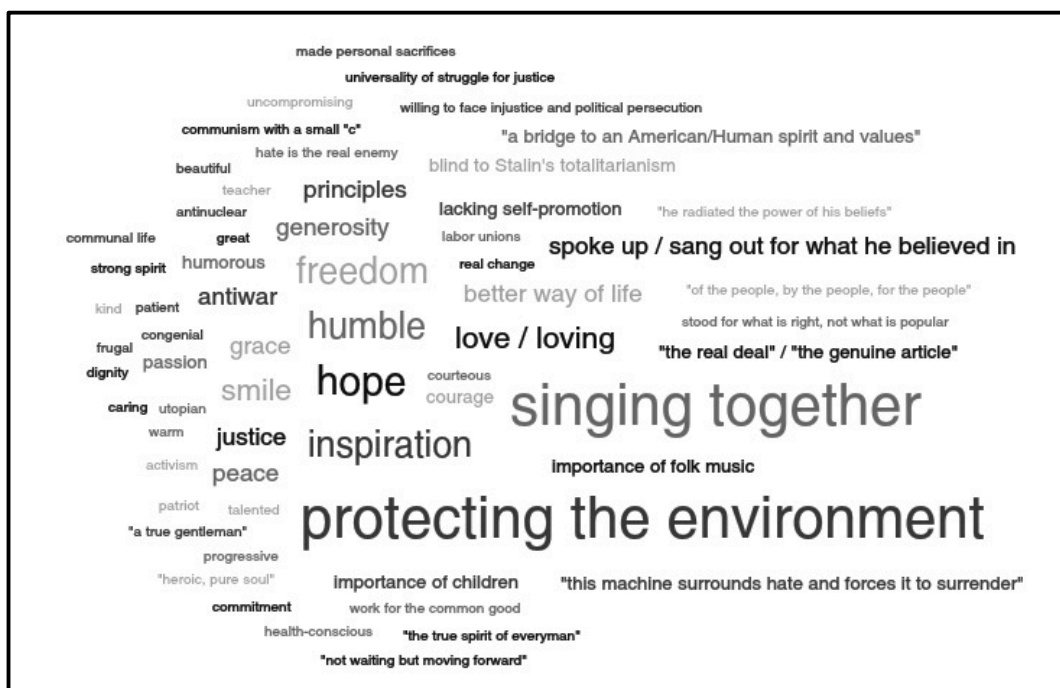
TABLE 5: Values Codes (Beliefs)

Primary codes	Emergent categories	Emergent themes
Beliefs	fundamental beliefs	freedom peace justice
	importance of folk music	singing with children singing together
	better way of life	communal life small "c" communism not waiting but moving forward - "of the people, by the people, for the people" - personal action with others effects social change real change utopian work for the common good
	hate is the real enemy	- "this machine surrounds hate and forces it to surrender"
	blind spot	late to acknowledge Stalin's faults

Summary

As a way of summarizing the first segment of the findings related to the singer framework, a code cloud generated by the *Dedoose* software for the *values* codes is given below in Figure 1. The relative size of the words and phrases indicate the frequency that these concepts appeared in the fifty-eight reader responses that were analyzed. The phrases “singing together” and “protecting the environment” jump out at once, with the words “freedom,” “humble,” “hope,” and “inspiration” coming next with “principles,” “generosity,” “antiwar,” “grace,” “smile,” “justice,” “peace,” “love/loving” coming in next. While this portion of the study has focused on the various facets of Seeger’s personality, in the next section we shift our attention to his singing.

FIGURE 1: Values Codes Cloud



The Singing Framework

Pete Seeger Live in Australia 1963

In May of 1962 Seeger was cleared of the charges brought against him seven years earlier of being in contempt of Congress for refusing to answer questions regarding his association with the Communist Party USA. With the acquittal finally secured, in the fall of 1963 Seeger packed up his family and a few instruments to set out on a ten-month around-the-world concert tour with Australia as the first stop. The black and white film of Seeger's concert at Melbourne Town Hall in September of that year was released on DVD in 2009. It offers a rare opportunity to view one of Seeger's live concerts in its entirety with excellent audio fidelity, thus it is a valuable artifact for analysis in connection with the "singing" framework of the current study.

Running Commentary

Background information

The audience at the concert at Melbourne Town Hall was mainly adults with attendance being approximately three thousand people strong. In spite of the large crowd, Seeger can be seen as creating a remarkably intimate atmosphere in which the audience could not only listen to his beautiful voice, but also hear the songs and the fascinating stories he told about them. Positioning the audience both in front and behind is likely to have been motivated by a desire to increase the seating capacity of the hall; however, it also succeeded in creating more of a

hootenanny atmosphere in which performer and audience are in quite a different relationship than the usual concert setting in which the audience members are simply passive observers.

As soon as Seeger appeared on the stage he immediately started singing a simple American folk song with banjo accompaniment and was quick to encourage the audience to sing along and/or clap and tap to the beat. From this moment he successfully set the tone for the evening to come. In the section that follows, a narrative description is given of how the concert unfolded with a few words of observation about each of the twenty-four songs that made up the play list that night.

The Program

S1. "Skip to My Lou"

This song started with a solo banjo performance and eventually Seeger encouraged the audience to join in on singing the chorus, "Hey, hey skip to my lou" He also did his signature foot stomping to help keep everyone in rhythm, and sang some adlib passages once the audience could take the chorus on their own.

S2. "The Frozen Logger"

This song was also sung to banjo accompaniment in a rollicking 6/8 rhythm

and more foot stomping. The story is quite humorous and tells an absurd story that got everyone laughing. Although the humor is similar to children's songs, the story is for adults. Seeger mentioned the importance of carrying on the tradition of folklore, and that the purpose of concerts such as this is especially for kids and for passing the tradition.

S3. "Pretty Polly"

For contrast Seeger sings the next song a cappella, a song that is about one hundred years old. He mentions that the version he sings is the traditional style from Nova Scotia. Seeger sings this one with his hands in his pockets and just telling a story.

S4. "The Wild Rover"

This is another song in 6/8 time which works well for group singing. Seeger said that it was actually an experiment since he was singing a song that he did not know having only heard it two days before. In the commentary he shared a quotation by the renowned gospel singer Mahalia Jackson & about foreign language, "Pete, I love to hear people singing their own songs, because they can sing them so much better than anybody else." From an anonymous friend he heard, "You learn another person's language or his songs, and you learn something of the soul of his people." He also took time to tell some jokes, and a couple of

moralistic stories about the futility of war. In this song he gets the audience to sing enthusiastically by encouraging them with phrases like “Sing it!” and “Once more!” and then ended by listening to audience sing once they knew it well.

S5. “Woody Guthrie Medley”

In the commentary Seeger tells the background of how Woody Guthrie taught him many things he could never have learned in school by encouraging him to travel. The medley included the following songs:

1. Ima gonna mail myself to you
2. Put your fingers in the air
3. Union Maid
4. The ladies’ auxiliary
5. Roll on, Colombia, roll on

S6. “Cripple Creek” and “Leather Britches”

At this point Seeger tells about the upcoming stops on the concert tour, and his concern that people may not be able to understand the words of his songs, so he plays some purely instrumental selections on the banjo in hoedown style since instrumental music has universal appeal. Throughout this song he continued to shed layers of clothes to be more comfortable.

S7. "Down by the Riverside"

Seeger introduced this famous song by singing a "mini-medley" of other negro spirituals: "Sometimes I feel like a motherless child" and "Nobody knows the trouble I've seen." As soon as he starts the upbeat "Down by the Riverside" everyone feels free to join in on the chorus, "I ain't gonna study war no more." He also uses this opportunity to teach the audience to sing in harmony while he takes the solo. Seeger mentions that he would like to hear the whole world singing this song.

S8. "Windy Old Weather"

At this point Seeger interpolates another piece for banjo alone, then segues to the sea chanty that follows.

S9. Highland Laddie

By this point of the concert, the audience starts to sing along their own with the swashbuckling chorus, "Hey ho, away we go, bonnie laddie, hieland laddie."

S10. "Kum Ba Ya"

For a change of pace Seeger tells the story of how the song "Kum ba ya" came to be sung in both the US and Africa in various languages and versions. Once again to add interest he encourages the audience to participate by telling

them, “Go ahead and make up your own harmony!”

S11. “Jesus, Joy of Man's Desiring” (J.S. Bach)

S12. “Allegretto from Symphony 7” (L. van Beethoven)

As a way of creating even further variety on the program, at this point Seeger interpolates two highly recognizable classical melodies with the improbable combination of banjo, whistling, and audience humming. The success of the venture is due to a combination of Seeger’s unflappable sense of self-confidence and belief in the universality of any genre of music when sung as music of the people.

S13. “Way Out There”

This is an authentic old cowboy song that Seeger learned from the famous country and western group The Sons of the Pioneers. The main point of its place in the program is because of the western style yodeling in the chorus, and he proceeds to get a friendly but somewhat stuffy roomful of Melbournians to yodel along with him. The story is about a hobo who was riding the rails out in the desert and gets kicked off the train for singing, but decides to make the best of it.

S14. "I Never Will Marry"

This is a humorous traditional folk song that served to calm the audience down a bit after the energetic yodeling of the previous selection. In the introduction he makes a philosophical observation that it is through singing

S15. Freiheit (Freedom)

The main point of this song is the story about how it came to be composed, and its use by the German Communist contingency of the International Brigade during the Spanish Civil War. Seeger omitted some of the details just given, but he insisted that everyone learn and sing the German word, "Freiheit" which means "freedom."

S16. "Luar do sertão"

Seeger adds this song for contrast and the simple beauty of the tune. He mentions in his commentary that it was originally written in a regional dialect of Brazilian Portuguese and that he will not even try to pronounce the lyrics.

17. "Genbaku wo yurusumaji" (Never Again the A-Bomb)

This poignant Japanese antiwar/antinuclear song became popular in England during the peace movement of 1950s and 1960s in an English translation by singer-activist Ewan MacColl. Seeger first sings it in Japanese then in English.

S18. “Michael, Row the Boat Ashore”

The audience began singing the “Alleluia” response spontaneously to this one, so apparently it was already well-known in Australia.

S19. “Living in the Country”

This was another instrumental interlude sung especially for the audience seated on the stage behind Seeger.

S20. “The Bells of Rhymney”

Seeger sings this song with no explanation or introduction. It is one of a handful of his own original compositions on the concert. The text is by the Welsh poet Idris Davies and refers to the failure of an unsuccessful general strike in 1926 and a coal mine disaster the year after. Seeger performs this song with an intensity of emotion that sets it apart from the other songs on the program and paves the way for the seriousness of the Bob Dylan song to come.

S21. “What Did You Learn in School Today?”

Seeger also gives minimal introduction to this cleverly tongue-in-cheek antiwar, antiestablishment song by Tom Paxton that poses innocently as a dialogue between parent and child. Considering the audience members’ reaction,

the deeper meaning was not lost on them. The upbeat tempo and lightness of the melody belies the social message that lies just below the surface and serves as a good buffer between the heaviness of the songs that precede and follow it.

S22. “A Hard Rain's A-Gonna Fall”

For the final selection on the official playlist Seeger chose a darkly apocalyptic song by Bob Dylan. Despite what some historians of pop music would like the public to believe, Seeger was a staunch champion of both Dylan and his music, and he felt compelled to introduce Australians to this song written just the year before. At the end of the song, Seeger took a bow and exited the stage, returning soon after to sing two encores.

S23. “If I Had a Hammer”

This song is synonymous with Seeger and the entire folk music revival, thus it was a good choice for his first encore. He and fellow member of the *Weavers* Lee Hays had written this song in 1949 for a dinner in support of eleven members of the American branch of the Communist Party who were on trial for sedition. Although Seeger was to officially withdraw his membership from the party a year later, the song and the occasion of its composition contributed to his being called in front of HUAC in 1956. He undoubtedly sang this song with a great sense of vindication at the start of the world tour after the reversal of his indictment.

S24. “I Know an Old Lady Who Swallowed a Fly”

For his second and final encore Seeger chose a lighthearted children’s song with an absurd story line, thus the concert came full circle. At the start he had told the audience that this concert was essentially for kids, and by that he meant “kids” of all ages, having given the audience a chance to become children again for a little while and simply enjoy singing a good song with honest and hearty laughter.

The following table (Table 6) serves as a summary of the overall structure of the concert:

TABLE 6. Concert Structure

Song number	Purpose
S1-3	Ice breakers
S4	Local song
S5 medley	Introduction to the songs of Woody Guthrie
S6	Banjo only
S7-10	Lots of audience participation
S11-12	Classical tunes on the banjo
S13-14	Yodeling / Fun
S15-17	Foreign songs
S18	Traditional song
S19	Instrumental for audience seated on stage
S20	Strong message through a song; no commentary
S21	New song by Tom Paxton
S22	New song by Bob Dylan
S23	Encore 1: Famous song
S24	Encore 2: Kids’ song

Qualitative Analysis of the Concert

Analysis categories

As stated earlier in Chapter 3, Seeger's activity as a performer will now be examined through a type of qualitative data analysis known as "performance analysis" that incorporates ideas gleaned from the model outlined by Auslander's article dating from 2004.⁸⁵ Please refer to Tables 7 and 8 below for this part of the findings. Before discussing the actual information entered in the table, a few words are in order about the categories that were selected and the ones that were omitted.

As will be recalled, Auslander focuses on two basic ways of looking at vocal performance: 1) the various levels of personality that the singer intentionally cultivates, and 2) the singing itself. In terms of the first of these categories, he suggests three aspects of personality, one being the musician as he/she exists in private life (the performer), another aspect is the public image that the musician consciously projects on stage and in other public appearances in front of the media and public (the performance persona). The third personality aspect is concerned with the role that a musician assumes in concert (the character) in order to effect a convincing rendition of a particular song being performed at the moment. In the current study, only the last one of these—character—has been included in order to account for those moments

⁸⁵ Auslander, *Performance Analysis*, 11.

during a concert when Seeger assumes a particular role in order to tell the story of the song at hand. The rationale for omitting the other two is based on the findings of the thematic analysis which show that Seeger did everything possible to discourage the sense of hero worship and personality cult that ordinarily grows up around popular performers in any genres of music. As he was so successful in accomplishing that goal, very little difference can be said to exist between Seeger the man and Seeger the performer. Also missing is the category of “costume” since, following the conventions of the folk music community to which he belonged, Seeger always performed in ordinary clothes such as jeans, flannel shirts, oversized sweaters, and the like.

Turning now to Auslander’s suggestions that were kept rather than dismissed, the following five categories have been included: voice, movement, gesture, facial expression, and instrument. The category of “voice” has been given three subcategories: volume, style, and tempo, and a key to the abbreviations for the qualities used to describe the singing given at the bottom of Table 7.

One final category has been added that does not appear in Auslander is “audience participation” that was added based on its importance to the conventions of folk music via the hootenanny tradition discussed elsewhere in this study. This category has also been given three subcategories based on the techniques Seeger was particularly fond of using to get the audience involved: sing-along, harmony, and lining-out. By “sing-along” it is meant that the audience

is invited to join in on the melody of particular parts of the song, usually a repeated chorus between verses. The term “harmony” refers to those times when Seeger asked the audience to sing along in improvised harmony. Rather than leaving it entirely to chance, he would often model the type of harmony he had in mind and hold a rehearsal before proceeding. Lastly, the technique of “lining-out” is when a song leader sings or shouts out the next line of text slightly ahead of when the full group needs to sing. It is a common part of numerous folk music traditions as well as psalm-singing in early American churches, and especially effective in situations where literacy was low and the price of books was high.

The findings described in tabular form

The performance analysis data recorded in Table 7 and Table 8 below are the result of repeated viewings of the concert DVD by the current author and a corroborating assistant who is a professional musician. Table 7 is structured according to the categories suggested by Auslander, whereas Table 8 strives to add what he might have included had he been dealing with a genre of music in which audience participation was central to the performance tradition such as with the type of folk music concerts that Seeger routinely gave. A narrative description of the findings follows directly after the two tables.

TABLE 7: Performance Analysis Data / Character, Voice, Body, Accompaniment

Track	Title	Duration	Character	Voice			Body			Instrument
				Volume	Style	Tempo	Movement	Gesture	Facial expression	
1	Skip to My Lou	04:43		f	N	Q	stomp		smiling	B
2	The Frozen Logger	03:27		mf	L	M	stomp			B
3	Pretty Polly	04:28		mf	L	M	motionless	hands in pockets		a cappella
4	The Wild Rover	08:18		mf, f	L	M	stomp		smiling	G
5	Woody Guthrie Medley	12:45		p, mf	L,N	M,Q		beckoning audience to sing		G
	I'm a gonna mail myself to you			mf	L	M	stomp			G
	Put your finger in the air		√	mf	L	M,Q	stomp		smiling	G
	Union Maid			f	N	Q		beckoning audience to sing		G
	The Ladies' Auxiliary			p	L	M				G
	Roll on Columbia			p	L	M	stomp			G
6	Cripple Creek / Leather Britches	02:31				Q	stomp			B solo
7	Down by the Riverside	08:43		mf, f	L,N	M	stomp	energetic body language		B
8	Windy Old Weather	01:27		p	L	M				B
9	Highland Laddie	03:14		mf	N	M	stomp	beckoning audience to sing	serious	B
10	Kum Bay Ya	03:34		p	L	S				B
11	Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring (J.S. Bach)	02:35		p		M				B solo + whistling
12	Allegretto from Beethoven's 7th Symphony	01:54		p	L	S			humming	B solo + humming
13	Way Out There	06:27	√	mf, f	N	Q				B
14	I Never Will Marry	04:22		p	L	M	stomp			B
15	Freiheit (Freedom)	04:58		mf	N	M			serious	B
16	Luar do Seraõ	02:39		p	L	S				B + humming
17	Genbaku wo yurusumaji (Never Again the A-Bomb)	02:33		mf	L,N	M			serious	B
18	Michael, Row the Boat Ashore	02:11		f	N	M		energetic body language		B
19	Living in the Country	03:32				M		played to audience behind		G solo
20	The Bells of Rhymney	01:24		f	N	S			serious	G
21	What Did You Learn in School Today	04:53	√	mf	N	Q			sarcastic	G
22	A Hard Rain's A-Gonna Fall	02:47		f	N	M			serious	G
23	If I Had a Hammer	06:31		f	N	M				G
24	I Know an Old Lady Who Swallowed a Fly	03:06	√	p	L	Q			smiling	B

f = loud	L = legato	Q = quick
mf = medium	N = non-legato	M = moderate
p = soft		S = slow

B = banjo
G = guitar

TABLE 8: Performance Analysis / Audience Involvement

Track	Title	Duration	Audience involvement			Notes
			Sing-along	Harmony	Lining out	
1	Skip to My Lou	04:43	√√			chorus part
2	The Frozen Logger	03:27				story based for kids
3	Pretty Polly	04:28				unaccompanied singing
4	The Wild Rover	08:18	√√			chorus part
5	Woody Guthrie Medley	12:45	√			
	I'm a gonna mail myself to you					
	Put your finger in the air					taking off layer of clothes
	Union Maid		√√			
	The Ladies' Auxilliary					
	Roll on Columbia		√			audience joined chorus without prompt
6	Cripple Creek / Leather Britches	02:31				
7	Down by the Riverside	08:43	√√	√√		hand clapping, adlib
8	Windy Old Weather	01:27				
9	Highland Laddie	03:14	√√			
10	Kum Bay Ya	03:34	√√	√√	√	
11	Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring (J.S. Bach)	02:35				
12	Allegretto from Beethoven's 7th Symphony	01:54	√			
13	Way Out There	06:27	√√			yodeling
14	I Never Will Marry	04:22	√√		√√	
15	Freiheit (Freedom)	04:58	√√		√	
16	Luar de Serato	02:39	√			humming
17	Genbaku O Yurusumagi (Never Again the A-Bomb)	02:33				
18	Michael, Row the Boat Ashore	02:11	√√	√√		
19	Living in the Country	03:32				
20	The Bells of Rhymney	01:24				
21	What Did You Learn in School Today	04:53				new song
22	A Hard Rain's A-Gonna Fall	02:47				
23	If I Had a Hammer	06:31	√√		√√	hand clapping
24	I Know an Old Lady Who Swallowed a Fly	03:06	√			

√ = some
√√ = a lot of

The findings described in narrative form

Character. Auslander's concept of "character" that is being used in the current study refers to those when a singer assumes a stylized persona for the sake of communicating something special about the song being sung. This is analogous to what an actor or actress, or a dancer does to be "in character" during a performance. In Seeger's case, as discussed above, his public and private selves were not much different, and to a certain extent the same pattern of unity exists in his concerts as well. The ease with which he was able to slip so seamlessly from the role of singer to teacher to storyteller makes discerning instances in which he takes on a special character rather difficult. Even so, four songs bear mention in this regard: 5c, 13, 21, and 24. Of the four, three are children's songs (5c, 21, 24) and one is a cowboy song (13), so a reasonable explanation is that Seeger may have been drawing on the type of personality that he ordinarily used when singing concerts at schools and summer camps for kids.

Voice. The next broad category in Table 7 is that of "Voice" which has been further divided into the subcategories of volume, style, and tempo. Although it would be possible to include a number of further subcategories to describe the subtler shades of vocal performance such as timbre (tone quality) and register (chest voice, head voice, etc.), a decision was made to limit the the variables to qualities that were readily discernable by the general public that made up Seeger's audiences. The pattern that emerges at first glance is that Seeger was a

consummate entertainer in terms of offering his audience a pleasing experience of peaks and valleys by following faster songs by slower songs, and louder ones with softer ones. He also appears to have a purpose in mind when varying the quality of his vocal style from legato (smooth) to non legato (not smooth) according to the nature of the texts and the style of the melodies. Although these might seem like ordinary things that any musician should be concerned with, there are performers that sing many songs in a row at similar levels of tempo and volume.

Body. The “Body” category is further subdivided into three sub-categories suggested by Auslander: movement, gesture, and facial expression. The degree and type of physicality that singers exhibit during performances is at times just as important as their singing in terms of its impact on the audience’s understanding, enjoyment, and reception of the message being conveyed. In contrast with some other genres of music such as pop and rock, performers and audiences involved in the folk genre share expectations for relatively subdued movement on stage emphasizing instead the meaning and understandability of the words.

Referring to Table 7 it will be noted that Seeger’s most notable movement on stage was his energetic stomp, an idiosyncratic but effective manner of toe-tapping to keep the beat of the music when involving the audience in the singing. In terms of gesture, the fact that he was playing the banjo or guitar during all but one of the songs by necessity limits his range of motion and gesture. The most common gesture was directed at the audience to indicate when they should

join in the singing with him. It is also worth noting that during the only song that was sung unaccompanied (song 4) he put the banjo down and stood motionless with his hands in his pockets.

Finally, Seeger's facial expressions are noted in the table only when they diverge from the ordinary. For example, he affected an especially serious expression for five songs (9, 15, 17, 20, 22) and the last four the having particularly somber texts and heavy social messages. The songs in which he was smiling throughout were either children's songs (1, 5b, 24) or the one Australian song that he had just learned two days before (4). The most unusual expression has been described as "sarcastic" for the duration of the Tom Paxton song in which a child innocently repeats the pro-war propaganda he has been taught at school that day (21).

Accompaniment. Seeger's effective and varied use of the five-string banjo and acoustic guitar to accompany himself and lead group singing is a significant part of the legacy he gave to the American folk song revival. Looking at the "Accompaniment" column in the table, it is easy to see that his choice of which instrument to use, like his choice of tempos and volume levels, result in a pleasing variety for the audience as well as suitability to the text. With the exception of the one unaccompanied selection mentioned above, the only variety in accompaniment was his use of whistling and humming (11, 12) along with the banjo.

Audience participation. At last we come to the area of performance analysis that supplements Auslander's recommendation by focusing on the audience. As mentioned above, initial viewing of the concert DVD and prior knowledge of Seeger's performing style suggested three subcategories: sing-along, harmony, and lining-out. A close examination of the concert footage showed that over fifty percent of the songs involved audience participation to one degree or another. This usually involved having the audience members join in on the chorus, a repetitive part of a song that was originally intended for group singing. Moving on to the "harmony" category, it will be noted that on three songs (7, 10, 18) Seeger had the audience sing harmony parts that complimented the original melody line. To make this happen, it was necessary for him to stop singing to hold an informal rehearsal to teach the harmony parts one by one, and then restart the song. On four occasions (10, 14, 15, 23) he used the "lining-out" technique to keep the song going without having to stop the singing.

Supplemental notes. The column on the far right of the table includes extra comments that support the adjacent findings related to audience involvement. For example, on three occasions the audience joined in on the chorus of the song with the third time being entirely spontaneous (1, 4, 5e). Two instances of handclapping are also noted (7, 23) along with one instance when Seeger cajoled the audience members into trying to yodel with him (13). Note was taken of Seeger having stopped to take off a layer of clothing (before 5c) adding to the

relaxed, informal atmosphere of the evening and his mention that one of the songs (21) had only been composed two weeks before.

Summary

This portion of the research considered a single live performance by Seeger from 1963 that was captured on video tape and later released in DVD format. Over multiple viewings, the concert was studied through a process of performance analysis adapted from the field of theater studies. It is hoped that this part of the study will encourage other scholars of popular music to apply this kind of research to both live and recorded performances by other artists in the future.

The Songs Framework

Songs from Five Live Performances

Selection of songs for the data set

The four CDs and one DVD examined in this study contain a total of one hundred thirty-nine songs from which fifty-nine were selected as the data set to be subjected to the process of content analysis. The criteria for selecting the songs to include or exclude were based on the principle that the resulting lyrics would be closely linked to Seeger's lifelong goals for the betterment of society. First of all, the pieces that were purely instrumental were cut since by definition they contained no lyrics. Second, any song from which Seeger only sang a fragment as a part of his commentary was also excluded. Third, songs that were performed

only in a foreign language were excluded unless Seeger also sang or narrated a portion in English, and that the text fit the profile of being a part of his agenda of social issues. Finally, any songs that were sung entirely in English but lacked any social issue content were entirely excluded. In Table 9 below the fifty-nine remaining songs are given in alphabetical order and with an indication of the concert(s) in which they were performed.

TABLE 9: Fifty-nine Selected Songs

title	Bowdoin	Carnegie (NY)	Melbourne	Carnegie (PA)	Sanders
A Hard Rain's A-Gonna Fall		√	√	√	
Acres of Clams					√
All mixed up				√	
Amazing grace					√
Bells of Rhymney, The	√		√	√	
Big Rock Candy Mountain	√				
Bourgeois Blues	√				
D-Day Dodgers	√				
Down by the Riverside			√		
Freedom come-all-ve, The				√	
Freiheit			√		
From Way up Here		√			
Genbaku o yurusumagi		√	√		
He Lies in an American Land	√			√	
Healing river				√	
Homestead Strike Song					√
I Ain't Scared of Your Jail		√			
I come and stand at every door				√	
If I Had a Hammer			√	√	√
If You Miss Me at the Back of the Bus		√			
In the Sweet Bye and Bye	√				
Jacob's Ladder					√
John Henry					√
Keep Your Eyes on the Prize		√			
Kum By Ya			√		
L'internationale					√
Last Night I had the Strangest Dream	√				
Little Boxes		√			
Lonesome Valley					√
Michael, Row the Boat Ashore	√		√		
Mrs. Clara Sullivan's Letter		√			
Mrs. McGrath		√			
Oh Freedom		√			
Oh, What a Beautiful City	√	√			
Old Devil Time					√
Old Settler's Song					√
Old Time Religion					√
Oleanna				√	
Peat bog soldiers				√	
Penny's Farm	√				
Praties grow small				√	
Preacher and the Slave	√				
Quiz Show	√				
Roll On Columbia, Roll On			√		
Step by Step	√			√	
This Land is Your Land		√		√	
This little light of mine				√	
Turn! turn! turn!				√	
Union Maid			√		
We Shall not be Moved					√
We Shall Overcome		√			
What a Friend we have in Congress	√				
What Did you Learn in School Today?		√	√		
When I first came to this land				√	
Where Have all the Flowers Gone?	√			√	
Who Killed Davey Moore?		√			
Who Killed Norma Jean?		√			
Worried Man Blues	√				
Young Woman who Swallowed a Lie					√

The songs

Bowdoin College Concert (Brunswick, Maine; 1960)

[Disc 1]

1. (tr. 2) "Penny's Farm" This song reflects the hard times experienced by tenant farmers who suffered the unfair practices of corrupt landlords.

Come you ladies and you gentlemen

And listen to my song,

I'll sing it to you right, but you might think it's wrong,

May make you mad, but I mean no harm,

It's all about the renters on Penny's farm.

CHORUS

It's hard times in the country,

Down on Penny's farm.

It's hard times in the country,

Down on Penny's farm.

Now you move out on Penny's farm,

Plant a little crop of 'bacco and a little crop of corn,

He'll come around to plan and plot,

Till he gets himself a mortgage

On everything you got.

CHORUS

Now there's old George Penny come into town,

With his wagon-load of peaches, not one of them sound,

He's got to have his money or somebody's check,

You pay him for a bushel,

And you don't get a peck.

CHORUS

You go to the fields

And you work all day,

Till way after dark, but you get no pay,

Promise you meat or a little lard,

It's hard to be a renter on Penny's farm.

CHORUS

But then George Penny's renters, they come into town,
With their hands in their pockets, and their heads hanging down,
Go in the store and the merchant will say:
“Your mortgage is due
And I'm waiting' for my pay.”

CHORUS

Goes down in his pocket with a trembling hand --
“Can't pay you all but I'll pay you what I can.”
Then to the telephone the merchant makes a call,
“They'll put you on the chain gang
If you don't pay it all.”

CHORUS

2. (tr. 3) “He Lies in the American Land” This song tells the tragic story of an immigrant worker who came to the US ahead of his family, then died before their arrival due to unsafe working conditions in the mill.

Ah, my God what is this land of America?
So many people travelling there
I will go too for I am still young

God the Lord will grant me good luck there

You, my wife, stay here 'til you hear from me

When you get my letter, put everything in order

Mount a raven black steed, a horse like the wind

Fly across the ocean to join me here

Ah, but when she arrived in this strange land

Here in McKeesport, this valley, this valley of fire

Only his grave, his blood did she find

Over it, bitterly she cried

Ah, my husband, what've you done to this family of yours?

What can you say to these children, to these children you've orphaned?

Tell them my wife not to wait, not to wait, not to wait for me

Tell them I lie here, in the American land

3. (tr. 9) “D-Day Dodgers” This song was written during World War II as a sarcastic response to Lady Astor, the first female member of the British Parliament, who was reported to have said that many British troops stationed in Italy had dodged participating in D-Day.

We're the D-Day Dodgers, here in Italy

Always on the vino, always on a spree

8th Army scroungers and our tanks

We live in Rome among the Yanks

We are the D-Day Dodgers

In sunny Italy

We are the D-Day Dodgers

In sunny Italy

We landed at Salerno, a holiday with pay

The Jerries brought the band out to greet us on the way

Showed us the sights and gave us tea

We all sang songs, the beer was free

To welcome D-Day Dodgers

To sunny Italy

To welcome D-Day Dodgers

To sunny Italy

On the way to Florence, we had a lovely time

We ran a bus to Rimini right through the gothic line

Anzio and Sangro were just names

We only went to look for dames

The artful D-Day Dodgers

In sunny Italy

The artful D-Day Dodgers

In sunny Italy

Now we hear the 2nd Army, will soon get home on leave

After all of three months service, it's time for their reprieve

But we can carry on out here

Another two or three more years

Contented D-Day Dodgers

To stay in Italy

Contented D-Day Dodgers

To stay in Italy

Dear Lady Astor, you think you know a lot

Standing on the platform and talking tommy-rot

Your England's sweetheart and her pride

We think your mouth's too bleeding wide

That's from your D-Day Dodgers

Way off in Italy

That's from you D-Day Dodgers

Way off in Italy

Look around the mountains in the mud and rain

You'll find the scattered crosses, there're some that have no name

Heart break and toil and pain all gone

The boys beneath them slumber on

Those are the D-Day Dodgers

Who'll stay in Italy

Those are the D-Day Dodgers

Who'll stay in Italy

4. (tr. 10) "Quiz Show" This is a topical song that was written in response to the 1959 quiz show scandal involving Columbia University English professor Marc Van Doren.

A dozen big companies are giving away

Hundreds and thousands of dollars, they say;

They ask you some questions, and someone keeps score,

And they slip you the answers a few days before -

Chorus

Hoodie dang fol dee diedo,
Hoodie dang fol dee dum,
Come along to the quiz show,
And join in the fun!

Now, something for nothing is hard to resist,
Especially when it will never be missed;
And, since you are only an average guy,
You're quite taken in by the size of the lie -

You act out your part in a natural way,
And then our dear sponsor has some-thing to say;
And millions are buying the things that he makes -
You're getting some grease that fried out of his steak -

Now that you're a liar, the company can choose
The minute their puppet will stumble and lose -
And you like your job, and you don't want the sack,
You'd better give part of the gravy right back –

You're a national hero wherever you're seen.

Your face is on every newspaper and screen;
And just like a saucer of milk for a pup,
Those suckers a-watching keep lapping it up -

Then one day it's over - someone smelled a rat;
The bag has been ripped, and they've let out the cat;
The companies find that they aren't alone,
For Congress is starting a quiz of its own -

Now think of the hero exposed for your view
And think of how easy it could have been you
We were all played for suckers and now we must pay
While the big shot behind him just slithers away

Yet Congress discovered a long time ago
The profits concealed in a questioning show,
And Congressman Walter can tell you the tale -
How quizzers get votes, and contestants get jail ...

5. (tr. 12) “What a Friend We Have in Congress” This song by Ernie Marris is a classic political sarcasm song that runs parallel to the genre of political cartoons. With a melody based on a familiar church hymn “What a Friend We Have in Jesus” the song criticizes the military-industrial complex and its connection with Congressional spending in the name of national security.

What A Friend We Have in Congress

Who will guard our every shore,

Spends three-quarters of our taxes

Getting ready for a war,

Guns must make our coastline bristle,

And we have to fill the sky

Full of planes and guided missiles,

They'll be Paid for Bye And Bye.

Have you noticed all the progress

In our mighty airborne fleet?

By the time a plane's adopted

It's already obsolete.

There's no factory profit, brother

And we have to do or die,

One improvement, then another,

They'll be Paid for Bye And Bye.

Have we trials, investigations?

There's subversion everywhere.

Careless words make complications;

Jail your thoughts and keep them there.

Listen only to our statesmen,

Close each wicked wondering eye,

Save our old traditional freedoms;

They'll be Paid for Bye And Bye.

Modern bombs are sure to carry

Loads of glory, joy and thrills,

What a privilege to bury

All the dead our money kills,

Never mind the widows weeping,

Disregard the orphan's cry,

When God wakes the dead and sleeping

They'll be Paid for Bye and Bye.

6. (tr. 15) “Bells of Rhymney” This is an original song by Seeger based on a text by the Welsh poet Idris Davies. The context was a failed general strike in 1926 that left the coal miners in a state of despair about the wretched working conditions and unfair wages they had to suffer.

Oh what will you give me?

Say the sad bells of Rhymney.

Is there hope for the future?

Say the brown bells of Merthyr.

Who made the mine owner?

Say the black bells of Rhondda.

And who robbed the miner?

Say the grim bells of Blaina.

They will plunder will-nilly,

Say the bells of Caerphilly.

They have fangs, they have teeth,

Shout the loud bells of Neath.

Even God is uneasy,

Say the moist bells of Swansea.

And what will you give me?

Say the sad bells of Rhymney.

Throw the vandals in court,

Say the bells of Newport.

All will be well if, if, if,

Say the green bells of Cardiff.

Why so worried, sisters why?

Sang the silver bells of Wye.

Oh what will you give me?

Say the sad bells of Rhymney?

Oh what will you give me?

Say the sad bells of Rhymney.

Is there hope for the future?

Say the brown bells of Merthyr.

Who made the mine owner?

Say the black bells of Rhondda.

And who robbed the miner?

Say the grim bells of Blaina.

They will plunder will-nilly,

Say the bells of Caerphilly.

They have fangs, they have teeth,

Shout the loud bells of Neath.

Even God is uneasy,

Say the moist bells of Swansea.

And what will you give me?

Say the sad bells of Rhymney.

Throw the vandals in court,

Say the bells of Newport.

All will be well if, if, if,

Say the green bells of Cardiff.

Why so worried, sisters why?

Sang the silver bells of Wye.

Oh what will you give me?

Say the sad bells of Rhymney?

[Disc 2]

1. (tr. 1) “Big Rock Candy Mountains” This song is a lighthearted account of a hobo’s idea of heaven. Hobos, tramp, and bums were men who hitched illegal rides on the freight trains. Some were in constant search of work in another town, while some were trying to avoid work altogether. The numbers swelled in the

wake of the devastating unemployment during Great Depression.

On a summer day
In the month of May
A burly bum came hiking
Down a shady lane
Through the sugar cane
He was looking for his liking
As he strolled along
He sang a song
Of the land of milk and honey
Where a bum can stay
For many a day
And he won't need any money

CHORUS

Oh the buzzin' of the bees
In the cigarette trees
Near the soda water fountain
By the lemonade springs
Where the bluebird sings

In the big rock candy mountains

In the Big Rock Candy Mountains

You never change your socks

And the little streams of alcohol

Come trickling down the rocks

The farmers' trees are full of fruit

And the barns are full of hay

Oh I'm bound to go

Where there ain't no snow

Where the sleet don't fall

The winds don't blow

In the Big Rock Candy Mountains.

CHORUS

In the Big Rock Candy Mountains

The cops have wooden legs

The bulldogs all have rubber teeth

And the hens lay soft-boiled eggs

The shacks all have to tip their hats

And the railway bulls are blind
There's a lake of stew
And of whiskey too
You can paddle all around them
In a big canoe
In the Big Rock Candy Mountains.

CHORUS

In the Big Rock Candy Mountains,
The jails are made of tin.
And you can slip right out again,
Soon as they put you in.
There ain't no short-handled shovels,
No axes, saws nor picks,
I'm bound to stay
Where you sleep all day,
Where they hung the jerk
That invented work
In the Big Rock Candy Mountains

CHORUS

2. (tr. 3) “Oh, What A Beautiful City” This classic negro spiritual was a favorite of Seeger’s that appeared on the program of many of his live performances as recordings. In comparison with some other examples, the social rhetoric in this song is rather low key with the main message being that there are many doorways into heaven so that no one would be barred from entering. It also contains a reference to Moses who led his people out of slavery in Egypt to the promised land of freedom, a frequent metaphor for the situation of the black slaves in the U.S.

Oh what a beautiful city

Oh what a beautiful city

Oh what a beautiful city

Twelve gates to the city, Hallelujah

Three gates in the East

Three gates in the West

Three gates in the North

Three gates in the South

There's twelve gates to the city, Hallelujah

Oh what a beautiful city

Oh what a beautiful city

Oh what a beautiful city

Twelve gates to the city, Hallelujah

Who are those children they're dressed in red?

There's twelve gates to the city, Hallelujah

It must be the children that Moses led

There's twelve gates to the city, Hallelujah

Oh what a beautiful city

Oh what a beautiful city

Oh what a beautiful city

Twelve gates to the city, Hallelujah

When I get to Heaven, gonna sing and shout

There's twelve gates to the city, Hallelujah

Ain't nobody there gonna keep me out

There's twelve gates to the city, Hallelujah

Oh what a beautiful city

Oh what a beautiful city

Oh what a beautiful city

Twelve gates to the city, Hallelujah

3. (tr. 4) “In the Sweet Bye and Bye” or “The Preacher and the Slave” This song is another parody of a familiar church hymn “In the Sweet Bye and Bye” often sung by the Salvation Army: “In the sweet bye and bye, we shall meet on that beautiful shore...” The version that Seeger sings is from the songbook of the IWW (International Workers of the World).

CHORUS

You will eat bye and bye

In that glorious land above the sky

Work and pray, live on hay

You'll get pie in the sky when you die (that's a lie!)

Long-haired preachers come out every night

Try to tell you what's wrong and what's right

But when asked bout something to eat

They will tell you in voices so sweet

CHORUS

Oh the starvation army they say
As they sing and they clap and they pray
Till they've get all your coins on the drum
Then they'll tell you when you're on the bum

CHORUS

If you fight hard for children and wife
Try to get something good in this life
You're a sinner and bad man they tell
When you die you will surely go to hell

Working men of all countries unite
Side by side we for freedom shall fight
When this world and its wealth we have gained
To the grafters we'll sing this refrain

You will eat, bye and bye

When you've learned how to cook and how to fry

Chop some wood, 'twill do you good

And you'll eat in the sweet bye and bye

4. (tr. 5) "Last Night I Had the Strangest Dream" This song by Ed McCurdy was extremely popular during the years of the peace and antiwar movements in the U.S. during the 1960s and 1970s.

Last night I had the strangest dream,

I'd never dreamed before.

I dreamed the world had all agreed

To put an end to war.

I dreamed I saw a mighty room,

The room was full of men.

And the paper they were signing said

They'd never fight again.

And when the paper was all signed,

And a million copies made,

They all joined hands and bowed their heads,

And grateful prayers were prayed.

And the people in the streets below
 Were dancing 'round and 'round,
 And swords and guns and uniforms
 Were scattered on the ground.

Last night I had the strangest dream,
 I'd never dreamed before.
 I dreamed the world had all agreed
 To put an end to war.

5. (tr. 8 Medley) “Step by Step” Seeger found these words in a 19th-century miners’ union rulebook and set them to his own original melody. The collectivist sentiment they express is perfect match with Seeger’s social views.

Step by step the longest march
 Can be won can be won
 Many stones can form an arch
 Singly none singly none
 And by union what we will
 Can be accomplished still

Drops of water turn a mill

Singly none singly none

6. (tr. 12) “Michael, Row The Boat Ashore” This is yet another good example of a spiritual that carries a hidden meaning about escaping “across the river” from a slave state to a free state.

Michael, row the boat ashore, hallelujah.

Michael, row the boat ashore, hallelujah.

Michael's boat is a music boat, hallelujah

Michael's boat is a music boat, hallelujah

CHORUS

Sister help to trim the sail, hallelujah

Sister help to trim the sail, hallelujah

Jordan's River is deep and wide, hallelujah.

Meet my mother on the other side, hallelujah.

Jordan's River is chilly and cold, hallelujah.

Chill's the body, but not the soul, hallelujah.

CHORUS

7. (tr. 14) "Bourgeois Blues" This song was written by Seeger's mentor Lead Belly after he and his wife were denied a hotel room in Washington, D.C. because they were black. In concerts, Seeger omitted the verses with the word "nigger."

Me and my wife went all over town

And everywhere we went people turned us down

Lord, in a bourgeois town

It's a bourgeois town

I got the bourgeois blues

Gonna spread the news all around

I tell all the colored folks to listen to me

Don't try to find you no home in Washington, DC

'Cause it's a bourgeois town

Uhm, the bourgeois town

I got the bourgeois blues

Gonna spread the news all around

The home of the brave, the land of the free

I don't wanna be mistreated by no bourgeoisie

Lord, in a bourgeois town

Uhm, the bourgeois town

I got the bourgeois blues

Gonna spread the news all around

8. (tr. 17) “Worried Man Blues” This is a classic narrative telling about someone convicted to twenty-one years in prison for an undisclosed crime

CHORUS

It takes a worried man to sing a worried song

It takes a worried man to sing a worried song

It takes a worried man to sing a worried song

I'm worried now, but I won't be worried long

I went across the river and I lay down to sleep

I went across the river and I lay down to sleep

I went across the river and I lay down to sleep

I woke up and I had shackles on my feet

Twenty-nine links of chain around my leg

Twenty-nine links of chain around my leg

Twenty-nine links of chain around my leg

And on each link, an initial of my name

CHORUS

I asked the judge, "What's gonna be my fine?"

I asked the judge, "What's gonna be my fine?"

I said, "Oh, judge, what's gonna be my fine?"

He said, "Twenty-one years on the Rocky Mountain Line"

Twenty-one years to pay for my awful crime

Twenty-one years to pay for my awful crime

Twenty-one years to pay for my awful crime

Twenty one years, but I still got ninety-nine

CHORUS

The train pulled out, sixteen coaches long

The train pulled out, sixteen coaches long

The train pulled out, sixteen coaches long

The one I love, she's on that train and gone

I looked down the track, as far as I could see

I looked down the track, as far as I could see

I looked down the track, as far as I could see

A little bitty hand was a-wavin' back at me

CHORUS

If anyone asks you who composed this song

If anyone asks you who composed this song

If anyone asks you who composed this song

Tell him it was I and I sing it all day long

CHORUS

Carnegie Hall Concert (New York City; 1963)

[Disc 1]

1. (tr. 4) "Mrs. McGrath" This song is a traditional Irish folksong that dates from the early 1800s, though its antiwar message is not bound to any one time or place.

It recounts the tale of something that every mother fears when she sends her son off to war.

CHORUS

With a too-ri-a, fo-diddle-di-a

too-ri-o-ri-o-ri-a

With a too-ri-a, fo-diddle-di-a

too-ri-o-ri-o-ri-a

“Oh, Mrs. McGrath,” the sergeant said,

“Would you like to make a soldier out of your son, Ted?

With a scarlet coat and a big cocked hat,

Mrs. McGrath wouldn't you like that?”

CHORUS

So, Mrs. McGrath sat on the seashore

For the space of seven long years or more

'til she spied a ship come a sailin' on the sea

hulla-loo bubba-loo and I think it is he

CHORUS

“Oh, Captain dear, where have ye been.

ye been sailin' on the Mediterreen'?

Have ye any tidings of my son Ted.

Is the poor boy livin' or is he dead?"

CHORUS

Then up steps Ted without any legs

And in their place two wooden pegs

She kissed him a dozen times or two

Cryin', "Holy Moses, it isn't you?"

CHORUS

"Oh was ye drunk or was ye blind

When ye left yer two fine legs behind?

Or was it the walking upon the sea

Wore your two fine legs from the knees away?

CHORUS

"I wasn't drunk, I wasn't blind

When I left my two fine legs behind.

But a cannon ball on the fifth of May
Swept my two fine legs from the knees away.”

CHORUS

“Oh, Teddy, my boy,” the widow cried
“Yer two fine legs were your mother's pride
I'd rather have my Ted as he used to be
Than the King of France and his whole navy”

CHORUS

"Oh, foreign wars, I do profrain
Between Don John and the King of Spain
By heavens, I'll make 'em rue the time
When they swept the legs from a child of mine."

CHORUS

2. (tr. 8) “What Did You Learn in School Today?” This song by Seeger’s contemporary Tom Paxton is a perfect example of a well-written lyric that serves as political sarcasm. On one level the story is of a little boy answering his parent’s questions about his day at school, while the real message is about how the children have been subjected to the propaganda of the military-industrial complex.

What did you learn in school today,

Dear little boy of mine?

What did you learn in school today,

Dear little boy of mine?

I learned that Washington never told a lie.

I learned that soldiers seldom die.

I learned that everybody's free.

And that's what the teacher said to me.

That's what I learned in school today.

That's what I learned in school.

What did you learn in school today...

I learned that policemen are my friends.

I learned that justice never ends.

I learned that murderers die for their crimes.

Even if we make a mistake sometimes.

That's what I learned in school today.

That's what I learned in school.

What did you learn in school today...

I learned our government must be strong.

It's always right and never wrong.

Our leaders are the finest men.

And we elect them again and again.

That's what I learned in school today.

That's what I learned in school.

What did you learn in school today...

I learned that war is not so bad.

I learned of the great ones we have had.

We fought in Germany and in France.

And some day I might get my chance.

That's what I learned in school today.

That's what I learned in school.

3. (tr. 9) "Little Boxes" This topical song by Malvina Reynolds that Seeger made into a hit dates from the same era as the previous one. The point is about the boring uniformity of postwar suburban housing developments and middle class values.

Little boxes on the hillside,

Little boxes made of ticky tacky,

Little boxes on the hillside,

Little boxes all the same.

There's a green one and a pink one

And a blue one and a yellow one,

And they're all made out of ticky tacky

And they all look just the same.

And the people in the houses

All go to the university,

And they all get put in boxes

And they came out all the same,

And there's doctors and there's lawyers,

And business executives,

And they're all made out of ticky tacky

And they all look just the same.

And they all play on the golf course

And drink their martinis dry,

And they all have pretty children

And the children go to school,

And the children go to summer camp

And then to the university,

And they all get put in boxes

And they all come out the same.

And the boys go into business

And marry and raise a family

And they all get put in boxes

Little boxes, all the same.

There's a green one and a pink one

And a blue one and a yellow one,

And they're all made out of ticky tacky

And they all look just the same.

4. (tr. 10) "Mrs. Clara Sullivan's Letter" This is another topical song by Malvina Reynolds that is based on an actual letter to the editor by a minor's wife that calls attention to the dire state of affairs for the miners that were out on strike in Perry County, Ohio.

Dear Mister Editor, if you choose,
Please send me a copy of the labor news;
I've got a son in the infantry,
And he'd be mighty glad to see
That somebody, somewhere, now and then,
Thinks about the lives of the mining men,
In Perry County.

In Perry County and thereabouts
The miners simply had to go out.
It was long hours, substandard pay,
Then they took our contract away.
And now fourteen months is a mighty long time
To face the goons on the picket line
In Perry County.

I'm twenty-six years a miner's wife,
There's nothing harder than a miner's life,
But there's no better man than a mining man,
You couldn't find better in all this land.
The deal they get is a rotten deal,
Mountain greens and gravy meal,
In Perry County.

We live in shacks that the rain comes in
While the operators live high as sin,
Ride Cadillac cars and drink like a fool
While our kids lack clothes to go to school
Sheriff Combs he has it fine,
He runs the law and owns a mine
In Perry County.

I believe the truth will out some day
That we're fighting for jobs at decent pay.
Why, after work my man comes in
With his wet clothes frozen to his skin,
Digging coal so the world can run

And operators can have their fun

In Perry County.

5. (tr. 11) “Who killed Norma Jean” This song by Seeger and Norman Rosten asks a series of rhetorical questions about the responsibility for Marilyn Monroe’s death in 1962. The lyrics imply that society’s unrealistic expectations of celebrities can be the cause of their death.

Who killed Norma Jean?

I, said the City, as a civic duty,

I killed Norma Jean.

Who saw her die?

I, said the Night, and a bedroom light,

We saw her die.

Who'll catch her blood?

I, said the Fan, with my little pan,

I'll catch her blood.

Who'll make her shroud?

I, said the Lover, my guilt to cover,

I'll make her shroud.

Who'll dig her grave?

The tourist will come and join in the fun,

He'll dig her grave.

Who'll be chief mourners?

We who represent, and lose our ten percent.

We'll be the chief mourners.

Who'll bear the pall?

We, said the Press, in pain and distress,

We'll bear the pall.

Who'll toll the bell?

I, screamed the mother, locked in her tower,

I'll ring the bell.

Who'll soon forget?

I, said the Page, beginning to fade,

I'll be the first to forget.

6. (tr. 12) “Who killed Davey Moore?” This song by Bob Dylan takes a similar stance to the previous song, but in response to the sudden death of a famous boxer shortly after a fight in 1963.

Who killed Davey Moore?

How come he died, and what`s the reason for?

Not I says the referee.

Don` t point your little finger at me.

Sure I could have stopped it in the eighth

and saved him from this terrible fate,

but the crowd would have booed I` m sure,

at not getting their money` s worth.

Too bad he had to go,

but there is pressure on me you know,

no, it wasn` t us that made him fall,

you can` t blame me at all.

Who killed Davey Moore?

How come he died, and what`s the reason for?

Not I says the angry crowd,

whose screams fill the ring aloud,

says too bad he died that night,

but we just like to see a good fight,
you can't blame us for his death,
we just like to see some sweat,
there ain't nothing wrong in that,
no, it wasn't us that made him fall,
you can't blame us at all.

Who killed Davey Moore?

How come he died, and what's the reason for?

Not I says his manager, puffing on his big cigar,

it's hard to say, it's hard to tell,

always thought that he was well,

too bad for his wife and kids he's dead,

but if he was sick he should have said,

no, you can't blame me at all,

it wasn't me that made him fall.

Who killed Davey Moore?

How come he died, and what's the reason for?

Not I says the boxing writer,

Pounding his print on his old typewriter,

says boxing ain't to blame,
there is just as much danger in the football game,
says boxing is here to stay,
it's just the old American way,
no, it wasn't me that made him fall,
you can't blame me at all.

Who killed Davey Moore?
How come he died, and what's the reason for?
Not I says the man whose fists
laid him low of a cloud of mist,
who came here from Cuba's door,
where boxing ain't allowed no more,
I hit him, yes, it's true,
but that's what I was paid to do,
don't say murder,
don't say kill,
it was destiny, it was God's will.
Who killed Davey Moore?
How come he died, and what's the reason for?

7. (tr. 14) A Hard Rain's A-Gonna Fall This classic song by Bob Dylan paints an apocalyptic picture of a world gone wrong. The message is heightened by the device of each stanza beginning with a question by an anonymous interlocutor directed toward “my blue-eyed son...my darling one,” a symbol of total innocence.

Where have you been, my blue-eyed son?

Where have you been my darling young one?

I've strayed on the side of twelve misty mountains

I've walked and I've crawled on six crooked highways

I've stepped in the middle of seven sad forests

I've been out in front of a dozen dead oceans

I've been ten thousand miles in the mouth of a graveyard

And it's a hard, hard, hard, hard

It's a hard rain's a-gonna fall.

What did you see, my blue-eyed son?

What did you see, my darling young one?

I saw a newborn baby with wild wolves all around it

I saw a highway of gold and with nobody on it

I saw a black branch with blood that kept drippin'

I saw a room full of men with their hammers a-bleedin'

I saw a white ladder all covered with water
I saw ten thousand talkers whose tongues were all broken
I saw guns and sharp swords in the hands of young children
And it's a hard, hard, hard, hard
It's a hard rain's a-gonna fall.

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

Who did you meet my blue-eyed son ?
Who did you meet, my darling young one?
I met a young child beside a dead pony

I met a white man who walked a black dog

I met a young woman whose body was burning

I met a young girl, she gave me a rainbow

I met one man, he was wounded in love

I met another man, he was wounded in hatred

And it's a hard, hard, hard, hard

It's a hard rain's a-gonna fall.

And what'll you do now, my blue-eyed son?

And what'll you do now my darling young one?

I'm a-goin' back out 'fore the rain starts a-fallin'

I'll walk to the depths of the deepest dark forest

Where the people are a many and their hands are all empty

Where the pellets of poison are flooding my waters

Where the home in the valley meets the dark dirty prison

And the executioner's face is always well hidden

Where hunger is ugly, where souls are forgotten

Where black is the color, where none is the number

And I'll see it and tell it and think it and breathe it

And reflect from the mountain so all souls can see it

And I'll stand on the ocean until I start sinkin'

But I'll know my song well before I start singing

And it's a hard, hard, hard, hard

It's a hard rain's a-gonna fall.

8. (tr. 16) “Keep Your Eyes on the Prize” This version of an old negro spiritual was a mainstay of the civil rights movement, and is a good example of how lyrics of spirituals were adjusted slightly in order to increase their impact. The original version was a work song with the words “Keep you hand on the plow, hold on.” Eventually the biblical story of Paul and Silas being set free from jail after God sent an earthquake to release them was added, and it carried a strong message to the black people who were hoping for deliverance from oppression.

Paul and Silas bound in jail

Had no money for to go their bail

Keep your eyes on the prize, hold on, hold on

Hold on, hold on

Keep your eyes on the prize, hold on

The very moment I thought I was lost

The dungeon shook and the chains fell off

Keep your eyes on the prize, hold on, hold on

Hold on, hold on

Keep your eyes on the prize, hold on

Only thing that we did wrong

Was stayin' in the wilderness too long

Keep your eyes on the prize, hold on, hold on

Hold on, hold on

Keep your eyes on the prize, hold on

The only thing that we did right

Was the the day we begun to fight

Keep your eyes on the prize, hold on, hold on

Hold on, hold on

Keep your eyes on the prize, hold on

9. (tr. 17) “If You Miss Me at the Back of the Bus” Seeger collaborated with civil rights worker Carver Neblett to create this classic of the Civil Rights Movement that brings overcoming racial discrimination with civil disobedience.

If you miss me at the back of the bus

You can't find me nowhere

Come on over to the front of the bus

I'll be riding up there.

CHORUS

I'll be riding up there.

I'll be riding up there.

Come on over to the front of the bus

I'll be riding up there.

If you miss me on the picket line

You can't find me nowhere

Come on over to the city jail

I'll be roomin' over there.

CHORUS

I'll be roomin' over there.

I'll be roomin' over there.

Come on over to the city jail

I'll be roomin' over there.

If you miss me in the Mississippi River

You can't find me nowhere

Come on over to the swimming pool

I'll be swimming right there.

CHORUS

I'll be swimming right there.

I'll be swimming right there.

Come on over to the swimming pool

I'll be swimming right there.

If you miss me in the cotton fields

You can't find me nowhere

Come on over to the courthouse

I'll be voting right there.

CHORUS

I'll be voting right there.

I'll be voting right there.

Come on over to the courthouse

I'll be voting right there.

If you miss me at the back of the bus

You can't find me nowhere

Come on over to the front of the bus

I'll be riding up there.

CHORUS

I'll be riding up there.

I'll be riding up there.

Come on over to the front of the bus

I'll be riding up there.

10. (tr. 18) "I ain't Scared of Your Jail" This song by Lester Cobb started out as a part of the civil rights movement in Montgomery, AL and Seeger helped popularize it in the North through his concerts. The melody is borrowed from a song of indefinite origin known as "The old grey mare."

I ain't a-scared of your jail

'coz I want my freedom

I want my freedom

I want my freedom
 I ain't a-scared of your jail
 'coz I want my freedom
 I want my freedom now!

11. (tr. 19) “Oh Freedom” This is one of the most widely sung songs of the civil rights movement. Likely tracing back to the mid-1800s, the words were constantly being adapted or augmented in reaction to ongoing events in the struggle.

Oh freedom
 Oh freedom over me, over me

And before I'd be a slave
 I'd be buried in my grave
 And go home to my lord and be free.

No more slavery
 No more slavery
 No more slavery over me, over me

And before I'd be a slave
 I'd be buried in my grave

And go home to my lord and be free.

No more weeping

No more weeping

No more weeping over me, over me

And before I'd be a slave

I'd be buried in my grave

And go home to my lord and be free.

No more Prichett

No more Prichett

No more Prichett over me, over me

And before I'd be a slave

I'd be buried in my grave

And go home to my lord and be free.

No more segregation

No more segregation

No more segregation over me, over me

And before I'd be a slave
I'd be buried in my grave
And go home to my lord and be free.

Oh freedom (freedom!)
Oh freedom (freedom!)
Oh freedom over me, over me

And before I'd be a slave
I'd be buried in my grave
And go home to my lord and be free

[Disc 2]

1. (tr. 8) “Oh What A Beautiful City”

[see previous CD]

2. (tr. 12) Genbaku wo yurusumaji This song was originally written in Japanese as a lament over the victims of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

Thanks to Seeger, it became a mainstay of the antinuclear movement in the U.S.

In the concert he sang it once in Japanese, then once in English.

Deadly rain gathers poison from the sky,
And the fish gather death from the depths of the sea,
Fishing boats are idle, their owners are blind,
Deadly harvest, of two Atom bombs,
And landsmen and seamen you must watch and take care,
That the third Atom bomb never falls.

3. (tr. 16) “This Land is Your Land” This is the quintessential Woody Guthrie song that he composed in various versions in the 1940s and was first widely distributed in the 1950s. He reportedly created it as a result of his intense dislike of Irving Berlin’s then popular “God Bless America.”

CHORUS

This land is your land, this land is my land
From California to the New York island;
From the red wood forest to the Gulf Stream waters
This land was made for you and me.

As I was walking that ribbon of highway,
I saw above me an endless skyway:
I saw below me that golden valley:

This land was made for you and me.

CHORUS

I've roamed and rambled and I followed my footsteps

To the sparkling sands of her diamond deserts;

And all around me a voice was sounding:

This land was made for you and me.

CHORUS

When the sun came shining, and I was strolling,

And the wheat fields waving and the dust clouds rolling,

As the fog was lifting a voice was chanting:

This land was made for you and me.

CHORUS

4. (tr. 17) "From Way Up Here" This song for the peace movement was written jointly by Seeger and Malvina Reynolds. The basic idea is that, viewed from the perspective of space, the earth is just a small, blue ball and that all people should

learn to live in harmony.

From way up here the earth seems very small,
It's just a little ball of rock and sea and sand,
No bigger than my hand.

From way up here the earth looks very small,
They shouldn't fight at all
Down there, upon that little sphere.

Their time is short, a life is just a day,
You'd think they'd find a way.
You'd think they'd get along
And fill their sunlit days with song.

From way up here
Their time is short, a life is just a day,
Must be some better way,
To use the time that runs
Among the distant suns.
From way up here the earth is just a ball,
A precious little ball,

So small, so beautiful and dear.

5. (tr. 18) “We Shall Overcome” This song was one of the most influential songs of the entire civil rights movement, and though Seeger did not write it, his versions of the words, the melody, and the tempo in which it was sung was deeply influential on its reception and its influence on empowering people of all colors and races.

We shall overcome,

We shall overcome,

We shall overcome, some day.

CHORUS

Oh, deep in my heart,

I do believe

We shall overcome, some day.

We'll walk hand in hand,

We'll walk hand in hand,

We'll walk hand in hand, some day.

CHORUS

We shall live in peace,

We shall live in peace,

We shall live in peace, some day.

CHORUS

The whole wide world around

The whole wide world around

The whole wide world around some day

CHORUS

We are not afraid

We are not afraid

We are not afraid today

CHORUS

We shall overcome,

We shall overcome,

We shall overcome, some day.

CHORUS

Melbourne Town Hall Concert (Melbourne, Australia;1963)

1. (tr. 5) Woody Guthrie Medley, 5c. "Union Maid" This song was written by Woody Guthrie to give encouragement to the wives of union workers. It uses many of the derogatory slang terms like "goon," "gink," "fink," and "stool" to describe the various hired thugs and insiders who were paid by the company managers to spy on and disrupt the union meetings. Lastly, the title of the song is a play on words between the "union maid" and "union made."

There once was a union maid, she never was afraid

Of the goons and the ginks and the company finks

and the deputy sheriffs who made the raid.

She went to the union hall when a meeting it was called,

And when the company boys come around

She always stood her ground.

CHORUS

Oh, you can't scare me, I'm sticking to the union,
I'm sticking to the union, I'm sticking to the union.
Oh, you can't scare me, I'm sticking to the union,
I'm sticking to the union 'til the day I die.

This union maid was wise to the tricks of the company spies,
She'd never be fooled by a company stool, she'd always organize the guys.
She'd always get her way when she'd ask for better pay.
She'd show her card to the company guard
And this is what she'd say

CHORUS

Now you girls that want to be free, just take a tip from me;
Get you a man who's a union man and join the ladies' auxiliary.
Married life ain't hard if you've got a union card,
And a union man has a happy life when he's got a union wife.

CHORUS

5e. "Roll On Columbia" Guthrie adapted the melody of Lead Belly's "Goodnight Irene" to fit these words which he wrote on commission to the U.S. government. It is essential a piece of musical propaganda to promote the building of dams on the Columbia river to create jobs for the Roosevelt's New Deal WPA and generate electric power and modernize the Pacific Northwest in the process

Green Douglas firs where the waters cut through.

Down her wild mountains and canyons she flew.

Canadian Northwest to the ocean so blue,

Roll on, Columbia, roll on!

CHORUS

Roll on, Columbia, roll on.

Roll on, Columbia, roll on.

Your power is turning our darkness to dawn,

Roll on, Columbia, roll on.

At Bonneville Dam there are ships in the locks,

The waters have risen and covered the rocks,

Shiploads of plenty will steam past the docks,

Roll on, Columbia, roll on.

CHORUS

On up the river is Grand Coulee Dam,
Biggest thing built by the hand of a man,
To run the great factories and water the land,
Roll on, Columbia, roll on.

CHORUS

Other great rivers lend power to you,
Yakima, Snake, and the Klickitat, too,
Sandy, Willamette, the Hood River, too
Roll on, Columbia, roll on.

CHORUS

2. (tr. 7) "Down by the Riverside" This song was among a handful of negro spirituals that were adopted by the civil rights movement and peace movement in the mid-20th century. In addition to the original meaning that focused on spiritual conversion, since baptism often took place at a riverside, the song also carried a hidden meaning about escape to freedom from slavery. That part of course appealed to the civil rights movement, while the words referring to laying down

the sword and shield appealed to the followers of the peace and antiwar movements.

I ain't gonna study war no more

Ain't gonna study war no more

Ain't gonna study war no more

I ain't gonna study war no more

Ain't gonna study war no more

Ain't gonna study war no more

I'm gonna lay down my sword and shield,

Down by the riverside

Down by the riverside

Down by the riverside

I'm gonna lay down my sword and shield,

Down by the riverside

Study war no more

CHORUS

I'm a-gonna shake hands with every man

Down by the riverside

Down by the riverside

Down by the riverside

I'm a-gonna shake hands with every man

Down by the riverside

Study war no more

CHORUS

I'm gonna lay down my sword and shield,

Down by the riverside

Down by the riverside

Down by the riverside

I'm gonna lay down my sword and shield,

Down by the riverside

Study war no more

CHORUS

3. (tr. 10) “Kum Bay Ya” This song has somewhat of a convoluted history in that it seems to have been an old religious song from the American South that got sent

off with missionaries to Africa, and then returned to the U.S. with African words. In the social movements it was often sung simply for its calming effect, kind of a lullaby for adults going through difficult times.

Kum ba yah, my lord, Kum ba yah!

Kum ba yah, my lord, Kum ba yah!

Kum ba yah, my lord, Kum ba yah.

O Lord, Kum ba yah

Someone's sleeping, Lord, Kum ba yah!

Someone's sleeping, Lord, Kum ba yah!

Someone's sleeping, Lord, Kum ba yah!

O Lord, Kum ba yah

Someone's weeping, Lord, Kum ba yah!

Someone's weeping, Lord, Kum ba yah!

Someone's weeping, Lord, Kum ba yah!

O Lord, Kum ba yah

Someone's singing, Lord, Kum ba yah!

Someone's singing, Lord, Kum ba yah!

Someone's singing, Lord, Kum ba yah!

O Lord, Kum ba yah

Kum ba yah, my lord, Kum ba yah!

Kum ba yah, my lord, Kum ba yah!

Kum ba yah, my lord, Kum ba yah.

O Lord, Kum ba yah

4. (tr. 15) “Freiheit” (Freedom) Seeger introduced this German freedom song to the audience and then taught them to sing the chorus, translating the main points in English. He also mentioned its history as a well-known marching song of the International Brigade that volunteered in the cause against fascism during the Spanish Civil War. The part of the history lesson that he left out was that this was the song of the German Communists who were in disfavor with Hitler.

5. (tr. 17) Genbaku wo yurusumagi (Never Again the A-Bomb) As with the previous selection, Seeger sang this song in the original Japanese and then read a prose translation in English, and finally a verse in English. Its popularity in the antiwar and antinuclear movements in England was largely due to the effort of singer-political activist Ewan MacColl.

In the place where our old home village was destroyed,

We bury the charred bones of our relatives,

(Now the white flowers are blooming there.)

Oh, we must never allow, we must absolutely forbid
another atom bomb to fall.

Deadly rain gathers poison from the sky,
And the fish gather death from the depths of the sea,
Fishing boats are idle, their owners are blind,
Deadly harvest, of two Atom bombs,
Then landsmen and seamen you must watch and take care,
That the third atom bomb never falls.

6. (tr. 18) Michael, Row the Boat Ashore

[see previous CD]

7. (tr. 20) The Bells of Rhymney

[see previous CD]

8. (tr. 21) What Did You Learn in School Today

[see previous CD]

9. (tr. 22) A Hard Rain's A-Gonna Fall

[see previous CD]

10. (tr. 23) If I Had a Hammer

[see previous CD]

Carnegie Music Hall Concert (Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania; 1965)

[Disc 1]

1. (tr. 2) “He Lies in an American Land”

[see previous CD]

2. (tr. 3) “Oleanna” This is a humorous song that pokes fun at immigrant’s over-inflated beliefs in what life in the U.S. would be like.

Oh, to be in Oleanna!

That's where I'd like to be,

Than be bound in Norway,

And drag the chains of slavery.

Ole, Oleanna, Ole, Oleanna,

Ole, Ole, Ole, Ole, Ole, Oleanna.

In Oleanna land is free,

The wheat and corn just plant themselves,
Then grow a good four feet a day,
While on your bed you rest yourself.

Little roasted piggies
Just rush about the city streets,
Inquiring so politely if
A slice of ham you'd like to eat.

Aye, if you'd begin to live,
To Oleanna you must go,
The poorest wretch in Norway
Becomes a King in a year or so.

Oh, to be in Oleanna!
That's where I'd like to be,
Than be bound in Norway,
And drag the chains of slavery.

3. (tr. 6) “When I First Came to This Land” This is another type of song made up by recent immigrants to the U.S. to help cope with the inherent hardships and disappointments.

When I first came to this land
I was not a wealthy man
So I got myself a shack and I did what I could
And I called my shack “BREAK MY BACK”
But the land was sweet and good and I did what I could.

When I first came to this land
I was not a wealthy man
So I got myself a cow and I did what I could
And I called my cow “NO MILK NOW”
And I called my shack “BREAK MY BACK”
But the land was sweet and good and I did what I could.

When I first came to this land
I was not a wealthy man
So I got myself a duck and I did what I could
And I called my duck “OUT OF LUCK”
And I called my cow “NO MILK NOW”

And I called my shack "BREAK MY BACK"

But the land was sweet and good and I did what I could.

When I first came to this land

I was not a wealthy man

So I got myself a wife and I did what I could

And I called my wife "RUN FOR YOUR LIFE"

And I called my duck "OUT OF LUCK"

And I called my cow "NO MILK NOW"

And I called my shack "BREAK MY BACK"

But the land was sweet and good and I did what I could.

When I first came to this land

I was not a wealthy man

So I got myself a son and I did what I could

And I called my son "MY WORK'S DONE"

And I called my wife "RUN FOR YOUR LIFE"

And I called my duck "OUT OF LUCK"

And I called my cow "NO MILK NOW"

And I called my shack "BREAK MY BACK"

But the land was sweet and good and I did what I could.

4. (tr. 7) “All Mixed Up” This song draws attention to the fact that American culture is actually a mix of many different cultures. It promotes multiculturalism and antiracism.

You know this language that we speak,
Is part German, part Latin and part Greek
With some Celtic and Arabic all in a heap,
Well-amended by the people in the street
Choctaw gave us the word “okay”;
“Vamose” is a word from Mexico way.
And all of this is a hint I suspect of what comes next.

I think that this whole world
Soon mama my whole wide world
Soon mama my whole world
Soon gonna be gettin' mixed up.

I like Polish sausage, I like Spanish rice,
Pizza pie is also nice
Corn and beans from the Indians here
Washed down by some German beer
Marco Polo traveled by camel and pony,

He brought to Italy, the first macaroni
And you and I as well as we're able,
We put it all on the table

CHORUS

There were no red-headed Irishmen
Before the Vikings landed in Ireland
How many Romans had dark curly hair
Before they brought slaves from Africa?
No race of man is completely pure,
Nor is anyone's mind, and that's for sure
The winds mix the dust of every land,
And so will man.

CHORUS

Oh this doesn't mean we must all be the same,
We'll have different faces and different names
Long live different kinds of races
And indifference of opinion makes horse races

Just remember the rule about rules, brother

What could be right for one could be wrong for the other

And take a tip from La Belle France: “Viva la difference!”

CHORUS

Well, I don't know where this song comes from

Maybe I should just play dumb

But after all, this is just the overture

And now the program begins for sure

But before the next song I sing

I will have to tune a string

Before the next song I sing

I will have to tune a string

5. (tr. 8) “I Come and Stand at Every Door” This is another song that became popular in the antinuclear movement. It is based on Japanese poem about Hiroshima.

I come and stand at every door

But none can hear my silent tread

I knock and yet remain unseen

For I am dead, for I am dead.

I'm only seven, although I died

In Hiroshima long ago.

I'm seven now, as I was then -

When children die, they do not grow.

[My hair was scorched by swirling flame;

My eyes grew dim, my eyes grew blind.

Death came and turned my bones to dust,

And that was scattered by the wind.]

I need no fruit, I need no rice.

I need no sweets, or even bread;

I ask for nothing for myself,

For I am dead, for I am dead.

All that I ask is that for peace

You fight today, you fight today.

So that the children of this world

May live and grow and laugh and play!

6. (tr. 12) “The Freedom Come-All-Ye” This song by Hamish Henderson is in the Scots language, and carries a strong antiapartheid, anti-imperialist message.

Roch the wind through the clear day’s dawin

Blaws the clouds heelster gowdie ow’r the bay

But there’s mair nor a roch wind blawin

Through the great glen o the warld the day.

It’s a thocht that will gar oor rottans

A’ the rogues that gang gallus, fresh and gay

Tak the road and seek ither loanins

For their ill ploys, tae sport and play

Nae mair will the bonnie callants

Mairch tae war when oor braggarts crouselly craw,

Nor wee weans frae pit-heid and clachan

Mourn the ships sailin doon the Broomielaw.

Broken faimlies in lands we’ve herriet

Will curse Scotland the Brave nae mair, nae mair;

Black and white, ane til ither mairriet

Mak the vile barracks o their maisters bare

Oh come all ye at hame wi Freedom,
 Never heed whit the hoodies croak for doom
 In your hoose a' the bairns o Adam
 Can find breid, barley-bree and painted room
 When MacLean meets wi's freens in Springburn
 A' the roses and geans will turn tae bloom,
 And a black boy frae yont Nyanga
 Dings the fell gallows o the burghers doon.

7. (tr. 13) "Peat Bog Soldiers" This song was originally sung in German by inmates of a Nazi prisoner of war camp reserved for political dissidents. Translated into many languages, it was to become an important song during the Spanish Civil War and then the peace movement in the U.S. and elsewhere. Its chief poignancy lies in the idea that the guards and well as the prisoners are all victims of the pointlessness of war.

Far and wide as the eye can wander,
 Heath and bog are everywhere,
 Not a bird sings out to cheer us,
 Oaks are standing, gaunt and bare.

We are the peat bog soldiers.

Marching with our spades,

To the bog.

Up and down the guards are pacing,

No one, no one can get through.

Flight would mean a sure death facing,

Guns and barbed wire greet our view.

But for us there is no complaining,

Winter will in time be past.

One day we shall cry rejoicing,

“Homeland dear, you're mine at last!”

Then will the peat bog soldiers,

March no more with spades,

To the bog.

8. (tr. 15) “Turn! Turn! Turn!” Seeger wrote this song using a poem from the Book of Ecclesiastes from the Bible verbatim plus interpolating the phrase “Turn, Turn, Turn.” Seeger’s interest in this text was not so much of its biblical origin, but the philosophical position that all sorts of opposites have a place in the general scheme of things.

To Everything (Turn, Turn, Turn)

There is a season (Turn, Turn, Turn)

And a time for every purpose, under Heaven

A time to be born, a time to die

A time to plant, a time to reap

A time to kill, a time to heal

A time to laugh, a time to weep

To Everything (Turn, Turn, Turn)

There is a season (Turn, Turn, Turn)

And a time for every purpose, under Heaven

A time to build up, a time to break down

A time to dance, a time to mourn

A time to cast away stones, a time to gather stones together

To Everything (Turn, Turn, Turn)

There is a season (Turn, Turn, Turn)

And a time to every purpose, under Heaven

A time of war, a time of peace

A time of love, a time of hate

A time you may embrace, a time to refrain from embracing

To Everything (Turn, Turn, Turn)

There is a season (Turn, Turn, Turn)

And a time for every purpose, under Heaven

A time to gain, a time to lose

A time to rend, a time to sew

A time of love, a time of hate

A time of peace, I swear it's not too late

To Everything (Turn, Turn, Turn)

There is a season (Turn, Turn, Turn)

And a time for every purpose, under Heaven

9. (tr. 16) "Healing River" This song was written by Fred Hellerman, one of the original members of *The Weavers*, and lyricist Fran Minkoff with whom he often collaborated. It became strongly associated with the cause of the civil rights movement after Seeger sang it in Jackson, Mississippi in 1963 in response to the murder of three volunteers who had been helping with voter registration for black citizens.

Oh healing river send down your water
send down your water upon this land
Oh healing river send down your water
and wash the blood from off the sand

This land is parching, this land is thirsting
no seed is growing on the baren ground
this land is parching, this land is thirsting
Oh healing river send your water down

Oh seed of freedom awake and flourish
let the deep roots nourish, let the tall stalks rise
oh seed of freedom awake and flourish
proud leaves unfurling unto the sky

Oh healing river send down your water
 send down your water upon this land
 Oh healing river send down your water
 and wash the blood from off the sand

[Disc 2]

1. (tr. 1) “This Little Light of Mine” Though not an actual spiritual, this well-known song has been treated over the years as a part of the folk tradition. The simplicity of its tune, its simple theme of solidarity, and the adaptability of its text to many situations made it a popular choice for group singing in many branches of the civil rights and peace movements.

This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine (3 x)

let it shine, let it shine, let it shine.

I've got the light of freedom, I'm gonna let it shine etc

CHORUS

All over Mississippi, I'm gonna let it shine etc.

All over Pennsylvania, I'm gonna let it shine. etc

CHORUS

2. (tr. 4) “Praties Grow Small” This song was brought to the U.S. by Irish immigrants escaping the Great Potato Famine of the 1840s. The “geese eating corn” refers to the fact that in the midst of the famine, all the corn was being fed

to geese for the tables of the wealthy while the common farmers starved.

Oh the praties they grow small, over here, over here

Oh the praties they grow small, over here

Oh, the praties they grow small

And we dig 'em in the fall

And we eats 'em tops and all, over here, over here

Oh I wish that we were geese, eating corn, eating corn

Oh I wish that we were geese, eating corn

Oh I wish that we were geese

We could live and die in peace

And our miseries all cease, eating corn, eating corn

3. (tr. 5) Step By Step

[see previous CD]

4. (tr. 9) A Hard Rain's A-Gonna Fall

[see previous CD]

5. (tr. 10) The Bells Of Rhymney

[see previous CD]

6. (tr. 11) If I Had a Hammer As mentioned elsewhere in this study, while “The Hammer Song” was destined to become one of the most widely sung anthems of the civil rights movement, its seemingly universal message of solidarity had its origin as a song that Seeger and fellow member of *The Weavers* Lee Hays had written for a dinner in support of members of the Communist Party of the United States that were on trial for treason. A clever part of lyrics is the combination of three powerful metaphors—hammer, bell, and song—to form a single unity. The hammer of course is a symbol of justice as in a judge’s gavel, though in this case it is also reminiscent of the hammer and sickle symbol (labor and farming) of the Communist Party. The bell is a symbol of freedom due to its association with the Liberty Bell of the American Revolution. The symbol of song is a testament to Seeger’s belief in the power of group singing in terms of creating solidarity and unity among people in their struggle for a better way of life.

If I had a hammer,
I'd hammer in the morning,
I'd hammer in the evening,
All over this land,
I'd hammer out danger,
I'd hammer out a warning,
I'd hammer out love between,
My brothers and my sisters,

All over this land.

If I had a bell,

I'd ring it in the morning,

I'd ring it in the evening,

All over this land,

I'd ring out danger,

I'd ring out a warning,

I'd ring out love between,

My brothers and my sisters,

All over this land.

If I had a song

I'd sing it in the morning

I'd sing it in the evening

all over this land

I'd sing out danger

I'd sing out a warning

I'd sing out love between

my brothers and my sisters

all over this land

Well, I've got a hammer
and I've got a bell
and I've got a song to sing
all over this land
It's the hammer of justice
It's the bell of freedom
It's a song about love between my
brothers and my sisters
all over this land

7. (tr 13) This Land Is Your Land

[see previous CD]

ENCORES

8. (tr. 14) “Where Have All the Flowers Gone” Perhaps the most famous antiwar song of all time, Seeger penned the original version of this song in 1955 based on a few lines of a traditional Cossack folk song mentioned in the 1934 novel *And Quiet Flows the Don* by Russian writer Mikhail Sholokhov.

Where have all the flowers gone, long time passing?

Where have all the flowers gone, long time ago?

Where have all the flowers gone?

Girls have picked them everyone

Oh, when will you ever learn?

Oh, when will you ever learn?

Where have all the young girls gone, long time passing?

Where have all the young girls gone, long time ago?

Where have all the young girls gone?

They've taken husbands everyone

Oh, when will you ever learn?

Oh, when will you ever learn?

Where have all the young men gone, long time passing?

Where have all the young men gone, long time ago?

Where have all the young men gone?

They're all in uniform

Oh, when will we ever learn?

Oh, when will we ever learn?

Sanders Hall Concert (Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts; 1980)

[Disc 1]

1. (tr. 2) "John Henry" This folk ballad is thought to be based on the life and death

of an actual Afro-American laborer that drove steel by hand on railway construction sites in West Virginia in the late 1800s. It contains the usual folklore features of exaggeration and idealization, but its importance as a labor movement song is the motif of “man versus machine.”

John Henry was about two days old,
sittin' on his papa's knee.

Well, he picked up a hammer and a little piece of steel;
said, “Hammer's gonna be the death of me, Lord, Lord.
Hammer's gonna be the death of me.”

John Henry said to his captain,
“A man ain't nothin' but a man,
But before I'd let your steam drill beat me down,
I'd die with a hammer in my hand. Lord, Lord.
I'd dies with a hammer in my hand.”

Well, the man that invented the stream drill
Thought he was mighty fine,
But John Henry drove fifteen feet;
The steam drill only made nine. Lord, Lord.
The steam drill only made nine.

John Henry hammered in the mountain
His hammer was striking fire.
But he worked so hard, he broke his poor heart.
And he laid down his hammer and he died. Lord, Lord.
He laid down his hammer and he died.

John Henry had a little baby.
You could hold him in the palm of your hand.
The last words I heard that poor boy say,
“My daddy was steel-driving man. Lord, Lord.
My daddy was a steel-driving.”

Well, every Monday morning
When the bluebird begin to sing.
You can hear John Henry a mile or more.
You can hear John Henry's hammer ring. Lord, Lord.
You can hear John Henry's hammer ring.

2. (tr. 5) “Lonesome Valley” Seeger’s version of what is likely an old gospel song from the southern U.S. is essentially the same as it was sung by his mentor Woody Guthrie. Although it contains content specific to Christianity, the main point is

about perseverance in the face of adversity, thus its appeal as a song for the civil rights and labor movement.

You gotta walk that lonesome valley,
You gotta walk it by yourself,
Ain't nobody here can walk it for you,
You gotta walk it by yourself.

Oh, Daniel was a Bible hero,
Was a prophet brave and true,
In a den of hungry lions
He showed what faith can do for you.
Oh, some folks say John was a Baptist,
Some folks say he was a Jew,
But the Holy Bible tells us
He was a preacher too.

Now though the road be rough and rocky
And the hills be steep and high
We can sing as we go marchin'
And we'll that one big union by and by.

There's a road that leads to glory
Through a valley far away,
Nobody else can walk it for you,
They can only point the way.

Mamma and daddy loves you dearly,
Sister does and brother, too,
They may beg you to go with them,
But they cannot go for you.

I'm gonna walk that lonesome valley,
I'm gonna walk it by myself,
Don't want to nobody to walk it for me,
I'm gonna walk it by myself.

3. (tr. 6) *Amazing Grace* This familiar Christian hymn and the tune that it became associated with in the U.S. has been received into many musical traditions including gospel, folk, and even Scottish bagpipe repertoire. The words were written in the late 1700s by British seafarer-turned-clergyman John Newton who had previously worked in the Atlantic slave trade but eventually joined the ranks of the British abolitionists. Though Newton made no connection between the song

and the slavery question, it became associated retrospectively with the antislavery movement in the U.S.

Amazing grace! How sweet the sound!

That saved a wretch like me!

I once was lost, but now I am found;

Was blind, but now I see.

Shall I be wafted to the sky

On flowery beds of ease

While others tried to win the prize

And sail through bloody seas.

Amazing grace! how sweet the sound

That saved a wretch like me

I once was lost, but now I am found

Was blind, but now I see.

4. (tr. 8) “The Internationale” In this concert Seeger sang three selected verses of the original French version of this powerful socialist anthem with spoken English paraphrases in between. Two decades later he encouraged British folk-singer and activist Billy Bragg to write a new singable translation that has since become the

standard English version. With its origins in the aftermath of the failed Paris Commune in the late 1800s, *L'Internationale* was eventually adopted by numerous leftist, socialist, communist, anarchist, and labor organizations around the world.

Debout! l'âme du prolétaire

Travailleurs, groupons-nous enfin.

Debout! les damnés de la terre!

Debout! les forçats de la faim!

Pour vaincre la misère et l'ombre

Foule esclave, debout! debout!

C'est nous le droit, c'est nous le nombre:

Nous qui n'étions rien, soyons tout:

C'est la lutte finale

Groupons-nous et demain

L'Internationale

Sera le genre humain.

Il n'est pas de sauveurs suprêmes:

Ni Dieu, ni César, ni Tribun.

Travailleurs, sauvons-nous nous-mêmes;

Travaillons au salut commun.
Pour que les voleurs rendent gorge,
Pour tirer l'esprit du cachot,
Allumons notre grande forge!
Battons le fer quand il est chaud!

CHORUS

Ouvriers, Paysans, nous sommes
Le grand parti des travailleurs.
La terre n'appartient qu'aux hommes.
L'oisif ira loger ailleurs.
C'est de nos chairs qu'ils se repaissent!
Si les corbeaux si les vautours
Un de ces matins disparaissent ...
La Terre tournera toujours.

CHORUS

5. (tr. 9) "Old Time Religion" This song is a parody of an American folk hymn that has appeared in numerous variants and has been covered by a wide range of

singers in both religious and secular contexts but usually assumed to be referring to old-fashioned protestant Christianity. Seeger's parody version refers however to really old religions such as the cult of Aphrodite and Zoroastrianism as well as the religions of the ancient Egyptians and the Druids. The point of the song is to get people to be less uptight about religion in general, and to encourage religious tolerance.

Give me that old time religion

Give me that old time religion

Give me that old time religion

It's good enough for me.

We will pray with Aphrodite,

We will pray with Aphrodite,

She wears that see-through nightie,

And it's good enough for me.

We will pray with Zarathustra,

We'll pray just like we use ta,

I'm a Zarathustra booster,

And it's good enough for me.

We will pray with those Egyptians,
Build pyramids to put our crypts in,
Cover subways with inscriptions,
And it's good enough for me.

We will pray with those old druids,
They drink fermented fluids,
Waltzing naked though the woo-ids,
And it's good enough for me.

We'll do dances to bring water,
Prepare animals for slaughter,
Sacrifice our sons and daughters,
And it's good enough for me.

I'll arise at early morning,
When my Lord gives me the warning,
That the solar age is dawning,
And it's good enough for me

6. (tr. 15) Old Settler's Song This is a traditional folksong of the Pacific Northwest that tells the fictional life of a worker who had tried his fortune at mining, farming, logging, and clam-digging. Though told in a humorous and entertaining way, the message is about the challenges and tough life of honest laborers trying to make a living. Seeger also includes an extra verse by Woody Guthrie that has a sarcastic political sting to it.

I've travelled all over this country,
Prospecting and diggin' for gold,
I've tunneled, hydraulicked and cradled,
And I have been frequently sold,
And I have been frequently sold,
And I have been frequently sold,
I've tunneled, hydraulicked and cradled,
And I have been frequently sold.

For one who gets riches by mining,
Perceiving that hundreds get poor,
I made up my mind to try farming,
The only pursuit that is sure,
The only pursuit that is sure,
The only pursuit that is sure,

I made up my mind to try farming,
The only pursuit that is sure.

So rolling my grub in my blanket
I left all my tools on the ground
I started one morning to shank it,
For the country they call Puget Sound,
For the country they call Puget Sound,
For the country they call Puget Sound.
I started one morning to shank it,
For the country they call Puget Sound.

Arriving flat broke in mid-winter
I found it all enveloped in fog
And covered all over with timber
Thick as hair on the back of a dog
Thick as hair on the back of a dog
Thick as hair on the back of a dog
And covered all over with timber
Thick as hair on the back of a dog

I staked out a claim in the forest
And set myself down to hard toil
For two years I chopped and I logged
But I never got down to the soil
But I never got down to the soil
But I never got down to the soil
For two years I chopped and I logged
But I never got down to the soil

No longer the slave of ambition,
I laugh at the world and its shams,
And I think of my happy condition,
Surrounded by acres of clams,
Surrounded by acres of clams,
Surrounded by acres of clams.
And I think of my happy condition,
Surrounded by Acres of Clams.

[this verse by Woody Guthrie]

When he asked if I'd fight for my country
I answered the FBI, "Yea,

I will point a gun for my country

But I won't guarantee you which way.”

7. (tr. 17) “Acres of Clams” Seeger follows the original folk song version with a parody written by Charlie King in 1977 in opposition to the construction of a nuclear power station in his home state of New Hampshire. This song is a good reminder that the antinuclear movement had two goals, opposition to the use and proliferation of nuclear weapons, and opposition to the spread of nuclear power generating plants.

I've lived all my life in this country

I love every flower and tree

I expect to live here 'til I'm ninety

It's the nukes that must go and not me.

It's the nukes that must go and not me.

It's the nukes that must go and not me.

I expect to live here 'til I'm ninety

It's the nukes that must go and not me.

I swallowed enough radiation

It's time I was standing my ground

So I'm joining that great occupation

We're shutting that power plant down

We're shutting that power plant down

We're shutting that power plant down

I'm joining that great occupation

We're shutting that power plant down

Now Seabrook, New Hampshire's a swell town

It's here that we're taking our stand

Why sit home and wait for a meltdown

Come fight for your freedom and land

Come fight for your freedom and land

Come fight for your freedom and land

Don't sit home and wait for a meltdown

Why fight for your freedom and land

We're seizing that land with a vision

Exposing the PSC's shams

As I sing of my happy condition

Surrounded by acres of clams....

[Disc 2]

1. (tr. 3) “Homestead Strike Song” This song recounts the landmark confrontation between the steelworkers union and steel mill owners in the town of Homestead, Pennsylvania in 1892.

We are asking one another
as we pass the time of day
Why working men resort to arms
to get their proper pay,
And why our labor unions
they must not be recognized,
Whilst the actions of a syndicate
must not be criticized.

Now the troubles down at Homestead
were brought about this way
Whilst a grasping corporation
had the audacity to say:
“You must all renounce your union
and forswear your liberty,
And we'll give you a chance
to live and die in slavery.”

CHORUS

Now the man that fights for honor, none can blame him.

May luck attend wherever he may roam.

And no son of his will ever live to shame him.

Whilst Liberty and Honor rule our Home.

Now this sturdy band of working men

started out at the break of day

Determination in their faces

which plainly meant to say:

“No one can come and take our homes

for which we have toiled so long

No one can come and take our place

no, here's where we belong!”

A woman with a rifle

saw her husband in the crowd,

She handed him the weapon

and they cheered her long and loud.

He kissed her and said, "Mary,
you stay home till we're through."

And when the trouble's over
I'll return to you.

CHORUS

When a bunch of bum detectives
came without authority
Like thieves at night while decent men
were sleeping peacefully---
Can you wonder why all honest hearts
with indignation burn,
And why the worm that treads the earth
when trod upon will turn?

When they locked out men at Homestead
so they were face to face
With a grasping corporation
and they knew it was their place
To protect their homes and families,

and this was neatly done

And the public will reward them

for the victory they won.

2 (tr. 5) “The Young Woman Who Swallowed a Lie” This song by Meredith Tax was a strong statement for the members of the women’s movement by naming a number of the common lies that had been told to women over the years that resulted in their systematic oppression: living to serve men, wearing makeup, playing stupid, taking birth control pills, and getting married. The structure of the song follows that of the humorous folksong “There Was an Old Woman Who Swallowed a Fly.”

There was a young woman who swallowed a lie

I don't know why she swallowed the lie,

Perhaps she'll die.

There was a young woman who swallowed a rule:

“Live to serve men!” (she'd learned it in school)

She swallowed the rule to prop up the lie...etc.

There was a young woman who swallowed some fluff

Lipstick and candy and powder and puff.

She swallowed the fluff to follow the rule...etc.

There was a young woman who swallowed a line,

“I like 'em dumb, baby, you suit me fine.”

She swallowed the line to follow the fluff...etc.

There was a young woman who swallowed a pill,

might have said no, but she hadn't the will

She swallowed the pill to follow the line...etc.

There was a young woman who swallowed a ring,

Looked like a princess, and felt like a thing.

She swallowed the ring to make up for the pill...etc.

One day this young woman, she woke up and said,

“I've swallowed so much that I wish I were dead.”

She ran to her sisters, it wasn't too late

To liberate, regurgitate.

She threw up the pill...etc.

And last of all she threw up the lie,

Now she knows why she swallowed the lie. And she'll not die.

3. (tr. 7) “We Shall Not Be Moved” As with many of the protest songs of the 1960s and 1970s, this one also is likely to trace its roots back to the age of slavery. It became somewhat of an all-purpose song of protest and solidarity and kept gathering verses improvised on the spot for certain occasions. In this performance Seeger includes verses that address the following societal issues by suggesting solidarity rather than confrontation: ageism, sexism, the urban/rural divide, racism, homophobia, and the dangers of the nuclear age.

We shall not, we shall not be moved,

We shall not, we shall not be moved,

Just like a tree that's planted by the water

We shall not be moved

We're young and old together, we shall not be moved, (2x)

Just like a tree that's planted by the water

We shall not be moved

CHORUS

We're women and men together, we shall not be moved, (2x)

Just like a tree that's planted by the water

We shall not be moved

CHORUS

Here's for city and country together, we shall not be moved, (2x)

Just like a tree that's standing by the water

We shall not be moved

CHORUS

We're black and white together we shall not be moved, (2x)

Just like a tree that's standing by the water

We shall not be moved

CHORUS

Yes, straight and gay together we shall not be moved, (2x)

Just like a tree that's planted by the water

We shall not be moved

CHORUS

Well, it's no nukes is good nukes we shall not be moved, (2x)

Just like a tree that's planted by the water

We shall not be moved

CHORUS

Split wood and not atoms we shall not be moved, (2x)

Just like a tree that's planted by the water

We shall not be moved

4. (tr. 12) "If I Had a Hammer"

[see previous CD]

5. (tr. 15) "Old Devil Time" This original song by Seeger focuses on the idea that time, fear, and hate can be devils that can bring us down if we give into them. He especially saw hate and fear as being the true enemies of peace in the world, and that the antidote to both was love.

Old devil time, I'm gonna fool you now

Old devil time, you'd like to bring me down

When I feel low, my lovers gather round

And help me rise to fight you one more time

Old devil fear, you with your icy hands
 Old devil fear, you'd like to freeze me cold
 When I'm sore afraid, my lovers gather round
 And help me rise to fight you one more time

Old devil hate, I knew you long ago
 Before I learned the poison in your breath
 Now when I hear your lies my lovers gather round
 And help me rise to fight you one more time
 No storm nor fire can ever beat us down
 No wind that blows but carries us further on
 And you who fear, oh lovers gather round
 And we will rise to sing it one more time

6. (tr. 17) “Jacob's Ladder” This song is an old negro spiritual that carried a message of hope to those in slavery. The biblical story of Jacob’s dream about a bridge between heaven and earth is a symbol accepted in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam so it also carries a message of solidarity among various groups of people who are striving for peace and justice regardless of their differences.

We are climbing Jacob's ladder,
 We are climbing Jacob's ladder,

We are climbing Jacob's ladder,

Brothers, sisters, all.

Every rung goes higher, higher,

Every rung goes higher, higher,

Every rung goes higher, higher,

Brothers, sisters, all.

Every new one makes us stronger,

Every new one makes us stronger,

Every new one makes us stronger,

Brothers, sisters, all

We are climbing Jacob's ladder

We are climbing Jacob's ladder

We are climbing Jacob's ladder

Brothers, sisters, all

7. (tr. 18) Oh, What a Beautiful City (Twelve Gates to the City)

[see previous CD]

Qualitative Analysis of the Songs

Content analysis and motif coding

In comparison with the *thematic analysis* of the reader responses discussed above, the *content analysis* of the fifty-nine selected song texts was somewhat less complex, a consequence of the differing nature of the two data sets. As a result, it was possible to launch at once into coding the motifs that began to emerge through the initial and subsequent readings of the texts. Holsti defines content analysis as being “any technique for making inferences by systematically and *objectively* identifying special characteristics of messages.”⁸⁶ The use of the *Dedoose* covers the “systematically” requirement of Holsti’s definition, but what about the requirement that the inferences also be made “objectively”? In traditional “old school” qualitative analysis, this condition was usually met through the application of “criteria of selection” that were established before the actual analysis of data.⁸⁷ However, the style of content analysis being used in the current study is more closely aligned with *grounded theory*, a research approach that “uses a series of cumulative coding cycles and reflective memoing to develop major categories for theory generation.”⁸⁸ The manner of evaluating and

⁸⁶ Berg, “Introduction to Content Analysis,” 238.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 240.

⁸⁸ Matthew B. Miles, A. Michael Huberman, and Johnny Saldaña. *Qualitative Data Analysis: A Methods Sourcebook*. (Los Angeles, CA: SAGE Publications, 2013), 8.

categorizing will now be discussed in greater detail.

Evaluation and categorization

Decisions about the coding categories for the content analysis of the fifty-nine selected songs were made on the basis of the deeper understanding of Seeger and his world that was gained from the foregoing analyses of the “singer” framework. Moreover, it was useful to consider the key social causes to which Seeger had given time and effort over the course of his career: labor, civil rights, pacifism, and environmental issues, and these four basic categories were the starting place for the coding of the songs on the macro level. The next step was to begin the coding on the micro level, that is, song by song, verse by verse, line by line. Once again the *Dedoose* software proved to be an invaluable tool in accomplishing this task. The outcome of this next level of the coding will now be described.

Application of the codes

At this cycle of the coding process it was important to be concerned with both the manifest and latent content of the song texts.⁸⁹ Therefore, the texts were analyzed at the word, phrase, stanza, and entire song level to unearth the meanings that lay both on the surface and at deeper meanings of the texts. After

⁸⁹ Berg, “Introduction to Content Analysis”, 242.

that cycle was completed, a second round of coding was undertaken during which the codes themselves were scrutinized for similarities, differences, ambiguities, irrelevancies, and so forth. The outcome of this cycle are shown in Table 10 below along with the output from *Dedoose* that indicates the frequency of each code's appearance in the selected songs. It will be noted that three code categories stand out as having the highest frequency: civil rights, labor, and solidarity, and this is consistent with the findings of the analysis section of the "singer" framework that showed Seeger's social concerns to be largely along the same lines.

Once the second coding cycle was completed, the third and final cycle was undertaken which served to fill in an intermediate level of categories between the four key social causes mentioned above, and the numerous motifs that had emerged. All three of these levels have been combined in Table 11 where they are labeled as "primary codes," "emergent categories," and "emergent motifs." The structure of this table parallels the outcome of the thematic analysis portion of the "singer" framework above in order to facilitate comparative discussion in the next chapter.

TABLE 10: Intermediate Coding Cycle Outcome

		Bowdoin College	Carnegie Hall	Melbourne Town Hall	Carnegie Music Hall	Sanders Hall, Harvard	TOTALS	
CIVIL RIGHTS	civil rights	2	4	1	3	4	14	
	civil disobedience		3			1	4	
	freedom		1	1	1	1	4	
	justice			1	1	1	3	
	prisoners	1					1	
	housing discrimination	1					1	
	women's rights					1	1	
LABOR MOVEMENT	labor movement	3	2	1	4	2	12	
	WPA			1			1	
	farming	1				2	3	
	hardship			1	1	1	3	
	intimidation			1			1	
	logging			1			1	
	man vs. machine					1	1	
	mining	1		1	1	1	4	
	physical danger	1			1		2	
	resolve, self-reliance			1		2	3	
	strike					1	1	
	unions			1		2	3	
	unjust management	2		1	1		4	
RELIGION	religion					1	1	
	biblical allusion	1				1	2	
	Christianity	2		2		1	5	
	religious humor					1	1	
	hypocrisy	1					1	
	religious tolerance					1	1	
SOLIDARITY	solidarity	2			4	9	15	
	black/white					1	1	
	gay/straight					1	1	
	male/female					1	1	
	urban/rural					1	1	
	young/old					1	1	
WAR	war				1		1	
	antiwar	2	2	1	3		8	
	pacifism	3	2	1			6	
	sarcasm	1					1	
	war injury		2				2	
UNCATEGORIZED	anti-nuclear		1	2	1	2	6	
	antiapartheid				1		1	
	antiimperialist				1		1	
	antiracist				1		1	
	apocalyptic vision		1	1	1		3	
	environmental issues			1			1	
	immigrants' stories	2			7		9	
	peace movement			2	3		5	
	political corruption	1					1	
	political irony, sarcasm	1	3				4	
	society & death of celebrity		2				2	
	TOTALS		28	23	22	36	41	

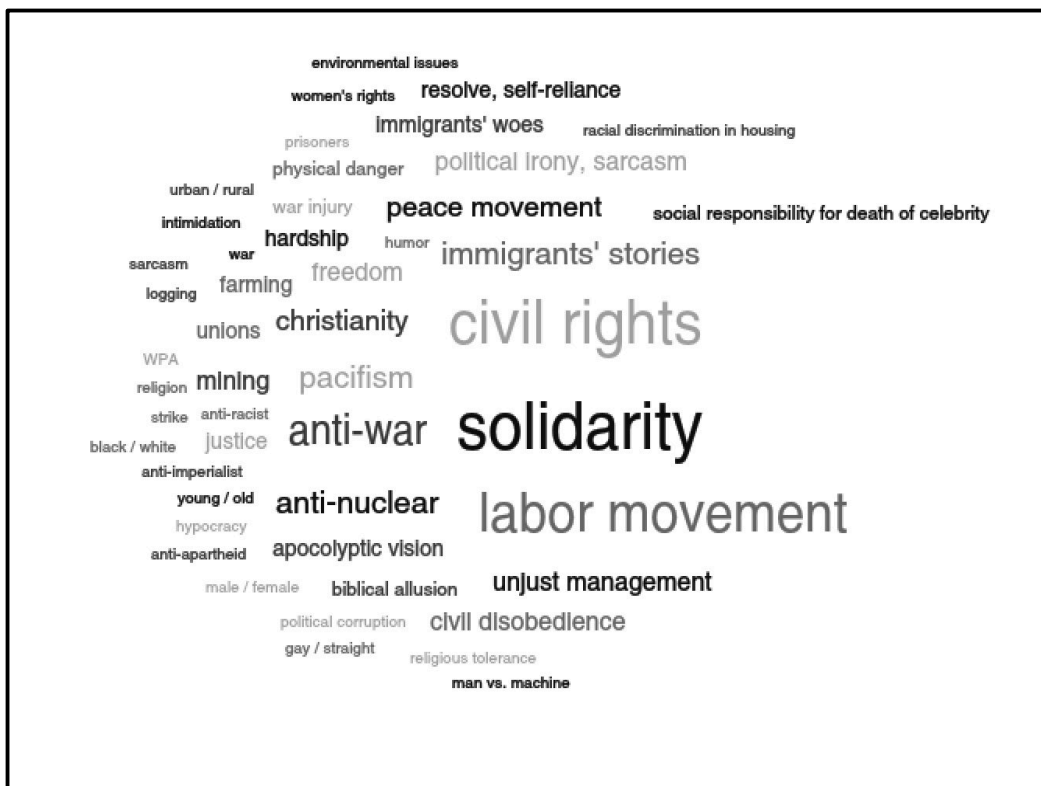
TABLE 11: Motif Codes

Primary codes	Emergent categories	Emergent motifs
Labor	Hardship	Physical danger
		Unjust management
	Unions	Immigrant stories
		Intimidation
		Resolve, self-reliance
	Workers	Strikes
		Farming
		Man vs. machine
		Mining
		Logging
Civil rights	Freedom & justice	WPA
		Prisoners
	Protest	Housing discrimination
		Anti-apartheid
		Anti-imperialism
		Anti-racist
		Civil disobedience
	Solidarity	Women's rights
		Black/white
		Gay/straight
Pacifism	Antiwar	Male/female
		Urban/rural
		Young/old
Environment	Politics	War injuries
		Antinuclear (weapons)
Other social issues	Social responsibility	Antinuclear (power)
		Apocalyptic vision
Religion	Christianity	Political corruption
		Political sarcasm
	Religious tolerance	Death of a celebrity
		Biblical allusion
		Humor
		Hypocrisy

Summary

As a way of offering an additional summary of the third and final segment of the findings related to the “songs” framework, the following code cloud generated by *Dedoose* for the content codes is given below as Figure 2. As in the case of the code cloud given at the end of the “singer” framework above (see Figure 1), the relative size of the words and phrases indicate the frequency that these codes were assigned in the content analysis of the fifty-nine songs in the data set, thus also giving a visual representation of the relative importance of the concepts behind the codes to the composition of Seeger’s play lists for the five concerts studied.

FIGURE 2: Motifs Code Cloud



Chapter Summary

The primary value of employing a grounded approach to qualitative research is to give the data a chance to “speak” so that new insights can be arrived at that truly reflect the unique nature of the object of research. In the case of the current study, the center of attention has been Pete Seeger and his role as a singing journalist and political activist. Moreover, a triangulation pattern of research was established by which Seeger’s personal characteristics (singer), his manner of performing (singing), and the message of the texts which he sang (songs) have been examined through the paradigms of thematic analysis, performance analysis, and content analysis. In the current chapter the findings of these three investigative approaches have been reported, and in the chapter that follows the findings will be discussed in greater detail.

Chapter 5: Discussion

Chapter Overview

The main purpose of this chapter is to discuss the broader implications and deeper meanings of the findings reported in Chapter 4. A major aspect of this discussion centers on comparing and contrasting the findings across the three frameworks, and this process of triangulation is potentially one of the most fruitful aspects of the study. Another function of this chapter is to extend the discussion beyond the confines of the research project itself to include two additional sources of information: 1) an in-depth look at one of Seeger's most socially significant and influential songs, "Where Have All the Flowers Gone?" and 2) additional viewpoints on his career as an activist singer-songwriter, both from his own perspective and those of other writers.

Discussion of the Research Findings

The Research Paradigms Revisited

Before embarking on the discussion proper, it is a good idea to make a brief recap of the ideas behind the research approaches employed. In Table 12 below the three frameworks of the study (singer, singing, songs) have been lined up with their respective research paradigms. First, it should be remembered that two of the frameworks were concerned entirely with analyzing written texts. The "singer" framework employed thematic analysis, an approach that is used when looking for common ideas across multiple excerpts of text such as the reader responses to

Seeger's obituary. Conversely, the "songs" framework employed content analysis which was chosen in order to take a deeper look into the substance of individual text excerpts, in this case the lyrics of selected songs from the CDs and DVD used in this study. In contrast to both of these approaches, the "singing" framework used the less common paradigm of performance analysis which does not deal with texts at all, but rather with observable behaviors of performers and audiences. The qualitative analysis of the "singer" and "songs" frameworks also employed two different styles of coding, values coding and motif coding respectively, that were found to be the most effective tools for discovering significant meanings in the two contrasting data sets. The values coding process was further expanded to include criteria found in a trusted theory of personality traits from the field of intrapersonal psychology. The "singing" framework did not invoke any of the standard coding procedures of qualitative research due to the nature of the data set and the procedure of performance analysis used to evaluate it.

TABLE 12: Comparison of Research Paradigms and Research Frameworks

	Singer	Singing	Songs
Research paradigm(s)	Thematic Analysis	Performance Analysis	Content Analysis
	"patterned response or meanings within the data set" (Braun & Clark, 2006)	"close readings of performances... that attend to the particulars of physical movement, gesture, costume, and facial expression as much as voice and musical sound" (Auslander, 2004) audience participation (added)	"systematically and objectively identifying special characteristics of messages" (Holsti)
Additional			Grounded Theory
			"cumulative coding cycles and reflective memoing" (Miles et al., 2013)
Coding style	Values Coding		Motif Coding
	values, attitudes, beliefs (Saldaña, 2014)		"the application of...index codes used to classify types and elements of folk tales, myths, and legends"; "a type refers to the complete tale...a motif is the smallest element in a tale that has something unique about it" (Saldaña, 2014)
Additional	Personality Trait Theory		
	factors: surgency, agreeableness, conscientiousness, intellect (Goldberg, 1990)		

The Singer Framework

General Remarks

The “singer” data set consisted of selected reader responses to Seeger’s obituary that appeared in the *New York Times* on January 24, 2014. The subsequent thematic analysis of these data resulted in what can best be described as a personality profile of Seeger that was based on impressions gathered of him both in public and private settings. What is noteworthy about this profile is that, whether people encountered him at an intimate musical gathering, at a concert or a protest march attended by thousands, or on the train going home from Grand Central Station, their remarks indicate a remarkably unified sketch of who he was, what he did, and how he went about doing it. The following personality profile is a narrative expression of the emergent categories and themes that fell under the primary code of “attitudes” found in Table 3 above based on Goldberg’s personality trait taxonomy.

Surgency, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness

Though not a term used in everyday conversation, the concept of “surgency” is simply a more precise way of describing the personality trait of extraversion. In Seeger's case, people used various expressions that support this category such as “committed,” “courageous,” and “passionate” in order to describe the outgoing aspects of his personality that showed themselves in many different situations. These outgoing and energetic traits were counterbalanced with numerous terms

from the “agreeableness” category that referred to Seeger as being caring, congenial, generous, humble, and patient. He was also noted as showing forth “conscientiousness” as a result of his unselfconscious frugality, as well as the proactive measures he took to insure continued good health such as using public transportation and walking to his concert.

Emotional Stability, Intellect

In addition to the foregoing personality traits, Seeger’s “emotional stability” was attested to by those who remarked on his capacity for remaining calm, dignified and of good spirits in spite of numerous cases of injustice and persecution that he faced over his career. They also commended his willingness to make personal sacrifices for the sake of others and the advancement of the causes he so strongly believed in supporting. Finally, in the category of “intellect,” Seeger’s compelling sense of hope and positive thinking was noted as a source of inspiration to so many with whom he shared his talent both as a performer and a teacher.

The Singing Framework

General Remarks

The data set for the “singing” framework consisted of the DVD of Seeger’s 1963 concert in Melbourne, Australia. The performance analysis of these data was based on categories suggested by Auslander and focused primarily on the aspects

of voice, body, and audience participation, with minor attention to character and accompaniment. The findings reported in the previous chapter regarding the variables of Seeger's voice (volume, style, and tempo) continue a pattern that was noted in the description of his personality, a pattern that can be summed up in two words: good balance.

Voice, Body, Accompaniment

Referring once again to the findings reported in Table 7 above, it will be noticed that songs requiring a strong, extroverted vocal delivery were artfully balanced by those of a more lyrical nature. Likewise, Seeger's body language and facial expressions were also varied in such a way as to create a pleasant experience for the audience. Other features of the performance that contributed to this include alternating banjo and acoustic guitar accompaniment, occasional pieces for banjo solo, as well as the introduction of a cappella singing, humming, whistling, and even yodeling.

Audience

However, Seeger's concern for the audience did not end with simply keeping them awake and well-entertained. Glancing once again at Table 8 above, it will be observed that sixteen of the twenty-four musical items in the program involved audience participation which has been described as “a hallmark of

Seeger's seven decades of performing in front of crowds large and small.”⁹⁰

Getting large groups of people to overcome their shyness and self-consciousness in order to sing songs they did not know with people they had never met was no small feat; however, Seeger had a knack for accomplishing this task with ease by utilizing the format and techniques of the “hootenanny” that he and Woody Guthrie had first experienced at union gatherings in the Pacific Northwest back in the 1930s.⁹¹ The main difference is that, whereas hootenannies were essentially a folk music “jam session” where multiple performers sing, play, and cajole the audience to join in, Seeger's was able to pull off the same effect entirely by himself in what could be described as a one-man hootenanny.

The Songs Framework

General remarks

The data set for the “songs” framework consisted of a selected group of songs from the four CDs and one DVD that were chosen on the basis of their connection with Seeger’s sense of social consciousness and his work for the common good. The results of the content analysis of these data can be viewed in Table 11. Once again, the analysis followed a pattern of repeated close readings of

⁹⁰ Peter Weber. “8 Songs to Remember Pete Seeger By,” *The Week*, January 28, 2014, <http://theweek.com/articles/452160/8-songs-remember-pete-seeger-by>.

⁹¹ Robert Santelli and Emily Davidson, eds. *Hard Travelin’: The Life and Legacy of Woody Guthrie* (Hanover, NH: Wesleyan University Press, 1999), 29.

the texts to discover reoccurring motifs. The emergent motifs (column on the far right of the table), emergent categories (column in the middle), and primary codes (column on the left) presented themselves over time. The primary codes consist of the following overarching issues that will form the basis of the discussion to follow: labor, civil rights, solidarity, pacifism, environment, politics, and religion.

Labor

Although Seeger had curtailed his direct participation in the labor movement by the time these recordings used in the current study were made, he included a considerable number of songs related to labor and union concerns. One explanation for this was that his involvement with the labor movement was the starting point for his lifelong career as a folk musician and social activist. On returning from serving in World War II, Seeger had stated that his single desire was to “Make a singing labor movement. Period.” (Winkler, p. 39). The same source gives the following additional information on the connection between the labor movement and his musical career:

He dreamed of a singing labor movement, in which music could foster a sense of community and class solidarity, provide workers with a kind of psychological space as they pondered dismal factory conditions, and sustain them when they wanted to encourage them to sing songs, new and old, that

would make them feel part of an America that valued their contributions.⁹²

Seeger had written to his wife that “After the war, I want to organize a very large chorus of untrained voices,” which Winkler interprets as being evidence of his desire to use music “to mobilize workers into collective action.”⁹³

Seeger’s attraction to the aims of the labor movement came from multiple sources and experiences in his life, including both his father and his association with Woody Guthrie:

From his father, Seeger had come to understand the difficulties of the working class in a corporate America more concerned with profit than anything else. The Great Depression, and his own difficulty finding work, sharpened his sense of how hard it could be to make a decent living. His travels with Woody Guthrie and the occasional benefit concerts in which he participated made him all the more eager to use music to try to mobilize workers to create a more egalitarian world.⁹⁴

Yet for Seeger it was not only a matter of encouraging workers to help themselves, but that as a group they could have a strong effect on changing the government in ways that other people might not be able to:

Now music and politics went hand in hand for him. His time on the road had shown him tough conditions firsthand, and his experience singing with

⁹² Winkler, *To Everything There is a Season*, 26.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 35.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 25.

Guthrie had helped him grasp how songs could articulate working-class grievances and empower people to act on their own behalf. That realization helped propel him into the union movement, with songs serving as weapons to mobilize workers to bring about social and political change.⁹⁵

Winkler offers further background and analysis on this matter:

Singing songs in union could foster a common commitment to work for social and political change. At the same time, the labor movement and its goals remained foremost in his mind; he was convinced that “the revival of interest in folk music would come through the trade unions”: “There was the singing tradition of the old IWW [Industrial Workers of the World] to build on. We envisioned a singing labor movement spearheading a nationwide folk music revival.”⁹⁶

In time, however, Seeger discovered that he needed to switch his emphasis from creating a “singing labor movement” and instead bringing his enthusiasm for musical participation to the public as a whole:

As the labor movement kicked out the radicals, I settled for ‘Let’s get America singing’; maybe the basic democratic philosophy in these folk songs will filter out subliminally to the American people.⁹⁷

The content analysis of the labor movement songs revealed motifs that

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ Ibid., 40.

⁹⁷ Dunaway, *How Can I Keep from Singing*, 75.

reoccur on the surface such as the physical dangers associated with the life of a laborer, suffering under unjust managers and tyrannical bosses, the hardship of participating in strikes, and the intimidation of union members by the managers and their minions. Yet, there were also stories of great courage and perseverance on the part of the workers in all types of jobs, as well as the strong resolve of immigrants to make a new life in the New World. Seeger's awareness of the universality of such themes led him to believe that all people could identify with these messages whether they were working class or not. As a result, he continued to emphasize music of the labor movement in his concerts long after he stopped being directly involved in its activities.

Civil rights

Seeger's association with the trade unions and the labor movement had a direct link to his later involvement in the civil rights movement, and the chief connection between the two was his affiliation with the Communist Party during his brief period as a student at Harvard University in the late 1930s. He summed up this connection in the following statement:

First, you have to understand that this mid-twentieth century has been torn by fears, doubts, confusions, and arguments about such things as peace, prosperity, civil rights in every country, and so on. Central in all these

matters has been a much-discussed word: communism.⁹⁸

It is important to remember, however, that at that time many people in nearly all walks of life both in the U.S. and Britain were in favor of the socialist economic system and became members of local branches of the worldwide Communist Party. It was not until after World War II and the strained relationship between the U.S. and the Soviet Union that membership in the Communist Party was regarded as a subversive activity. Seeger's most extensive personal comments on this aspect of his direct involvement with "the party" were as follows:

In the old days I felt it should be helping the meek to inherit the earth, whether you call the working class the meek or not. Innocently I became a member of the Communist Party, and when they said fight for peace, I did, and when they said fight Hitler, I did. I got out in '49, though, when I moved up here. I should have left much earlier. It was stupid of me not to. My father had got out in '38, when he read testimony of the trials in Moscow, and he could tell they were forced confessions. We never talked about it, though, and I didn't examine closely enough what was going on. My friends were mostly Communists, and they said, 'We have to go along with the party'. I didn't realize the danger the world was in; I thought everything would turn out right. I thought Stalin was the brave secretary

⁹⁸ Seeger, *Own Words*, 99.

Stalin, and had no idea how cruel a leader he was.⁹⁹

Later in life, when asked whether or not he was still a Communist, he would say, “I am a Communist with a small ‘c’. Like the Native Americans, who shared resources and took care of everyone in the tribe.”¹⁰⁰ This idea of taking care of “everyone in the tribe” is echoed throughout Seeger’s life in his direct participation in the civil rights movement as well as the songs he sang. The result of the content analysis of the song texts reinforces this notion through their emphasis on “freedom” and “justice” as well as their use in the various protest movements with which Seeger was involved. On the motif level, the songs contain lyrics dealing with opposition to unjust imprisonment, housing discrimination, apartheid, imperialism, and racism as well as supporting women’s rights and the notion of civil disobedience.

Solidarity

An additional concept that is closely aligned to civil rights is that of the primary code of “solidarity.” Two of Seeger’s most influential songs are quintessential expressions of solidarity: “We shall overcome” and “We shall not be moved.” Between the two of these songs they cover nearly all of the social dualisms that were dividing U.S. society at the time: age, gender, location (urban vs. rural), race, and sexual orientation. The nature of both of these songs is such

⁹⁹ Wilkinson, *Protest Singer*, 116.

¹⁰⁰ Dunaway, *How Can I Keep from Singing*, 405.

that additional verses could be improvised on the spot according to the purpose of the event at which it was being sung.

Pacifism

A traditional motif of pacifist/antiwar songs is that of a living relative decrying the injuries or death of a son, brother, or father as a result of war of which and “Mrs. McGrath” is a classic example of this genre. However, the advent of nuclear weapons in the mid-twentieth century gave antiwar songs whole new dimensions and depth of horror to describe. In reaction to this Seeger sang a touching example “Gembaku wo yurusumaji” in both Japanese and English as a public statement about the unconscionable use of the atomic weapons against the civilian population of Hiroshima and Nagasaki at the end of WWII.

Environment

Seeger was no less adamant in his opposition to the spread of atomic power plants as he was to the use and proliferation of nuclear weapons, thus he sang songs of an antinuclear sentiment aimed at both uses. He also performed Bob Dylan’s newly-penned warning of the impending environmental apocalypse “A Hard Rain’s Gonna Fall” to audiences around the world who were unlikely to appreciate its meaning. In later years, environmental issues related to the cleanup of the Hudson River would come to dominate his concert engagements and personal life.

Additional ideas about Seeger's legacy

Study of “Where Have All the Flowers Gone?”¹⁰¹

Introduction

Pete Seeger was known as the father of American folk music, a genre that truly came into its own during the 20th century. He created and performed countless works as a singer-songwriter, and the song “Where have all the flowers gone?” is one of his best-known masterpieces worldwide. The song has a unique history in terms of how it gained popularity as an antiwar song, a fact that becomes clear with a study of its various translated versions. It has appeared in over 20 different tongues, not only Indo-European languages but also Asian languages such as Japanese and Chinese. Various methods of translation have been used such as exact translation, homage, and free translation with the main idea of the lyrics being preserved. The meaning of the song has also developed in many ways with its universal message of peace. For example, it became more personalized when the exiled German actress Marlene Dietrich sang one of the earliest translations of the song in the 1960s with a nostalgic feeling towards her home country, and the figure skater Katarina Witt expressed antiwar sentiment by skating to the song at the 1994 Winter Olympics. Furthermore, the same language often has sometimes created some variations for the same song as in the case of

¹⁰¹ This portion of the dissertation appears in a different form in *Global Perspectives on Geolinguistics* eds. Wayne Finke and Hikaru Kitabayashi (New York: The American Society of Geolinguistics, 2015), 52-61.

the Japanese language versions.

How the song was made

Pete Seeger himself must not have imagined at first how the song was going to come out in the future. It is said that the idea came to Seeger while reading the novel *And Quiet Flows the Don* by Russian writer Mikhail Sholokhov.¹⁰² The book is about Cossack youth living in the time of civil war and revolution through WWI. Seeger took a memo of some lines of Russian Cossack song “Koloda-Duda” that appeared in the book, and in 1955, while on a plane heading for a performance in Ohio, he recalled and browsed the memo and made it into the song in about 20 minutes.¹⁰³ Seeger’s original is not in the final form that is widely known, but rather has only the three verses shown below:

“Where Have All the Flower Gone?”

Where have all the flowers gone?

Long time passing

Where have all the flowers gone?

Long time ago

Where have all the flowers gone?

¹⁰² Mikhail Sholokhov. *And Quiet Flows the Don*. Reissue edition. (New York: Vintage Books, 1989).

¹⁰³ Dunaway, *How Can I Keep from Singing?*, p. 228.

The girls have picked them, every one.

Oh, when will you ever learn?

Oh, when will you ever learn?

Where have all the young girls gone?

Long time passing

Where have all the young girls gone?

Long time ago

Where have all the young girls gone?

They've taken husbands, every one.

Oh, when will you ever learn?

Oh, when will you ever learn?

Where have all the young men gone?

Long time passing

Where have all the young men gone?

Long time ago

Where have all the young men gone?

They're all in uniform.

Oh, when will you ever learn?

Oh, when will you ever learn?¹⁰⁴

The arrangement of the song is for simple banjo accompaniment by Seeger himself, and it repeats the same melody for each verse as typical folk song does. Most of the lines are repeated in each stanza with some of the keywords taking turns: “flowers”, “young girls”, and “young men”.

Later on Seeger heard that the song had been sung at some hootenannies, a type of singing gathering popular at the time. Joe Hickerson, a graduate student in ethnomusicology, attended a hootenanny where it was sung, and he thought that the song was too short and it ends when the audience is just getting warmed up as they sang along. Hickerson came up with the idea of adding extra verses with the keywords “soldiers” and “graveyards” in addition to the verse with “flowers” to be a circular song with the total of six verses.¹⁰⁵ This effect created a stronger message related to the images of war and vanity, while at the same time emphasizing the eternity of the human struggle. In other words, time heals what has happened due to wars, with the flower symbolizing the peace to be reborn from the graveyards that used to be battlefields. Seven years later with the advent of the Folk Music Revival, the Kingston Trio made a big hit with it as a cover song. Eventually other singers such as The Brothers Four, Peter Paul and Mary, and Joan Baez sang it as well, and in 1960s it received more popularity. The

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 228-229.

¹⁰⁵ Seeger, *Where Have all the Flowers Gone?*, p. 166.

original intention of traditional folk songs was to convey the stories by singing as old-fashioned media; thus, in a way the concept was passed down to younger generations by these singers of the Folk Song Revival movement.

As mentioned above, the idea of the song at first was not strongly connected with the antiwar movement per se. However, as the Vietnam War progressed, and the surge of antiwar sentiment resulting from the Tet Offensive in 1968 grew stronger, the antiwar connotations of the song increased. Footage of cruel killing images and soldiers singing this song in the battlefield were shown on TV, and the lyrics of the song were a perfect match for the antiwar feelings among the American people.¹⁰⁶ As a result, the song has had worldwide recognition among those who wish for peace in many other contexts.

Translation issues

Over the years the song has been translated into more than 20 languages ranging from Indo-European languages such as German, French, and Italian to Asian languages such as Japanese and Chinese. The main purpose for translating the song seems to have been to allow people to understand the lyrics directly with their first language. It has also enabled people to sing the song themselves which

¹⁰⁶ Paul M. Haridakis, Barbara S. Hugenberg, and Stanley T. Wearden, eds. *War and the Media: Essays on News Reporting, Propaganda and Popular Culture*. (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2009), 26.

is an important aspect of the folk music tradition. The example below shows the lyrics of a version in German version. Since English and German are both members of the Germanic language group, it is more or less an exact translation. (A back-translation into English is added in brackets to show the meaning).

“Sag mir wo die Blumen sind”

Sag mir, wo die Blumen sind

Sag mir, wo die Blumen sind, wo sind sie geblieben?

(Tell me where the flowers are, where have they remained?)

Sag mir, wo die Blumen sind, was ist geschehn?

(Tell me where the flowers are, what has happened?)

Sag mir, wo die Blumen sind, Mädchen pflückten sie geschwind.

(Tell me, where the flowers are, Young girls picked them quickly.)

Wann wird man je verstehn, wann wird man je verstehn?

(When will we understand, when will we understand?)¹⁰⁷

Some adjustments can be seen (e.g. adding “Sag mir”) so that the main idea stays in the same location of the melody. The most important thing is to maintain an easily singable form. This German version keeps the five main keywords “Blumen” (flowers), “Mädchen” (girls), “Männer” (men), Soldaten (soldiers), and

¹⁰⁷ Seeger, *Where Have all the Flowers Gone?*, 169.

Gräber (graves) and comes back to the first verse with “Blumen” which is exactly the same structure as the English version. By translating a song into another language, it may lose some of the subtle nuance from the original version and text underlay issues need to be considered. However, when translating among Germanic languages such as English, German, Dutch, and Swedish, fewer changes are needed than languages that are more distant from English. Even Romance languages such as French and Italian require fewer changes in the process of translation as compared with Asian languages such as Chinese and Japanese.

This translation issue also needs to be considered from a different point of view. When the song is covered by singers and produced by record companies, their intention is not simply about conveying a message, but also selling the music. One way of determining this is by noticing that the arrangement conveys a mellow or bright mood instead of that of a serious antiwar atmosphere. For example, “Que Sont Devenues les Fleurs” by French singer Dalida, “¿Dónde están las flores?” by Costa Rican ex-football player Jorge Hernan, and one English version by rock 'n' roll singer Johnny Rivers all fall into this category.¹⁰⁸ Moreover, although the lyrics of the Rivers version is the same as original in English, it sounds more like a slick cover.

¹⁰⁸ *Wikipedia's* entry on Pete Seeger's song “Where Have All the Flowers Gone,” <https://ja.wikipedia.org>.

There are other approaches that can also be observed through the process of translation. First, the translation process can also localize the meaning along with the change of the language. In this situation, the act of translation is not only about conveying the original meaning, but also about adding something that is special to an individual writer, singer, or audience. For example, the Russian version below gives a specific name to Seeger’s “flowers”—“poppies”—which is perhaps more meaningful to a Russian audience rather just saying “flowers”.

“Ты скажи мне где цветы” (You Tell Me Where the Flowers Are)

Ты скажи мне где цветы , где все маки

Их собрали девушки летним днём

Ты скажи мне где цветы, где все маки

Собрали девушки ,собрали летним днём

(You) tell me where the flowers are, where all the poppies are

Girls have collected them on a Summer day x2¹⁰⁹

Related to the additional ideas, some specific images like the season of Summer is also included in this version.

Another example of adding local content can be found in the Croatian version that shows more connection with their ongoing experience of war:

¹⁰⁹ <http://www.antiwarsons.org/canzone.php?lang=en&id=2 #agg1549>.

“Iznad Polja Makova” (Above the Fields of Poppies)

Kazi gdje su ratnici (Tell where the warriors are)

gdje su davni snovi (where the ancient dreams are)

kazi gdje su grobovi (Tell where the graves are)

da li znade tko (whether anyone knows it)

Iznad polja makova (Above the fields of poppies)

blagi lahor piri (gentle breeze blows)

zauvijek će živjeti (will live forever)

hrvatski ratnici (Croatian warriors)¹¹⁰

The song includes some words like “Croatian warriors” and “poppies” as a result of this localization of the song that taps into the collective memory of war among the Croatian people. It also shows some patriotic emotions in the lyrics instead of simple antiwar feelings out of respect for the soldiers that have been fighting for their country.

A second situation occurs when the translation is utilized with a more artistic approach. It is possible that this may be caused by a response to the difficulty of translation. The Chinese song 那些花儿 (Those flowers) by 范玮琪

¹¹⁰ <http://www.antiwarsongs.org/canzone.php?lang=en&id=2#agg2346>.

(Christine Fan) is a case in point: the whole melody is entirely different from Seeger's original, and yet it borrows some English lines such as "Where have all the flowers gone? Where the flowers gone?" in the outer part of the song to show the concept is in common.¹¹¹

In the case of the Japanese song "花は何処へ行った" ("Hana wa doko e itta"), the title is a direct translations of the English performed by the band *modern grey*.¹¹² The lyrics, are a totally free translation and the melody is entirely original. However, the lyrics follow the concept of the main keywords such as "flowers", "young girls", and "young men" in the verses for the story of the song. A case could be made to support the idea that such *homage* songs have appeared in China and Japan since the task of translating from English to an Asian language is more difficult than from English to a European language.

Connected with people

Continuing the idea that song translation can create something more than mere translation, there are cases of one singer adding an additional image to this song. Marlene Dietrich (1901-1992) was a German-born actress who became a successful film star in the United States. When the power of the Nazis was getting stronger, Hitler asked her to come back to Germany; however, she refused the

¹¹¹ <http://www.antiwarsons.org/canzone.php?lang=en&id=2#agg1547>

¹¹² *modern grey* (rock band) performance of "Hana wa doko e itta", released March, 1995, MCA Victor, compact disc.

invitation and instead acquired American citizenship to stay in the States.¹¹³ After that the German people felt justified in criticizing her particularly as they saw her making official visits to console the American soldiers during the war.

From the age of 50 she concentrated on her singing career, and in 1960 she went back to Germany for a concert after her long absence from her mother country. The fact that she sang Seeger's song in German caused considerable controversy with some people seeing it as an offensive act, particularly as she was seen consoling the American soldiers during wartime. In spite of these problems, it became a big hit and ensured the song's recognition throughout Europe. Some people viewed it as reopening the wounds of war memories whereas others believed the song has an important role to help people see the truth in history. For German people especially, it was also related to their country that was still divided at the time. Today she is buried in Berlin and her artistic contributions have been reevaluated. Her feeling that she could not go back to her own country because of the war-related situation was expressed in her performance of this song.¹¹⁴

¹¹³ Steven Bach. *Marlene Dietrich: Life and Legend*. (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1992), 240.

¹¹⁴ Stephen G. Marshall. "Marlene Dietrich." In *American National Biography Online*. Oxford University Press, 2000. Accessed February 23, 2016. <http://www.anb.org/articles/18/18-03329.html>.

Another case is with a figure skater Katarina Witt.¹¹⁵ She was a gold medalist in the 1984 Winter Olympics in Sarajevo. At the time she was a representative of East Germany. In 1989 the Berlin Wall was destroyed and things had changed in Germany, however when she saw the situation in Sarajevo with Yugoslav wars, she wanted to do something with her performance at the 1994 Lillehammer Winter Olympics. She used an instrumental version of this song to express her peace message with her figure skating. She was close to her retirement and ended with 7th position as a result, but her performance moved people and is considered one of her greatest performances. It seems that the song itself behaves as a type of media and once again this song continues to have a unique role as a peace message, something related to the simplicity of its melody even when the words are taken away.

Variations in Japanese versions

The difficulty of translation was mentioned above with regard to Asian languages. The Japanese folk music movement came after the American one in 1960s and Seeger's song was also brought to Japan as a cover song in English and it has since been sung in various Japanese translations. This version by lyricist

¹¹⁵ Susan Tyler Eastman, Robert S. Brown, and Karen J. Kovatch. "The Olympics that got real? Television's story of Sarajevo." *Journal of Sport & Social Issues* 20, no. 4 (1996): 366-391.

Takashi Oota is known as the original:¹¹⁶

野に咲く花は どこへ行く

(A flower comes out in a field, where is it going?)

野に咲く花は 清らか

(A flower comes out in a field, it is pure)

野に咲く花は 少女の胸に

(A flower comes out in a field, on the chest of a young girl)

そっとやさしく 抱かれる

(Gently, softly held)

All the important keywords including “flowers”, “young girls” and “young men” are used in his version. Although it does not keep them in the same location in the melody, the basic concepts of the lyrics was maintained. Since Japanese mora consist either of a single vowel or one consonant plus one vowel, the Japanese words needed to express a phrase of English song text tend to take up more notes of the original melody. As a result, the line “When will they ever learn?” had to be omitted in the verse. Thus, the difficulty of exact translation can be noticed in the Japanese translation.

Another version is by rock 'n' roll singer Kiyoshiro Imawano who had been

¹¹⁶ *Antiwar Songs Blog*, accessed February 27, 2016, <http://www.antiwarsongs.org/canzone.php?id=2&lang=en#agg1386>.

singing protest songs including some of an anti-nuclear nature. He had established the reputation of singing rock in Japanese in a “cool way,” and also had covered many English songs in Japanese. “Where have all the flowers gone?” was one of his works. In comparison with Oota, the words match with his rock style of singing. The example is taken from verse four:¹¹⁷

その若者は どうなった (What happened to the young man)

その戦場で どうなった (What happened in a battlefield)

その若者は死んでしまった小さなお墓に埋められた

(The young man died and is buried in a small tomb.)

Lastly, one more example is offered for the sake of free translation. This variation was sung by the pop-rock band *Mr. Children*. This was never released as a recording because the content departs so drastically from the original concept, though it appeared in some of their live performance. The following example is from verse one:¹¹⁸

愛した人はどこへ行く 愛した人は何処に

(Where is the lover going? Where is the lover)

残した愛は時の彼方に ただ僕らは振り返るだけ

(Love left is in the time. What we can do is just to look back)

The general atmosphere is captured well by these lyrics, but the main idea of the

¹¹⁷ *Wikipedia's* entry on Pete Seeger's song *Where Have All the Flowers Gone*, accessed on February 27, 2016, <https://ja.wikipedia.org>.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*

original song has disappeared from this version.

To summarize, examples of the most striking variants of “Where have all the flowers gone?” have drawn on cases taken from the numerous Japanese language versions of the song. It must be noted that such contrasts can also be found with other languages as well. Further analysis could reveal similar situations where the variety of approaches has resulted from the diverse intentions of lyricists and singers to seek extended possibilities of the song.

Conclusion

In this section, Pete Seeger’s song “Where have all the flowers gone?” has been analyzed and translation issues have been discussed. The song itself has the power to convey a message of peace, and this fact has been enhanced by translations in many other languages. As a result the song has touched the feelings of various audiences in many ways. Dietrich and Witt also showed great possibilities for the power of this song to connote a message of peace through their performances. Finally, the Japanese variants have been examined as a way of explaining the difficulty of translation while at the same time describing some artistic approaches of song translation. Seeger once mentioned that he considered himself to be but one link in the chain of the American folk movement, and we have seen proof that he did not consider that he owned the song, but rather that he shared the song with other singers. Because of this fact the song became an important tool for audiences and performers to connect with their peace messages

or with some other purpose in their immediate environment. That is one of the great functions of music, thus this song reminds us that music can indeed influence our society.

Quotations from Seeger and Other Writers

Background Information

This section looks at each framework further in order to support the results of the qualitative analysis done with the assistance of the Dedoose software. It draws mostly on Seeger's comments from the book *In His Own Words*.

The "singer" framework

Self identity. The eulogy comments are mainly related to people's memories about Seeger and their experiences attending his concerts, as well as specific songs that he had sung. As we have seen, their comments match our image of Seeger being enthusiastic, devoted, and down to earth. Now, we shall look more into the topic of Seeger as a singer. Chapter 1 discussed the definition of folk music, and based on that we can consider him as a folksinger. However, he preferred not to be bound by that kind of description:

Last year I decided that one of the stupid things I've done in my life was to allow people to call me a "folk singer." It was 50 years ago, when I was young and innocent, and I thought these other people knew more than I did; but I still had not woken up to my mistake 30 years later, when I titled a

book *The Incomplete Folksinger*.¹¹⁹

He explains here that he did not want to call himself a folk singer, and said he had made a mistake by putting the word “folksinger” in the title of one of his books. This shows his “one link in a chain” attitude. He did not want to be a singer for the audience to just listen to, but rather one singer to share the music with. This results in creating a position of equality in which the singer is not someone special that others should follow. Wilkinson has summed it up as follows:

Seeger’s faith in music as a means of achieving among groups of people feelings that can’t be achieved on one’s own came by way of family line and his own emphatic experience.¹²⁰

In other words, while music has the power to connect various people, groups of people can achieve something that one person cannot.

The Weavers and HUAC. Seeger was the center of the folk music genre and his activity was based on performances for meeting the audience or for some minority groups with specific purposes. However, he also experienced the commercial side of the music industry with the development of music industry generally and the folk music revival in particular:

In 1949 four of us formed a quartet called the Weavers which surprised ourselves as well as everybody else by suddenly getting a record called

¹¹⁹ Seeger, *His Own Words*, 71.

¹²⁰ Wilkinson, *Protest Singer*, 8.

“Goodnight Irene” selling 2,000,000 copies.¹²¹

Dunaway adds this information about the situation:

The Weavers were favorite targets for those investigating the entertainment and broadcasting industry; their visibility made them extremely vulnerable to attacks and provided blacklisters with headlines.¹²²

Because of Seeger’s character and talent, the effect of musical power was particularly strong.

Seeger and his father. Seeger’s father was a professor of musicology, and his comments about his famous son throw some interesting light on both of their personalities:

Peter was one of the first to introduce, for the city audience, some songs that weren’t folk songs. They were like folk songs, in this respect: that the average person, after hearing it a few times, could and would sing it, so that the definition of what was a folk song began to include that.¹²³

Elsewhere he expressed his respect for his son during the McCarthy era:

I was tremendously appreciative of Peter’s whole stand. His willingness and his ability to run a risk. I was willing enough; I just didn’t have the ability.

Nothing I could do, except in a small way. I could write, I could give a

¹²¹ Seeger, *Ibid.*, 75.

¹²² Dunaway, *How Can I Keep from Singing*, 173.

¹²³ Seeger, *Sing Out*, 53.

lecture and that sort of things. But that wasn't carrying thousands of people along with me in a public concert.¹²⁴

Perhaps, the greatest legacy that Pete Seeger received from his father was that of a solid sense of the purpose of music in society. As mentioned in a previous chapter, Charles had been a part of the musical aspect of the government relocation project during the Great Depression. Out of that experience comes this clear statement of how his father viewed music's function in society:

1. Music, as any art, is not an end in itself, but is a means for achieving larger ends.
2. To make music is the essential thing – to listen to it is accessory.
3. Music as a group activity is more important than music as an individual accomplishment.
4. Every person is musical; music can be associated with most human activity, to the advantage of both parties to the association.
5. The musical culture of the nation is, then, to be estimated upon the extent of participation of the whole population rather than upon the extent of the virtuosity of a fraction of it.
6. The basis for the musical culture is the vernacular of the broad mass of the people – its traditional (often called “folk”) idiom; popular music and processional music are elaborate superstructures built upon the common

¹²⁴ Ibid, 81.

base.

7. There is no ground for the quarrel between the various idioms and styles, provided proper relationship between them is maintained – pop need not be scorned nor professional music artificially stimulated, nor folk music stamped out or sentimentalized.
8. The point of departure for any worker new to a community should be the tastes and capacities actually existent in the group; and the direction of the activities introduced should be more toward the development of local leadership than toward dependence upon outside help.
9. The main question, then, should be not “is it good music?” but “what is music good for?”; and if it bids fair to aid in the welding of the people into more independent, capable and democratic action, it must be approved.
10. With these larger ends ever in view, musicians will frequently find themselves engaged in other kinds of activity, among them the other arts; this, however, promotes a well-rounded social function for them and ensures a well-rounded social function for them and ensures opportunity to make music serve a well-rounded function in the community.¹²⁵

Music, then, as a thing in itself, is not the final form, but it is used to achieve something larger. Rather, creating is the most important thing in music,

¹²⁵ Wilkinson, *Protest Singer*, appendix.

not merely listening to it. This also leads to the fact Seeger often invited his audiences to sing along. The overriding question should be, “What is the music for?” instead of “Is the music good?” This is what Seeger learned from his father and showed forth in his own music making throughout his career. These purposes of music, as outlined by his father, have some points that Seeger also kept as his personal beliefs. Seeger must have had respect for his father and also gained such power of music to reflect to his musical activities.

The following commentary summarizes the influence of both Seeger’s father and his wife Toshi:

Seeger would be the first to say that his approach to life was in large part a legacy from others, beginning with his parents, and in particular his father, Charles Seeger, whose radical democratic tendencies in politics and in music were cornerstones of Pete’s understanding of the role of the citizen and the artist in modern society...It’s a truism among Seeger’s friends that he “could not have been Pete” (as it’s often expressed) without Toshi, who has functioned as manager, agent, and political consultant/confidante, all while doing the lion’s share of raising the three children.¹²⁶

The “singing” framework

Introduction. This section deals with Seeger’s performance style, which is the

¹²⁶ Seeger, *Own Words*, xvi.

important part for interacting with his audience. Early on he learned some unique techniques and continued performing that way from the 1940s. He experienced the custom of holding a kind of singing gathering called a hootenanny when he was working with the labor movement, and he continued to use the same format from that point on. Participation is the keyword when we talk about his performances. He invited his audiences to join for the singing, and he considered that to be the most crucial purpose of having a performance. In this section, a concert DVD of an Australian live performance was used as one source to observe his singing, gestures, his talk, his MC abilities, and so forth. In order to have the audience sing along with him, he lined out the words ahead of the next part of the melody. He also tried to get the audience singing in harmony.

Seeger's performance style. Folk music can be performed by one person singing and playing instruments. Seeger played the banjo and acoustic guitar for his performances. They were suitable to easily hold a concert when he was invited. The following comment shows his opinion about the usage of music; it also reflects on his future activities more than just observing the situation in society, but getting involved to make a change.

[Seeger] had come to believe that songs "can help this world survive." At one level, he understood that songs could simply create a sense of feeling good, as if by association: "If you can cheer yourself up, you can perhaps cheer others up." But songs could also have a larger impact. They could

encourage the collective action that could demand and achieve political change.¹²⁷

Furthermore, Seeger was personally devoted to a long-term involvement in musical activities that spanned all of the crucial social problems in 20th century. He served as the connection pass down the tradition between the early greats such as Woody Guthrie and Lead Belly and younger generations like Bob Dylan and Bruce Springsteen.

Although Seeger experienced both commercial and non-commercial activities, his intention was always to have an impact on a particular social issue and getting audiences to sing together as a way of sharing the idea through the song lyrics:

Seeger was so uncomfortable with being an entertainer that he sometimes urged people not buy his records. He preferred that they sing the songs themselves.¹²⁸

He often encouraged audiences to sing along with him as a way of creating a sense of oneness with the audience through a style of informal concert known as a “hootenanny”. Seeger also did what is known as “lining out” to tell the audience the words of the lyrics ahead so that they could sing along. He considered himself to be just one link in a chain, and that he did not have to be personally outstanding.

¹²⁷ Winkler, *To Everything There is a Season*, 36.

¹²⁸ Wilkinson, *Protest Singer*, 13.

Seeger wanted to guide others to think about their discontent, something he could accomplish with his musical talent.

Ahead of the 1963 World Tour. Seeger made the following comments before embarking on a world concert tour in 1963. Australia was the first country he visited.

I and my family are leaving this August on a trip around the world. I'm putting on concerts in Australia, Japan, India, Africa and about twelve other countries, concert halls, villages, radio and TV...I hope to show them that we have a lot of good old music in this country besides what they probably usually have heard. I'll pick the banjo and guitar and sing "John Henry" and "Michael, Row the Boat Ashore," but most especially I promise you I'll sing songs that tell of the great freedom fight you are putting up – songs like "Woke Up This Morning," "If You Miss Me at the Back of the Bus," and of course "We Shall Overcome." Above all, I'll tell about your heroism and your love for freedom.¹²⁹

As we can see, one of his purposes was to talk about America to the people in other countries. Seeger also thought that the civil rights movement was the main topic that he wanted to talk about with the audience.

Once abroad, Seeger had felt that the most worthwhile thing he could do

¹²⁹ Seeger, *Own Words*, 115.

was to describe the civil rights movement in America:

Had he made the trip earlier, he might have described the work of unions, but “the union movement had been well split” he told me, “the lefties had all been kicked out, the movement was struggling along and not doing well, overseas I felt instead that everybody should know about Dr. King.”¹³⁰

Seeger also wanted to introduce good old songs from US and also give a banjo performance which was very rare overseas, and he was particularly taken with the idea of how it was a combination of African and European elements. The banjo looks similar to a lute-like instrument that the African slaves brought with them to America. The instrument can have four, five, or six strings and has come to be used in country, folk, Irish traditional, bluegrass, and minstrel shows in the 19th century. Seeger often used his banjo performances as a kind of entertainment to begin his concert. It broke the ice and the rhythmical sound made audience feel relaxed and ready to enjoy an evening of music. The banjo was also a standard part of hootenannies which were informal gatherings in a hall or a house to sing songs. Seeger and Woody Guthrie had seen people holding this kind of singing meeting in combination with union functions in Seattle in 1941, and he was so impressed by the crescendo of sound that could lift people’s spirits and create a strong sense of solidarity.

¹³⁰ Wilkinson, *Protest Singer*, 89.

Emphasis on audience participation. The following observation about Seeger's attitude towards performance shows that he was not giving concerts in order to sell CDs commercially or for being an entertainer, but rather only to provide the music.

He understood that listening was not enough. He invited audiences to sing along, so that each voice joined with others, building to an emotion-filled climax and binding people together. His "hootenannies" transformed passive listeners into full-throated actors, no longer an audience but now a part of the medium and the message.¹³¹

Wilkinson also reports that Seeger once told him the following:

"People ask, is there one word that you have more faith in than any other word," he told me, "and I'd say it's participation. I feel that this takes on so many meanings...It's been my life work, to get participation, whether it's a union song, or a peace song, civil rights, or a women's movement, or gay liberation. When you sing, you feel a kind of strength; you think, I'm not alone, there's a whole batch of us who feel this way. I'm just one person, but it's almost my religion now to persuade people that even if it's only you and three others, do something. You and one other, do something. If it's only you, and you do a good job as a songwriter, people will sing it."¹³²

¹³¹ Winkler, *To Everything There is a Season*, ix.

¹³² Wilkinson, *Protest Singer*, 106.

At yet another time Seeger had this to say on the same subject:

It all boils down to what I would most like to do as a musician. Put songs on people's lips instead of just in their ears. While I don't wish my publishers ill—I'm a lucky songwriter to be working with several honest and hardworking publishers)—my main hope in putting together [Where Have All the Flowers Gone] is that I can encourage other singers and songwriters in various places and times to write songs. To adapt and rewrite other songs. To use songs not to get rich or famous, but to help this world survive. I wish I could live long enough to see more people singing again, either solo or in groups. For recreation. For reverence. For learning and laughter. For struggle. For hope, for understanding.

I know I won't live that long, but if this world survives, I believe that modern industrialized people will learn to sing again.¹³³

Finally, Seeger's focus at concert was often for the sake of children and he wanted to introduce old songs and at the same time explain how the music was used with folk music genre. Wilkinson tells of one such concert that makes a good summary of everything he was about: "Seeger made his way carefully among the children on stage. 'A long time ago, people didn't listen to music,' he said. 'They made music.' He asked them to help him sing."¹³⁴

¹³³ Seeger, *Own Words*, 252.

¹³⁴ Wilkinson, *Protest Singer*, 108.

The folk music phenomenon. As we have seen, Seeger has been credited with putting into motion the whole process of giving folk music a ride out of the countryside, dressing it up, and bringing to town where “city folk” had the chance to hear and see it for the first time. However, he also felt this phenomenon should have its limits:

The stage is a great invention. It elevates a performer so he or she can be seen clearly by people in the back rows. With a microphone, one performer can be heard by thousands of people. The framework of the stage concentrates the eyesight of the viewer. The spotlight and a bright colored costume all help to lift the spectator’s heart out of the drabness of everyday existence.

That’s show business.

What’s good about folk music is that it is not show business. It should not be show business. Folk music should be part of everyday life and should help keep it from being drab. It should be the fiddle or guitar, bongo drum or harmonica that’s brought out after supper dishes are cleared away and families make their own music, rather than switching on the magic screen. Folk music is the songs that parents sing to their children to put them to sleep. And the tunes that you can whistle as you walk down the street. But the trouble with most “folk music” magazines (and I read an awful lot of

them from U.S.A. and from other countries as well) is that they tell me what professional performer is singing here, and why the one is better than some other one. And somehow millions of people have gotten the idea that folk music is somebody standing on stage with a guitar in his or her hand.¹³⁵

Acoustic vs. electronic instruments. Seeger's side of the 1965 Newport "Bob Dylan incident" has seldom been heard in its entirety, so it seems appropriate to quote him at length at this point. Moreover, it is especially important to understand his musical reasons for taking exception to Dylan's use of electric amplification.

The main problem which amplification it seems to me, is similar to the problem with instruments. They tend to discourage the ordinary average person who just likes to sing a song into thinking that they can't sing without it. And in the long run what the human race needs in the way of music is the ability and the confidence to sing a song, whether it is at the fireside, bedside, tableside, worksite, sidewalk side, or anywhere side without having to think of it as a "performance." And none of the "folk revivals" in any country nor any festivals, magazines, recordings that I know of have really attacked this problem and made much headway in solving it. Skiing and swimming are participation sports for millions, but

¹³⁵ Ibid., 254.

music seems still to be in hock to the experts, and most of the millions listen.

The best thing about rock is that millions have been dancing.¹³⁶

With the background information we can now proceed to the incident at the 1965

Newport Folk Festival:

Every word in every song he ever sang was intelligible, which had a lot to do with the force of his performances. The issue at stake, he says, between him and Bob Dylan at the Newport Folk Festival, in 1965, when he said that he wished he had an axe to cut the cable supplying electricity to the stage, was not that Dylan had performed with electric instruments – Howlin’ Wolf had done that the day before, he points out, there were no prohibitions against it—but that no one could hear the words to Dylan’s song. “It was a good song, too,” Seeger told me. “Maggie’s Farm.” He was sure that Dylan wanted the audience to hear the words—else why sing the song?—and that the people in charge of the microphones were sabotaging him.¹³⁷

So it was not the use of electric guitar rather than acoustic that Seeger objected to; rather it was that the volume level obscured the understanding of the words which, to his way of thinking, was the whole point of singing at all.

Seeger talking about his song selection. In a 1988 interview gave the following fascinating background on how and why he chose to sing certain songs:

¹³⁶ Seeger, *Own Words*, p. 317.

¹³⁷ Wilkinson, *Protest Singer*, 13.

I'm singing a wide variety of songs, trying to touch base with these different kinds of people, get 'em involved, not just listening but singing. I think the act of singing is very important... Even singing a sentimental old song can actually be a very political thing if people are singing together. It might be "You Are My Sunshine". Because Black and White people are singing that together, getting a little harmony together, it becomes a very important thing... When it first came out I was rather contemptuous of it—one more attempt of the ruling class to give us nice, pretty songs and forget about problems we should face up to. Well, now I see that it's not just the words of the song, but the singing of the song which is even more important... It all boils down to what I would most like to do as a musician. Put songs on people's lips instead of just in their ears.¹³⁸

The "songs" framework

The necessity for singers to be songwriters. So far, Seeger character has been described the audience's point of view. In the following passage he describes his ideal for what it means to be a performer:

Every folk singer should consider himself or herself a songwriter on the side.

If you love folk songs, consider how they have been changed and improved through the generations by singers who added their own home-grown

¹³⁸ Seeger, *Own Words*, xiii.

genius.

Singers are not only for just singing the songs, but the songwriting is one important side since the songs are the words of the singer they want to express. This can be done by using old songs and change some of the words with their environment.

This shows the essence of creating songs by yourself. The song is not only for the sake of singers to sing, but for the audience, thus range of the melody, pitch, etc. needs to be considered.¹³⁹

You may have to change the key, raising it or lowering it to fit the range of your own voice. You may want to change the chords to suit the style of your own accompaniment...If you don't feel like changing the song at all, don't be ashamed of that, either...For the songs, you can change the words if necessary, you can make it your own this way. This means the lyrics of the song become more like your own opinions or messages and be more realistic, not just as a fiction story as a piece of work to sell as a product.

That is the core concept of the folk music.¹⁴⁰

¹³⁹ Ibid., 246.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., 70.

Seeger had deep personal beliefs about the basic nature of songs that he liked to express in a metaphoric way:

A song is ever moving and changing. A folk song in a book is like a picture of a bird in midflight, printed in a bird book. The bird was moving before the picture was taken, and continued flying afterwards. It is valuable for a scientific record to know when and where picture was taken, but no one is so foolish as to think that the picture is the bird...It is valuable for a scientific record to know when and where it was collected, but the still-picture of the song is not the song itself.¹⁴¹

Once a song is printed or written down, the text is like one capture of an object. The photograph of a bird in flight is but one moment of a bird's movement, and a song text is just the same. It changes according to each singer's intention. Songs from Europe were brought with immigrants to the U.S. and then they changed the content or form as they lived in the new land. America has a history of exploring and claiming new land, a process that brings many hardships. As a result, they needed songs to pass down their stories and thus express their agony and hardship. This is the tradition that has continued for generations and generations. Seeger's contribution was to know this tradition of music and to learn the messages left by ancestors and thus understand many things from traditional

¹⁴¹ Ibid., 68.

music. He introduced this concept to the various social movements in the mid 20th century, and lived long enough to show that power of music by his performance with his own singing. He also educated a younger generation and thus passed down this heritage by the precious songs remembered by people.

Chapter Summary

At this point the three aspects of Pete Seeger that have been studied separately—the singer, the singing, and the songs—need to be viewed again as a whole. Two excellent examples that support this cause can be taken directly from the research findings that have just been discussed. The first is the comparison that can be made between the complimentary traits of surgency and agreeableness that were discussed regarding his personality, and the balance that was observed between extrovert, upbeat, uplifting music and songs of a more tender, soothing nature in his concerts. The second comparison is that of the parallel that exists between Seeger's emphasis on audience participation in his concerts and his political beliefs about the importance and strength of all forms of collective action.

This idea of balance and connection can also be observed as being mirrored in Seeger's inclusion of songs from so many different aspects of the struggle for equality and human rights in his concerts, and his involvement with these same movements on the ground. In other words, he did not merely sing songs of the civil rights movement, but he was there to work, and if need be, to fight for justice. Through his music making he did not merely "talk the talk" but also most surely "walked the walk." Moreover, Seeger's was intensely aware that great social movements are born out of the same struggle, and were moving in the same direction, and gladly embraced his unique role in helping bring them a little closer

together. As Rob and Sam Rosenthal have pointed out, Seeger “served as a bridge between eras, struggles, and peoples” and that he was insistent “that movements for social justice, whatever their particular focus, must link up together.”¹⁴² Here are some of Seeger’s own words that speak directly to this same point:

You can’t really solve the problem of poverty on earth unless you can also solve the problem of pollution on earth...And vice versa. My guess is we won’t solve the problem of racism and sexism and a whole lot of other things until each of us, individually, realizes how much we depend on others—sometimes those near and dear to us, sometime those faraway and unknown.¹⁴³

¹⁴² Seeger, *Own Words*, xiii.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, xiii-xiv.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

Chapter Overview

The concluding chapter of this dissertation serves a few different purposes. One purpose is to summarize the most salient points that have appeared in the previous five chapters. Of particular importance is to revisit the original research question and consider how in the end it has been answered. There is also a recapitulation of the research plan in order to clarify one last time the approaches that were used and the reasons they were chosen. The findings are also revisited one last time in a succinct manner that distills the essence of many pages of earlier writing. A few comments are offered on what can be seen as the significance of the study in a way that stays true to Pete Seeger's own program for social change. Finally, a few recommendations are made for further study that flow out of the current research project.

The Research Question and Hypothesis

The current study sought to answer the following question: How did Pete Seeger go about directing the various aspects of his musical activity toward his intention of contributing to the betterment of society? The initial inclination to pose such a question and seek to answer it took on even greater significance upon Seeger's passing in January of 2014 while the study was already well underway. Suddenly, Seeger's role as a cultural, social, and political icon of one of the most turbulent centuries in American history was being freshly assessed by

commentators of every persuasion. As a result, his strongest supporters and most ardent detractors all felt obligated to raise their voices in praise and criticism once again in order to remind the world of what sort of person it had just lost.

The enormous volume of information about Seeger, both old and new, that was suddenly in the public eye provided great opportunities as well as great challenges to the focus of the research. For this reason, it was decided to concentrate on data that was close to the man and his music. The hypothesis from the outset was that not any one aspect of Seeger's musical activity had been responsible for his unprecedented impact on the social consciousness of a nation; rather it was a rare convergence of a person (the singer), his actions (the singing), and his message (the songs) that was the true source of power behind the contributions he made to the betterment of society.

The Research Plan

In order to seek an informed answer to the research question, three frameworks were used as the vantage points from which to survey Seeger's long and illustrious career in music: the singer, the singing, and the songs. For each framework, a unique data set was assembled as well as a unique research paradigm chosen that was appropriate to the nature of the data. In brief, the "singer" data set consisted of responses to Seeger's *New York Times* obituary that from January, 2014. They were subjected to thematic analysis with the assistance of the *Dedoose* software program, and the results compared with the personality

profiling theories of Lewis Goldberg. The “singing” data set consisted of a DVD of Seeger’s 1963 concert in Melbourne, Australia that was studied through an original approach to performance analysis based on the work of Philip Auslander. The “songs” data set consisted of a selection of lyrics from live performance recordings that were subjected to content analysis once again with the assistance of *Dedoose*. Finally, extensive reading was done of the major biographical and autobiographical sources about Seeger, and this information collated with the findings of the three research frameworks.

The Findings

Seeger’s contributions to the cause of the major social movements of twentieth- and early twenty-first-century America can be attributed first of all to the messages contained in the songs he wrote, collected, and sang. He was deeply committed to a living tradition of folk music that included topical songs of current interest, especially those that fall into the category of protest songs that spoke out loudly and clearly against all types of prejudice, discrimination, and injustice. Seeger’s activities in this regard included writing new songs, adapting old songs, as well as collecting and promoting songs by various songwriters of a like mind.

His activities as a singer included his own public concerts and those involving other musicians, and musical segments of other types of gatherings such as union meetings and protest marches. In all such situations he was as much or even more concerned with getting the audience members singing along than

focusing attention on his own voice. He also used his concerts as a chance to teach people about the history and meaning of the songs he sang, while also taking the opportunity to inform them about the social causes and issues the songs addressed. The causes he felt strongly about were those of central importance to the nation as a whole: labor issues, civil rights, peace, equality, justice, nuclear issues, and preservation of the environment.

What set him apart from most other public figures in the field of music was his aversion to being thought of as a “star” and all that goes with that. He continually referred to himself as being but “a link in the chain” that connected people across the generations, across barriers of race, social and economic standing, and even political affiliation. He also served as a great mentor to folk musicians of the generation growing up in his footsteps, even to those that sought and achieved great commercial success in ways that personally did not interest him. However, Seeger was probably proudest of the fact that he was able to instill a love of folk music among children, and among young adults, an appreciation for its power to inspire and move people to take collective action.

Paradoxically, Seeger was able to accomplish this because of his having been blacklisted due to his leftist political leanings and prevented from access to the public airwaves. Rather than be pulled down by this turn of events, he turned it into an opportunity to take his music and his message to the schools and colleges of the nation where they found fertile ground. In the end, we can see that

his role as a singing journalist and singing social activist is truly what set him apart from other musicians—folk or otherwise—of the past hundred years.

The Significance of This Study

Seeger's greatest hope was for there to be peace on earth, and to that end he wanted to connect people of all kinds through music. Whereas folksongs had originally been a way of passing down stories of a certain culture or tribe, in his hands they became powerful tools for the transformation of society through collective effort. The Marxist saying that "art is not a mirror, but a hammer: it does not reflect, it shapes"¹⁴⁴ is likely one with which Seeger would heartily agree. He was a representative figure of the folk song movement, and his life and music together became a way of using music to work on social problems; moreover, he wanted to teach people how to use music for the common good. His purpose was not to seek stardom, or to get rich but rather to express a message, and to effect social change. This idea needs to be repeated each generation if it is to stay alive, so if this study can contribute to that end in some small way, it has been a success.

Recommendation for Further Study

A number of future projects have been suggested through course of the current study. One would be a comparative study of the careers of Bob Dylan and

¹⁴⁴ Leon Trotsky, *Literature and Revolution*, trans. Rose Strunsky. (1924; repr, New York: Russell & Russell, 1957).

Pete Seeger in terms of their music and their social views. Seeger's mentoring of the the young Dylan and the exaggerated accounts of their differing views on the introduction of electronic instruments into the performance of folk music has overshadowed the deep respect in which Seeger held Dylan and his songs. Likewise, there is need for a comprehensive study of Seeger's influence on the next generation of singers in the folk genre, both amateurs and professionals, those of the social activist variety, and those who set a more commercial, entertainment oriented track for their careers.

Another type of study would be to make a thorough analysis of the anthology *Hard Hitting Songs for Hard-Hit People* that Seeger worked on with Woody Guthrie. It is considered to have been an important influence on Seeger's entire career as a writer, collector, adapter, and singer of folk songs, so an in-depth study of this volume, and a comparison of its contents with Seeger's later works would be a useful contribution to the literature. A related topic would be to do a comprehensive study of the ways in which the lyrics of traditional folk songs have been changed and adapted over the years to create new topical songs. This could be linked to focused in-depth research into the music of the individual social movements in which Seeger was involved.

Finally, the current study excluded many songs Seeger performed throughout his career, thus there is a need for further content analysis of various categories of songs he performed in other public concerts, as well as those

contained in publications with which he was associated such as *Sing Out!* and *Broadside Magazine*.

Appendices

Singing and Songs Frameworks Information

Complete Listing of All Song Titles

- 1960: Bowdoin College / CD
- 1963: Carnegie Hall / CD
- 1963: Pete Seeger Live in Australia / DVD
- 1965: Carnegie Music Hall (Pittsburgh, PA) / CD
- 1980: Sanders Hall, Cambridge, MA (Harvard University) / CD

CD1:1960 Bowdoin College

Disc1	
1. Goofing Off Suite: Opening Theme	2:09
2. Penny's Farm	2:25
3. He Lies In The American Land	2:24
4. Deep Blue Sea	5:06
5. Hieland Laddie	3:58
6. Oh, Riley	3:46
7. Banjo Medley: Cripple Creek, Old Joe Clark, Old Dan Tucker	4:12
8. Summertime	3:13
9. D-Day Dodgers	4:59
10. Quiz Show	4:06
11. Al Smith Holds The Bottle	0:32
12. What A Friend We Have In Congress	2:33
13. Living In The Country	2:42
14. Water Is Wide	5:30
15. Bells Of Rhymney	5:37
16. Goodnight Irene	4:59
17. Intermission	0:13

Disc2	
1. Big Rock Candy Mountain	3:23
2. Just A Dream	1:03
3. Oh, What A Beautiful City	3:33
4. In The Sweet Bye And Bye / Preacher And The Slave	3:41
5. Last Night I Had The Strangest Dream	3:08
6. Medley: Colorado Trail / Spanish Is The Loving Tongue / From Here On Up Texas Girls / We Pity Our Bosses Five / The Scabs Crawl In / Swarthmore Girls	3:23
7. Medley: Open The Door Softly / Road To Athay / Why Do Scotsmen?	1:10
8. Medley: Hold Up Your Petticoat / Where Have All The Flowers Gone? / Step By Step / Joe Hill's Last Will	4:33
9. Viva La Quince Brigada	3:25
10. Suliram (Indonesian Lullaby)	3:13
11. Wimoweh	3:15
12. Michael, Row The Boat Ashore	2:27
13. Commentary	0:23
14. Bourgeois Blues	2:42
15. Black Girl / Kisses Sweeter Than Wine	5:20
16. Tzena, Tzena, Tzena	3:05
17. Worried Man Blues	4:11
18. Conclusion	0:51

CD2: 1963 Carnegie Hall

Disc1	Time
1. Audience	1:07
2. Banjo Medley: Cripple creek, Old Joe Clark	2:19
3. Lady Margret	3:29
4. Mrs. McGrath	4:01
5. Mail Myself To You	1:36
6. My Ramblin' Boy (Live)	5:20

7. A Little Brand New Baby	1:20
8. What Did You Learn In School Today? (Live)	2:03
9. Little Boxes (Live)	3:01
10. Mrs. Clara Sullivan's Letter	3:31
11. Who Killed Norma Jean?	2:50
12. Who Killed Davey Moore?	3:11
13. Farewell (Live)	3:10
14. A Hard Rain's A-Gonna Fall	6:07
15. Didn't He Ramble (fragment) (Live)	1:21
16. Keep Your Eyes On the Prize	3:25
17. If You Miss Me At The Back Of The Bus	2:41
18. I Ain't Scared Of Your Jail	1:55
19. Oh Freedom! (Live)	5:24
Disc2	
1. Audience (Live)	0:58
2. Skip To My Lou (Live)	2:05
3. Sweet Potatoes (Live)	2:51
4. Deep Blue Sea (Live)	2:31
5. Sea Of Misery (fragment) (Live)	0:59
6. Oh Louisiana	2:18
7. (The Ring On My Finger Is) Johnny Give Me	2:27
8. Oh What A Beautiful City	3:01
9. Luar do sertão (Moon Of The Backland)	2:46
10. The Miserlou	2:12
11. Polyushke Polye (Meadowlands) (Live)	1:25
12. Genbaku O Yurusumagi (Never Again The A Bomb) (Live)	2:43
13. Shtil di Nahkt (Quiet Is The Night)	3:46
14. Viva La Quince Brigada (Long Live The Fifteenth Brigade) (Live)	3:54
15. Tshotsholosa (Road Song) (Live)	2:43
16. This Land Is Your Land (Live)	3:30
17. From Way Up Here (Live)	2:37

18. We Shall Overcome (Live)	8:13
19. Mister Tom Hughes's Town	1:42
20. Bring Me li'l' Water Silvy	3:48
21. Guantanamera	7:06

DVD: 1963 Pete Seeger Live in Australia

Disc 1	
1. Skip to My Lou	4:43
2. The Frozen Logger	3:27
3. Pretty Polly	4:28
4. The Wild Rover	8:18
5. Woody Guthrie Medley /1.I'm gonna mail myself to you 2.Put your fingers in the air 3.Union Maid 4. The ladies' Auxiliary 5. Roll on Columbia	12:45
6. Cripple Creek/leather Britches	2:31
7. Down by the Riverside	8:43
8. Windy Old Weather	1:27
9. Highland Laddie	3:14
10. Kum Bay Ya	3:34
11. Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring	2:35
12. Allegretto From Beethoven's 7th Symphony	1:54
13. Way Out There	6:27
14. I Never Will Marry	4:22
15. Freiheit (Freedom)	4:58
16. Luar do sertão	2:39
17. Genbaku O Yurusumagi (Never Again the A-Bomb)	2:33
18. Michael, Row the Boat Ashore	2:11
19. Living in the Country	3:32
20. The Bells of Rhymney	1:24
21. What Did You Learn in School Today	4:53
22. A Hard Rain's A-Gonna Fall	2:47
23. If I Had a Hammer	6:31

24. I Know an Old Lady Who Swallowed a Fly	3:06
25. Credits	4:34
Disc2	
1. Bandstand: Living in the Country	1:50
2. Bandstand: Interview	4:04
3. Bandstand: Who Killed Davey Moore	2:34
4. Folk Singers Report: Interview	2:18
5. News Footage: Interview	1:53
6. News Footage: Newspaper Men Meet Such	1:06
7. News Footage: Interesting People	1:29
8. Pete Sings: John Henry	2:24

CD3: 1965 Carnegie Music Hall (Pittsburgh, PA)

Song Title	Time
1. Oh Susanna	4:01
2. He Lies In An American Land	3:48
3. Oleanna	3:20
4. Ah, Ah, Ah	2:30
5. Never Wed An Old Man	2:36
6. When I First Came To This Land	4:17
7. All Mixed Up	5:19
8. I Come And Stand At Every Door	2:38
9. Malaika	2:00
10. May There Always Be Sunshine	1:46
11. Manyura Manya	4:10
12. The Freedom Come-All-Ye	4:52
13. Peat Bog Soldiers	3:12
14. Los Cuatro Generales	3:49
15. Turn! Turn! Turn!	3:51
16. Healing River	4:23

Disc2	
1. This Little Light Of Mine	6:24
2. Old Joe Clark	4:00
3. Going Across The Mountain	3:27
4. Praties Grow Small	2:02
5. Step By Step	1:05
6. Greensleeves	2:20
7. I Once Loved A Lass	1:48
8. Queen Anne Front	3:44
9. A Hard Rain's A-Gonna Fall	6:37
10. The Bells Of Rhymney	3:47
11. If I Had A Hammer	3:02
12. Guantanamera	4:38
13. This Land Is Your Land	3:31
14. Where Have All The Flowers Gone	2:12
15. Abiyoyo	5:48

CD4: 1980 Sanders Hall, Cambridge, MA (Harvard University)

Disc1	Time
1. Introduction	0:30
2. John Henry	3:51
3. Introduction to song	0:52
4. Go Tell Aunt Rhodie	2:26
5. Lonesome Valley	3:55
6. Amazing Grace	6:04
7. Recorder Improvisation	2:05
8. The Internationale	5:12
9. Old Time Religion	3:11
10. Introduction to song	0:29
11. Down-a-Down	3:27
12. Introduction to Louis Killen	2:03

13. Rothesay-O	2:19
14. Introduction to song	1:31
15. Old Settler's Song	3:04
16. Introduction to song	1:27
17. Acres of Clams	2:24
18. Abiyoyo	5:11
19. Teaching Song	3:15
20. Cristo Ya Nacio	5:10
Disc2	
1. Sicilian Tarantella	1:36
2. Introduction to song	4:36
3. Homestead Strike Song	3:30
4. Introduction to song	0:40
5. The Young Woman Who Swallowed a Lie	3:54
6. Introduction to song	2:42
7. We Shall Not Be Moved	4:20
8. Introduction to song	2:38
9. Somagwaza	1:36
10. Introduction to song	2:31
11. Run Come See the Sun	1:42
12. If I Had a Hammer (Hammer Song)	2:12
13. Introduction to song	1:51
14. The Water is Wide	6:42
15. Old Devil Time	2:53
16. Hole in the Bucket	2:47
17. Jacob's Ladder	3:29
18. Oh, What a Beautiful City (Twelve Gates to the City)	3:40
19. Song Introduction	0:45
20. Little Birdie	2:41
21. Greensleeves	2:20

Singer Framework: Online Article

New York Times online article by Jon Pareles JAN. 28, 2014

Pete Seeger, Champion of Folk Music and Social Change, Dies at 94

By JON PARELES, JAN. 28, 2014

Pete Seeger, the singer, folk-song collector and songwriter who spearheaded an American folk revival and spent a long career championing folk music as both a vital heritage and a catalyst for social change, died on Monday in Manhattan. He was 94.

His death, at NewYork-Presbyterian Hospital, was confirmed by his grandson Kitama Cahill Jackson.

Mr. Seeger's career carried him from singing at labor rallies to the Top 10, from college auditoriums to folk festivals, and from a conviction for contempt of Congress (after defying the House Un-American Activities Committee in the 1950s) to performing on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial at an inaugural concert for Barack Obama.

For Mr. Seeger, folk music and a sense of community were inseparable, and where he saw a community, he saw the possibility of political action.

In his hearty tenor, Mr. Seeger, a beanpole of a man who most often played 12-string guitar or five-string banjo, sang topical songs and children's songs, humorous tunes and earnest anthems, always encouraging listeners to join in. His agenda paralleled the concerns of the American left: He sang for the labor movement in the 1940s and 1950s, for civil rights marches and anti-Vietnam War rallies in the 1960s, and for environmental and antiwar causes in the 1970s and beyond. "We Shall Overcome," which Mr. Seeger adapted from old spirituals,

became a civil rights anthem.

Mr. Seeger was a prime mover in the folk revival that transformed popular music in the 1950s. As a member of the Weavers, he sang hits including Lead Belly's "Goodnight, Irene" — which reached No. 1 — and "If I Had a Hammer," which he wrote with the group's Lee Hays. Another of Mr. Seeger's songs, "Where Have All the Flowers Gone?," became an antiwar standard. And in 1965, the Byrds had a No. 1 hit with a folk-rock version of "Turn! Turn! Turn!," Mr. Seeger's setting of a passage from the Book of Ecclesiastes.

A Generation's Mentor

Mr. Seeger was a mentor to younger folk and topical singers in the '50s and '60s, among them Bob Dylan, Don McLean and Bernice Johnson Reagon, who founded Sweet Honey in the Rock. Decades later, Bruce Springsteen drew from Mr. Seeger's repertory of traditional music about a turbulent America in recording his 2006 album, "We Shall Overcome: The Seeger Sessions," and in 2009 he performed Woody Guthrie's "This Land Is Your Land" with Mr. Seeger at the Obama inaugural. At a Madison Square Garden concert celebrating Mr. Seeger's 90th birthday, Mr. Springsteen introduced him as "a living archive of America's music and conscience, a testament of the power of song and culture to nudge history along."

Although he recorded dozens of albums, Mr. Seeger distrusted commercialism and was never comfortable with the idea of stardom. He invariably tried to use his celebrity to bring attention and contributions to the causes that moved him, or to the traditional songs he wanted to preserve.

Mr. Seeger saw himself as part of a continuing folk tradition, constantly recycling and revising music that had been honed by time.

During the McCarthy era Mr. Seeger's political affiliations, including membership

in the Communist Party in the 1940s, led to his being blacklisted and later indicted for contempt of Congress. The pressure broke up the Weavers, and Mr. Seeger disappeared from commercial television until the late 1960s. But he never stopped recording, performing and listening to songs from ordinary people. Through the decades, his songs have become part of America's folklore.

"My job," he said in 2009, "is to show folks there's a lot of good music in this world, and if used right it may help to save the planet."

Peter Seeger was born in Manhattan on May 3, 1919, to Charles Seeger, a musicologist, and Constance de Clyver Edson Seeger, a concert violinist. His parents later divorced.

He began playing the ukulele while attending Avon Old Farms, a private boarding school in Connecticut. His father and his stepmother, the composer Ruth Crawford Seeger, collected and transcribed rural American folk music, as did folklorists like John and Alan Lomax. He heard the five-string banjo, which would become his main instrument, when his father took him to a square-dance festival in North Carolina.

Young Pete became enthralled by rural traditions. "I liked the strident vocal tone of the singers, the vigorous dancing," he is quoted as saying in "How Can I Keep From Singing," a biography by David Dunaway. "The words of the songs had all the meat of life in them. Their humor had a bite, it was not trivial. Their tragedy was real, not sentimental."

Planning to be a journalist, Mr. Seeger attended Harvard, where he founded a radical newspaper and joined the Young Communist League. After two years he dropped out and went to New York City, where Alan Lomax introduced him to the blues singer Huddie Ledbetter, known as Lead Belly. Lomax also helped Mr. Seeger find a job cataloging and transcribing music at the Archive of American Folk Song at the Library of Congress.

Mr. Seeger met Guthrie, a songwriter who shared his love of vernacular music and agitprop ambitions, in 1940, when they performed at a benefit concert for migrant California workers. Traveling across the United States with Guthrie, Mr. Seeger picked up some of his style and repertory. He also hitchhiked and hopped freight trains by himself, learning and trading songs.

When he returned to New York later in 1940, Mr. Seeger made his first albums. He, Millard Lampell and Hays founded the Almanac Singers, who performed union songs and, until Germany invaded the Soviet Union, antiwar songs, following the Communist Party line. Guthrie soon joined the group.

During World War II the Almanac Singers' repertory turned to patriotic, anti-fascist songs, bringing them a broad audience, including a prime-time national radio spot. But the singers' earlier antiwar songs, the target of an F.B.I. investigation, came to light, and the group's career plummeted.

Before the group completely dissolved, however, Mr. Seeger was drafted in 1942 and assigned to a unit of performers. He married Toshi-Aline Ohta while on furlough in 1943. She would become essential to his work: he called her "the brains of the family."

When he returned from the war he founded People's Songs Inc., which published political songs and presented concerts for several years before going bankrupt. He also started his nightclub career, performing at the Village Vanguard in Greenwich Village. Mr. Seeger and Paul Robeson toured with the campaign of Henry Wallace, the Progressive Party presidential candidate, in 1948.

Forming the Weavers

Mr. Seeger invested \$1,700 in 17 acres of land overlooking the Hudson River in Beacon, N.Y., and began building a log cabin there in the late 1940s. (He lived in

Beacon for the rest of his life.) In 1949, Mr. Seeger, Hays, Ronnie Gilbert and Fred Hellerman started working together as the Weavers. They were signed to Decca Records by Gordon Jenkins, who was the company's music director and an arranger for Frank Sinatra. With Jenkins's elaborate orchestral arrangements, the group recorded a repertoire that stretched from "If I Had a Hammer" and a South African song, "Wimoweh" (the title was Mr. Seeger's mishearing of "Mbube," the name of a South African hit by Solomon Linda), to an Israeli soldiers' song, "Tzena, Tzena, Tzena," and a cleaned-up version of Lead Belly's "Goodnight, Irene." Onstage, they also sang more pointed topical songs.

In 1950 and 1951 the Weavers were national stars, with hit singles and engagements at major nightclubs. Their hits included "Kisses Sweeter Than Wine" and Guthrie's "So Long (It's Been Good to Know Yuh)," and they sold an estimated four million singles and albums.

Their commercial success was dampened, however, when "Red Channels," an influential pamphlet that named performers with suspected Communist ties, appeared in June 1950 and listed Mr. Seeger, although by then he had quit the Communist Party. He later criticized himself for not having left the party sooner, though he continued to describe himself as a "communist with a small 'c.'"

By the summer of 1951, the "Red Channels" citation and leaks from F.B.I. files had led to the cancellation of television appearances. In 1951, the Senate Internal Security Subcommittee investigated the Weavers for sedition. And in February 1952, a former member of People's Songs testified before the House Un-American Activities Committee that three of the four Weavers were members of the Communist Party.

As engagements dried up, the Weavers disbanded, though they reunited occasionally in the mid-1950s. After the group recorded an advertisement for Lucky Strike cigarettes, Mr. Seeger left, citing his objection to promoting tobacco use.

Shut out of national exposure, Mr. Seeger returned primarily to solo concerts, touring college coffeehouses, churches, schools and summer camps, building an audience for folk music among young people. He started to write a long-running column for the folk-song magazine *Sing Out!* And he recorded prolifically for the independent Folkways label, singing everything from children's songs to Spanish Civil War anthems.

In 1955 he was subpoenaed by the House Un-American Activities Committee. In his testimony he said, "I feel that in my whole life I have never done anything of any conspiratorial nature." He also stated: "I am not going to answer any questions as to my association, my philosophical or religious beliefs or my political beliefs, or how I voted in any election, or any of these private affairs. I think these are very improper questions for any American to be asked, especially under such compulsion as this."

Mr. Seeger offered to sing the songs mentioned by the congressmen who questioned him. The committee declined.

Mr. Seeger was indicted in 1957 on 10 counts of contempt of Congress. He was convicted in 1961 and sentenced to a year in prison, but the next year an appeals court dismissed the indictment as faulty. After the indictment, Mr. Seeger's concerts were often picketed by the John Birch Society and other rightist groups. "All those protests did was sell tickets and get me free publicity," he later said. "The more they protested, the bigger the audiences became."

The Folk Revival Years

By then the folk revival was prospering. In 1959, Mr. Seeger was among the founders of the Newport Folk Festival. The Kingston Trio's version of Mr. Seeger's "Where Have All the Flowers Gone?" reached the Top 40 in 1962, soon followed by Peter, Paul and Mary's version of "If I Had a Hammer," which rose to

the Top 10.

Mr. Seeger was signed to a major label, Columbia Records, in 1961, but he remained unwelcome on network television. "Hootenanny," an early-1960s show on ABC that capitalized on the folk revival, refused to book Mr. Seeger, causing other performers (including Bob Dylan, Joan Baez and Peter, Paul and Mary) to boycott it. "Hootenanny" eventually offered to present Mr. Seeger if he would sign a loyalty oath. He refused.

He toured the world, performing and collecting folk songs, in 1963 and returned to serenade civil rights advocates, who had made a rallying song of his "We Shall Overcome."

Like many of Mr. Seeger's songs, "We Shall Overcome" had convoluted traditional roots. It was based on old gospel songs, primarily "I'll Overcome," a hymn that striking tobacco workers had sung on a picket line in South Carolina. A slower version, "We Will Overcome," was collected from Lucille Simmons, one of the workers, by Zilphia Horton, the musical director of the Highlander Folk School in Monteagle, Tenn., which trained union organizers.

Ms. Horton taught it to Mr. Seeger, and her version of "We Will Overcome" was published in the People's Songs newsletter. Mr. Seeger changed "We will" to "We shall" and added verses ("We'll walk hand in hand"). He taught it to the singers Frank Hamilton, who would join the Weavers in 1962, and Guy Carawan, who became musical director at Highlander in the '50s. Mr. Carawan taught the song to the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee at its founding convention.

The song was copyrighted by Mr. Seeger, Mr. Hamilton, Mr. Carawan and Ms. Horton. "At that time we didn't know Lucille Simmons's name," Mr. Seeger wrote in an autobiographical songbook, "Where Have All the Flowers Gone," published in 1993. All of the song's royalties go to the "We Shall Overcome" Fund, administered by what is now the Highlander Research and Education Center,

which provides grants to African-Americans organizing in the South.

Along with many elders of the protest-song movement, Mr. Seeger felt betrayed when Bob Dylan set aside protest songs for electric rock. When Mr. Dylan appeared at the 1965 Newport Folk Festival with a loud electric blues band, some listeners booed, and reports emerged that Mr. Seeger had tried to cut the power cable with an ax. But witnesses, including the festival's producer, George Wein, and production manager, Joe Boyd (later a leading folk-rock record producer), said he did not go that far. (An ax was available, however. A group of prisoners had used it while singing a logging song.)

In later recountings, Mr. Seeger said he had grown angry because the music was so loud and distorted that he couldn't hear the words.

As the United States grew divided over the Vietnam War, Mr. Seeger wrote "Waist Deep in the Big Muddy," an antiwar song with the refrain "The big fool says to push on." He performed the song during a taping of "The Smothers Brothers Comedy Hour" in September 1967, his return to network television, but it was cut before the show was broadcast. After the Smothers Brothers publicized the censorship, Mr. Seeger returned to perform the song for broadcast in February 1968.

Fighting for the Hudson River

During the late 1960s Mr. Seeger started an improbable project: a sailing ship that would crusade for cleaner water on the Hudson River. Between other benefit concerts he raised money to build the Clearwater, a 106-foot sloop, which was launched in June 1969 with a crew of musicians. The ship became a symbol and a rallying point for antipollution efforts and education.

In May 2009, after decades of litigation and environmental activism led by Mr. Seeger's nonprofit environmental organization, Hudson River Sloop Clearwater,

General Electric began dredging sediment containing PCBs it had dumped into the Hudson. Mr. Seeger and his wife also helped organize a yearly summer folk festival named after the Clearwater.

In the 1980s and '90s Mr. Seeger toured regularly with Arlo Guthrie, Woody's son, and continued to lead singalongs and perform benefit concerts. Recognition and awards arrived. He was elected to the Songwriters Hall of Fame in 1972, and in 1993 he was given a lifetime achievement Grammy Award. In 1994 he received a Kennedy Center Honor and, from President Bill Clinton, the National Medal of Arts, America's highest arts honor, awarded by the National Endowment for the Arts. In 1999 he traveled to Cuba to receive the Order of Félix Varela, Cuba's highest cultural award, for his "humanistic and artistic work in defense of the environment and against racism."

Mr. Seeger was inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, in the category of early influences, in 1996. Arlo Guthrie, who paid tribute at the ceremony, mentioned that the Weavers' hit "Goodnight, Irene" had reached No. 1, only to add, "I can't think of a single event in Pete's life that is probably less important to him." Mr. Seeger made no acceptance speech, but he did lead a singalong of "Goodnight, Irene," flanked by Stevie Wonder, David Byrne and members of the Jefferson Airplane.

Mr. Seeger won Grammy Awards for best traditional folk album in 1997, for the album "Pete" and, in 2009, for the album "At 89." He won a Grammy in the children's music category in 2011 for "Tomorrow's Children."

Mr. Seeger kept performing into the 21st century, despite a flagging voice; audiences happily sang along more loudly. He celebrated his 90th birthday, on May 3, 2009, at a Madison Square Garden concert — a benefit for Hudson River Sloop Clearwater — with Mr. Springsteen, Dave Matthews, John Mellencamp, Ms. Baez, Ani DiFranco, Roger McGuinn of the Byrds, Emmylou Harris and dozens of other musicians paying tribute. That August he was back in Newport for

the 50th anniversary of the Newport Folk Festival.

Mr. Seeger's wife, Toshi, died in 2013, days before the couple's 70th anniversary. Survivors include his son, Daniel; his daughters, Mika and Tinya; two half-sisters, Peggy, also a folk singer, and Barbara; eight grandchildren, including Mr. Jackson and the musician Tao Rodriguez-Seeger, who performed with him at the Obama inaugural; and four great-grandchildren. His half-brother, Mike Seeger, a folklorist and performer who founded the New Lost City Ramblers, died in 2009.

Through the years, Mr. Seeger remained determinedly optimistic. "The key to the future of the world," he said in 1994, "is finding the optimistic stories and letting them be known."

Gerry Mullany, Emma G. Fitzsimmons and Daniel E. Slotnik contributed reporting.

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