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THE MAKING OF FOLK IDENTITY: POLITICS, CONSUMPTION, TRADITION, AND REBELLION IN THE FOLK MUSIC REVIVAL MOVEMENT

by

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ABSTRACT

THE MAKING OF FOLK IDENTITY: POLITICS, CONSUMPTION, TRADITION, AND REBELLION IN THE FOLK MUSIC REVIVAL MOVEMENT

By

Shuichi Takebayashi

This dissertation examines the folk music revival movement that occurred between the late 1950s and early 1960s. Focusing on how and why urban college students, the major component of the movement, embraced traditional folk music, it argues that their commitment to folk music resulted revolved around the construction of identity embedded in the postwar socioeconomic condition. Folk music was not just a leisure activity to be consumed. It was an experience that contributed to forming their cultural identity interlocked with the conditions of life in America after World War II. This dissertation not only explores the intricacies of the folk music revival movement but also considers why well-educated children from relatively well-off families became fascinated by traditional folk music created and sung by the rural working-class people. Embracing folk music was a refreshing experience that helped them find an intense connection to the past, present, and future of America.

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INTRODUCTION

During the period from the late 1950s to early 1960s, young middle-class Americans became interested in traditional folk music that had been played in rural southern regions for decades. They listened to hillbillies, blues, country, and bluegrass performed with simple components of acoustic instruments. Their interest in folk music became something we can call a movement. Folk music especially attracted college students. Most of them were exposed to folk music for the first time at college and some of them were immediately fascinated by the folk music tradition. Folk music societies at colleges around the nation published their folk music magazines and organized folk concerts and workshops. Many folk singers who would represent the folk revival movement emerged from these college settings, including such big names as Joan Baez, Bob Dylan, Tom Paxton, Phil Ochs, and Peter, Paul & Mary, as well as the Kingston Trio and other folk trios or quartets.

In general, the folk music revival movement refers to the period from 1958 when the Kingston Trio, the young folk trio from San Francisco, burst upon the national scene with their first single "Tom Dooley" that sold millions of copies, to early 1964 when the Beatles and other British bands began dominating the American popular music chart, or to the summer of 1965 when Bob Dylan played his new song "Maggie's Farm" with electric guitar backed up by the electric blues band at the Newport Folk Festival. During this folk revival period, there are several moments that have been inscribed on American people's memories. Among them are the fresh and soothing harmony of collegiate folk groups such as the Kingston Trio and the Journeymen, the Sunday gathering at

Washington Square in Greenwich Village, the intimate relationship of the folk diva Joan Baez and the eccentric hobo-like star Bob Dylan, Newport Folk Festivals—especially in 1963, the singing of "Blowin' in the Wind" by all singers at the finale including Peter, Paul & Mary, Pete Seeger, Freedom Singers, Baez, and Dylan—, and the Washington March in August 1963 with the now legendary "I Have a Dream" speech given by Martin Luther King Jr., at which Baez, Dylan, Peter, Paul and Mary, and others sang.

As the names of the Kingston Trio, Joan Baez, Bob Dylan, and others suggest, the folk music revival movement was not a subculture movement.[1] According to the definition of "subculture" by Dick Hebdige, subculture is "expressive forms and rituals of ... subordinated groups."[2] The majority of folk revivalists were not subordinated groups but middle-class and upper-class college students. The folk revival was the movement in which children from affluent families embraced the music of subordinated people—mainly, the white working-class and African Americans—living in the South and Appalachian mountains in the first half of twentieth century. Put differently, the folk revival consisted of college students' embracement of another's culture, calling it "authentic folk music."

They listened to authentic folk music mainly via records and radio. Major and independent record labels issued a variety of folk music records during the revival period. Not only did record companies release new recordings by contemporary folksingers, they also reissued the records originally sold in the 1920s and 1930s. The most famous reissued album is *The Anthology of American Folk Music* from Folkways Records, an independent folk specialty label in Greenwich Village, in 1952. Radio also played an important role in disseminating authentic folk music around the country. It aired many

folk music programs, among which were Oscar Brand's "Folksong USA" from New York and "Grand Ole Opry" from Nashville. In Springfield, a town at the northern edge of Ozark Highlands in Missouri, KWTO (Keep Watching the Ozark) aired a two-hour radio program *Ozark Jubilee*, which became successful, and ABC television put twenty-five minutes of the program on its own radio network. Before long, the Ozark program became a ninety-minute primetime television on Saturday.[3]

In addition, college folk music societies organized concerts, workshops, and festivals which allowed college students the opportunity to experience live performance of authentic folk music on campus. In fact, major universities held two- or three-day annual folk festivals. Newport Folk Festival starting in 1959, though not organized by college students, attracted many young revivalists and took on a look of pan-university folk festival. In New York, folk music impresarios like Izzy Young of the Folklore Center organized concerts at Town Hall and other places. Young was one of the co-founders of Friends of Old Time Music, an organization whose aim was to provide experience of listening to old-time folk music with New York audience. New York also had a lot of coffeehouses at which folk performances were offered and various types of folksingers were booked.

The folk revival movement in the late 1950s did not occur all of sudden. It might be true that "Tom Dooley" by the Kingston Trio was a keystone that geared the movement in a more commercialized direction, but, before the folk revival began in the late 1950s, there had been at least two major folk revivals in the twentieth century. In the 1920s, folk song collectors both from professional folklorists at universities and commercial record companies conducted numerous field recordings in the rural South.

The former category includes John Lomax and Cecil Sharp among others. These collectors were pioneers in collecting vernacular folk songs and compiling them with musical scores. They also recorded the variation of lyrics since a folk song was handed down orally, which allowed the lyrics to be changed. Meanwhile, record companies realized the potential appeal of old-time music to local and urban audience and began scouting talents in the South. Ralph Peer of Okeh Records scouted a band and recorded them naming them "The Hill Billies," which is the origin of "hillbilly" genre. It was in the 1920s that the recording industry had established the categories of "hillbilly" and "race record."

The second revival of folk music in the twentieth century occurred in the late 1930s and early 1940s when New Deal cultural politics and left-wing activism exploited folk songs as a means of consolidating workers and unemployed people by creating the image of the common man. Union organizers were eager to invite folk singers to sing folk songs before workers. Woody Guthrie, Aunt Molly Jackson, Pete Seeger, and Paul Robeson were particularly popular at union meetings. During the Depression era, the Roosevelt administration established new institutions such as the Federal Music Project under the auspices of the WPA in 1935 and sponsored live performances, programs, and recitals. The Library of Congress started the Archive of American Folk Song under the direction of Robert W. Gordon in 1928 and documented folk song recordings. John Lomax, who was working for the archive, recorded Leadbelly at the Louisiana State Penitentiary in 1933.

Additionally, in the 1940s, record companies began reissuing folk song records. One of the earliest attempts was *Smoky Mountain Ballads* from Decca in 1941. In the late

1940s *Mountain Frolic* and *Listen to Our Story*, both were collected and recorded by Alan Lomax for Victor. These reissues were precursors of oft-mentioned Harry Smith's *Anthology of American Folk Music* in 1952 from Folkways Records. The materials used for those reissued records were originally marketed to the rural audience from which the music was produced in the 1920s and 1930s. The reissued records in the 1940s and early 1950s were targeted to urban audience including teenagers who would become the core constituency of the folk revival movement.

Before "Tom Dooley" in 1958, there were several important events in the 1950s to chart the course of soon-to-be-popularized folk revival movement: The Weavers made Leadbelly's "Goodnight Irene" the most popular song in 1951; Harry Smith's *The Anthology of American Folk Music* from Folkways Records was released in 1952; Harry Belafonte's "Day-O (Banana Boat Song)" ushered in the skiffle and calysso boom and Lonnie Donegan's "Rock Island Line" (again, this is Leadbelly's song) became a big hit; Tennessee Ernie Ford's "Sixteen Tons," (the song by the country & western singer Merle Travis, in 1955) sold a million copies; and the Tarriers made two hit singles "Cindy, Oh, Cindy" and "Banana Boat Song" in 1957.

The anticommunism atmosphere in the early 1950s also affected the future of folk revival. The FBI published *Red Channels: The Report of Communist Influence in Radio and Television* in 1950, a 213-page booklet that listed the names of alleged communist members who worked in the radio and television industry. The anticommunism hysteria made the Weavers virtually disband. In 1955 Pete Seeger was summoned before the House of Un-American Activities Committee. His alleged connection to the Communist Party hindered him from appearing on television and other mainstream medium.

Literature Review

The folk music scholarship has thus far explored its subject from two perspectives. The first is the examination of folk music within the folklore discipline. Folklorists have been concerned with folk music as an artifact that represented the lives of people living in pre-modern society or geographically isolated regions, in which they orally transmitted their vernacular music from person to person, and generation to generation. At the turn of the twentieth century, pivotal folklorists such as Francis James Child (1825-1896) and Cecil Sharp (1859-1924) founded the basis of American folk music scholarship. The Child-Sharp dictum confined the category of folk music to Anglo-Saxon ballads and did not take non-English-origin folk music seriously into their subject of research.

Because folklorists have been mainly interested in preserving tradition, it seems natural that many folklorists in the 1950s were opposed to the commercialization of folk music that changed the face of folk music. The most ardent critic was Richard Dorson, then the nationally renowned folklorist at Indiana University. He denounced the folk music in the revival period as "fakelore."[4] Folklorists had a tendency to generalize the folk revival as a dissatisfaction of the middle-class whites, who romanticized the folk culture in the South and West. Bruno Nettl at the University of Illinois, for example, characterized the folk revival as a means of effective identification to "offset disorientation and displacement ... to regenerate an idealized primordial community."[5] Folklorists also examined the transformation of musical style of folk music during the revival period. D. K. Wilgus at University of California, Los Angeles, observed that the folk music during the revival period, in order for the music business to be accepted by a

larger audience, began to be homogenized and mechanized.[6]

However, not all folklorists were critical of the folk revival movement. B. A. Botkin determined that the motivation of the folk music revivalists in Greenwich Village consisted of the ideas of participation and a do-it-yourself attitude in the sense of making up one's own songs. Comparing the folk revival through an analogy to folk rituals, Botkin pointed out that the role of mass media was a substitute for the role of oral transmission in the dissemination of folk music. Botkin, one of the few folklorists who lauded the folk revival, assessed that the folk revival involved "psychological and imaginative identification with the folk and a community rather than the impulse of a nostalgic wish."[7]

The second perspective in the folk music scholarship is the relationship between folk music and leftist politics. In the 1920s and 1930s, leftist organizations in America officially used folk music as their political weapon. With the help of folk music as a kind of music for the people, by the people, and to the people, they thought, leftist ideology could appeal to the mass. R. Serge Denisoff at Bowling Green State University was one of the most prolific scholars who examined the relationship between folk music and leftist politics. Denisoff's thesis was that the folk revivalists sold out to the capitalist industry, and because of that, the folk revival movement failed to mobilize the working-class people. Unlike the leftist movement in the 1930s and 1940s that defended its ideology against capitalism, Denisoff argued, the folk revival in the 1950s and 1960s was too vulnerable to the overwhelming power of American capitalism.[8] While Denisoff saw the disconnect between the old left musical tradition and the postwar folk movement, Robbie Lieberman argued that the leftist tradition of the use of folk music laid the

foundation for the protest culture in the 1960s.[9] Other scholars who were concerned with the leftist politics included John Greenway, David Dunaway, and Richard Reuss.[10] They have contributed to a solid foundation of literature of the folk music scholarship which has provided us with a perspective of the political mobilization of folk music throughout the twentieth century beginning with the Wobblies.

Besides these academic scholars, many insiders of the folk revival movement contributed to the literature of the revival movement. Robert Shelton and Josh Dunson wrote many articles on the folk revival scene. Shelton, a *New York Times* writer, who reported the Village folk scene and reviewed folk records and concerts on regular basis, emphasized the positive aspect of popularizing folk music. Dunson, who contributed to folk music magazines, dichotomized the folk revival between the North and the South, and argued that the folk revival movement in the South epitomized by Freedom Singers and the one in the North epitomized by Newport Folk Festival were different movements, despite the interrelationship between them. The South realized a conventional method of utilizing the power of singing for political cause whereas the North placed the folk singing in the popular cultural milieu in which the folk audiences were considered as consumers who sought for their personal fulfillment through folk music.[11]

The recent scholarship in the folk music revival has attempted to present a comprehensive view of the movement, not restricted to the folkloristic and leftist political standpoints, but also including the historical developments of music industry, mass media, and social structure, and the interrelationship among these factors. Methods of recent studies vary, but one thing these methods have in common is that they do not take the "folk" concept for granted as the leftist scholars and many folklorists did. The recent

scholarship has emphasized the fluidity of the concept of "folk" and then has described the transformation and heterogeneity of the nature of folk music within the revival movement.[12]

Robert Cantwell, for example, attributes the folk revival to five elements: folklore and ballad scholarship, minstrelsy, left-wing politics, popular music and culture, and the psychological and economic setting of postwar America. The folk revival, he argues, "made the romantic claim of folk culture—oral, immediate, traditional, idiomatic, communal, a culture of characters, of rights, obligations, and beliefs, against a centrist, specialist, impersonal technocratic culture, a culture of types, functions, jobs, and goals."[13] Cantwell views the revival movement as basically "conservative... cultural patriotism" adapted by youthful dissidents who felt themselves displaced from wealthy and educated families. In his analysis, the folk revival was a phenomena that occurred beyond the middle-class youth born in a time when expanding prosperity was a given. Therefore the middle and upper-class youth in the 1950s looked at the prosperity from within and found out that their society had been characterized by functionalism, technocracy, and bureaucracy. Cantwell understands the revival as "restorative" rather than "reactionary" or "revolutionary." The revival, wrote Cantwell, adapted two opposing class cultures—"the one belonging to a displaced and disenfranchised class and the other largely to the wealthy, educated, and well-traveled."[14] The latter having a subtle sense of displacement from the prospect of the bright future nation's leaders had promised, appropriated the former's sense of alienation in the material sense from the mainstream society which had benefited from affluence. The folk revival that showed the urban youth's allure to the southern folk culture thus represents a connecting point between the

past and the present beyond the class and regional boundaries. Thus the way Cantwell understands the folk revival demonstrates how it might be situated in a broad range of perspectives.

In *Romancing the Folk*, Benjamin Filene examines a process of popularizing and canonizing "folk music" by various middlemen since the eighteenth century. With different aims and methods in different social settings, Filene argues, the musical middlemen have contributed to the construction of the American musical heritage—the roots music—through which Americans reflect their collective memory. He reveals that the idea of "roots" or "folk" has been used not only for constructing public memory but also for defining American musical experience. From the collection of British ballads by Francis James Child to the revitalization of folk tradition by Bob Dylan during the folk revival era, Filene examines how the American musical practice in the past has been utilized to construct American collective memory. Filene reveals that the concept of roots music is unfixed and has been made and remade by many musical practitioners including singers, scholars, and music impresarios. Folk music, as a concept (not as a certain musical form), can be a tool of both romanticizing American musical past and revitalizing the American musical future, through which Americans identify themselves in America's historical context. Filene's approach reminds us of one of the most important characteristics of culture in that the meaning of culture or cultural material is always repositioned in the context of social transformation.

David Hajdu's *Positively 4th Street* deals with the same concern Filene discusses. Focusing on the careers of four singers—Bob Dylan, Joan Baez, Mimi Farina, and Richard Farina—, Hajdu depicts how these four individuals evolved their artistry as folk

singers. As Filene treats the notion of folk as fluid, Hajdu depicts the early career of Dylan as a process of acquiring "folk authenticity." At the beginning of his career, Dylan had no concrete idea what the folk authenticity meant. With vague idea about folk, he moved into Greenwich Village from Minneapolis. Dylan scoured the repertoires of folk music from records and individuals he met to create his own "folk" style. He started as a follower of Woody Guthrie and within two years he transformed himself into a social protest singer and then changed his folk persona to a more introspective poet. Hajdu's illustration of Dylan's early career suggests that the folk revival in the late 1950s was not just a revival of what it used be, but something that renewed the old tradition so that it could be some reference or connection to the social context of the 1950s.[15]

Purpose of Dissertation

As the researchers have recently explored, the folk music revival was a cultural movement that centered around the notion of "authenticity" and it was chiefly college students who were mesmerized by the sound of folk music. Why did authenticity matter to college students in the late 1950s and early 1960s? What did authenticity exactly mean to the college folk revivalists and to American society in the broader sense? This dissertation examines the discourse of authenticity constructed by young revivalists and argues that their discourse of authenticity revolves around the construction of identity embedded in the postwar socioeconomic condition. The folk revivalists exploited folk music mainly because it helped them learn a valuable lesson about the postwar conditions of America in which they would live. The folk revival movement provided a venue for the folk revivalists to consider the relationship between the postwar American conditions

and themselves by imagining, visioning, and conceptualizing "authenticity."

Authenticity is defined in various ways, but for the purpose of this dissertation the authenticity reflected in folk music which inspired young revivalists meant, for instance: a primitive style of democracy; a sense of community based on human bond; innocence free from social and cultural predicaments; musical exchange without economic interests; and the reality of life. The folk revival movement was a process to authenticate folk music and the people who sang it and to reflect their own attitudes toward postwar social conditions in America. It was also an attempt for revivalists to connect the authenticity they learned from folk music to their identity construction.

In this dissertation, the folk revivalists refer to those who embraced folk music not only for its musical characteristic but also for its underlying significance that helped them construct their collective identity. As I stated earlier, the folk revival was a commercial movement, especially after "Tom Dooley" in 1958. The response to it was of course varied. For many young people, it was a new distraction replacing rock 'n' roll by Elvis Presley or Chuck Berry and they would find another distraction when the boom was gone. For some, folk music meant a means of protest against social injustice and corruption. For some others, however, folk music signified the meaning of life. Among various types of folk music available in the postwar revival period, the folk revivalists preferred traditional style of folksinging sung by regional singers in the South to popular-oriented style marketed to the mainstream audience of popular music.

The folk revivalists consisted of both producers and consumers. The folk revival scholarship has tended to be concerned with the producers and ignore the folk music revival audiences, the consumers. The lack of attention to revival audience does not

recognize the complexity of the folk revival movement. In fact, cultural studies usually takes either the production or consumption side approach. The premise to do so is that these two are to some extent opposed to each other in their interests and that they are composed of different constituencies. In analyzing a film, for instance, we can divide the producers of the film from its audience. But, in analyzing the folk music revival, the boundary between producers and consumers is obscured by the ideologies of folk music itself. Of course, there were several production agencies such as record companies and folk music festival organizers, and, on the other hand, there were a huge number of audiences, that did not play any roles in producing folk music materials—records, magazines, festivals, and so forth. Nevertheless, both types of revivalists—the producers and the consumers—shared the same view of the folk music authenticity. Thus this dissertation seeks to examine cultural politics in the folk revival movement from both the production and reception sides.[16]

The experience of the folk music revival was not just a leisure activity meant to be consumed: it was an experience that contributed to forming the self identity that was interlocked with the conditions of life in America after World War II. I do not attempt to present a single and simple identity associated with the folk revival movement. The folk revivalists in fact, had different views about the folk music revival and its contextual understanding in postwar America. I can say, however, at least that they redefined folk music and reshaped the boundaries between races, classes, social hierarchies, and aesthetics. To the young generation in the 1950s, folk music represented not just a traditional musical expression. More importantly, folk music captivated young people as a refreshing experience that helped them find an intense connection to the past, present,

and future of themselves and society.

As the chapter structure indicates, I attempt to illustrate the folk revival movement from four perspectives: Commercialism, rebellion, folklore tradition, and identity formation. Each of these elements plays a significant role in the making of the folk revival movement. The middle-class and upper-class college revivalists contemplated these four aspects in their lives as they created the folk revival movement. All of these factors were the critical issues for them and folk music, they thought, provided a refreshing solution with them on an imaginary level. In other words, the folk revival movement was the response of the young generation to the social, cultural, and economic condition of postwar America.

My contribution to the folk revival scholarship is that this dissertation focuses on the identity formation of middle- and upper-class college students. Not only does my project explore the intricacies of the revival movement, it also considers why well-educated children from well-off families became fascinated by the authenticity of folk music. The folk revival movement was a response, in one sense, to the postwar higher education system. Universities, as Christopher Lasch has pointed out, have become a place of a "conflict between the humane values of which the university is uniquely the embodiment and the knowledge factory."[17] The "humane values" means that university, to quote Mario Savio, is the "place where people begin seriously to question the condition of their existence"[18] At the same time, university has functioned as a "knowledge factory" to produce new corporate workers to maintain the scientific management business culture. Folk revivalists at campus, I think, were encountered these conflicting ideas about

university. They realized that they needed to create the self identity, projecting folk music onto such a social conflict.

In this dissertation, I use campus folk music magazines as main primary sources. During the revival period, university folk music societies published folk music magazines to promote their activities and to disseminate the folk revival movement. The college folk magazines I use are the ones from Pennsylvania State University, the University of Illinois, the University of Michigan, and the University of Minnesota. These magazines are very useful because they tell us why authenticity of folk music mattered to college folk revivalists and how they constructed their cultural identity through practicing the folk music revival. Thus far, campus folk magazines have not been explored for scholarly purpose while New York-based folk magazines such as *Sing Out!* and *Broadside* have been frequently used. My project uses both New York-based folk magazines and campus folk magazines to present a comprehensive view on folk music. College folk magazines are very helpful to reveal how college revivalists conceptualized folk music and why they authenticated it.

Chapters

Chapter 1 discusses the debate over commercialism. As the folk music revival became a lucrative genre for the music industry and mass media by the early 1960s, an angry voice came up from the folk music community. They charged that folk music had become the profit-motivated music and lost its tradition and authenticity. This kind of criticism, on the one hand, resulted from the historical notion of folk since "folk" had been a term that

refers to the pre-modern style of life before the advent of commercialization in the American society. Chapter 1 argues that the commercialization debate played an important role for the revivalists in shaping the notion of folk. I am not arguing whether or not the folk revival was a commercial movement. My point is that the argument about commercialization shaped the revivalists' sense of "folk" and helped them construct the folk identity, which is discussed in chapter 4. Chapter 1 also chronicles the history of the folk music revival movement. With this Introduction and chapter 1 readers can grasp an overall picture of the movement in this chapter.

Chapter 2 explores the connection between Greenwich Village bohemian culture and the folk revival. Greenwich Village was the central place of the folk revival. Many folksingers moved to the Village and folk entrepreneurs like Izzy Young's Folklore Center and Moses Ash's Folkways Records flourished. Folksingers mingled with artists from other genres and shared a similar view about America of the 1950s. Beat writers, journalists, actors, dancers, composers, painters, and political activists interacted with one another at cafes and bars. Though varied in their artistic and ideological preferences, these young Villagers established a distinctive ethos of aesthetics, world views, and self-identity, which was not plagued by widely accepted accounts of their generation such as "the lonely crowd," "organization man," or "silent generation." This chapter discusses the affinity between the Beat Generation and the folk revivalists in their use of culture of others to make their own cultural identities. Beat writers embraced African American beboppers and legitimated their blackness as an articulation of spontaneity and autonomy—those traits which they regarded as having vanished from the mainstream American culture. Similarly, the folk revivalists learned the musical tradition in the

South, which had been inherited from generation to generation. They found that traditional folk music could speak to a greater extent for their cultural alienation and their feeling of displacement from their middle-class cultural structure. As a response to it, the revivalists created their cultural identity associated with the folk people who sang and listened to vernacular songs.

Chapter 3 examines the influence of folkloristic definition of "folk" on the folk revival movement. The American folklore scholarship defined "folk music" as the music submitted to the process of oral transmission. This definition of folk music was influential in the folk revival era. College folk magazines were strongholds of the folkloristic understanding of folk music. This chapter argues that the folk revivalists did not necessarily understand folk music as folklorists had explained. Rather they employed the folklorists' definition of folk music as a set of values that helped them find out their vision of postwar society and their future.

Chapter 4 considers the construction of folk identity. The folk revival movement helped create an imaginary space for the college revivalists to create their cultural, collective identity. The folk identity was an amalgam of generational conflict, postwar socioeconomic conditions, emergence of popular culture as a source of cultural identification, transformation of function of higher education in society, and psychological necessity for them to construct identity. Folk identity consisted of contradictory ideas that generated from the folk revival community connected through records, mass media, marketplace, and person-to-person interchanges. This chapter first clarifies the structure of identity and then discusses the process of mediation through which the folk music revivalists constructed the folk identity. Although the chapters do

not follow a chronological order, they interrelate with one another. Because the folk revival was not an institutional history, its structure and mechanism as a movement is hard to describe chronologically. Rather, illustrating the movement from distinctive perspectives is more appropriate.

The revival movement struck a deliberate balance between political pamphleteering against the social inequality and abstract analysis of the postwar American society. As their involvement in the civil rights movement suggests, the folk revivalists demonstrated a high degree of commitment to social reform. At the same time the revivalists shared a nuanced critique of the postwar affluent society, juxtaposing it with the folk community in which folk music had been produced. The postwar folk revival movement was short-lived. It became a boom in the late 1950s and waned by the mid-1960s, giving way to folk rock and the consequent psychedelic rock. During the period, the baby boomer generation began searching for a new way of establishing their identity through cultural practice. The folk revival was a multifaceted movement, rejecting simple explanations such as the reification of leftist ideology, antithesis to aggressive rock 'n' roll, yearning for the pre-industrial community-based society, representation of youth generation's conservatism, among others. While all these explanations contain a certain degree of truth explaining the revival movement if we try to understand the revival movement more comprehensively, the identity formation becomes the key concept. The folk revival movement illustrates how individuals construct cultural identity through the process of creating and consuming the folk revival movement. Popular culture like music can shape people's views of the world, their sense of selfhood and community. This dissertation is an attempt to address the relationship

between the folk revival movement and its participants. The folk revival movement helped shape and define the folk identity. I hope this project can clarify a significant role of popular culture which helped shape the revivalists' social and cultural consciousness.

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[1] For definition of "subculture," I rely on Dick Hebdige's work. According to Hebdige, subculture is "expressive forms and rituals of ... subordinated groups" and it is "both a declaration of independence ... of subordinate status" and "confirmation of the fact of powerlessness, a celebration of impotence." See Dick Hebdige, *Subculture: The Meaning of Style* (New York: Routledge, 1988), 2.

[2] Ibid.

[3] "They Love Mountain Music," *Time*, May 7 1956, p. 60.

[4] Richard Dorson, "Folklore and Fakelore," *American Mercury* 70 (1950).

[5] Robert Cantwell, *When We Were Good: The Folk Revival* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1996), 269.

[6] D. K. Wilgus, "Current Hillbilly Recordings: A Review Article," *Journal of American Folklore* 78, no. 309 (July-Sept 1965): 281.

[7] B. A. Botkin, "The Folksong Revival: Cult or Culture?," in *The American Folk Scene: Dimensions of the Folksong Revival*, ed. David A. De Turk & A Poulin Jr. (New York: A Laurel Original, 1967), 99-100.

[8] R. Serge Denisoff, *Great Day Coming: Folk Music and the American Left* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1971). This is his representative work on the folk music and leftist movement.

[9] Robbie Lieberman and People's Songs (organization), *"My Song Is My Weapon": People's Songs, American Communism, and the Politics of Culture, 1930-1950*, (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1989).

[10] David King Dunaway, *How Can I Keep from Singing: Pete Seeger* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1981); John Greenway, *American Folksongs of Protest* (New York,: Octagon Books, 1970); and Richard A. Reuss and JoAnne C. Reuss, *American Folk Music and Left-Wing Politics, 1927-1957* (Lanham, MD.: Scarecrow Press, 2000).

[11] Josh Dunson, *Freedom in the Air: Song Movements of the Sixties* (New York: International Publishers, 1965). 10, 111; David Gahr and Robert Shelton, *The Face of Folk Music* (New York: Citadel Press, 1968).

[12] Cantwell, *When We Were Good: The Folk Revival*; Benjamin Filene, *Romancing the Folk : Public Memory & and American Roots Music* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000); Millie Rahn, "The Folk Revival: Beyond Child's Canon and Sharp's Song Catching," in *American Popular Music*, ed. Rachael Rubin and Jeffrey Milnick (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2001); and Neil V. Rosenberg, ed., *Transforming Tradition: Folk Music Revivals Examined* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1993).

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CHAPTER 1

THE FOLK MUSIC REVIVAL MOVEMENT AND COMMERCIALISM

The debate over commercialization of folk music was one of the most disputed issues throughout the folk revival period between the late 1950s through the mid-1960s. As folk music became a lucrative segment in the popular music market and an attractive subject for mass media, a critical voice arose from the folk music community. The purists, or traditionalists, of the folk music community argued that the essence of folk music lay in the anonymity of the songs and that folk music and commercialization could not co-exist because folk music was, or must be, the music that had been developed outside the commercial interest. The defenders of folk music did not want contemporary folk music included in their traditional folk music category. Meanwhile the advocates of commercialized folk music, often called popularizers, thought that the essence of folk music remained unchanged despite the change of the external structure around folk music and popular music in general. They contended that the quality of folk music was one thing and its commercialization another: the value of folk music should be judged by its music per se, not how many copies were sold, and that the increasing popularity of folk music enriched the folk music genre.

This chapter addresses several issues that generated the debate over the commercialization of folk music. First, from a historical standpoint, folk music had been commercialized well before the postwar revival movement occurred. With technological innovations such as portable recording machines, radios, and record players, folk music had became integrated into the music industry in the 1920s, and thus became

commercialized. Along with this commercialization of folk music, folk singers sought their means of income in the commercial medium. Put it simply, the notion of folk music as something separated from commercial interest is myth. Second, folk music's affinity with leftist organizations in the 1920s and 1930s created another myth that folk music was a music hostile to capitalism in which producing and purchasing commercial products were encouraged. The history of the Weavers exemplifies the complexity of this relationship between leftist politics and folk music. Third, folk music in the 1950s created new musical styles that attracted a new audience. The majority of folk revival enthusiasts were the middle-class white college students. Bluegrass was an invention that can be understood in this context. A number of folk trios and quartets in the revival era such as the Kingston Trio appealed to college students through their harmony-based singing style. Fourth, while the revival produced a new folk style like that of the Kingston Trio or the Journeymen, the traditional style of folk music continued to have an enormous impact on the urban audience as well. Judy Collins, Joan Baez, or the New Lost City Ramblers were popular among college audiences. In addition, the Friends of Old Time Music provided opportunities for an urban audience to experience authentic folk music that was immune to contemporary flavors such as the songs of the Kingston Trio and other groups.

Despite the fact that folk music had been a commercial enterprise since the 1920s and that most of the postwar revivalists had learned folk music through commercial outlets, the debate over commercialization played a central role for folk revivalists in defining the revival movement. Rather than merely one of many musical trends in the music industry, occurring in the late 1950s and early 1960s, the folk revivalists understood folk music as an important cultural expression that represented their concerns

about society and themselves. For the revivalists, folk music was an enlightening experience to learn and consider the concern between the postwar American social condition and themselves.

To examine the way in which the commercialization debate shaped the folk music revival and the folk identity, I use several primary materials such as folk music magazines, biographies and autobiographies of folksingers, popular magazines for mainstream readers, and newspaper articles. In particular, comparing the discourse in folk music magazines and mainstream magazines allowed me to conduct an insightful exploration of the formation of folk revival movement. The folk revival discourse occurred not only within the folk community; the mainstream media also helped disseminate that discourse throughout the country. The folk community and mainstream media basically argued the same thing about the folk revival including the tone of anti-commercialism. It thus can be said that mass circulated media is also responsible for the creation of folk revival movement. This chapter illustrates through a juxtaposition of the discourse within the folk community and that of the mainstream magazines that the folk revival movement became the kind of movement acceptable by the majority of population.

Folk Music Before the Revival Movement

As noted earlier in this chapter, folk music has been commercial since the 1920s. Major record companies like Columbia and Okeh scouted rural talents in the South to add to their catalogs. Before long, other companies—major and independent— rushed into the South to conduct field recordings. The music performed by the southern singers were

labeled as various as "old-time," "hillbilly," "or country" if sung by whites, and "race music" if sung by blacks. The records were distributed nationwide via mail-order catalogs and bought at local record shops in urban areas. Except for the rural people who could listen to vernacular music at their neighbors, Americans first learned folk music through commercial records.

Radio, first aired in 1922 in Pittsburgh, was another channel that made folk music reach nationwide. Several programs delivered folk music throughout the nation. The famous *Grand Ole Opry*, at which Uncle Dave Mason became the first country music star, began broadcasting on WSU in Nashville in 1925. In San Francisco, KFRC started *Blues Monday Jamboree* in 1927 featuring country singers like Harry McClintock, who composed "The Big Rock Candy Mountain." McClintock also hosted a children's program on KFRC called *Mac and His Gang* during which he played his comic country songs.

Radio also provided folk singers with a means of livelihood. In 1935 Woody Guthrie left his hometown in Oklahoma for California after the devastating Dust Bowl. He migrated to Los Angeles and found a job on KFVD radio singing traditional and original folk songs. His folk songs successfully attracted widespread public attention. Guthrie's appearance on KFVD also brought opportunities to meet other prominent folk singers like Cisco Houston and Pete Seeger. Not only did he befriend those folk singers, Guthrie also met unionists, which gave him an opportunity to write a column "Woody Sez" for the communist daily paper *People's World.* In 1940 he moved to New York and performed at a benefit concert for refugees from the Spanish Civil War, which was his first major appearance. Soon he formed the Almanac Singers with Seeger and Lee Hays,

and they toured the country.[1]

Radio, from its beginning, was a commercial medium. Programs were sponsored by corporations. Folk music programs were no exception. For McClintock and Guthrie, local radio stations laid groundwork for their professional careers. For example, Guthrie earned two hundred dollars a week, a huge amount of money at that time, for the Model Tobacco network radio program "Pipe Smoking Time" in 1940.[2] Guthrie's success on radio led him to another success: the contract with RCA Victor to record his first album *Dust Bowl Ballads* in 1940. In McClintock's case, the popularity of his radio show in San Francisco brought him the contract with RCA Victor to release records in 1928.

RCA Victor also signed with a Texan fiddler named Eck Robertson who had rethink his career options in the period of transformation in entertainment. Before his first recording "Sally Goodin' " for RCA Victor in 1922, Robertson had been traveling with medicine shows and playing the piano for silent movies. Robertson desperately needed to find a new medium in place of disappearing medicine shows and silent movies. This was the reason he traveled to New York to audition for RCA Victor. A decade later as with the cases of Guthrie and McClintock, he found a job at a radio station in Dallas.

As the genre of folk music became an increasing presence in the market during the 1940s, folk singers went professional and consequently the notion of authorship had to change. One of the characteristics of being professional in this decade was the notion of authorship. At the end of 1930s Pete Seeger, Woody Guthrie, Lee Hays, and Millard Lampell formed the Almanac Singers. They sang union songs and anti-war songs wherever they were able to find audiences, mainly at union meetings. They also toured across the U.S. A good deal of their material was traditional folk music, and no individual

singer was credited as the writer or performer. The group held their principle of anonymity, an important characteristic of traditional folk music. The Almanac Singers did not last long. As the US entered WWII, some of its members joined the army and the group disbanded in 1942. After the war, Seeger created People's Songs, Inc (PSI) in January 1946. It was not a folk group, but an organization to help singers write new songs and exchange traditional songs. For this purpose, PSI published their first monthly magazine *People's Song Bulletin* in February of that year. The *Bulletin* appears to have had the same goal as the Almanac Singers. The first issue declared:

> The people are on the march and must have songs to sing. Now, in 1946, the truth must reassert itself in many voices. There are thousands of unions, people's organizations, singers and choruses who would gladly use more songs. There are many songs writers, amateur and professional, who are writing these songs. It is clear that there must be an organization to make and send songs of labor and the American people throughout the land.[3]

The statement very much echoes the activities Almanac Singers had undertaken. PSI attempted to mobilize unions with folk songs, But, contrary to the Almanac Singers's anonymity principle, *People's Songs Bulletin* gave individual credit to songwriters, a departure from the anonymity practiced by the Almanacs Singers.

Along with the change of the notion of authorship, the folk music community began establishing a booking agent for folk singers to earn jobs. In the same year, People's Artists Inc., (PAI) was founded. Directed by Bob Howard, PAI served as a booking agency for folk singers to increase their economic return. PAI supplied talents for any events—house parties, summer camps, union meetings, left-wing organizations, and so on.[4] The PSI's abandonment of anonymity principle and PAI's attempt, as "incorporated" in its name indicates, for the economic benefit of folk singers marked a departure from the traditional notion of folk music.

PSI, however, did not last long. After the defeat of Henry Wallace whom PSI had supported for the presidential election in 1948, PSI ceased its activity. On July 1949, PAI and PSI had a joint meeting to discuss the role of folk music for political causes. At the meeting they argued: "the commercialized standards of Hollywood, radio, and Tin Pan Alley have subverted the musical life of our country. The concert halls reach, at best, only a very small portion of the American people, and then at prices usually beyond the reach of working people." Their solution was to promote "a music rooted in the democratic past of America and which is an integral part of the struggles shaping our country today."[5] They remained unchanged in their notion about the relationship between music and politics.

On August 26, PAI organized an outdoor concert featuring Paul Robeson and others in Peekskill, New York. The local people in Peekskill reacted negatively to the name of Robeson. Since the 1930s Robeson had been the central singer performing for the left-wing political cause. A mob of local people attacked concert-goers before the concert. PAI canceled the concert and rescheduled it the next week. The rescheduled concert was held without any injuries, but, after the concert, a mob attacked more than 150 concertgoers.

The Peekskill riots epitomized the anti-communist hysteria after WWII. At the same time, it taught the folk music community that they could no longer reach a wider audience through inculcation of left-wing agenda. PSI had already learned this lesson at the presidential campaign for Progressive Party's candidate Henry Wallace the previous year. Not only did they see the defeat of Wallace, they also had to confront the breakup between the Progressive Party and the labor movement. Because the labor unions had

refused to support the Progressive Party, the PSI's involvement in the campaign meant its loss of union support.[6]

As the historian Robbie Lieberman argues in her study on People's Song, very few PSI members had organic ties with the labor movement. Even though they were from working-class backgrounds, Lieberman contends, their world view was close to that of the middle-class Americans. People's Songsters supported the labor movement not because they shared the same experience with workers, but because they held ideological, romanticized notion about the working-class.[7] As declared at the meeting before the Peekskill riots, People's Songsters saw music as "an integral part of the struggles shaping our country." They had inherited the Old Left culture in the 1920s and 1930s and the romantic notion of "folk" and "folk music."

For that purpose, hootenanny was a perfect expression of this impulse. Hootenanny was an informal gathering at which the audience was expected to sing with others. There was basically no guest singer featured; everyone could be a guest singer of equal importance. This practice of audience participatory ideology was part of folk music culture, in contrast to the mass culture critics' belief that an audience was to be passive and forcefully entertained. In 1946, People's Songs copyrighted "hootenanny" as their title of folk performances. Consequently, in the late 1940s, PSI published *How To Plan a Hootenanny* and launched its own record label "Hootenanny Records" issuing 78 rpm records. Breaking up with the traditional sense of folk music as anonymous product, emphasizing the sense of folk as participatory culture, and distributing their songs through commercial channels, PSI combined the traditional sense of folk music with the sense of entrepreneurship.

The end of WWII, however, marked an end of hope. As discussed, PSI's support of Henry Wallace drove the organization into a miserable state. By 1950, the American Dance Group and Folksay became defunct. After the demise of PSI, Pete Seeger organized the "Good Neighbor Chorus," a teenagers' chorus group. With his purpose of the music—for social ends—unchanged, Seeger tried a different approach to his music. He observed in *Daily Worker*: "many fine songs can never be sung right by soloists, and...most glee clubs and chorus groups overarrange the great people's songs which sound best when performed in a direct and straightforward manner."[8] Seeger and his chorus group met weekly at the 110th St. Community Center and held concerts at hospitals and welfare institutions. Performing folk music in a chorus arrangement might have stirred controversy within the PSI/PAI circle. Canadian-born folk singer Oscar Brand notes that in 1946 there were few "groups" singing folk songs because folk singers were supposed to be soloists.[9] Though not directly addressing Seeger's Good Neighbor Chorus, PAI's newly launched folk music magazine *Sing Out!* printed a critical reaction to the chorusing of folk music. It reads that "the compromising effects of commercialism, political oppression, and the highly developed skills required to manipulate the modern symphony orchestra and the equally unsingable cantata" isolate singers, "who know what to sing and how," from singing. Written by the magazine's music editor James Hutchinson, this statement demonstrates how the purist notion of folk music defended the music from economic, political, and artistic intrusions. There was an assumption in Hutchinson's mind that a folk song could only be called authentic if sung by the singer who knows the condition in which the song was created. We will see that similar argument recycled in the midst of the folk revival movement between the late 1950s and

the early 1960s.

The assimilation of folk music into the mainstream popular music, as Hutchinson pointed out, was observed elsewhere. On January 28, 1950, a memorial concert for Leadbelly, who had died in the previous month, was held at Town Hall in New York. Produced by Alan Lomax, the concert brought a variety of musical styles, which not simply proved the wide influence of Leadbelly, but also predicted the phase of folk music in the new decade. The roster for the first half of the concert included, *New York Times* reported, "Woody Guthrie; the Trinidadian, Lord Invader; harmonica-playing Sonny Terry; the composer of 'St. Louis Blues,' W. C. Handy; Oscar Brand, Edith Allarire, Tom Glazer, Sidney Bechet (playing saxophone to the piano accompaniments of Count Basie), and Brownie McGhee, ... Rev. Gary Davis ..., and Jean Ritchie ... ."[10] Canadian-born folk singer Oscar Brand, one of the participants for the concert who had hosted the folk music radio program "Folk Song Festival" on WNYC since 1945, recollects the concert:

> Woody Guthrie sang duets with Tom Paley right after Hot Lips Page and Sidney Bechet blew some wild jazz riffs into the rafters. Pete Seeger led The Good Neighbor Chorus in a program of folk songs, and W. C. Handy followed with a few of this original blues. Jean Ritchie quietly strummed her Kentucky dulcimer with a goose quill and then left the stage to Count Basie and is real gone piano. Tom Glazer sang some old ballads, the Lord Invader jangled some calypso tunes on a West Indian cuatro, The Weavers sang "Irene," Reverend Gary Davis raked the audience with his crude gutter gospels, and Bill Dillard's band jazzed from one side of the stage to another. There was genial Frank Warner singing a few from his special, private collection—songs like "He's Got the Whole World in His Hands" and "Tom Dooley." Finally, Leadbelly's close friends, Sonny Terry and Brownie McGhee, joined Sticks McGhee in some sophisticated blues.

Brand concludes that the concert reflected the "American music today... the kind of amalgam...which Town Hall provided that night—blues, ballads, calypso, and jazz

mingled in what is now popular song." As Brand argues, the repertoire of the memorial concert for Leadbelly went far beyond a single musical category.[11]

The history of folk music in the first half of twentieth century reflected commercial concern, technological development, and leftist politics. These elements affected the nature of folk music and became integral parts of the folk music landscape. Commercial forces and radio served as channels for distributing folk music and helped folk singers gain jobs which in turn made several folk singers known across the continent. Records and radio were important outlets for folk singers, without which folk music would not be able to be heard nationwide. Left-wing organizations played an important role in disseminating folk music among union members. However, during this time, there was a transformation of American society in which "the mass"—working-class people—which the leftist organizations targeted, melted away and a "new mass"—the population accessible to folk music via commercial channels—emerged.

The Weavers

In 1948 he and Lee Hays, both Almanac Singers alumni, teamed up to form a new group. They recruited two young performers: Fred Hellerman (guitar) and Ronnie Gilbert (vocal) and named themselves the Weavers. At the very beginning, the Weavers appeared at the same places as the Almanac Singers did: they performed at hootenannies, campaigned for Vito Marcantonio, American Labor Party candidate for the House of Representatives, in 1948, and made recordings for two small labels, Charter and Hootenanny. Joining in hoots, supporting left-wing politics, and recording for PSI-funded

label, however, resulted in little success. Hootenanny events by its concept did not bring them money. As the Peekskill event signified, left-wing organizations had already lost their power of mobilizing workers and therefore union meetings were no longer suitable places to perform. Facing the reality, the Weavers looked for a more commercial venue in which to perform. In late December 1949 the Weavers were given a chance to play at Village Vanguard, an avant-garde night club in Greenwich Village. The owner Max Gordon had featured some soloist folk singers like Dyer-Bennet, Burl Ives, and Josh White. But a folk singing group like the Weavers was new to him. Gordon gave the Weavers a two-week tryout. The Weavers proved remarkably successful and continued playing there for six months.

Technically, the Weavers's music sounded better than the Almanac Singers's. This may have been because individuals of the Almanac Singers lacked playing techniques or because their ideological need to represent folk people hindered them from playing skillfully. Whatever the reason, the Almanac Singers demonstrated amateurism. Woody Guthrie once complained the group's technical poorness, that "the ability to perform, play music or sing, had ought to be the first requirement...if it was going to grow and spread and have a wide mass following."[12] They were, in a sense, fortunate because they were able to count on left-wing organizations which brought in an audience. The Weavers in the meantime rehearsed and rehearsed whereas the Almanac Singers, Guthrie joked, had only rehearsed on stage.[13] Seeger understood Guthrie's comments on the technical problem of Almanac Singers. The Weavers pursued musical deftness. The group was composed of four vocals: two low baritones, one alto, and one tenor. In addition, the Weavers hid their leftist politics; they changed politically offensive lyrics.

Their songs became less politically charged.

After the success at Village Vanguard, the Weavers made a contract with Decca Records. For their first album *Folk Songs of America and Other Lands*, Gordon Jenkins, who had arranged for Ella Fitzgerald and Louis Armstrong, made orchestral arrangements. Gordon added strings and horns for song arrangement. The final product was eclecticism. The music, as Oscar Brand points out, "spans the possible gap between the rural sound and the sophisticated sound which everyone knows."[14] They combined "good arrangements, sound musical taste, down-to-earth personality[,] and feeling in their presentations."[15] Their cover of Leadbelly's song "Goodnight Irene" from that album reached No.1 in August 1950.

The folk music community, especially the folk-left such as People's Artist to which members of the Weavers belonged, were perplexed about how to interpret the commercial success of the Weavers. The newly launched magazine *Sing Out!* reviewed the first album with mixed feelings. Generally positive though, the reviewer described "Easy Rider Blues" (Leadbelly's cover) as "pretty stiff," which present[ed] "some aspect of Negro music."[16] Irwin Silber, publisher of *Sing Out!*, reviewed the Weavers's concert at Town Hall: "The Weavers would have sounded far better in the more vital and vibrant Hootenanny setting than they did in their formal attire of the Town Hall stage.... if they are not able to be an integral part of the growing people's cultural movement, which is what I am sure they would prefer, they are still maintaining high standards of performance and artistic integrity in their work."[17] As Silber points out, the Weavers created a new "artistic integrity" in their work, which, however, made the old-guard folk traditionalists question for whom the Weavers performed.

The Weavers were not a passing fad. They kept releasing traditional folk materials with modern arrangements—"So Long, It's Been Good to Know Yuh," "On Top of Old Smoky," and "Midnight Special." They maintained both commercial success and a high standard of musical taste. After the success of "Goodnight Irene," the Weavers toured the US. In August 1951, *Newsweek* reported that the Weavers earned $4,000 a week, which was twenty times as much as they did a year and a half before.[18]

The career of the Weavers in comparison with that of the Almanac Singers indicates more than merely a shift from a left-wing folk group to a popular-oriented folk group. It was easier in the early 1940s under the Roosevelt administration's New Deal policy to unionize. But the Weavers had to find a new audience in place of those found at union meetings or benefit concerts organized by leftist organizations that had been losing the power of mobilizing workers. The Weavers found their place to perform on radio and at nightclubs and consequently made a contract with Decca Records. Also important was the improvement of performance quality and breakaway from the traditional solo-singing style. The Weavers's stylistic change did not mean that they had given way only to their commercial success. Not only did Seeger and other members want to play more skillfully, they had to adjust to the transformation of the folk music world and beyond. It was, in other words, a search for a new audience. The audience in the leftist sense had been disappearing due to anti-communism epitomized by McCarthyism, and to the general tendency of decline of labor movement. Thus, the Weavers had to reorient toward a new audience through commercial outlets.

Bluegrass: Commercialized Style of Folk Music

During the folk music revival era, bluegrass was considered one of the most authentic folk styles. Named after Bill Monroe's supporting band "The Blue Grass Boys," bluegrass music gained popularity after WWII, and it appealed to the young urban audience in the 1950s. The musical origin of bluegrass dates back to the early twentieth century when the southern mountain music was labeled as "hillbilly" with other folk music styles such as old-time music and country music. Bill Monroe formed a band called the Monroe Brothers with his two brothers in the late 1920s and earned spots at several radio programs. The Monroe Brothers disbanded in 1938 and Bill formed a new band, the Blue Grass Boys. Next Year, Monroe and the Blue Grass Boys made a debut at Grand Ole Opry in Nashville.

In the 1940s the popularity of Bill Monroe and the Blue Grass Boys sparked and they toured around the Southeast. The decade witnessed other popular bluegrass bands. In 1948 two members of the Blue Grass Boys, Earl Scruggs and Lester Flatt, left the band and formed their own band, the Foggy Mountain Boys, named after a Carter Family song. Scruggs, Flatt, and their band's first recording in 1949, "Foggy Mountain Breakdown" became their signature tune. Another popular bluegrass band was the Stanley Brothers, which was formed in 1947 and soon signed with Columbia. Influenced by Bill Monroe, Ralph and Carter Stanley formed the Clinch Mountain Boys. The urban audiences in the 1950s embraced bluegrass as an authentic folk music. The musical characteristics of bluegrass confirmed that it finely fit into the image of folk music: it did not use electric instruments; it included a large number of traditional tunes; and it sang about lives of rural Americans.

It is true that bluegrass presented traditional "folk" style music to urban

audiences, but we ought to recognize that it came out of the complex relationship between commercialism and tradition. Bluegrass music historian Neil Rosenberg calls bluegrass a "distinctive type of commercial country music."[19] According to Rosenberg, during and after WWII when hillbilly enjoyed its popularity, the country music industry developed into a more commercialized one. As hillbilly record sales grew, hillbilly musicians began shifting their priority from performing at their local radio stations to making records. In 1944 *Billboard* began listing "hillbilly," which was responsible for the growth of the hit-star system in the country music. Now radio stations began hiring country singers who had hit records. During this transformation of the industry emerged the Stanley Brothers and Flatt & Scruggs. Both groups had signed with small labels right after the war and moved to Columbia in 1949 and 1951, respectively.

Musically, bluegrass developed its technicality during the 1940s. In traditional hillbilly performance, the banjo players used two-finger picking. In the mid-1940s Earl Scruggs invented three-finger picking style, which enabled the banjo player to play more melodically. Fiddle playing evolved into a completely different style from its traditional Anglo-Saxon style. Influenced by commercial jazz and swing, the bluegrass fiddle developed a clearly distinctive blues style. Bluegrass also incorporated other popular styles from ragtime and vaudeville. Almost all bluegrass was performed by white musicians, though, bluegrass reflected an interchange of white and black American musical traditions.[20]

If the Weavers's music represented the mixture of folk music and the mainstream popular music, the bluegrass music blended southern white hillbilly and African-American vernacular music. Understanding bluegrass as authentic folk music

would thus be inaccurate if we took "authentic" as something genuine or original in the historical sense. The history of bluegrass reminds us of the arbitrary nature of such notions as "folk" and "authenticity." Bluegrass demonstrated its peculiarity in that it represented authenticity, which satisfied the hard-core folk audience, and at the same time proved commercially successful. The folk music revivalists meditated on these notions or tried to articulate them. Commercialism was another important notion the revivalists struggled to interpret.

The Kingston Trio

The debate over commercialism occurred again when the Kingston Trio released "Tom Dooley," a cover version of traditional folk song reportedly written by the North Carolina old-time banjo player Frank Proffitt. It was released in September 1958 and soared to the top of the chart in the same year. Like the Weavers, the Kingston Trio sang in harmony. The three college graduates—David Guard, Bob Shane, and Nick Reynolds—created a polished chorus with a flavor of the Caribbean folk music called calypso, which became popular a few years earlier notably by Harry Belafonte. Also similar to the Weavers was their clothing. The trio dressed up neatly to be accepted by the mass audience. Pinstripe shirt with button-down collar was their trademark and they wore crew-cuts and always smiled at the camera.

The Kingston Trio came from San Francisco. Reynolds and Shane were in business majors at Menlo College and Guard majored in economics at Stanford University. Originally named "The Calypsonians" around 1956, they performed at the local famous club Purple Onion. In mid 1957, the trio became the headline act for the

club. When Dave van Ronk, Brooklyn-born white blues singer, toured the West Coast, he happened to be at the Purple Onion and saw the Kingston Trio.

> The Kingston Trio had first hit it big in Frisco, at a joint called the Purple Onion, but their version of the folk crowd consisted of boys in neat little three-button suits with narrow little lapels and skinny little ties, and girls in evening gowns. Crew-cuts! ....My big problem....was that I didn't look like a folksinger.[21]

van Ronk had a similar surprising experience in Los Angeles, too. The people at folk clubs in West Coast were "more like regular Americans."[22] The Kingston Trio adopted the collegiate fashion from the beginning of their career. With pinstriped Oxford shirts, chino pants, and clean-cut hair, the trio looked just a perfect normalcy of the 1950s' American youth and their audience looked like "*Mademoiselle* and *Esquire* fashion models."[23]

The Kingston Trio brought a new audience to the folk music world. They changed the public image of folk music. Completely detached from political activism and social rebellion, the trio and its audience represented the "regular Americans" of the 1950s. They were the idols for teenage girls. *Life* magazine featured the Kingston Trio on the cover on August 3, 1959. The cover story reported that a thirteen-year-girl named Barbara, who had asked for their autographs, was surrounded by the three. After she got autographs form each member, Barbara "went to pieces."[24] R. Serge Denisoff characterized the Kingston Trio as the "synthesis of the Weavers and Elvis Presley," pointing out their overtly commercially-driven but grass-rooted manner in their renditions of folk materials.[25]

However, the Kingston Trio exemplified more than what Denisoff had described. The trio boosted domesticity which neither the Weavers nor Presley had represented. All

of them married before the age of twenty-five before or right after they made their debut. The *Life* article aforementioned printed two pictures of the three couples. One of the pictures shows their wives massaging their husbands between song sessions at a backstage. The other picture shows each couple cuddling with each other under an overturned boat on shore in New York. The trio's early marriage well fits into the postwar domestic ideal shared by middle-class Americans, which was believed to bring stability and security with them in the context of the Cold War and expanding affluence of national economy. A tint of rebellious or subversive trait that was able to be observed in the Weavers and Presley disappeared from the Kingston Trio. For the first time in the folk music history the Kingston Trio successfully appealed to the very middle of the road of American conformism. Not only did the Trio deliver their calypso-flavored rendition of traditional folk materials, they also embodied the normalcy of the 1950s by their backgrounds, education, stage costume, and marital status.

New Lost City Ramblers and the Friends of Old Time Music

While the Kingston Trio demonstrated their eclectic interest in folk music, the New Lost City Ramblers (hereafter NLCR) introduced the string-band hillbilly music of the 1920s and 1930s to urban audiences. Formed in 1958 by Mike Seeger, Tom Paley, and John Cohen, NLCR attempted to recapture the feeling of old-time music, as well as its musical style. Unlike the Kingston Trio who geared traditional materials toward contemporary tastes, NLCR emulated much the same as they had heard from commercial records released in the 1920s and 1930s. NLCR signed with Folkway Records in late 1958 and soon released the first album *The New Lost City Ramblers*. The songs NLCR selected for

the album included those of Gid Tanner & the Skillet Lickers, Fruit Jar Drinkers, the North Carolina Ramblers, Piedmont Log Rollers, and other hillbilly bands, some of which were complied in Harry Smith's *The Anthology of American Folk Music* in 1952. NLCR's first LP was, Robert Shelton reviewed in *New York Times*, a "finely wrought bit of musical archaeology and reconstruction. The trio have [sic] recaptured the part of the oldtime string bands with considerable flavor and wit."[26]

Tom Paley, born in 1928, and both John Cohen and Mike Seeger in 1932, were all raised in New York City. They had grown up listening to hillbilly songs on records and radio. Paley, alumnus of People's Song, had been playing the banjo since the 1940s and issued an 10-inch album *Folk Songs from the Southern Appalachians* from Electra in 1953. He was one of the performers at the Leadbelly memorial concert at Town Hall in January 1950. Mike Seeger was a half-brother of Pete Seeger and brother of Peggy Seeger. His father Charles was a musicologist at Harvard University. He grew up surrounded by an abundant amount of folk music and field recordings his father had collected with the Lomaxes. Cohen earned an M.A. degree in arts at Yale University. Variously interested in folk music, photography, paintings, and films, he was part of the Beat Generation circle including Jack Kerouac, Allen Ginsberg, and Robert Frank before becoming a member of NLCR.

NLCR's urban middle- or upper-class upbringing with college education, similar to those of the Kingston Trio's, nevertheless demonstrated a strikingly different notion of folk music from what the Kingston Trio did. For the album cover of their first album, NLCR used a photograph—a man playing the guitar under the shade of tree—by Russell Lee from the Library of Congress's Farm Security Administration collection. The use of

FSA photograph during the Depression era suggests that NLCR was true to representing the music they performed not only for its musical styles but also for its social backdrops to "promote a sense of studied authenticity."[27] Paley, Cohen, and Seeger dressed in turn-of-the-century plain clothing for performances, contrasted to the Kingston Trio's Ivy League pinstriped shirts. They replicated the authenticity of hillbilly music in the depression era. Cohen recalls that NLCR "stood in opposition to the commercialization of folk music which was being exploited by the Kingston Trio, the Limeliters, the Highwaymen, the Chad Mitchell Trio..., and other groups with collegiate appeal."[28]

As Cohen mentions, there were many musical followers of the Kingston Trio. The Limeliters—three men group composed of Lou Gottlieb (bass), Glenn Yarborough (guitar), and Alex Hassilev (banjo)—signed with Elektra, an independent folk label, in 1959. Before the contract they had performed in Aspen, Colorado, Los Angeles, and San Francisco. Gottlieb, one of the original members of the Gateway Singers, was an arranger for the Kingston Trio. The Limeliters was a folk trio skillful in playing and singing. Like the Kingston Trio, their arrangements and harmonies were "attractive... and well disciplined."[29] Their repertoire included such traditional songs as "John Henry" and "If I Had a Hammer." Gottlieb was also a seasoned comedian and he added comic interludes to the music. The Highwaymen, formed in 1958 by Wesleyan University students, made a hit single "Michael, Row the Boat Ashore" in the summer of 1961. Later they moved to Greenwich Village and began performing at Gaslight Café. The Chad Mitchell Trio was another college-originated folk group, formed in 1958 at Gonzaga University in Spokane, Washington. In 1959 the Chad Mitchell Trio traveled to New York to perform. With help from Barry Belafonte and others, the trio was given a series of opportunities to play in

New York. They soon signed with Colpix and released the first LP in late 1960.

Every record label —major and independent —looked for their own Kingston Trio, and in most cases they found one. The list continues. The Tarriers, folk trio from New York, released a single "The Banana Boat Song" with calypso arrangement in 1956. The Cumberland Three were from San Diego. One of the members John Steward was formally playing rock 'n' roll and switched to folk while in college. The Journeymen—trio of Scott McKenzie, John Phillips, and Eric Weissman—had been performing in Greenwich Village before they signed with Capitol in 1961.[30] The Brothers Four was formed in 1958 by University of Washington fraternity students. They performed at local clubs in Seattle. With the local success, the four students ventured to San Francisco during summer break and played at famous clubs like "hungry I" and Purple Onion, which brought them to sign with Columbia. The New Christy Minstrels, formed in 1961, was a ten-piece ensemble band. The leader Randy Sparks initially formed his trio the Randy Sparks Trio and expanded it into the New Christy Minstrels. They recorded their first album for Columbia in 1962, and did a nation-wide college tour across the US. In August 1964, the New Christy Minstrels performed at the Democratic National Convention at Atlantic City, New Jersey.

In Greenwich Village, the folk music community was puzzled by the sudden commercial success of these folk groups. Recognizing their musical technique, Robert Shelton assessed the college folk groups:

> A rash of energetic young trios and quartets have been turning to folk music for material. With almost a surfeit of imagination and technique, these groups have been tampering with, enlarging and distorting folk songs. Viewed through a popular-music telescope, the proliferation of folk groups is probably the healthiest thing to have happened in years to shake up Tin Pan Alley complacency. But viewed through the microscope of folk music, the majority of the groups are

> wasting energy and talent and defiling standards by veering so far away from the roots of the music.

Shelton, one of the most influential folk music critics in the Village, confessed his uneasiness about their ignorance of the folk roots. He continues:

> It is not a declaration of esthetic conservatism to say that the slower folk music changes, the better it is likely to be.... most of the groups are simply taking the shell of folk song without understanding, probing into or assimilating its inner core.[31]

This is the reason why NLCR received high acclaim from the Village folk audience. The young folklorist Ellen Stekert comments in a symposium on *New York Folklore Quarterly* in 1963 that NLCR "seriously try to understand the culture from which the song came and who try to go back and absorb this culture themselves so that they can then produce stylistically the material the way it would be sung in the traditional culture."[32] This kind of appraisal was repeated over and over by different audiences. For instance, Sandy Paton, folksinger and collector, aptly summarizes the significance of NLCR in three points: the group emulated "genuine country music sound by drawing their style, as well as their material, from early commercial recordings"; they presented their old-time music to urban audiences; and NLCR brought "real country musicians into the college festivals and concerts."[33]

Patton's third point refers to the Friends of Old Times Music (FOTM). In January 1961, Cohen of NLCR, the mandolin player Ralph Rinzler, and Izzy Young of the Folklore Center founded FOTM, a non-profit organization to bring authentic folk singers in the south to New York for concerts. The first concert took place on February 11, 1961, featuring Roscoe Holcomb (billed as "Traditional Singer of Kentucky). In order to assure the attendance, FOTM brought already popular three folk acts—Jean Ritchie, Greenbriar

Boys (bluegrass band), and NLCR. The second concert on March 25th presented Clarence Ashley ("Country recording star of the 1920s & '30s"). *New York Times* reporter Shelton was pleased to hear "the real folk music, without any personal or commercial axes to grind." Clarence Ashley and his band ("Five farmers from the Blue Ridge Mountains"), Shelton writes, were "as down-to-earth as the open collars and galluses they wore," which distinguishes them from "the slick, technically flashy Bluegrass bands that roam the South today."[34] *The Village Voice* editor J. R. Goddard celebrated the "gen-u-wine article in country music" of Ashley's performance. Like Shelton, Goddard seems to have liked the clothes Ashley wore and the manner in which he spoke, describing that he "sport[ed] an ancient hat and gallus suspenders over a boiled white shirt, [and] drawled " 'Ah'm gonna turn them boys square at ye.' "[35]

FOTM organized fourteen concerts between February 1961 and May 1965. Except for the first concert at which popular folk singers already active in New York like Jean Ritchie were featured, FOTM presented exclusively semi-professional or formerly professional less-known folk singers living in the South, some of whose songs, like those of Mississippi John Hurt, Clarence Ashley, Furry Lewis, and Dock Boggs, were included in Harry Smith's *Anthology of American Folk Music*. The audience who had listened to Smith's anthology might have been excited to watch these legendary singers singing on the stage. The FOTM organizers did not necessarily detest urban pop-folk performers who "distorted" folk materials as some critics insisted. FOTM's significance is that it brought a new dimension of authenticity by inviting traditional singers living in the 1960s to New York. The New York audience appreciated these folk performances not as legendary singers who had lived in the past, but as performances of current musical

expression.

Young Traditional Folk Singers

In early 1961 when FOTM launched a series of concerts, collegiate folk groups had dominated the national chart. But not all college students favored the Kingston Trio's style of folk music. In Greenwich Village tradition-oriented folk singers outnumbered pop-oriented folk singers. This was true even to young singers. It was just a month before the FOTM's first concert when Bob Dylan moved to New York from Minneapolis. He was then a follower of Woody Guthrie and playing Guthrie's songs in the Village. The twenty-year-old, who dropped out of the University of Minnesota, Dylan did not model himself after the college folk groups. He idealized Guthrie's hoboing life and imitated it in his way. Joan Baez, who had already been popular contracting with Vanguard, sang in a very traditional manner—following the Marian Anderson or Odetta tradition. Born into a wealthy family in 1941, Baez became a folk diva in Boston when she attended Boston University. Her first album *Joan Baez* in November 1960 featured thirteen traditional folk materials. Phil Ochs was from Columbia, Ohio. Dropping out of Ohio State University, Ochs came to New York in early 1962. In the Village, Ochs started singing at coffeehouses and bars. His interest was politics and he produced a number of topical songs.

Although Village folk singers and critics showed their preference for traditionalism, it did not mean that college folk chorus groups were not welcomed to the Village in the late 1950s. With the rise of popularity of folk music among college students, Village clubs and coffeehouses booked college folk groups to bring in college

students, especially from New York University. For the Village entertainment entrepreneurs, collegiate folk music was a welcome addition to their programs. College folk groups were sometime matched with traditional and veteran singers. For example, in 1959, the Tarriers participated in the benefit concert for the Folksingers Guild, a management office founded by van Ronk. College folk groups were able to fill large halls with their audience. The Kingston Trio had a recital at Carnegie Hall in November 1960. In August 1961, the Forest Hills Music Festival was crowded with an audience of 11,000 although its lineup was amalgam of different genres—Harry Belafonte, the Kingston Trio, Chad Mitchell Trio, Theodore Bikel, Odetta, Miriam Makeba (South African singer), Ella Fitzgerald, Judy Garland, Victor Borge, and Johnny Mathis. Rather than being a distinctive type of pop music, college folk music became an integral part of the popular music repertoire in New York.

This music was often matched with comedy. Before the folk music revival boom, Village clubs had offered comedies, occasionally tied with musical entertainments. They naturally set up the shows putting comedy and folk groups together. The Cumberland Three performed at Carnegie with comedian Shelley Berman in March 1961. Reporting that the concert was well received by a 2,700 member audience, Robert Shelton stated that it was not unusual for younger comedians such as Mort Sahl and Bob Newhart to play the theater and concert hall circuits with folk musicians.[36] The Limeliters had a cabaret comedy element in their artistry.[37] But, the most successful marriage of folk chorus and comedy was Peter, Paul & Mary. Before the trio was formed, Paul Stookey acted as a comedian at Village clubs.[38] At their debut performance at Bitter End in December 1961, Shelton reported, Stookey "explores the folklore of the sports car with

some amazing sound effects. ('There is a moment of truth between third and fourth gears')"[39]

At the same time, folk music promoters in Greenwich Village—clubs, coffee houses, concert organizers—continued presenting veteran folk singers. Veteran singers, who had been in the scene before the war, maintained their popularity in the Village folk scene, if not nationwide. Odetta, Burl Ives, and Pete Seeger were regulars at concerts in the Village and recorded for several labels. Black folk singer Josh White, who gained fame at his performance at Café Society in the 1940s, was still on the stage.[40] He had been constantly recording since the early 1940s for several record labels including Village independent label Elektra Records. In addition, younger singers who pursued the traditional style of folk singing—Theo Bikel, Jean Ritchie, and NLCR, to name a few—joined the coterie of folk tradition. The Village folk scene was rich in its number and variety of style—veteran and young, pop-oriented and traditional, white roots and black roots, and apolitical and residual radicalism.

Although folk music magazines, professional folklore journals, and some veteran folks singers expressed their distaste for the mushrooming of folk chorus groups initiated by the Kingston Trio, the Greenwich Village folk scene integrated the new musical trend into its gamut of entertainment. This is mainly because clubs, coffeehouse, and concert organizers were concerned, first and foremost, with their business. There was no reason for the folk music enterprises to miss the golden opportunity of huge popularity of college folk trio and quartets. Village-based record labels were no exception. Elektra Records signed with the Limeliters in 1960. Vanguard with the Rooftop Singers in 1962. While college pop-folk groups did not dominate the Village folk scene, they were not

excluded from the scene. The overall folk scene in the Village seems to have been less ideological than practical accepting and exploiting every part of the revival movement.

The categorization of folk music, with strong connotations of its aesthetic value, during the revival period became embedded in revivalists' way of understanding folk music. Many articles, from mainstream magazines to academic journals, discussed the folk music revival, most of which associated its aesthetic value with the degree of commercialization. Folk music magazines such as *Sing Out!*, *Caravan*, and campus folk music magazines had pointed out the influence of commercialism on folk music as early as before 1960, but it wasn't until 1962 that mainstream media concentrated attention on the anti-commercial aspect of the folk music revival movement. In June 1962 *Time* ran an article featuring four female folk singers—Joan Baez, Bonnie Dobson, Judy Collins, and Carolyn Hester. Titled as "The Folk-Girls," the article portrayed the four singers with "scorn of the " 'commercial' " as the bastion of traditional folk music. Citing Baez's words that "folk music depends on intent. If someone desires to make money, I don't call it folk music," the article conveyed the sense that folk music was an anti-commercial category, from which readers might infer that folk music was far different from other genre of popular music like rock 'n' roll.[41] When *Time* magazine featured Joan Baez on its cover in November 1962, it categorized folk music into Commercial (Popularizer or Impures), Pures (Authentics), and semi-purist (Adapters or Interpreters).[42]

Newsweek reported basically the same story as *Time*. Although pointing out that the folk music revival had been flourishing especially on the campus that had an "intellectual tradition," *Newsweek* dichotomized the folk revival supporters into "in-group" (which preferred traditional folk music) and "out-group" (commercialized

folk music supporters). The article then moved to the issue of money. Citing the words of Baez again ("The minute you start thinking about making money, you lose your spirit. I know I'm getting paid a hell of a lot. But I don't care about the money."), the article emphasized that the "real" folk singers were indifferent to making money.[43]

The self-defense of commercially successful folk singers like Baez, who insisted that money was not their primary concern, became commonplace. They all expressed distaste for being labeled "commercial." Peter, Paul and Mary, with the huge success hits such as "Blowin' in the Wind" and "If I Had a Hammer," contended that their motivation to sing was moral: "If they [critics] want to call us show biz, then let 'em call us show biz. But if we're show business, we're something different, we're show business with *morals* [original italic]."[44]

Their insistence of priority on "morals" or "spirits" rather than on making money came not only from the desire to differentiate themselves from other pop-oriented folk groups including the Kingston Trio, but also from their artistic identity that they were playing authentic folk music. Being part of a tradition of folk music, Baez and the trio of Peter, Paul, and Mary implied that they belonged to the folk community that was based on the imaginary affiliation with socio-economically marginalized people who nonetheless, as the common men, have taken their hardship in stride. Placing themselves within this folk music genealogy, postwar folk revival singers claimed that they could do something more than the usual "show business."

Their insistence on "morals" and "spirits" had a powerful effect on the folk revival audience. Because folk revivalists understood that this was their own socioeconomic conditions in which commercial-driven ethos had prevailed in all walks of

life and struggled to make sense of it, folksingers' contention that morality was of prime importance validated the involvement of the folk revival practice. Prioritizing morals was the concern not only for successful folksingers like Baez, but also for all folk revivalists and folk revivalists struggled to find a way not to compromise their moral values in the world of commercialization.

Broadside Magazine and Topical Songs

The commercial success of folk chorus groups initiated by the Kingston Trio raised the question of how to reconcile this new type of folk music with the traditional folk music. Before the Kingston Trio, people in the folk community shared a sense of what folk music was: it was a music sung by generation to generation; it was a medium for left-wing politics; and it was a music for oppressed or marginalized Americans. The Kingston Trio did not fit into any categories of these definitive imageries of folk music. The leftist-leaning audience tended to criticize the commercialism because leftist politics had long antagonized capitalism that, they thought, had exploited workers. Folk music magazines often printed articles on commercialization of folk music from both pro and con sides.

In February 1962, a new folk music magazine was published by Sis Cunningham and Gordon Friesen. They married in 1941 and soon moved to New York. They befriended with Pete Seeger and his Almanac Singers members. During WWII, Friesen worked for the Office of War Information, but he was soon fired because his political affiliation in the past was questioned by the FBI. After the war when he was working for CBS, the Red Scare pushed him away from the job again. Meanwhile, Cunningham

performed and wrote songs for People's Song. Surviving the pressure of McCarthyism in the early 1950s and witnessing the folk music revival movement in Greenwich Village in the late 1950s, Cunningham and Friesen conceived an idea to publish a topical song magazine. They named it *Broadside*.

Broadside was exclusively a topical song magazine. In the first issue *Broadside* declared that "*Broadside* may never publish a song that could be called a 'folk song.'" Although *Broadside* admitted that "many of best folk songs were topical songs at their inception," what *Broadside* was concerned with were certain types of songs that dealt with the reality—problems of current American society.[45] *Broadside* decided to print as many topical songs as possible so that the magazine would be a medium through which political awareness would be diffused among subscribers. Following this editorial policy, *Broadside* printed "original" lyrics of topical songs, and oftentimes their melodies, too. The first issue in February 1962 contained six topical songs: "Will You Work for Peace, Or Wait for War?" by Agnes Friesen, a teenage daughter of Cunningham and Friesen—a song against war; "Boxholder, Local" by Ernest Marrs, migratory worker—a protest against junk mail; "Carlino" by Gil Turner—an attack on a reactionary New York State politician who had supported building bomb shelters; "Little David" by Eddie Gottlieb, school principal—a song against war; "Talking John Birch" by Bob Dylan, who had already contracted with Columbia Record and whose first album was about to come out—a satire song about the John Birch Society; and "Come Clean Blues" by Malvina Reynolds, famous veteran singer from the West coast—a song for strikers at the Colgate-Palmolive plant in Berkeley, California.

Broadside often reprinted newspaper articles relevant to the themes of particular

topical songs. For example, when *Broadside* printed a song about the Cuban missile crisis in October 1962, a clipping from *New York Times* reporting the invasion was laid out with the lyric and notation of the song. *New York Times* was the most oft-reprinted source for clippings, including Robert Shelton's articles on folk music. Among other major publications used for reprinting included *Time, The Economist, The Nation, Village Voice,* and *Life*. By using clippings from major newspapers and magazines, *Broadside* impressed the readers that its topical songs functioned as social commentary on several issues such as nuclear weapons, civil liberties, the corporate responsibility, war, and the civil rights.

Broadside's emphasis on "topical song" appears, in part, to have been generated from its ambition to publish something different from *Sing Out!*. As a successor to *People's Song Bulletin*, which was an organ of People's Song, *Sing Out!* started in 1950. When *People's Song Bulletin* ceased in 1949, its executive director Irwin Silber attempted to rekindle the *People's Song Bulletin*'s mission by publishing a new magazine. There were arguably ideological similarities between *People's Song Bulletin* and *Sing Out!*. Silber recalls:

> an America based on the celebration of "working people" and the "common man"; the trade union movement and the hope that it would be the driving force for a "better" America; a commitment to racial equality; anti-fascism; and a sense that communism as we knew it was a political and spiritual force in that process.[46]

Although *Sing Out!*'s ideological bent became thinner and thinner as the 1950s came to a close, what did not change was no direct reference to the current social issues in America.

The decision of Cunningham and Friesen to publish a topical song magazine was not ascribed to their sense of rivalry with *Sing Out!* alone. They had also complained

about pop-folk music because it did not contain a political edge. Echoing the critical theorist Theodore Adorno, Friesen wrote in the August 1962 issue that many folk songs in the folk music revival movement were "songs of retreat and even passive submission." Singling out songs like "Tom Dooley," "The John B, Sails (Sloop John B.)," and "Railroad Bill," Friesen attacked these songs because, in the case of "The John B. Sails," the level of lyrics were as low as that of "Amos & Andy"; in the case of "Railroad Bill," the corporate executive never worked for railroad construction; and in the case of "Tom Dooley," it was "just another aimless murder story no different from the hundreds of such stories in the 'detective' magazines cluttering up our news stand." Friesen concluded that these three songs "give ... the audience some kicks. Hardly a sound basis for the growth of a healthy folk music movement."[47]

Because of his position as the publisher for *Broadside*, Friesen's criticism might give us an impression that *Broadside* employed an anti-commercial policy. But this is not correct: from the beginning, *Broadside* did not take an anti-commercial stance. It is true that the magazine printed many songs against big corporations and business corruptions and ran articles discussing the malicious influence of commercialism, but it does not mean that *Broadside* resisted commercialism per se. *Broadside* recognized beneficial sides of the commercialization of folk music. *Broadside* congratulated its topical songwriters who signed with record companies even if they were major labels. For example, when Bob Dylan's first album *Bob Dylan* was released from Columbia, *Broadside* informed the readers of his album. *Broadside* hoped that Dylan's song printed in the magazine would become commercially successful. The New World Singers, *Broadside* noticed, "have just finished recording a batch of singles for Atlantic. Their

single-cut song "It's All Right, Babe," which appeared in *Broadside* a few months earlier, "should be a real hit."[48] When reporting a folk concert by Phil Ochs at Gerde's, *Broadside* wrote that his live performance was attracting "some of the bigger recording companies...Let's hope a contract will be waiting."[49] *Broadside* hoped that these songs or singers, which and who appeared in *Broadside*, would become commercially successful.

Since *Broadside* preferred to see folk singers becoming popular, it fought against the media censorship that would prevent some singers from singing in certain venues. In April 1963, ABC Television began broadcasting a weekly 30-minute program *Hootenanny* on Saturday nights. Featuring well-known folk singers and groups, *Hootenanny* attempted to capitalize on the folk music movement. Each segment was recorded at a college campus and guest singers performed before college students. The program, however, stirred a controversy from the beginning when it banned Pete Seeger from the program for his alleged communist affiliation. The folk music community in Greenwich Village immediately formed an ad hoc organization called "Folksingers Committee to End the Blacklist" to express objection against the ABC's decision about Seeger. Joan Baez took the first action for the organization by refusing to perform for the program. Other singers such as Tom Paxton, Barbara Dane, Peter, Paul & Mary, Bob Dylan, even The Greenbriar Boys and The Kingston Trio, followed Baez.[50] About this event, Friesen wrote angrily that it would be a shame for ABC if Seeger was not permitted to perform for the show because he had been one of the great folk singers responsible for the development of American folk tradition. Friesen's anger also pointed to the poor quality of the program. The audience looked bored because, Friesen assumed,

the songs sung at the program had no appeal to the college students due to the lack of timely lyrical content. Here again, Friesen argued about the usefulness of topical song because of its reference to social issues.[51]

The interesting point in Friesen's argument is that he appeared to want to watch Seeger performing on TV. While disappointed by the content of the *Hootenanny* program, Friesen did not express antipathy toward TV as a medium. From the inception in 1962 to around 1965 when folk-rock emerged as an edgy pop music style, the contributors to *Broadside* were comprised of both unknown and commercially successful songwriters. The most frequent contributor was Malvina Reynolds and the second was Phil Ochs. There was "nothing wrong" with becoming popular, said Friesen, "...the composer should try to reach his or her maximum audience."[52] *Broadside* hoped that the magazine could produce commercial hits. While *Broadside* resisted the commercialized folk music movement because the movement had produced de-politicized and neutralized folk songs,[53] it would be a mistake to assume that *Broadside* hated the commercialization of folk music. In fact, *Broadside* held a distinctive position in the folk music revival scene in which the magazine sought to circulate as many topical songs as possible no matter how they were circulated. Seizing the opportunity of the folk music revival boom, *Broadside* attempted to spread its topical songs to a broad and diverse audience, maintaining its rigid criteria for the quality of song but being less critical about how the song was disseminated.

Conclusion

Because folk music had been commercial since the 1920s, the heated debate over the

commercialization of folk music in the postwar revival period seems to be odd. But the fact is that many people in the postwar era forgot that folk music had been commercial early on. This gap helped raise an aesthetic question about the relationship between folk music and its commercialization. The folk revivalists, regardless of their positions, contemplated the issue of "commercialization" in the context of an emerging mass culture society. Raising a question about propriety of commercialization of folk music, or the debate over authenticity, enabled the folk community to reconsider the nature of folk music and its relation to the postwar American society. *Broadside* magazine became a vehicle for demonstrating the strengths of folk music legacy as social criticism, reminding readers of folk music's relationship with left-wing politics in the pre-WWII period, and presenting an idea of how to reconcile the authenticity of folk music with the American system of mass consumption. The anti-commercialization argument did not merely show its conservative nature by attacking the changing nature of folk music and defending the tradition but also reflected a transitional phase of American social condition.

The purist notion of folk music functioned as an antithesis of the drastic change of American society that occurred within a couple of decades, rather than as a direct criticism to folk music whose value had been diluted. The purists, while expressing their distaste for commercialized folk music and advocating back-to-the-tradition mantra, delivered a message that something was wrong with over-industrialized postwar America. The idea of authenticity was brought in to respond to the changing face of folk music. The sound of college folk groups like the Kingston Trio was so different from those of traditional folk songs. Defining folk music therefore was an important process

for both defenders of authentic folk sound and popularizers to confirm the continuity of the relationship between folk music and social condition, or at the very least, to learn the history of folk music.

The contestation of commercialized folk music, the search for authentic folk music attempted by FOTM, and nostalgic vision of folk music were collective reaction to the "affluent society," also the title of a 1958 book by the economist John Kenneth Galbraith. In this book, Galbraith pointed out the imbalance between private goods and public goods. America, on the one hand, was producing an overwhelmingly large amount of private goods such as automobiles and televisions, but, on the other hand, it did not appropriately invest in social infrastructure such as education and healthcare. At this same time the folk revival, with its leftist legacy and sympathy toward marginalized people, became concerned with that other side of America, which was left behind in the national pursuit of affluence.

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[3] Ronald D. Cohen, *Rainbow Quest: The Folk Music Revival and American Society, 1940-1970* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2002), 42.
[4] Ibid., 42-43, 45.
[5] Ibid., 62.
[6] Cohen, *Folk Song America: A Twentieth Century Revival*, 37.
[7] Robbie Lieberman, *"My Song Is My Weapon": People's Songs, American Communism, and the Politics of Culture, 1930-1950* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1989), 99.
[8] Richard A. Reuss and JoAnne C. Reuss, *American Folk Music and Left-Wing Politics, 1927-1957* (Lanham, Md.: Scarecrow Press, 2000), 233.
[9] Oscar Brand, *The Ballad Mongers: Rise of the Modern Folk Song* (New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1962), 106.
[10] "Memorial Concert Honors Lead Belly," *New York Times*, January 30, 1950, p. 29.
[11] Brand, *The Ballad Mongers: Rise of the Modern Folk Song*, 142-143.
[12] Lieberman, *"My Song Is My Weapon": People's Songs, American Communism, and the Politics of Culture, 1930-1950*, 57-58.
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[15] Ron Radosh, "Commercialism and the Folksong Revival," in *The American Folk Scene: Dimensions of the Folksong Revival*, ed. David A. De Turk & A Poulin Jr. (New York: A Laurel Original, 1967), 305.
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[17] Reuss and Reuss, *American Folk Music and Left-Wing Politics, 1927-1957*, 236-237.
[18] Cohen, *Rainbow Quest: The Folk Music Revival and American Society, 1940-1970*, 79.
[19] Neil V. Rosenberg, "From Sound to Style: The Emergence of Bluegrass," *Journal of American Folklore* 80, no. 316 (1967): 143.
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[46] Cohen, *"Wasn't That a Time!": Firsthand Accounts of the Folk Music Revival*, 96.
[47] Gordon Friesen, "Whither American Folk Music?," *Broadside*, no. 11-12, August 1962.
[48] *Broadside*, no.23, March 1963.
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[50] Nat Hentoff, "Footnotes to Hootenanny," *Village Voice*, April 18, 1963. (Reprinted in *Broadside*, no.25, Late-April issue, 1963).
[51] "Bulletins from the Blacklist Front," *Broadside*, no. 32, September 1963; Gordon Friesen, "There's No Blacklist in Haven," *Broadside*, no. 24, April 1963.
[52] Sis Cunningham and Gordon Friesen, *Red Dust and Broadsides: A Joint Autobiography* (Amherst, Mass.: University of Massachusetts Press, 1999), 296.
[53] Pete Seeger told the same idea about the role of television. See J. C. Barden, "Pete Seeger," *Hi Fidelity*, January 1963, p. 105. In this article Seeger also mentioned that his transfer from Folkways to Columbia might have allowed him to reach wider audience.

CHAPTER 2

FOLK SINGERS AND GREENWICH REBELS

During the 1950s, many young artists and activists lived in Greenwich Village in New York. Political activists, abstract painters, Beat poets, journalists, avant-garde dancers, actors, jazz musicians and folk singers congregated with one another and created distinctive cultural forms in their fields. Folk singers had personal relationships with Village artists and activists and constituted a part of the Village rebellious culture.

Greenwich Village became the center of the folk revival movement with many folk music venues and institutions such as coffeehouses, nightclubs, folk record companies, and folk music magazine publishers. The coffeehouses, called "basket houses" because members of the audience put their money in a small basket if they liked the performance, offered folk music acts to attract customers. In fact, many folk singers including Dave van Ronk and Bob Dylan started their careers from basket houses. However, folk music was heard not only in coffeehouses in the Village, but also often in Washington Square on Sunday afternoons where folk singers congregated and performed their own folk music. The audiences and bystanders could listen to several types of folk music from blues to bluegrass and ethnic folk songs.

A more informal style of folk entertainment than that at coffeehouse was the hootenanny, a participatory-based folk gathering. Little boundary existed between performer and audience, and, therefore, everyone could perform regardless of their technical skills. The hootenanny had been a popular event before WWII among the left-wing organizations such as People's Song to mobilize and show the solidarity of working

class people. In the revival era, such a political implication became less and less conspicuous, but the format of hootenanny as a means to promote the sense of togetherness remained.

The one place in Greenwich Village that best represented the folk music revival movement was the Folklore Center. Started in 1957, the Folklore Center sold folk records, instruments, books on folk music, concert tickets, and other miscellaneous goods related to folk music. Located near Washington Square, the Folklore Center served as an information vendor for folk singers and the audiences and as a place to meet these people. Soon after starting the Folklore Center, the owner Israel (Izzy) Young began sponsoring folk concerts on his own and in early 1960 co-founded the Fifth Peg, one of the first coffeehouses featuring folk acts on a regular basis.[1] In 1962 he co-founded an organization called Friend of Old Time Music to invite southern folk singers to perform in New York. Young himself and his Folklore Center functioned as a magnet to connect the people who were involved in the Village's folk scene.

Not only did the Village folk scene attract national and local media attention, the Village also created its own folk journalism. *Sing Out!*, the most popular folk magazine, had been published since 1950, and many key figures including Pete Seeger and Izzy Young contributed articles to it. Less professional-looking than *Sing Out!*, but as influential, *Broadside* printed folk songs on topical issues including Bob Dylan's "Blowin' in the Wind," and its singers committed themselves to the civil rights movement. *Caravan* started as early as 1957, providing concert and record reviews and articles, some of which were provocative arguments about authenticity-versus-commercialization. The town weekly *Village Voice*, a newly launched weekly paper in

1955, also covered the happenings in the folk scene in the Village. *The New York Times* staff writer Robert Shelton, who first reported Dylan's performance in the Village, covered various kinds of folk music events. The more pop-oriented magazine *Hootenanny*, a companion magazine to the ABC's program of the same title, attracted a wider range of audience than these small folk publications mentioned earlier.

In the late 1950s major record companies were searching for a new youth-oriented music after the sudden decline of rock 'n' roll craze, and they began cultivating the folk music genre. Besides the major record companies like Columbia and Decca, there were independent folk-specialty labels such as Folkways and Elektra in the Village. Independent labels were not vulnerable to the major labels; they had released a significant number of folk records and laid the groundwork for expansion of interest in folk music among the young generation, especially, college students.

This chapter explores the characteristics of Village culture and its relationship with the folk revival movement. By examining folk singers in the Village and their relationships with other cultural and political figures, I attempt to place the folk revival movement in a broader context of American youth culture in the 1950s and early 1960s. My contention in this chapter is that the culture of Greenwich Village in this period represents to a great extent the mindset of suburban middle-class youth throughout the nation. From the Beat Generation to the folk revivalists, the young cultural rebels in the Village created distinctive cultural practice derived from their middle-class anxiety.

Also in this chapter, particular attention is paid to the relationship between folk singers and Beat writers, especially their way of understanding artistic identities in relation to the postwar American society. The Beats and Village folk singers, as well as

artists in other genres, held a common understanding of American society. Having lived in a society of conformity under the Cold War political tension, these two groups saw beautiful and simple people as beaten by the society or marginalized by the urbanization of society. To Beat writers, these beautiful and simple people were black hipsters, and, to folk revivalists, they were authentic folk singers living in the South.

Both Beat writers and folk revivalists romanticized the culture of others. The Beat writers embraced African Americans' bebop, from which they found the notion of spontaneity or improvisation—something lost in American mainstream that was controlled by scientific management and calculation. They thought that the notion of spontaneity could be their personal revolt against a predominant force of corporate liberalism.[2] Folk revivalists embraced the folk singing tradition still alive in a rural region that had been alienated from mainstream American geopolitics. They incorporated this tradition of embracing others' cultures into their own social backgrounds as middle-class whites to create their folk revival culture.

Relying on autobiographies by several authors from different fields who contributed to making the Village rebellious culture in the 1950s, I attempt in this chapter to construct an overview of the Greenwich Village cultural milieu that has more to do with the creation of the folk revival movement. Since the folk revival movement was primarily a culture of the middle-class white students, the selection of figures that appears in this chapter represents this constituency. I argue that most of the Village cultural figures shared the concern that folk revivalists had about American society and its connection to identity formation. Most of the Greenwich Village rebels were middle-class, college-educated dropouts or graduates from Cold War suburban families. No

matter what their political standpoints or what their works expressed, they were a microcosm for what happened to the rest of the middle- and upper-class young generation in postwar America.

The Beat Generation

Sociological accounts of the 1950s have conventionally explained that it was the decade that overwhelmed individuals and forced them to become a part of the established society. Sociologists, for instance, have labeled the Americans in the 1950s as part of "the lonely crowd" or "the organization man," for instance. David Riesman argued that the postwar society associated with the Cold War ideological tension, suburbia, and consumer-oriented market structure, was redirecting the American character toward other-directedness. Calling them "the lonely crowd," Riesman pointed out that the value of other-directed Americans was determined by peer groups of the same social class, age, and educational background. Meanwhile, William H. Whyte, Jr., called the new American character "the organization man" who conformed to the system in which he was employed and who believed in the "Social Ethic" that legitimized social pressure against the individual. "Social Ethic," White defined, had three propositions: a belief in the group, a belief in belongingness, and a belief in the application of science to achieve the belongingness.[3]

The Beat Generation was one of the first cultural movements that challenged such a granted view. In 1952, five years earlier than the publication of Kerouac's *On the Road*, John Clellon Holmes published an article "This is the Beat Generation" in the *New York Times*. In this article, which first used the term "Beat Generation," comparing his

generation to the Lost Generation, Holmes characterized his generation as having "an instinctive individuality, needing no bohemianism or imposed eccentricity to express it."[4] Bohemians of the Lost Generation during the 1920s, Holmes stated, were the people who were "occupied with the loss of faith" and who sought "diversion" to fill its blank. Members of the Beat Generation, Holmes explained, were concerned with how to live rather than why to live. They were motivated with the curiosity to live, which led them to become interested in bebop, narcotics, promiscuity, existentialism, and hucksterism.

The Beat Generation was a generation that adored hipsterism. Norman Mailer explicated the idea that being "Hip" was the key to overcoming conformity in his famous essay "The White Negro." The source of Hip came from African Americans who had been living on the margin in the course of American history. More concretely, Mailer pointed out, the direct source of Hip was jazz. Bebop jazz players in the 1940s and early 1950s represented the essence of Hip, living for immediate pleasures rather than postponing satisfaction associated with the Social Ethic. Having adapted this ethos, more and more white middle-class youth began spending lives in their own way; they seemed to "divorce [themselves] from society, to exist without roots, to set out on that uncharted journey into the rebellious imperatives of the self."[5] They distanced themselves from the white society to which they, in the sociological sense, belonged and instead invested themselves into the African American's marginalized culture. Jack Kerouac observed that hipsters were the people who "looked like criminals and spoke a language sprinkled liberally with such phrases as 'crazy, man' and 'man, I'm beat.'" Hipsters possess "a long line of personal experience and vision, nightlong expressions full of hope that had become illicit and repressed by War, stirring rumblings of a new soul."[6]

Yet the Beat Generation was not synonymous with hipsterism. While the original hipsters were homeless beings in the sense that they were cut off from the rest of the society and they found Greenwich Village a home, the Beat Generation came to the Village to find their home to fill the emptiness derived from their psychological homelessness. Kerouac was aware that by the end of the 1940s the original black hipsters had "vanished into jails and madhouses or were shamed into silent conformity; the generation itself was short-lived and small in number."[7] Thus he dreamed that he and his generation of white middle-class Americans would live *like the original hipsters.* With this understanding that the original hipsters had disappeared when the Beat moved to the Village, we can read *On the Road* as homage to the original hipsters. *On the Road* was published in 1957, but Kerouac had finished its manuscript by the early 1950s. *On the Road*, Kerouac explained, was an attempt at "an imaginative survey of a new American generation known as the 'Hip' (The Knowing) with emphasis on their problems in the mid-century 50s and their historical relationship with preceding generations." Characters in *On the Road* hitch-hiked across the country, which "lasted until 1949 or so... the 1950s began a new sinisterness in America." The Beat Generation, as Kerouac and Holmes claimed, was their attempt to challenge this "new sinisterness of the 1950s."[8]

As Mailer pointed out, the Beats were more idyllic than the original hipsters.[9] The original hipsters came out of a "muted rebellion of the proletariat."[10] They were beaten down by the society. As the marginalized, whose power could not be materialized in the realm of politics and economy, they instead became engaged themselves in the cultural arena in which they could use their spontaneity and primitiveness. Mailer, Kerouac, and others embraced the hipsterism they discovered in African American culture, but what

they meant by "Beat" was different from what they called "hipster." "Beat" was conceptual and idealistic; hipster was more existential. In the essay "About the Beat Generation," Kerouac explicated the idea of "Beat" and "hipsters." While hipsters meant "characters of a special spirituality...the subterranean heroes who'd finally turned from the freedom machine of the West," the Beat Generation was "just an idea in our minds."[11]

The Beat writers were born and raised in socially accepted white middle- and upper-class families. Kerouac was born into a middle-class family in Lowell, Massachusetts. He enrolled in Columbia University with football scholarship. Ginsberg was a son of a teacher in Paterson, New Jersey, and also enrolled in Columbia. In their novels and poetry, the Beat Generation nonetheless cast a doubt about the norm of class they belonged to.[12] The Beat poet Ted Joans said:

> we're the richest people in the world and yet we don't have truth and love. It's not what's up front that counts, it's what's in your heart and brain. There is nothing wrong with material possessions. But you should use them and not let them use you. I think everybody wants to conform, but the future of the world lies in the hands of the nonconformists....[13]

To become nonconformists, the Beat Generation disguised themselves as culturally marginalized Americans from the middle-class norm. They were not able to find out their raison d'être in their suburban neighborhood, which they thought was responsible for the loss of identity. Therefore, they tried to find a way out from their middle-class-ness and found a clue in the culture of hipsterism from African American artists like beboppers. Hipsterism, they thought, would give them a clue as to how to have "truth and love" in the abundance of "material possessions."

Postwar Rebels in Greenwich Village

On the first night Michael Harrington arrived in New York from Chicago in the fall of 1949, he went out to Greenwich Village and entered a bar named Café Bohemia on Barrow Street. The bar turned out to be a lesbian place, but he found it fascinating and enjoyed a conversation with a lesbian woman.

The next night he went to another bar in the Village named San Remo on MacDougal Street. It was, Harrington called, the "united front of the Village." The customers of San Remo consisted of diverse groups of artists: old writers like Maxwell Bodenheim and James Agee; writers of younger generation like Allen Ginsberg, Jack Kerouac, Larry Rivers, and Paul Goodman; dance revolutionaries Julian Beck and Judith Marina, who would found The Living Theatre; avant-garde dancer Merce Cunningham and his associate composer John Cage; and painters like William de Kooning, Franz Klein, and Jackson Pollock. San Remo was also a place for many seamen, some of whom had joined the Spanish Civil War or were communist party members.

In fact, Jack Kerouac's novel *The Subterraneans* describes the people at San Remo through the eyes of the Ginsberg character Adam Moorad, who were "hip without being slick, they are intelligent without being corny, they are intellectual as hell and know all about Pound without being pretentious or talking too much about it, they are very quiet, they are very Christlike."[14]

In addition to the diversity of customers, San Remo was an interracial tavern. A year later, Harrington took his female friend, who had come from his hometown St. Louis, to Sam Remo to show her the "real" Village. When they went into the bar, he noticed that she visibly stiffened not because she encountered some homosexual customers but because she witnessed that white girls were sitting with black men to

chat.[15]

Despite such nervousness about cross-racial relationship and other social norms, some bars in the Village like Sam Remo challenged these norms. Cedar Tavern, on University Place between Eighth and Ninth Street, was always packed with painters. By the mid-1950s, after the death of Jackson Pollock, Cedar Tavern became a place of intersection between the first and second generations of abstract expressionists, who called themselves the "New York School." Although Cedar Tavern was not necessarily tolerant toward homosexuals and "beatniks"—a sign "No Beatniks Allowed" appeared on the door—,[16] its patron painters such as de Kooning and Kline mingled with homosexuals or beatniks just as the patrons at the San Remo or the White Horse had.

The White Horse Tavern, on Hudson and the Eleventh Street, was another popular hangout place among the literary and artistic circles. White Horse were famous for the fact that poet Dylan Thomas frequented the bar and had died at thirty-nine when he was drinking there in 1953. After the death of Thomas, the White Horse kept attracting young writers such as Norman Mailer, James Baldwin, Seymour Krim, and Dan Wakefield. Vance Bourjaily, who wrote a novel *The End of My Life*, held a regular Sunday meeting of writers at the bar. In attendance were Calder Willingham, John Aldridge, John Clellon Holmes, Herman Wouk, and Norman Mailer.

In addition to writers, musicians, actors, and painters, young politicos also were important to the Greenwich Village rebellious culture in the 1950s. The Young Democratic Party operative Daniel Moynihan was one of the patrons of the White Horse Tavern. The Catholic Worker leader Dorothy Day was on the scene and Harrington worked at Day's hospitality house for a while before he established the Young Socialist

League in 1954. It was at the White Horse tavern that the young journalist Dan Wakefield from Indiana received an offer to write book reviews for *Commonweal*, the liberal Catholic magazine. The office of *The Nation* magazine was located on Sixth Avenue. Journalists and activists from different institutions gathered at bars in the Village and developed friendships despite their ideological differences.

If bohemianism means, as Holmes suggests in his "This is the Beat Generation" essay comparing the Beat Generation with the Lost Generation, an escape from the social reality surrounding artists or an attitude seeking a haven from undesirable social conditions, the young artists and writers in Greenwich Village in the 1950s did not fit well into such a definition. The Beat Generation and postwar rebels had little of the cynicism or nihilism that the Lost Generation did. What they sought was faith—faith in themselves and faith in America. They had an "instinctive individuality," which contradicts the sociological explanation about the young generation of the 1950s. Holmes explains that the Beat Generation children were brought up during the collective bad circumstances such as the Depression and WWII. Thus they had little trust in collectivity and conformism.[17]

Harrington, born in St. Louis to a middle-class family, described himself and his cohorts in the Village as "voluntary exiles from a middle class."[18] In the era of the baby boomer, economic affluence, the collapse of institutions of social control including the family, and increased enrollment ,in universities, the traditional work ethic became more and more obsolete. Growing up in a nuclear family, baby boomers were taken care of; they had leisure time and didn't need to work in order to survive. For Harrington and others, the middle-class norm with which their parents grew up, did not work as a role

model for them. That norm was like a vacuum which left them directionless.

In the 1940s and 1950s, the Village culture was constructed not only by the people from families with radical leanings, but also by the people from the middle-class suburban baby boomers with no particular radical background. As discussed earlier, most of the Beat Writers came from the middle-class families and, voluntarily, dropped out of the mainstream American norm or became critical of it. As an ideological haven, Greenwich Village was a suitable place for them. In the Village they could be free from the middle-class norm that had bound them.

Folk singers in the Village held the same view about American society as many Village artists and writers. John Cohen, a member of the New Lost City Ramblers, moved to the Village in 1957. Like the Beat writers, he felt a sense of emptiness in the postwar American society and in his self-identity. To Cohen, the southern old-time music was his artistic solution equivalent to Beat poets' interest in jazz and poetry reading. Cohen's fascination with southern folk music provided him with an imaginary connection to the rural ideal life and a sense of community. His embrace of the southern hillbilly music was not so much a concern with social reform or socialist ideologue as "a search for real and human values."[19] Cohen and other Village artists believed that the problem needing to be solved was not the social system but how they would survive in the postwar entanglement of political, social, and cultural conditions that were all transforming into a disturbing new era.

Washington Square and hootenanny

During the 1950s, Cohen and other Village folk singers frequented bars and cafes along

with well-known Beat writers and other artists. At the White Horse Tavern, for instance, the Clancy Brothers, an Irish folk group, sang their Irish rebellion songs, in which young Mary Travers of future Peter, Paul & Mary would join.[20] It was at the Five Spot, a jazz club, that Ginsberg met Harry Smith for the first time, who is now regarded as one of the most important figures responsible for creating the folk music revival movement, with his 1952 6-LP folk music collection *The Anthology of American Folk Music* for Folkway Records.[21]

In addition to bars in the Village, folk singers had another heir place to perform within the Village. As stated in the introduction to this chapter, since the early 1950s folk singers and audiences had gathered at Washington Square on every Sunday from April to October to sing and play folk songs. It was a free concert played by anyone who wanted to play. The Sunday gathering in Washington Square attracted many onlookers including tourists. Around the mid-1950s, according to Dave Van Ronk, Washington Square offered five types of folk performances. First, there were dance groups which he calls "The Zionists." By the 1940s several folk dance groups had been active in New York. The most notable was the American Square Dance Group, founded by Margot Mayo. The dance company had much to do with folk music. Izzy Young, who would later found the Folklore Center, recalls that when he went to Mayo's American Square Dance Group in 1945 he heard Alan Lomax's records like *Mountain Frolic* and *Listen to Our Story* being played.[22] Mayo's dance company was one of the participants of the first hootenanny "Grapes of Wrath Evening" that took place in March 3, 1940, at Forrest Theater with many folk singers such as Aunt Molly Jackson, Leadbelly, Bess & Alan Lomax, Burl Ives, Woody Guthrie, Golden Gate Quartet, and Pete Seeger.[23]

The second type was the singers who sang old union songs. Van Ronk calls them "Stalinists," or "LYL-ers" [Labor Youth League]. This type represented the legacy of folk music in previous decades when folk music was strongly associated with leftist politics. Singers who belonged to People's Song like Jerry Silverman were categorized into this type. However, the political atmosphere had changed and the union movement lost its edge.

The third consisted of bluegrass players. Discussed in the previous chapter, bluegrass music advertised itself as an authentic country style although it was actually an eclecticism of several sources. The urban audience in the Village embraced bluegrass as an authentic folk music. Bluegrass enabled its players to develop various kinds of playing styles. For banjo playing, Earl Scruggs began unconventional three-finger picking. Roger Sprung developed a distinctive banjo playing style called "progressive bluegrass," blending elements of jazz and popular music. Scruggs was born and raised in the Piedmont region of North Carolina surrounded by old-time music. On the other hand, Sprung was a New Yorker, born in Manhattan in 1930. Sprung's family members played various instruments and he began playing the piano at the age of five. At eighteen he began playing the banjo, triggered by his frequent visits to Washington Square. The bluegrass players such as Sprung and Scruggs—composed of city-bred and mountain players—at Washington Square represented a new constituency of folk music revival. Contrary to the first (folk dance) and second (union songs) types, both of which had continuity of prewar folk music tradition, the bluegrass music demonstrated a new synthesis of traditional folk music, jazz, and popular music.

The fourth and fifth categories were ballad singers and blues singers, which,

according to van Ronk, made up the majority of Washington Square's folk performers.[24] A *New York Times* article in 1959 about the Sunday singing at Washington Square, headlined "Balladeers Drawing Visitors to Park Every Sunday," reported that the most popular instrument was the guitar. The singers with guitars learned their ballad and blues songs from books and records; very few were original.[25] Van Ronk himself was known as a blues singer. Like van Ronk, most of the blues and ballad singers at Washington Square were young whites. Some singers such as Jean Ritchie came from the southern region of the country, but some others like van Ronk were city dwellers.

The Washington Square folksinging was a gathering that had spontaneously developed. No organizer or sponsor existed. There was no official program that told who would sing at a particular date. There was no publicity. Singers and audiences would not know what was to happen at the fountain in the Square until they actually arrived. Anyone could sing with their instruments. Most of the audience came from outside the Village. One Villager confirmed that ninety percent of them were tourists from Brooklyn and the Bronx.[26] The singers and the audience who gathered at Washington Square represented a miniature of the folk music revival movement. These impromptu concerts provided a wide range of folk music performed by a variety of people and attracted many onlookers.

Another important informal gathering for folk singers in the Village was the hootenanny. Defined by Pete Seeger as a "gathering of those interested in folk song at which several singers sing folk songs,"[27] hootenanny played an important role in constructing the folk revival movement. Its origin goes back to the early 1940s when Pete Seeger and Woody Guthrie started a series of gatherings of folk singing to pay their rent.

As the participants of hootenanny increased in number, the gatherings held moved from their apartment to Town Hall, and finally to Carnegie Hall in 1960. Hootenanny was a long-established tradition for union organizers as a means to consolidate workers to gain their political goals. Unions organized hootenannies to inspire political awareness in union members. But as the time progressed, such political implications became less and less obvious. Hootenanny became recognized as an informal folksinging party, almost neutral to any political ideology.

As the term hootenanny became widely used to refer to many similar kinds of folk events, the contents and implication of hootenanny diversified, but the basic concept of it remained the same. According to Irwin Silber, publisher of folk music magazine *Sing Out!*, hootenanny is characterized by audience participation, song's topicality, variety of forms not simply folk music but also other forms of expressions, and openness to newcomers.[28]

The folk gathering at Washington Square and hootenannies represented important elements that resonated with the rebellious culture in the 1950s. Both folk events were based on informality and togetherness between performers and the audience. These events encouraged everyone to be a part of the event. This kind of participation culture contradicted the dominant commercial culture in which the consumers and producers were clearly divided. In a time when American industries were producing an enormous amount of products and Americans could afford to buy them, the American culture had become more and more divided: industries produced commodities and the rest of people consumed them.

Also the Sunday gatherings at Washington Square and hootenannies provided a

sense of community with participants. In a time when the suburbia life style, from which most of the folk revivalists came, had destroyed the community-based lifestyle, these folk events revived the sense of it, if not a substitution for it. Less hierarchical, profit-seeking, and ideological, Washington Square and hootenannies in Greenwich Village best represented the ethos of folk revival culture.

Coffeehouses

As it became apparent that folk music attracted many audiences, bars and clubs in the Village, including prominent clubs like Village Vanguard, increased their bookings of folk singers. One of the first endeavors to focus on folk acts took place when Art D'Logoff began a series of folk concerts featuring Pete Seeger and others at the Circle-in-the-Square Theater next to Actor's Playhouse in November 1955. Successful in the folk concert series, D'Logoff opened his nightclub Village Gate in 1958.[29] It offered jazz and folk music, as well as comedies. Dan Wakefield remembers that at Village Gate he listened to folk singers such as Nina Simone, Clancy Brothers, and Leon Bibb, as well as jazz greats like Charles Mingus and John Coltrane, plus many comedians including the still unknown Woody Allen.[30]

Meanwhile, European style cafés had been in business in the Village since the 1940s. They had served Italian-style espresso and cappuccino. Patrons could spend as much time reading books or talking with friends as they wanted at the cafés. The first European café was introduced in the Village in 1935 when Dominick Parisi imported a genuine espresso machine into the Village to open his Café Reggio. This was the beginning of the first wave that saw growth and proliferation of European style

coffeehouses in the Village such as David Grossblatt's Rienzi (107 McDougal), Café Wha? (on MacDougal), the Lion's Head, the Fat Black Pussy Cat; and the Figaro (186 Bleecker).[31] Although they occasionally held art events such as poetry readings or painting exhibitions, these coffeehouses maintained the European style—serving espresso, sandwiches, and providing chessboards for patrons to play on.[32]

Then, the second wave of coffeehouse emerged around the mid 1950s. They began offering live entertainment including folk singing. Opening in August 1958, Café Bizarre on Third Street was the first Village coffeehouse that featured folk music. It had a small stage in the back, with a sound system, lighting, and emcee. Folk singer Logan English directed the show. The opening act was Odetta. Cage Bizarre also featured poetry readings and poets like Ted Jones and William Morris read their poetry.[33] Gaslight Cafe, on MacDougal Street, mixed beat poetry and folk music. The owner John Mitchell published *The Gaslight Review,* an anthology of poetry. It was a non-liquor café, but customers were allowed to bring their own bottle. The most popular spot for poetry reading, Gaslight offered several poetry readings featuring, for example, Allen Ginsberg and Gregory Corso. When Van Ronk performed at the Gaslight, he experienced the beatnik snobbery in which the audience members snapped their fingers instead of clapping their hands when they wanted to praise his performance.[34] At Café Wha?, on MacDougal Street, the show was split into the day-time part and the night-time part. In the day-time part, audiences could watch all kinds of second-rate entertainments from comedy, poetry, song, impersonation, ventriloquy, to hypnotism. Fred Neil organized the day-time show. The night-time show, on the contrary, offered professional acts: youthful comedians such as Woody Allen, Lenny Bruce, Richard Pryor, and Joan Rivers, and

folksingers like the Journeymen.[35]

In its early years of the Greenwich Village folk scene, the way folk singers were evaluated depended on peer approval. For instance, at hootenannies and Washington Square, the evaluation of singers was ambiguous partly because they were free entertainment and partly because there was no clear boundary between performers and the audience. Most importantly, the folk music community was small without a sufficient number of outside audiences until around 1955; therefore, it had to be self-supporting. Before the folk revival boom, the folk music community audiences were themselves, their friends, and well-informed listeners. Therefore, the evaluation tended to be subjective and self-celebratory. As the folk revival boom progressed, the number of audiences who did not necessarily have extensive knowledge about folk music increased.[36] Some members of these audiences were even tourists, who just wanted to enjoy a good time. Thus, a serious, or authentic, solo singing style might not be appropriately appreciated by them.

After nightclubs and coffeehouses began featuring folk acts as commercial entertainment, the standard of evaluation to a great extent changed. The owners of these establishments began providing their own folk music entertainment by paying folk singers and by charging customers to listen to folk singers as well as other acts like stand-up comedies and jazz. The folk singers were inevitably evaluated in relation to other performances. Therefore, they needed to attract the audience not only by their folksinging but also by something else. For that purpose, some folk groups such as the Limeliters incorporated a comedy flavor into their folksinging. The most successful folk group with a comedy element was of course Peter, Paul & Mary. Paul Stokey played the role of

comedian entertaining the audience while the three sang with deliberate harmony.

Conclusion

During the early years of the folk revival movement in Greenwich Village, there was a cultural force that attracted many artists and writers. There was a "cross-pollination of music, painting, writing," said David Amram.[37] The Village artists, Michael Harrington wrote, built "a kind of organization of disorganization."[38] Challenging the flannel suit conformity under the Eisenhower America, the Village artists and writers built up a community with freewheeling spirit. White Horse was their headquarters. Abstract expressionists explored an improvisation and non-objective art form, rejecting narrative and representational painting. It was in the 1950s that unconventional poetry by e. e. cummings, a long-time Village poet, finally gained recognition and he was invited to tour campuses around the country. The avant-garde dance choreographer Merce Cunningham, having collaborated with John Cage since the 1940s, started his own dance company in 1953. African American jazz players and Beat poets collaborated to give improvisational performances, which resulted in creating a new art form "jazz-poetry." Improvisation was not only what jazz players did. Poets like Kerouac skillfully improvised words on the stage to go along with the music.[39]

The Village intellectual milieu in the 1950s demonstrated a generosity that did not segregate particular ideologues. William Buckley, Jr. and his cohorts, who would later found the conservative political organization, the Young Americans for Freedom, in 1960, frequented White Horse talking with lefty/liberal members like Harrington's Young Socialist League. There was, Wakefield recalls, so much "common ground of

conversation and interest with one another."[40] Conservatives and liberals shared concern for the dignity of the individuals who were struggling for freedom against highly institutionalized American society.[41] In *The Liberal Imagination* published in 1950, Lionel Trilling, English professor at Columbia University, argued that liberals, regardless of whether it meant leftist liberals or free marketer liberalism, shared the faith that human betterment was possible. In Trilling's view, both Buckley and Harrington were the same "liberals." Trilling's notion of liberal, which included left-wing liberals, who insisted on a larger role for government, and classical liberals, who demanded a free market, a smaller role for government, and individual rights, reflected the Village cultural milieu. There was not a clear distinction between right or left in the Village bohemia; They were both concerned with the essential human being.

The folk music revival movement in Greenwich Village sprang up from such a cross-cultural milieu of the Village during the period in which other cultural genres had been creating new forms. Folk music itself was hardly a new musical form, but it sounded new to urban audiences. Greenwich Village folksingers would soon transform old and traditional folk music into a definitive expression of their ideologies and identities. In the Village cultural landscape, folk music was not isolated, but it was a part of the larger rebellious culture that responded to the Cold War political and social rigidity. Abstract expressionists, avant-garde dancers, the Beat writers, and beboppers intertwined with one another and they often showed their works in collaboration with other genres. There were also socially-minded journalists and political activists in the Village. Unlike the Village bohemians in the 1920s and 1930s who had been socially marginalized from the American mainstream, the fifties' Village bohemians, who were

not necessarily socially marginalized but culturally and ideologically marginalized, chose to live as if they were marginalized because they thought that the American social condition had spoiled their essence of humanity.

The Village artists were not social critics, who would describe the problem and how it happened, and then provide prescriptions to remedy social illnesses. Instead, the Beat writers and the Village folksingers created artistic frameworks as a way to understand the society to which they belonged. They voluntarily estranged themselves from their white, urban, and middle/upper-class identity to create their own cultural identities. The act of alienation linked them to the construction of their own cultural identity embodied by their works and contributed to the creation of their cultural movements such as the Beat Generation and the folk revival movement.

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[1] For the history of the Fifth Peg, see Robbie Woliver, *Bringing It All Back Home: 25 Years of American Music at Folk City* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1986). The Fifth Peg was renamed Gerde's Folk City in June, 1960.

[2] Daniel Belgrad, *The Culture of Spontaneity: Improvisation and the Arts in Postwar America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 197-98. See also George Lipsitz, *Rainbow at Midnight: Labor and Culture in the 1940s* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1994), 59-60.

[3] William Hollingsworth Whyte, *The Organization Man* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002); David Riesman, *The Lonely Crowd: A Study of the Changing American Character* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1950).

[4] Clellon Holmes, "This Is the Beat Generation," *New York Times*, November 16, 1952, p. SM10.

[5] Norman Mailer, "The White Negro: Superficial Reflection on the Hipster," *Dissent* 4 (1957): 277.

[6] Paul S. George and Jerald M. Starr, "Beat Politics: New Left and Hippie Beginnings in the Postwar Counterculture," in *Cultural Politics: Radical Movements in Modern History*, ed. Jerold M. Starr (New York: Praeger, 1985), 194.

[7] Jack Kerouac, *Visions of Cody*, (New York: McGraw Hill, 1972), 36-37.

[8] Jack Kerouac, *Selected Letters, 1957-1969*, ed. Ann Charters (New York: Viking). 226n, 409.

[9] Fred W. McDarrah and Gloria S. McDarrah, *Beat Generation: Glory Days in Greenwich Village* (New York: Schirmer Books, 1996). 5.

[10] Norman Mailer, "Hipster and Beatnik: A Footnote To 'The White Negro,'" in *Advertisements for Myself* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1959), 373.

[11] Jack Kerouac and Ann Charters, *The Portable Jack Kerouac* (New York: Penguin Books, 1996), 559.

[12] McDarrah and McDarrah, *Beat Generation: Glory Days in Greenwich Village*. 6.

[13] Ibid., 5.

[14] Jack Kerouac, *The Subterraneans* (New York: Grove Press, 1989), 1.

[15] Interracialism was not a ubiquitous phenomenon characterizing the entire Village culture, of course. Even in the late 1950s, Miles Davis was taken to jail because he walked with a white woman (she was his

friend) to catch a taxi near the Birdland. James Baldwin was beaten up at a Greenwich Village bar when he was sitting with a white woman. It was as difficult for a black American to rent an apartment in the Village as in any other white section of New York. See Marc D. Schleifer, "The Village," *Dissent* 8, no. 3 (1961).
[16] Ross Wetzsteon, *Republic of Dreams: Greenwich Village the American Bohemia, 1910-1960* (New York: Simon& Schuster, 2002). 551-553.
[17] Holmes, "This Is the Beat Generation," p. 10.
[18] Michael Harrington, *Fragments of the Century* (New York: Saturday Review Press, 1973). 43.
[19] Philip F. Gura, "Southern Roots and Branches: Forth Years of the New Lost City Ramblers," *Southern Cultures* 6, no. 4 (2000): 63-64.
[20] Dan Wakefield, *New York in the Fifties* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin/Seymour Lawrence, 1992). 81.
[21] Paola Igliori, ed. *American Magus Harry Smith* (New York: Inanout Press,1996), 107.
[22] B. A. Botkin, "The Folksong Revival: A Symposium," *New York Folklore Quarterly* 19, no. 2 (1963): 106.
[23] Robbie Lieberman, "The Culture of Politics: Communism, Americanism, and the People's Songs Hootenanny," *The South Atlantic Quarterly* 85, no. 1 (Winter 1986). Later in 1962, Mayo and Young would become governing members for an organization to promote folk concerts called the Friend of Old Time Music.
[24] Dave Van Ronk and Elijah Wald, *The Mayor of Macdougal Street: A Memoir* (New York: Da Capo Press, 2005). 42.
[25] Michael James, "Free Show in Washington Square Is a Hit," *New York Times*, May 25, 1959, p. 1.
[26] Ibid., p. 34.
[27] Peter Tamony, "'Hootenanny': The Word, Its Content and Continuum," in *The American Folk Scene: Dimensions of the Folksong Revival*, ed. David A. De Turk & A Poulin Jr. (New York: A Laurel Original, 1967), 83.
[28] R. Serge Denisoff, *Great Day Coming: Folk Music and the American Left* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1971). 114.
[29] Ronald D. Cohen, *Rainbow Quest: The Folk Music Revival and American Society, 1940-1970* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2002), 108.
[30] Wakefield, *New York in the Fifties*, 157.
[31] Oscar Brand, *The Ballad Mongers: Rise of the Modern Folk Song* (New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1962), 165-166; Robert Cantwell, *When We Were Good: The Folk Revival* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1996), 286.
[32] J.R. Goddard, "Coffee Houses: Many Things to Many Men," *Village Voice*, November 30, 1961, p. 1, 14.
[33] McDarrah and McDarrah, *Beat Generation: Glory Days in Greenwich Village*, 45; Van Ronk and Wald, *The Mayor of Macdougal Street: A Memoir*. 54, 71.
[34] Van Ronk and Wald, *The Mayor of Macdougal Street: A Memoir*, 146.
[35] Bob Dylan, *Chronicles* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2004), 10-11.
[36] David Hajdu, *Positively 4th Street: The Lives and Times of Joan Baez, Bob Dylan, Mimi Baez Fariña, and Richard Fariña* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2001), 48.
[37] Wakefield, *New York in the Fifties*, 3.
[38] Hatrrington, *Fragments of the Century*, 47.
[39] David Amram, *Vibrations: The Adventures and Musical Times of David Amram* (New York: Macmillan Co., 1968), 294-95.
[40] Wakefield, *New York in the Fifties*, 267.
[41] Jerold M. Starr, "Cultural Politics in the 1960s," in *Cultural Politics: Radical Movements in Modern History*, ed. Jerold M. Starr (New York: Praeger, 1985). 244.

CHAPTER 3

THE FOLK MUSIC REVIVAL MOVEMENT AND FOLKLORE

The very basic concept of the term "folk" dominant during the folk revival movement in the 1950s and early 1960s stemmed from the folklore scholarship. This folkloristic concept of "folk" significantly affected the way in which the folk revival movement developed. Folklorists conceived folk music as a residual cultural form that had existed in pre-industrial society before the advent of mass communication technology and industrialization. Without technology to deliver it, folklorists characterized, folk music bore the characteristic of oral culture. The folk music literature published in the 1920s and 1930s defined folk song as a song "passed on by word of mouth from singer to singer, not learned from books or from print."[1]

During the revival period, the notion of folk music as an oral culture in pre-industrial society was shared not only by folklorists and folk singers but also by the young folk revivalists. Most of the folk revivalists were not disciplined in folklore, but they embraced the folkloristic idea of folk music and became ardent publicists of the concept of folk. In particular, college folk music magazines expressed their fondness for it because it addressed social illness and presented an idealism of human life. What captivated the college revivalists was the ideological background of folk music as a music generated by the common people living in community-based societies. Perfectly resonating with folklorists' argument, college folk magazines advocated the value of traditional folk music and its people, especially its "simplicity" concept in which a folk song is created and handed over. These key characteristics helped the folk revivalists

construct their social criticism and their own cultural identity centered around folk music.

This chapter discusses how the folkloristic concept of folk music influenced the formation of the folk music revival movement. To better understand the relationship between folklore scholarship and the revival movement, I first survey the historical background of folklore scholarship in terms of how it has dealt with folk music. Then I discuss how folklorists in the revival period endeavored to convey the richness of American folk music to the public. Folklorists in the revival period collaborated with record companies to issue and reissue collection of folk songs and also provided a depth of understanding of the music itself.

The folkloristic notion of folk flourished most at colleges. This chapter also explores the way in which college folk revivalists understood folk music and the folk revival movement. They published folk magazines and organized folk concerts and workshops at campus. Close examination of college folk magazines reveals that college folk revivalists were the most enthusiastic supporters of folk music tradition and their way of understanding was constructed within the context of postwar social transformation. I argue that the college folk revivalists appropriated the notion of simplicity from folk music and projected this notion on their own social conditions.

American Folk Music Heritage

The American folklore scholarship has dealt with folk music as one of its research fields since the late nineteenth century. The Harvard professor Francis James Child (1825-1896) is today recognized as the pioneer of American folk music scholarship. With his initial interest in ballads, Child collected lyrics of English and Scottish ballads and

published a ten-volume collection *The English and Scottish Popular Ballads* (1882-1898). For his works Child collected lyrics including their variants and provided each song's origin, theme, and alterations. Child's focus was exclusively on lyrics, from which he classified each song into different categories. Although Child's focus was limited to British ballads, Child's work paved the way folk music should be studied and became a canon for future folk music scholars.[2]

One of the earliest attempts to extend Child's scholarship was achieved by the English folklorist Cecil Sharp. In 1916, Sharp began collecting Appalachian mountain songs, which resulted in *English Folk Songs from the Southern Appalachians* (1917) and such subsequent works as *American English Folk Songs* (1918) and *Folk Songs of English Origin Collected in the Southern Appalachians* (1919-23), with co-author Olive Dame Campbell, who had invited Sharp to the US to collect Appalachian ballads. Sharp's selection of folk songs overlapped with those of Child's and he demonstrated his adherence to Child's methodology of text-based classification by noting each song's origin, variants, lyric, and singer. Moreover, as these titles of books indicate, Sharp's interest in folk music was confined to "English" folksongs or "English-origin" folk songs heard in the Appalachian region.[3]

Like Child, Sharp held a Darwinian concept about folk songs noting they had evolved through the course of time, during which selections were made and consequently variants were produced. With the increasing degree of industrialization, Child and Sharp thought, folk songs and the rural community, in which folk songs were created, played, and handed down from generation to generation, were on the verge of extinction. Researching folk songs was meant to preserve what was doomed to disappear. During the

period in which Sharp lived, America underwent the transformation of social and economic structures. Industrialization threatened to destroy traditional communal lives. For that reason, Sharp romanticized the Appalachian mountain music, connecting them to his idealized imagery of pre-industrial rural simplicity.[4]

It was John Lomax who shed scholarly light on American folk music in a broader way than Child and Sharp had done. Born in Texas, Lomax was fascinated by cowboy songs and began researching them in 1906 when he was a Harvard student. Lomax published *Cowboy Songs and Other Frontier Ballads* in 1910. With this work, Lomax added American-origin cowboy songs to the repertoire of American folk music tradition that had been confined to Anglo-Saxon origin ballads.

Despite his departure from canonizing only British ballads, however, Lomax followed the path Child and Sharp had paved in terms of the conception of folk music. Just as Sharp understood English-origin folk songs as a disappearing type of music resulting from industrialization, Lomax characterized cowboy songs as an isolated cultural form threatened by the increasingly modernized society and he thought that cowboys and cowboy songs would disappear shortly.

Though not a professional folklorist, Carl Sandburg, poet and biographer of Abraham Lincoln, collected folk songs when he traveled around the country and published *The American Songbag* in 1927. The table of contents of the book shows that he had an eclectic definition of folk music. He included minstrel songs, blues, Mexican songs, work songs (e.g. for lumberjacks and railroad men), war songs, gospel, jail songs, and others. The diversity of folk songs in *The American Songbag* intended to reach a popular audience. For this purpose, Sandburg put piano accompaniments to each song so

that the reader could sing the song at home or on social occasions.[5]

In addition to these individual efforts mostly in academic fields, government institutions helped augment the notion of "folk" by incorporating folk music into a national culture in the late 1920s. In 1928 Robert W. Gordon, former columnist for an adventure pulp magazine, was named as the director of the newly established Archive of American Folk-Song at the Library of Congress (until 1933). Defining folk music as a "body of song in the possession of the people passed on by word of mouth from singer to singer, not learned from books or from print,"[6] Gordon collected 78 rpm folk music records as well as field recordings for the archive. He regarded folk music as a popular format of musical expression of a people. *His* folk music included African American folk songs and hillbilly songs, both of which academic folklorists had not included for their scholarly purpose.

During the Depression era, the federal government launched the Federal Music Project (which was changed to the WPA Music Program in 1939) under auspices of the Works Progress Administration's Federal Project to conduct field recordings. Other governmental institutions such as the Folklore Studies of the Federal Writers' Project, the Resettlement Administration, and the Folksong and Folklore Department of the National Service Bureau of the Federal Theater Project, started their own folk song projects for similar purposes. Key figures in these projects—Charles Seeger, a Harvard musicologist, for the Resettlement Administration (and later for the Federal Music Project), B. A. Botkin, a prominent folklorist, for the Federal Writer's Project, and Alan Lomax, a son of John Lomax, for the Folk Music Archives of the Library of Congress—contributed to collecting a vast range of American folk songs collection.

The New Deal folk music projects also changed the way how folk music was understood. Unlike Child and Sharp, folklorists in the 1930s did not see folk music as a disappearing cultural form. Partly because the folk music projects were carried out under the banner of rescuing the nation, displaying the evolutionist aspect of folk music would not have fit the New Deal agenda. Rather than focusing on old Anglo-Saxon ballads, Botkin, Seeger, and Lomax instead worked for providing diversity of American folk songs that would represent American ethnic and regional diversities. It is important to note that the folk music projects during the Depression era were mobilized to inspire nationalism into the Americans' minds. Therefore, the selectivity characterized by Child's and Sharp's works did not come up as a primal importance. To raise the national pride, folk music needed to appeal to every American in every region; the music worth being collected should include every kind of folk music. The Federal Music Project, for instance, published *Spanish American Folk Songs* in 1937 and organized the three-day "American Folk Music Festival" in 1938, at which people coming from all over the country listened to patriotic songs like "Yankee Doodle." The mobilization of folk music as a cultural agent in the 1930s thus reshaped the course of the folk music concept and transformed the cultural position of folk music from a sacred folkloristic interest into a more secular and nation-wide project.

Folklorists and Folk Music in the 1950s

In the 1950s, the folklore scholarship community relied on the basic concept of "folk" that was established by pioneering folklorists like Child and Sharp. In 1954, the International Folk Music Council restated the conventional definition of folk music; it

defined folk music as the music "that has been submitted to the process of oral transmission" and that is the "product of evolution and is dependent on the circumstances of continuity, variation and selection." Moreover, it separated folk music from any influence of commercial force, explaining that folk music "can be applied to music that has been evolved from rudimentary beginnings by a community uninfluenced by popular and art music."[7] Leading folklorists in the 1950s defended these notions of folk music. Richard Dorson at Indiana University expressed his disgust about the emergence of commercialized folk music that did not bear traditional characteristics of folk music. The growing commercialization and popularization of folk music, Dorson deplored, resulted in the distortion of folk music. He distinguished the genuine folk music from the commercialized folk music which he labeled as "fakelore." Dorson determined his distinction of folklore/fakelore on whether the music was a "synthetic product claiming to be authentic oral tradition but actually tailored for mass edification" or not.[8]

The problem of defining folk music raised the question of the way in which folk singers performed. In 1948, *Musical America*, classic-oriented music magazine, expressed a concern about the contemporary folk singing styles that were "more or less doubtful in their authenticity, much singing having been labeled arbitrary or capricious aberration, rather than faithful interpretation." Like Dorson's "fakelore" argument that attempted to authenticate folk music, *Musical America* criticized a propensity among a number of folk singers to seek "quick returns on the radio, in clubs, and in intimate gatherings," without studying the original materials they sang, and stressed the importance of recapturing "that which was felt and sung by its creators." To do so, the magazine contended, "one must go back to its roots, to its originators—the simple,

unsophisticated people who have not been affected by the entertainment level imposed by the disc jockeys."[9] The article did not identify who were the problematic folk singers, but it acclaimed those who would match the criteria of true folk singers—Josh White, John Jacob Niles, Leadbelly, Burl Ives, Richard Dyer-Bennet, among others.

While folklore professionals debated over the changing nature of folk music, popular magazines helped the American public appreciate American folksong or, more broadly, the folklore tradition. Popular magazines targeting the middle-class readers published articles that reported the richness of American folklore and endeavors of folklorists who had collected folk songs. For American folklore in general, Duncan Emrich, chief of the Folklore Section of the Library of Congress from 1945, wrote about "traditional knowledge and way of life of our people" in *Holiday* magazine. The essential character of folklore, Emrich explains, lies in the "difference between the hand-made and the machine-made, the nonstandardized and the standardized, the individual and the mass."[10] American folklore is, writes Emrich, a "memory of the American past and a living heritage."[11] Although Emrich's article did not develop a detailed criticism of the standardized mass society, it did emphasize the folkloristic value of true folk music celebrating it as a defender of a traditional way of life and the people living within that tradition. *Time* magazine, in 1955, reported that Emrich, born and raised in Turkey until sixteen, was first fascinated by American folklore when he moved to Colorado to take the position of assistant professor at the University of Denver in 1940, where he heard the song of drinkers, miners, and gold prospectors. He was a researcher of Arabic language, but the songs he heard in Colorado "changed everything." He began collecting folk songs and, in 1945, was assigned to be the chief the Folklore Folk Song Section of the Library

of Congress.[12]

Harry Oster, who was teaching English literature at Louisiana State University, hunted folk songs in Louisiana including Angola Prison at which Leadbelly served in the 1930s. Born in Massachusetts, educated at Harvard, and earning a doctorate degree from Cornell, the folklorist Oster "gravitated to LSU because he was fascinated by the diversity of folk music in Louisiana" and he "roam[ed] the streets and backlands of [Louisiana] to record its rich musical patois—French, Cajun, Negro French, Anglo-Saxon."[13]

Popular magazines, or middle-brow magazines, contributed to publicizing folk music and to celebrating folk song collectors for their dedications to preserving the American folk music tradition and spreading the value of it among the American public. These magazines played a role in bringing folklorists' accomplishments into the minds of middle class Americans. From August 1959 to August 1960, *Life* magazine featured a special five-part series of "Folklore of America." The headlines for the series were "America's Legends," "A Vivid Heritage Recalled," "Tales the Indians Told," "The Rich Treasury of Colonial Tales," and "Ballads and Tales of the Frontier." The series ran colorful illustrations of American folklore legends and heroes like Rip Van Winkle, Paul Bunyan, and Daniel Boone, as well as the stories of western frontiers and Native Americans, folk tales and myths, and so forth. In the fifth run, *Life* highlighted the famous folk ballads "Frankie and Johnny" and "John Henry." The *Life* special series of "Folklore of America" was reprinted into a book titled *The Life Treasury of American Folklore* in 1961. The folklore series promoted the awareness of American past and national pride in the historical perspective.

The promotion of richness of American folklore aimed not only at the middle-class Americans but also at more sophisticated readers. *The New Yorker* magazine ran articles about Frederic Ramsey Jr., a jazz historian, who made a field trip in the South to collect folk songs. His collection was released as ten-LP record series *Music From the South*. Ramsey was enthusiastic to preserve folk tradition. He not only recorded folk songs in the South but also photographed the southern folk materials and interviewed the local people. The eminent folklorist B. A. Botkin, reviewing Ramsey's composite book of photographs, interviews, and commentaries, titled *Been Here and Gone*, wrote that Ramsey's work as a folk song collector helped make the Southern folk tradition alive.[14]

Folklorists and Folk Music Records

Folklorists' influence on the folk music revival movement was enormous. Not only did they pave the way for the folk revivalists' understanding of their country's folk music tradition and help them organize campus folk song concerts, they also influenced the folk record industry. In fact, many folklorists worked with the record industry to produce folk song records. Folklorists looked for the outlet for their collections of field recordings and record companies looked for materials to sell.[15]

In a sense, the folklorists during the revival period were responsible for preserving the tradition of American folklore. *The New York Times* listed numerous folksong collectors including Alan Lomax, Carl Sandberg, and Cecil Sharp and wrote that, thanks to them and phonograph technology, one could hear "frozen musical history."[16] As the *New York Times* article pointed out, the efforts of folklorists were meshed with that of record companies that issued folk records and folk music

anthologies. Folk music specialty labels, such as Folkways Records, had worked with folklorists or anthropologists. Folkways Records collaborated with anthropologist Harold Courlander, who took numerous field trips to the South and all over the world. During the 1950s Courlander served as a chief editor of "Ethnic Folkways Library" for Folkways. He produced more than thirty albums for Folkways.

Some academic folklorists worked with folk record labels. For instance, Kenneth Goldstein, who would later become a folklore professor at the University of Pennsylvania, served as folk music director for Stinson and Riverside, and Prestige Records during the 1950s. He issued more than five hundred LPs of various kinds of folk music including Ewan MacCall and A. L. Lloyd. Harry Oster established a one-man operation record company named Folk-Lyric and produced an impressive catalogue of Cajun and Negro music from Louisiana.[17]

During the 1950s, Alan Lomax produced many folk albums. Already a renowned folklorist by the mid-1930s, Lomax worked for the Archive of American Folk Song in the Library of Congress. In 1939 and 1940, Lomax produced several radio programs for the CBS radio such as *American Folk Songs*, *Back Where I Come From*, and *Wellsprings of Music*, with Woody Guthrie and Leadbelly, Burl Ives, Aunt Molly Jackson, and others. Lomax's position as an archivist at the Library of Congress legitimized his programs. In 1942 he was assigned to the Armed Forces Radio Service, programming folk music shows to encourage troops abroad. In 1943 he worked for the Office of War Information to produce morale-boosting radio programs. Not so commercially-driven as other radio programs, Lomax's radio programs played a distinctive role in popularizing folk music. After the war, he produced *Mountain Frolic* for Brunswick. In 1949, as a director of Folk

Music for Decca Records, Lomax edited a series of folk albums by folk singers including Burl Ives, Richard Dyer-Bennett, and Josh White, as well as Kentucky mountain ballads and cowboy songs. The biggest project was "World Library of Folk and Primitive Music" a series for Columbia Records. It contained eighteen volumes which overviewed world music. For folk music proper to America, he produced seven volumes of *Southern Folk Heritage* for Atlantic in 1959 and twelve volumes of *Southern Journey* for Prestige in 1960.

The most influential folk record for the revivalists of the 1950s, however, was *The Anthology of American Folk Music.* In 1952 Folkways Records released a six-LP set *The Anthology of American Folk Music*. Compiled by Harry Smith, the *Anthology* contained eighty-four old-time records issued in the 1920s and 1930s. The songs of the six-LP collection were divided into three categories: "Ballads," "Social Music," and "Songs." For each song, Smith wrote extensive notes and information.

Smith studied anthropology at the University of Washington in the early 1940s. After WWII, he moved to the Bay Area where he painted, made short films, and pursued other artistic activities. He then moved to New York around 1950 and met Moe Ashes, the owner of Folkways Records, and began the *Anthology* project with him. Although he studied anthropology at university, he was not a professional anthropologist, and he did not take field trips to record folksongs as Lomax, Courlander, Oster, and Emrich all had. Instead, Smith enthusiastically collected folk music on 78 rpm records. He had bought 78 rpm records for his personal collection since the 1940s. In a 1968 interview with John Cohen in *Sing Out!* magazine, Smith recalled that the *Anthology* did not attempt to showcase all the best records, but tried to demonstrate the diversity of folk music from a

musicological point of view. Before the *Anthology*, said Smith, "there had been a tendency in which records were lumped into blues catalogs and hillbilly catalogs."[18] Smith's *Anthology* blurred the hitherto distinction between blues and hillbilly and showcased all of these records under the banner of "American Folk Music."

College Folk Magazines

The most ardent supporters for the effort of folklorists, who had preserved the tradition of American folk music, were college students. During the folk music revival movement, the folklorists' insistence on the value of American folk music was widely accepted at campuses across the nation. Students joined campus folk music societies and engaged themselves in organizing folk music events such as concerts, campus hootenannies, and workshops. College folk music societies published folk magazines that featured information of campus, or local, folk music events and articles on folk singers and folk music, most of which were written by the students of the society or by university professors of English and folklore.

The close examination of college folk magazines reveals that the college folk music audiences embraced the basic idea of folk music presented by professional folklorists and that they mediated thorough the lens of folklorists, or folksingers they admired. To college folk revivalists—the folk music society members and the dedicated folk music audiences, folk music inspired them to question, grow, and learn. As the Free Speech Movement leader Mario Savio would later discuss in the early 1960s, the university was the place where students would "begin seriously to question the condition of their existence."[19] The sociologist Kenneth Keniston called the postwar college

students "psychological adults," who were "created out of postindustrial society through university." The postwar social condition provided unprecedented privileges with students that did not require them to be a part of the social structure by earning income. Psychological adults are in sharp contrast to "sociological adults," who want to "[integrate] themselves into the institutional structure of society."[20] Conditioned in such social and cultural settings, youngsters of folk revival learned folk music that appealed to them as an idyllic and ideal cultural expression from which they began thinking about the "condition of their existence." College folk magazines provide rich evidence as to how much students embraced the concept of folk as folklorists had presented it, why they were mesmerized by this concept, and how they associated folk music with the postwar American social problems.

College folk magazines were published by the university's folk music societies or as personal magazines. It is remarkable that, regardless of this difference, the opinions in college folk magazines bore a striking similarity to those by folklorists, as if the former were faithful disciples of folklorists. In 1962, John Burrison,[21] an undergraduate student at Pennsylvania State University, started *Folkways Monthly*. Having two professors at Penn State on the advisory board—one was a folklorist and the other anthropologist—, *Folkways Monthly* delivered contents that taught fellow students the quintessence of folk music, which "must be passed down from one person to another, from generation to generation," through which process we could find "how life was in the days of old."[22] Young Burrison then deplores commercialization of folk music. Commercialization and exploitation [of folk music], Burrison writes, "break down a culture, but an enthusiastic and yet considerate collector, such as prof. [sic] Bayard [folklorist at Penn State, one of

the advisors for the magazine], can keep this heritage alive by recording and stimulating interest in it, and thus helping to preserve folk culture."

This article does not identify who was responsible for the commercialization of folk music, but it discusses two kinds of folk music: "traditional way of life" and "vocation to pastime."[23] Jean Ritchie is one of Burrison's favorite folksingers and he had heard Ritchie sing at Newport Folk Festival in 1959.

> Don't confuse Jean Ritchie with the recent cult of commercial "mountain" singing heard so frequently over the radio, referred to variously as "hillbilly," "country and western," and "bluegrass" (the best spokesmen for this type of singing being perhaps Earl Scruggs, Lester Flatt, and the Foggy Mountain Boys). These singers yodel through (generally in group harmony) "popular" love songs which are meaningless and sentimental to the degree of being ludicrous, and they are backed up by a "swinging" collection of twanging electric and steel (Hawaiian) guitars, plucking mandolin, thumping bass, fast-as-greased-lightnin' banjo, and sawing fiddle, which produce, in total, one great pulsating frenzy of sound.[24]

What distinguishes Ritchie from many other commercial folksingers is that she, with her "simple, unadulterated country style, represents a "segment of the music and life ways of the distant past, somehow surviving and relatively unchanged today, strangely out of place in a technological world marked by television, hydrogen bombs, and the Installment Plan." Ritchie is a "fine example of the oral transmission of folk culture" because she sings "basically the same songs that, two or three hundred years ago, were being sung by immigrating pioneers and farmers, or perhaps even five centuries ago by the country dwellers of the British Isles."[25]

Little Sandy Review is perhaps one of the best-known folk magazines published by college revivalists for its uncompromising purist persuasion. Starting in 1960 as a personal publication by two students at the University of Minnesota in Minneapolis—John Pankake and Paul Nelson—, *Little Sandy Review* printed reviews on folk records,

books, and folk concerts, as well as editors' column on the folk music scene. The main feature was record review. *Little Sandy Review* distinguished market-oriented folk music from tradition-ridden folk music and favored the latter seriously because it had "intellectual complexity, an emotional commitment, [and] an aesthetic integrity."[26] One example of how *Little Sandy Review* dichotomized folk singers into traditional and market-oriented is seen in the fourth issue where brief comments on folk record labels appear. For example, Elektra

> started out with some fine work back in the 10"[rpm] days and still have some excellent Jean Ritchie LP's, but , by and large, Jac Holzman & Company seem to have grown fat and contented on the likes of Oscar Brand, ... the Limeliters, Josh White, and other slick and sophisticated cocktail party folkum.[27]

It is easy to assume why *Little Sandy Review* likes Jean Ritchie and dislikes Oscar Brand, Josh White, and the Limeliters. Oscar Brand is a popularizer; Josh White and others entertainment singers; and the Limeliters are too sophisticated. Ritchie, on the other hand, is from the Kentucky mountains and preserves its tradition. In the same review, *Little Sandy Review* criticizes the Cumberland Three because they are market-oriented like the Kingston Trio. The criticism continues: "[m]ediocrity has become the key word, and traditionalism, authenticity, and scholarship have fallen by the wayside. Ethics are completely out of the question. Everybody screams 'I wrote this, I wrote that' at the top of their lungs."[28]

Pankake and Nelson believed that folk music could give college students the opportunity to think about the profound meaning of life. Before beginning to listen to folk music at college, most of the students listened to pop music that would "appeal to *both parents and teenager alike*—something nice, fresh, and bouncy; something

musically pleasing to the ear and *mentally unchallenging*. [both my italics]" Folk music for them is the music that comes in between the teenage period and parenthood and that it should be a "mentally challenging" music. In their understanding of the role of folk music, the change of musical taste from pop music to folk music inherently involves the change of attitude toward an individual's self-identity. Therefore, Pankake and Nelson did not accept pop-oriented folk music because it was an extension of pop music for teenagers that did not help develop mental maturity.

Bob Dylan, who came to know Pankake and Nelson when he was a student at the University of Minnesota and borrowed folk records such as Harry Smith's *Anthology of American Folk Music* and Jack Elliott's from them,[29] would later call Pankake a part of the "folk police" to refer to their selectiveness.[30] With a few exceptions such as the New Lost City Ramblers and Joan Baez, their selection of folk singers for reviews on *Little Sandy Review* heavily inclined toward traditional, veteran singers such as Jean Ritchie, Pete Seeger, Muddy Waters, Cisco Houston, Harry Belafonte, Malvina Raynolds, the Weavers, Burl Ives, Leadbelly, and John Lee Hooker.

When Bob Dylan's first album was released, *Little Sandy Review* applauded his "terrific" songwriting skill, which was the "best we've had since Woody Guthrie sleathed [sic] his pen," and his performing style as "Guthriesque cowboy-Texas blues style." The magazine remarked that "a star was born." The first album *Bob Dylan*, released in March 1962, was composed of covers except his two original songs.[31] *Little Sandy Review* spent an unusual five pages reviewing Dylan's first album. What satisfied Pankake and Nelson was that not only had Dylan improved his singing and songwriting techniques so quickly, but also his first album assured them that Dylan was on the right track of folk singing

tradition with a twist of his own artistry.

But, to his second album *The Freewheelin' Bob Dylan* released in May 1963, *Little Sandy Review* expressed a "great disappointment." Dylan's "inventiveness (both as a songwriter and as an interpreter)" and "natural gift for genuine directness and simplicity in the finest folk-derived sense" he demonstrated in his first album "barely exist" in *The Freewheelin' Bob Dylan.*[32] Critical comments continue: "he has become melodramatic and maudlin, lacking all Guthriesque economy; his melodies bear more relation now to popular music than folk music." Pankake, Nelson, and other contributors to *Little Sandy Review* held a prescriptive notion about what folk music should be. As the reviews on Dylan's two albums repeatedly suggest, their criteria of folk music, or what they expected to listen for in Dylan's music, was whether it maintained to a certain extent continuity to Guthrie's folk music. Dylan's second album consisted of eleven original songs and two cover songs. Many of the original songs were topical songs that addressed social issues. *The Freewheelin' Bob Dylan* is, *Little Sandy Review* contends, based "almost 100 per cent on his own personality; there is hardly any traditional material, and most of the original material is not particularly folk-derived. It is pure Bob Dylan..."[33] Their propensity to favor traditional materials is apparent: singing original songs violates the unwritten code of folk music. *Little Sandy Review* does accept original songs, but the personal expression should retain some reference to the original folk singer (in Dylan's case, *Little Sandy Review* understands Dylan within the frame of Guthrie style folksinging. So, in their minds, Dylan should be Guthriesque.) or fits into the folk music tradition lineage.

No other folk magazine more clearly expressed their opinions than *Little Sandy*

Review. The magazine often stirred heated debates with other publications or individuals. But *Little Sandy Review* was not the only exceptionally opinionated magazine with its extreme traditionalism. More or less, every college magazine demonstrated rigidity in traditional folk music and preference of authentic folk singers rather than city-folksingers. Fully influenced by the folkloristic framework of understanding folk music as an antithesis of highly civilized society and mass culture, the college folk music enthusiasts like Pankake and Nelson tried to secure the realm of folk music against the invasion by, for instance, popular music and what the *Sing Out!* publisher Irwin Silber calls "personality cult." Folk music, they thought, played a distinctive educational role for the youth who were moving from adolescence to adulthood. Blurring the line between folk music and popular music, which would occur in the form of "folk rock" in the mid-1960s, nullified this distinctive role of folk music. To rephrase by using the terms "form" and "function," *Little Sandy Review*'s undercurrent of notion of folk music is that the form of folk music prescribes the function of folk music. To keep the function of folk music working, the magazine acted like the "folk police," watching every folk record to see if it maintained the framework of folk music.

The University of Michigan Folklore Society launched its magazine *Folkways: A Magazine of International Folklore* in 1959. The main feature of *Folkways* was songs with lyrics and scores—similar to *Sing Out!*—and it also printed short articles about folk music, folksingers, and instruments. The first issue begins with a two-page article "Notes on the Child Ballad," which is followed by the song "Lord Randall," one of the songs in the Child collection. Then, two songs by Bill McAdoo—"800 Miles" (travel song) and "Santy Anno" (sea chantey originated during the American-Spanish War)—both

appeared in *Sing Out!*, a two-page article "Blues for Big Bill [Broonzy]" with his selected discography, the nineteenth century English folk song "The Fox," "Virgin Mary" (Christmas folk song of America origin), French-Canadian folk song "Ah, Si Mon Moine Voulait Danser," a four-page article about the Israel-origin instrument called "chalil," a guitar instruction, an article about the Trinidad steel drum with discography, the song "Strangest Dream" by the New York folksinger Ed McCurdy, an one-page article about the origin of Tom Dula (Tom Dooley), "Suliram"—an Indonesian lullaby, and Guthrie's "This Land is Your Land."

Unlike *Little Sandy Review*, the University of Michigan's *Folkways* was not so outspoken about its opinions. Rather, it provided a wide coverage of aspects of folk music as the title includes "International." But it shared the tenet of folk music with *Little Sandy Reviews* and other college folk magazines. The preface of the first issue stated that folk music has a "functional value above and beyond its esthetic [sic] qualities. It is a medium through which we may bring together the various fibres of cultures and view them comparatively."[34] *Folkways*'s description of folk music's importance of "functional value" over aesthetic qualities indicates that folk music is the kind of music that is set in social structure in which it plays a certain role. Folk music, folksinger Bill McAdoo commented, "forces one to move around and meet people, to learn of their problems."[35]

The second issue begins with the songs "Geordie" (popular folklore of the British Isle) and "Who Killed Cock Robin" (by Joe Hickerson), followed by the comparison of two versions of the song called "Te Maid Freed from the Gallows," which is found in Child's *English & Scottish Popular Ballads vol.2*. It compares lyrics of British and American versions. Then, the issue continues with Merle Travis's "Dark as a Dungeon"

with score, an article about the significance of folk music workshop, "Don't Sing Love Songs" from Lomax's *Folksong USA*, an article about bluegrass with selected discography, "Mighty Day" (about the flood in a Texas town in 1900), an article about Polynesian folk music Maori," a biographical article about Peggy Seeger with discography, "Song of Courting & Complaint," an article about Leadbelly, "Eres Alta Y Delgada" (Spanish folk song), the list of recent recordings categorized into four areas: "Southern & traditional American," "blues," "flamenco," and "miscellaneous," and finally ends with "Tuning by Harmonics" (instruction of tuning guitar).

The third issue "Old Timey Music Issue" contains four articles and ten songs. The titles of the articles are "Old Timey Music," "New Lost City Ramblers," "Bill McAdoo," "Picking: Carter Family Style." The songs are "A La Roo" (Mexican Christmas song), "Angel Band," "That Crazy War" (about WWI) "We've Got Franklin D. Roosevelt Back Again," "Man of Constant Sorrow," "The Riddle Song," "Nobody Knows You When You're Down And Out" (by Josh White), "Nobody Knows The Way I Feel This Morning" (by Bill McAdoo), "Sur La Route" (old drinking song) and "Freight Train" (by Elizabeth Cotten). The third issue also announced the two-day University of Michigan Folk Festival in April 1960.

Folkways deals with some city-bred singers such as Bill McAdoo and the New Lost City Ramblers.[36] McAdoo and NLCR proved true inheritors of the folk music tradition. There is no coverage of the Kingston Trio and the Limeliters even though *Little Sandy Review* sometimes mentioned these pop-folk groups as the subject of criticism. But in *Folkways*, readers see a traditional landscape of folk music as "the very fabric of human expression," through which we may "embrace the world and its people."

At the University of Illinois, the Campus Folksong Club began publishing bi-monthly *Autoharp* in April 1961. The first issue of Autoharp—only seven pages—printed two traditional songs with words and chords ("Finnegan's Wake" and "The Grey Goose"), a one-page article "Folksong on Campus" by Archie Green, the information about the concert of Sonny Terry & Brownie McGhee at campus, and editorial matter. The goals of *Autoharp* were to distribute "traditional material and comment about traditional material." The meaning of "traditional" is well explicated by a request to readers: "if you have any songs which your grandmother taught you, we would love to have them."[37] The second issue had three songs: "The Battleship of Maine" (one of the New Lost City Ramblers's repertoire), "Indian Massacre"(from John Greenway's *American Folksong of Protest*) and "Malaila" (contributed from a reader). There were also three articles about the folk scene of New Orleans, Woody Guthrie, and "How to Make an Israeli Shepherd's Pipe" (one page each). In the third issue, *Autoharp* printed two songs ("John Henry" and Leadbelly's "In Den Long Hot Summer Days") and five articles ("Chicago Blues," "John Henry," "Indian Neck Folk Festival," "Leadbelly," and "Children and the Weather"). The fourth issue printed two songs (Bill Monroe's 1936 song "Darlin' Cory" and the children's song "The Robin" from a reader) and three articles ("Bill Monroe," "Jewish Folklore," and "In Defense of the Kingston Trio")

Whether it was a song or an article, *Autoharp* demonstrated a clear preference for traditional materials as it declared in the first issue. This is basically a similar ideological characteristic among campus folk magazines as we have seen. One difference is that whereas other campus folk magazines printed articles that were mostly written by staff writers, many articles in *Autoharp* were contributions from readers, probably students of

the University of Illinois. One such contribution is "In Defense of the Kingston Trio" in the fourth issue. As the title indicates, this article values the importance of this commercially successful folk trio. *Autoharp* put a disclaimer to the article: "The opinions expressed by Mr. Adams [the contributor] are not necessarily the same as those of the staff of *Autoharp*."[38] Such a disclaimer has not been seen in other contributed articles.

The Campus Folksong Club frequently invited both well-known and obscure folksingers to the campus. During the years of 1961 and 1962, the club invited Sonny Terry & Brownie McGhee (the blues duo), Jimmie Driftwood ("Ozark folksinger" dubbed by *Autoharp*), Red Cravens & the Bray Brothers (bluegrass), and George and Gerry Armstrong (English ballad), Lester Flatt & Earl Scruggs (bluegrass), Sleepy John Estes (blues), the New Lost City Ramblers (old time), Jean Redpath (Scottish ballad), and Joe Glazer ("labor's troubador"). This list of folksingers who visited the campus supports my understanding that *Autoharp* favored traditional folk styles. There were some young singers and players in their twenties like NLCR, but most of the singers had reached the level of being called veteran singers. For instance, Sleepy John Estes was born in 1889 and had reached the seventies in the early 1960s. Sonny Terry & Brownie McGhee were born in 1911 and 1915, respectively. There was no urban folksinger invited to the University of Illinois. Except NLCR, all of these singers were from the South. Anglo-Saxon balladers like Jean Redpath and George & Gerry Armstrong suggests the influence of Child's scholarship. There was also a union singer, which was a residual of leftist politics of the 1930s and 1940s.

The collaboration with folklorists also characterizes the strong affinity with folklore discipline. In a similar fashion to Penn State's *Folkways Monthly* that published

scholarly efforts of folklorists to preserve folksongs and hand them down, *Autoharp* helped students learn about folklore courses and speakers. In the May 19 of 1961 issue, *Autoharp* told of a folklore professor's return from Europe and publicized his new course "English 357: Folklore in American Literature" next semester.[39] In February 1962, *Autoharp* announced a new course "Music 316: Music Cultures of the World" offered by another professor.[40] Also, *Autoharp* started an interdepartmental folklore seminar that would be held bi-weekly, inviting university's faculty to speak about their academic interests.[41] The speakers for the fall semester in 1961 came from departments of sociology, German, English, and art. In the spring semester in 1962, the speakers were from departments of agriculture, music, anthropology, and Spanish and Russian languages. Not only did it collaborate with the university's faculty, *Autoharp* also invited eminent scholars like Archie Green, a frequent contributor to the *Journal of American Folklore*, and Harry Oster, professor at Louisiana State University who had explored Louisiana folk songs, to the campus.[42]

To campus folk revivalists, folk music was not simply a musical style or leisure activity. It was rather a study tool through which they could learn what they had not known, and it provided, they believed, a mediating space to consider the way in which revivalists would search the self in relation to society and to the past and future. The University of Michigan's *Folkways* says that folk music has a "functional value," and campus folk revivalists understood that to be a set of values traceable to folklorists' works and the songs of authentic folksingers. Penn State's *Folkway's Monthly* states that folk music, played not by commercial professionals but by the rural folksinger, gives a "humanistic point of view to 'how life was in the days of old' not to be found in text

books."[43] As they discovered the various types of folk music from Anglo-Saxon ballads, Appalachian mountain songs, cowboy songs, to blues and foreign folk songs, they began to create an imaginary "folk life" in their minds. To make *the* real folk music distinctive, the easiest way was to contrast it with "popular" folk music. If the singer has "no real commitment to traditional modes or values," an article in *Autoharp* contends, he or she is a "concert" singer.[44] Thus, the criteria to judge authenticity of the singer is whether he or she can demonstrate their familiarity and commitment about/to the material they perform. The basic nature of folksong is, John Pankake and Paul Nelson sum up, "simplicity, intimacy, and immediacy."[45]The New Lost City Ramblers are, Michigan's *Folkways* contends, one of the unusual groups that possess a "deep understanding of the musicians who made them, the folk culture that produced them, and the emotions and feelings underlying the songs."[46]

Embracing Simplicity

In the folk music revival era, as *Little Sandy Review* argued, "folk music" was synonymous with "simplicity." This notion bears a notable similarity to the Romantic movement in the eighteenth century in Europe—Jean-Jacque Rousseau's "the noble savage," Samuel Coleridge's and William Wordsworth's retreat from London to the Lake District, William Blake's mysticism, Ralph Waldo Emerson's transcendentalism. It was during the Romantic movement period that the notion of "folk" was first defined as a term for the folk music scholarship. Seemingly, two starting points were the German philosopher Johann Gottfried von Herder and the English bishop Thomas Percy. Herder interpreted the term "folk (*Volk*)" as an opposition to civilization or Enlightenment. *Volk*

thus meant the illiterate people living in the lower stratum of society in the rural area, as opposed to the emerging bourgeois class as wage workers in urban areas. In the pre-industrial and pre-literate folk, Herder found an escapism from the civilizing society. Herder collected German folk songs sung by such folk people and published *Volkslieder* (Folk Song) in 1778. Influenced by Herder, the Grimm Brothers collected German folk tales. Thomas Percy, on the other hand, published old English ballad collection *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry* in 1765. Because this was a poetry collection, Percy did not fully elaborate the notion of folk as Herder did. But *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry* was received as a celebration of the tradition of the English folk culture during the height of the Romantic Movement.[47]

There is a parallel relationship between the Romantic Europeans and the young generation in post-WWII America. The former had a critical view of the growing complexity of the society that was under the process of civilization, and the latter experienced the Cold War anxiety while enjoying unprecedented economic affluence. The Romantic Movement was concerned with the excess of civilization which, its advocates thought, deprived human beings of the traditional values and organic structure of society. Young Americans in suburbia in the 1950s and 1960s felt depressed by the high degree of conformity, resulting from the power of the military-industrial complex and the race of supremacy against the Soviets. Diagnosing the society, social critics characterized the society as variously as "white-collar," "men with gray flannel," "organizational man," "lonely crowd," "the status seekers," and "theory X." Both the Romantic Europeans and the Cold War Americans were stranded in a condition of material abundance and rapid transformation of the social and cultural value, which, they

believed, subjugated their beings.

It was believed that only the "folk" people could possess "simplicity" in a pre-industrial society. In this context "folk" does not mean the ordinary people as its semantic definition tells us: it is rather a term describing the people who live in a less civilized society. Among the young generation in the 1950s, there was an apparent tendency to understand the "folk" in this way, accepting the framework folklorists had formulated and in which they had been working.

> "I love *you* [original italic]." He hung up, and turned to face the world through the steamy window of the phone booth. Along with his feeling of dizziness was a feeling of newness—the feeling of fresh, strong identity growing within him. It was a generalized love—particularly for the little people, the common people, God bless them. All his life they had been hidden from him by the walls of his ivory tower. Now, this night, he had come among them, shared their hopes and disappointments, understood their yearnings, discovered the beauty of their simplicities and their earthy values. This was *real* [original italic], this side of the river and Paul loved these common people, and wanted to help, and let them know they were loved and understood, and the wanted them to love him too.[48]

The citation above is from Kurt Vonnegut Jr.'s debut novel *Player Piano* in 1952. Based on his own experience working at General Electric, this dystopian novel depicted the hyper-automated society as a future of America, and Vonnegut created the protagonist Dr. Paul Proteus, the elite technocrat [as "He" in this citation], who dropped out of the high road to success at the Ilium Works, a fictional company based on General Electric, and became the leader of rebels who would smash down machines that, they thought, were ruling the world. After hanging up the phone with his wife whose only hope for her husband was his success at the company, Proteus realized a deep feeling toward "the little people, the common people" spring up within him because he discovered "the beauty of their simplicities and their earthy values" in them. Simplicity is not a pejorative word

here, but it indicates an organic relation of the "common" people to their society. Proteus dichotomizes people into two types: the corporate-ethos-ridden people who live in a complicated and highly mechanized society, and the oppressed people who suffer from the excess of modernization but live in a harmony with their neighbors. A simple society is a self-satisfied and self-governed society.

After serving the Army during WWII, Vonnegut studied anthropology at the University of Chicago and took a course taught by Robert Redfield. Vonnegut was fascinated by Redfield's lecture on "folk society." Redfield defined "folk society" as a small community isolated from other communities and its members who share the code of behavior, similar to French sociologist Emile Durkheim's description of the pre-industrial society that is governed by "the collective conscience" of individuals who maintain solidarity and social order. Redfield's lecture, which basically warned against sentimentalizing a life in folk society, led Vonnegut, however, to daydream of living in an isolated place.[49] In the age of technology and scientific management, in which rationalism and efficiency had become a decisive force, simplicity was an arresting notion even though it seemed a mere nostalgic attempt to retreat from the reality.

From a folkloristic or anthropological point of view, the prevailing mode of scientific thinking in the postwar America is contrasted greatly with the previous era. In the 1950s, the prevailing mindset of folk revivalists was that scientific development and increasingly mechanized structure of society had changed the fundamental element of human life. Thus folk music was an antithesis to this inevitable socioeconomic trend. They shared the idea of what folk music used to be and they romanticized the primordial tradition of folk music expressed by the "ordinary folk who were on familiar terms with

hard work, poverty, hunger, and homemade culture" before the advent of science and industrialization.[50]

To relate the notion of simplicity with folk music, college revivalists equated a folk song with the singer who sings the song in terms of their organic relationship. If the singer sings a song about hardship, the singer must have experienced hardship. If the singer sings a song about poverty, the singer must be someone who lives in poverty. Thus, a folk song is an artistic expression of the singer's identity. Interestingly, simplicity defined as such represents wholeness. In an organic society, people and society are related to each other because human beings as organisms have limits and thus they can know the wholeness of their society. Simplicity can grasp the wholeness because the word "simple" is predicated on the existence of wholeness. Simplicity is the requisite to understanding the society as a whole.

"Simplicity" and "wholeness" were not the only words that characterized the folk music revival movement. Synonymous with these words are other words which include "primitive," "sincerity," "traditional," and "authentic." The folk community argued and defined folk music with these pivotal words. For example: "If a folksong loses its *sincerity* [my italic], it loses its most poignant attribute—and it ceased to be a folksong."[51] Robert Shelton, the folk music correspondent for the *New York Times*, reported that at the University of Chicago Folk Festival "the bulk of the music at the festival was a swig of spring water. The key words were tap-roots, *tradition, authenticity* [my italics], and non-commercial."[52]

Although the folk revivalists embraced the idea of simplicity in folk society, they neither trapped themselves into anachronism nor became pessimists to disdain the society

in which they were living. Neither were they reactionary nor revolutionary. They tried to find a way out of the dilemma of modern society and presented folk music as a solution to that problem. The solution is of course not political. They developed their aesthetics in folk music, then constructed their cultural identity around folk music. Folk music was a tool not only as a means of expressing their musical aesthetic but also a medium for reconsidering their reasons to live and their role in society—who they were, what they were thinking about, what they could do for the society, and what kind of relationship they wanted to have with that society.

This is the reason many folk singers, as well as the folk music audience, supported the definition of folk music as a representation of life as a whole. Dave van Ronk wrote in 1965 that folk music is the "musical expression of an entire way of life."[53] Rather than "a body of art," said the Oklahoma-born folk singer Sam Hinton, folk music is "a process, an attitude, and a way of life; its distinguishing features lie not within the songs themselves, but in the relations of those songs to a folk culture."[54] While Van Ronk was born in 1936 and Hinton in 1917, folk singers in the 1950s and early 1960s, regardless of ages, conceived a similar concept of folk music. So did the Harvard musicologist Charles Seeger, father of Pete Seeger: folk music is "a summary of way of life of a culture community, the attitudes and feelings of those who comprise it toward life and death, work and play, love, courtship and marriage, heath and hearth, children and animals, prosperity and adversity—a veritable code of individual and social behavior."[55]

Conclusion

Folklorists provided the ideological foundation of the folk music revival movement. While they researched American folk songs within their discipline, they collaborated with record companies to release folk music records. They also contributed articles on American folk music and folklore to mainstream magazines to introduce the richness of American folk music tradition. On the other hand, folklorists expressed their condemnation of non-traditional style of folk songs that emerged in the late 1950s.

Their criticism found audience on college campuses. The young generation at universities, as a part of their education, learned folk music in various ways through academic courses, attending folk music events on and around the campus, buying folk music records, and so forth. They echoed the ideas presented by folklorists because what folklorists provided was not just a simply nostalgia for the past but a critical perspective toward postwar society. Youngsters at college compared their rootlessness arising from their middle-class backgrounds with the "folk" people who were connected to one another through music that had roots in a particular place, particular musical style, and particular historical embodiment.

The authenticity had a power of persuasion to the urban revivalists. Folk revivalists were infatuated with the idea of authenticity and many urban audiences preferred the authentic folk performance like Clarence "Tom" Ashley singing his signature song "The Coo Coo Bird." The urban folk audience projected *their* feelings that came from their everyday experiences of modern lives onto the folk music, which represented what they had lost and at the same time provided them with a critical view on their modern society. Folk music seemed, to urban Americans, to represent their attitudes

toward their own lives and the society. In the folk revival movement, folk music represented not merely a type of music they consumed, but a set of values that told them to how to live better and how to make the society better. They reinterpreted and revitalized the folkloristic understanding of folk music as a favorable counterpoint to the emerging mass society, in which mass-production and mass consumption became a social norm.

The folk revivalists embraced authentic folk music that had been discovered and collected by folklorists and its historical importance. Not only did folk revivalists inherit the aesthetic value of folk music from the folklore scholarship, they also gave serious consideration to the folkloristic ideology and its role as social commentary. It is safe to say that folk revivalists embraced the simple mode of society and life and juxtaposed it with their reality in the postwar fragmented and highly sophisticated society. Folklore is a keyword to understanding the folk revival movement. Folklorists presented folk revivalists with invaluable insights into the way of mediating the postwar American society and the way of constructing self-identity. We will see the revivalists' identity formation more closely in the next chapter.

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[1] Cited from John Greenway, "The Position of Songs of Protest in Folk Literature," in *The American Folk Scene: Dimensions of the Folksong Revival* (New York: A Laurel Original, 1967), 116.
[2] Francis James Child, *The English and Scottish Popular Ballads* (New York: Dover Publications, 1965).
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CHAPTER 4

CONSTRUCTING THE FOLK IDENTITY

Folk music, to the revivalists, was more than just a particular musical expression. They considered folk music something that influenced their lives and their ways of understanding the society. Dave van Ronk, for instance, in a 1965 folk magazine article, explained that folk music is "the musical expression of an entire way of life—intimately linked with the psychology, occupation, a general world view (Weltanschauung) of a particular group of people, generally literate or semi-literate."[1] Similar explanations were given by numerous revivalists. What we can infer from their effort to define folk music as such is that folk revivalists attempted to situate folk music or the folk music revival movement within a social and cultural context on both the personal and collective levels. By discussing folk music from various points of view—commercialism, folklore, aestheticism, and non-conformism—folk revivalists constructed the concept of folk identity in relation to social issues, encompassing its past, present, and future.

There is no single or fixed idea of folk identity. It can be found only in a process in which folk revivalists projected all possible ideas about folk music onto the reality of America in the 1950s and early 1960s. Through the process of practicing the folk music revival movement in their own ways, they contemplated, one critic puts it, the "symbiotic interchange among corporate America, popular culture, and our own grassroots."[2] Despite different paths the revivalists took in the courses of their lives and their diversity of individual preferences, folk identity was a shared imaginary space in which they searched for historicity—a historical sense that connects revivalists to the past, present,

and future. Because folk revivalists were the people who psychologically found themselves dropping out of the rapidly transforming society, they looked for their cultural space, which, they hoped, might give them the security of knowing who they were.

This chapter attempts to illustrate how folk revivalists connected with the movement through the construction of their cultural identity. Naming it "folk identity," I explore the way in which folk revivalists constructed their cultural identity, which reflected the transformation of America, helped create self-identity, and generated collective consciousness by confirming the connection, though it was on an imaginary level, between themselves and authentic folksingers they admired.

Following the cultural studies' concept of identity as an individual's response to external conditions relating to him or her,[3] I argue that folk revivalists created "folk identity" to set a benchmark for understanding the postwar society and for searching to better understand themselves and the whole external conditions in which they were situated. As I have discussed in the previous chapters, folk revivalists were concerned with the social and cultural condition of postwar America and their construction of cultural identity. At college they encountered folk music as a subject of study, as a means of entertainment, and as a means of socializing. Through the process of their involvement of folk music, they found themselves practicing the folk revival movement as a sign of differentiation from others and as a rebellious form of culture.

At the same time, revivalists saw themselves as sufferers in ever urbanizing America. The sense of suffering was one of the archetypes of the postwar cultural hero image. The young generation of Americans found characters in film and literature who suffered from, for instance, generational conflict and the "phony" world. Having

consumed several images of suffering heroes from various sources in popular culture, folk revivalists recognized in folk music yet another sufferer. Folk singers, in revivalists' understanding, were sufferers because they tried to preserve their traditional way of life that was in danger due to the socioeconomic transformation of America.

The fact that folk music was the music whose origin is traceable to a particular region and particular social class or character appealed to the revivalists. The cowboy song, for instance, was created by the cowboy himself or someone who was familiar with the life of cowboy in the Southwest or South. This appeal reflected the social and cultural condition of folk revivalists whose identities were not necessarily built upon their sociocultural background. They had grown up surrounded by popular culture in suburbia. They did not posses the same kind of culture as southern folk singers who had their own songs to sing about themselves.

This chapter also considers the role of university as an intellectual milieu in the context of the postwar American social condition. Many folk revivalists, most of whom came from middle- and upper-class families, encountered folk music when they were at college. With relative freedom in terms of time and money, students could not only enjoy listening to folk music as an extracurricular or leisure activity, but also examine it for the purpose of constructing self-identities. Faculty provided extensive knowledge about and insights into folk music in their courses. Folk music societies organized folk concerts and published magazines.

Theory of Identity

As a central issue to cultural studies, "identity" is an important but complicated concept.

"Identity" is sometimes understood as an essentialized category that leads to political agency like male identity or middle-class identity or as a representation of political relationship between different social groups. Defined as such, the concept of "identity" tends to ignore individual differences within the constituency. It does not take individually specific experiences into serious consideration. Because the folk music revival movement did not set any political goals, conceptualizing "identity" as a political agency does not help us understand the social and cultural meaning of the movement.

The identity of "folk identity" is not the identity that is determined by one's already existing social, racial, or cultural categories. It is true that the main constituency of the revival movement was white middle-class youth living in urban areas, but their socioeconomic background was not a direct attribution to the making of "folk identity." By chance or other reasons, they encountered the folk music tradition and listened to authentic folksingers on records and at concerts. Then they attempted to understand their experience of folk music in the context of society, time, and the self. In this process of identity formation, the folk revivalists constructed folk identity by reflecting on the social and material conditions of postwar America.

The making of "folk identity" shows us a process of constructing cultural identity associated with the experience of the folk revival. The identity I am discussing here can be linked to the concept of "self." Both concepts are constructed as a response to others including the parents' generation of revivalists, as well as external material conditions. In the modern world, the historian Warren I. Susman remarked, "the development of consciousness of self" makes the modern world "modern."[4] Philosophers and sociologists have tried to account for identity and the self. Back in the eighteenth century, the Scottish

philosopher David Hume argued that the self was a bundle of sensations and experiences, continually changing as one had new sensations and experiences. Emile Durkheim argued that the individual is a product of society, not vice versa. In the 1930s, George Herbert Mead recapitulated the same argument Durkheim did: "the whole [society] is prior to the part [the individual], not the part to the whole."[5] Moreover, Mead analyzed the self by distinguishing "I" from "Me." According to Mead, the "I" is "something that is responding to a social situation," and the "Me" is "the organized set of attitudes of others which one himself assumes."[6] To Mead, the self plays both subjectively and objectively and, through the interaction between "I" and "Me", the self is constructed.

In the late 1950s, Erving Goffman described the self as a performance by its possessor. The self, Goffman argues, "does not derive from its possessor, but from the whole scene of his action, being generated by that attribute of local events which renders them interpretable by witnesses." Goffman defined the self as a "performed character" that "does not have specific location, whose fundamental fate is to be born, to mature, and to die."[7] Like Hume, Durkheim, and Mead, Goffman describes the self as a product of interaction between a person and his or her external reality.

In his 1963 book *Stigma*, Goffman changed his terminology from "the self" to "identity." In the same year, Peter Berger's popular book on sociology *Invitation to Sociology* featured "identity" in its relation to several sociological theories such as role theory, reference-group theory, and dramaturgical sociology.[8] Identity, Berger writes, is "no longer a solid , given entity... it is rather a process, continuously created and re-created in each social situation that one enters, held together by the slender thread of memory."[9]

Cultural studies has developed the concept of identity or the self in a similar

manner. As an active agent, identity is projected onto and positioned in a wide range of cultural practices in a given socioeconomic circumstance. As continually reshaped, transformed, and renegotiated, identity exists only in relation to the social reality. This relationality and fluidity suggest that identity is subject to the continuous interplay of history, culture, and power. Identity is a social concept. Unlike "personality," which indicates more or less a stable characteristic of an individual, identity is being constantly reconstructed in relation to the social condition to which an individual belongs. With this definition of identity in mind, we can reach another definition of identity: it has a kind of shared experience and history with others. Because identity is constituted through others, certain groups, communities, and society, one's identity can be shared with others. The identity formation depends on others, which creates a sense of solidarity as "active agents."[10]

In a more popular discourse, the concept of "identity" as we know it today was popularlized by Erik Erikson's study *Childhood and Society* in 1950. It was the first book that defined identity as the normative psychosocial achievements of selfhood that can be attained in relation to committing oneself to social circumstance.[11] With this notion of identity, Erikson introduced his famous model of eight stages in human development, among which the fifth "adolescence" (the fidelity stage) plays a pivotal role in identity formation. Adolescence, according to Erikson, is the period in which one develops a sense of the self through the negotiation between "identity" and "role confusion." In this stage between thirteen and eighteen, a child has to learn the roles he or she will occupy as an adult. In this process, the child re-examines his or her identity and tries to find out exactly who he or she is, and the sense of self can be hindered because of the confusion

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about their role in society.

The formation of identity thus centers around the relationship between society and individuals. If we understand the issue of identity as such, it becomes clear that the "folk identity" is not a cohesive identity that permeates one's life regardless of what he or she experiences. Nor is it a given identity as essential property to define who he or she is by their socioeconomic characteristics like the working-class identity or African American identity. Any cultural form including the folk revival movement does not define its practitioner's identity by itself. It only becomes a catalyst for the connection between cultural practice and identity formation.

For adolescents living in a highly developed, sophisticated society such as the U.S., identity formation depends on what kind of role in society they choose. And it is influenced by social and cultural conditions. The role means not only occupational role in their future. Rather it indicates their value and belief about the society and themselves. As Erikson characterized, at the adolescence stage teenagers seek the self identity by mediating between the self, as the entity with one's series of life experiences, and role confusion that they cannot find the right answer. They found it difficult to set their role because the postwar socioeconomic transformation from production-based to consumption-based society, coupled with the emergence of suburban middle-class as a major segment of American demography, has collapsed the traditional way of establishing the self identity.

Traditionally, establishing an identity was achieved by following one's parents. Parents might have taught their children how to become an adult, how to live, and how to think about the world. But, now, postwar children had to find their identity on their own

because they understood that they were living in a totally different social condition from that of their parents. To construct identity, they tried to develop an affiliation with those who might hold the same idea about the society or the identity formation. The subject they had such intimacy included cultural heroes, as well as their like-minded friends.

As I will discuss later in this chapter, many folk revivalists encountered folk music at college during their adolescence, a time of trying to define who they were and what value and belief they construct as their identity. Erikson's notion of identity, therefore, provides a useful framework to consider the significance of the revival movement in terms of revivalists' self identity construction.

Cultural Heroes

During postwar America, American adolescents sought heroes in the popular culture of the day. They looked for heroes who might represent their situation and speak for them. These popular culture heroes provided an image for them of the ideal self which helped them construct their identities in the real social, economic and cultural condition. Of course, the popular culture hero did not solve each adolescent's identity crisis, but the hero image did help them construct a sense of self. We understand ourselves and our society through the negotiation between self and reality. Without the sense of self, it is difficult to understand reality, and therefore the relationship between self and reality. These popular culture heroes were not identical to the social roles or the self identities of adolescent Americans in their real lives, but these heroes had a significant impact on adolescent minds. These heroes, therefore, provided perspectives from which youthful Americans looked at their reality.

Some of these popular culture heroes were found in movies, in books and even in comic strips. In Hollywood, James Dean acted as a rebellious but sensitive teenager dissatisfied with suburban conformity in *Rebel Without a Cause* in 1955. His character's rebellion might have been done without a cause, but his pursuit of belonging gave many teenagers a cause to search for the self. In the 1954 film *On the Waterfront*, Marlon Brando played an ex-boxer who ran errands for a crooked boss of the longshoremen's union. When his character Terry realizes that he has inadvertently been involved in a murder, he becomes torn between loyalty to his boss and the qualms of his conscience. The characters of Dean and Brando are, in short, vulnerable, but rebellious against what they cannot accept as a social or cultural norm or something that cannot fit into their echical or moral criteria.

In the 1956 film version of best-selling novel *Man in the Grey Flannel Suit* written by Wilson Sloan, Gregory Peck plays the main character Tom Rath, an archetype of "organization man" in the 1950s who wonders whether he has the freedom to make any choices in his conformist world. A Madison Avenue advertising executive, Rath lives in a comfortable Connecticut bedroom town and commutes in and out of Manhattan, leaving him little time for his wife and children. He is very professional, but frustrated by the role he plays in business as an "organization man." Rath soon realizes that he will have to choose between becoming a fully dedicated company man and maintaining a healthy work-life balance. Tom Rath's "organization man" foreshadowed the future of college students.

In literature, J. D. Salinger published *The Catcher in the Rye* in 1951, which won overwhelming critical acclaim and produced many devoted admirers, especially among

college students. The 16-year-old protagonist Holden Caulfield, who is plagued by "phoniness" of his surrounding people and leaves his preparatory school in Pennsylvania for Manhattan, became an iconic figure among the post-WWII generation. In 1957, Jack Kerouac's *On the Road* was published. In this road novel, two protagonists Sal Paradise (a self portrait by Kerouac) and Dean Moriarty (based on Neal Cassady) traveled from coast to coast. Paradise is introverted and struggling about his future; Moriarty, just out of a reform school, is joyous and reckless. Narrated by Paradise whose monologue addresses the wasteland of modernity, *On the Road* conveys his loneliness, insecurity, and failure, all of which are underscored by his longing for friendship with Moriarty who does not care about what Paradise is concerned.

In postwar America, the traditional image of a hero being extraordinary and doing extraordinary things changed. A hero was not a great man. Rather he was just an average man whose effort does not pay off. A hero is, for example, like Sisyphus in the Greek mythology. Sisyphus is ordered to roll a rock to the top of a mountain. When Sisyphus raises the rock near the top, however, the rock begins rolling down by its own weight. He starts it again, but with a futile result. The French existentialist writer Albert Camus, then a popular writer among American college students, wrote *The Myth of Sisyphus*, in which he argued that Sisyphus is happy about this fate because Sisyphus tells us that he overcomes the fate by accepting his travail. Sisyphus accepts his fate even though he knows that his effort does not pay off.

Charlie Brown, the main character in the comic strip *Peanuts*, also fits well into this category of hero as an average man who suffers from predicaments. The author Charles Schulz once said, "has to be the one who suffers, because he is a caricature of the

average person. Most of us are much more acquainted with losing than we are with winning."[12]

In a time when America exerted enormous influence on international relations and, domestically, achieved enormous expansion of its economic power and the consequent social transformation into a consumer society, the baby boomer generation saw themselves as sufferers who had been disconnected and alienated from the social tie because of the postwar affluence. C. Wright Mills's *White Collar: The American Middle-Classes* (1951) discussed the propertyless middle-class workers who provided a vast staff for the ruling elite. White-collar workers in modern industrial societies, Mills observes, are unorganized and dependent upon large bureaucracies for their existence. Vance Packard's *Status Seekers* (1959) questioned the well-established assertion that the postwar affluent economy has increased social mobility and blurred class and ethnic lines. Focusing on the middle-class Americans, who have moral dilemma between the desire for success in business and mass consumption in private life, Packard argued that America had become more socially divided with a widening chasm between the "Diploma Elite," the real upper and upper-middle classes, and the "Supporting Classes," the lower-middle, working, and real lower classes, which replaced the traditional class line. Herbert Gans summed up the character of these middle-class Americans living in suburbia by observing that suburbanites were "incapable of real friendship; they [were] bored and lonely, alienated, atomized, and depersonalized."[13]

These negative descriptions of the middle-class Americans were to a larger extent the counter-image of what the identity-seeking youth wanted to become. After having consumed existential heroes through popular culture channels, folk revivalists discovered

folk singers on records and at concerts. Folk singers became, though imaginary, a role model for urban folk revivalists, the sufferers, who did not get much material benefit from the nation's economic advancement. But for all this predicament, folk revivalists thought, folk singers in the South could help them from being "alienated, atomized, and depersonalized." Their act of singing seemed to be a vindication of it. Moreover, unlike popular culture heroes who are, as a matter of course, the fabricated image of psychologically naïve teenagers in most cases, folk singers were real figures living in the 1950s.

The Folk Identity Formation at Campus

It is thus natural for folk revivalists to find their heroes in folk music. By listening to Woody Guthrie, for example, revivalists created the image of Guthrie as a desperate working-class hero or a rambling hobo. The young Bob Dylan was influenced by Guthrie's autobiography *Bound For Glory*, which made Dylan decide to go to New York to see him. He saw a vision in Guthrie's *Bound for Glory* that Dylan was, like the Guthrie in his autobiography, hoboing the country singing along the road. Guthrie, desperate but individualistic, was a prototype of folksingers whom many revivalists admired.

The interesting point is that folk revivalists found their folk heroes at campus. Before Dylan found Guthrie and other folk singers including Odetta, Jack Elliott, and Pete Seeger when he was a student at the University of Minnesota, his musical heroes at his high school days were Little Richard, Buddy Holly, and Gene Vincent. He was also a fan of James Dean and ran around town in jeans, a motorcycle jacket, and boots. Entering the university, Dylan learned the Beat literature and folk music at the off-campus hip area

called Dinkytown and he came to immerse himself in folk music by playing it.[14]

Dylan's transformation regarding his choices of heroes from rock 'n' roll to folk singer was not unique. Phil Ochs, another prominent folk singer in the revival period, took a similar path. Before enrolling in Ohio State University, Ochs's heroes were Marlon Brando and James Dean. After he watched *On the Waterfront*, he dreamed about boxing to become a champion. After watching *Rebel Without a Cause*, he thought that he wanted a red jacket and combed his hair back like Dean. His favorite singers were Johnny Cash, Faron Young, Everly Brothers, Gene Vincent, Buddy Holly, and Elvis Presley. He arrived in Columbus, wearing a red jacket like Dean in *Rebel Without a Cause*. Before long, however, he became to learn folk music such as Guthrie, Seeger, the Weavers, and related political events like HUAC. Ochs decided to become a folk singer.[15]

University played a special role in creating the revival movement and the construction of identity for several reasons. Folklorists had studied folk music for decades and they had taught their students folk music and folklore at class. Unlike rock 'n' roll songs that were frequently played on the radio, folk music was less accessible for high school students. They did not have enough opportunities to hear folk music in their hometowns. Accessing folk music for the first time on campus, they came to learn more about folk music. Peter Yarrow of Peter, Paul and Mary outlines a typical developmental pattern of how a college student become involved in the folk music revival:

> having attended such an affair [collegiate old-fashioned style singing or dancing event], and felt such elevated feelings as belong to hymn singing and revival meetings, the student begins by buying certain records, typically by Harry Belafonte or the Kingston Trio, and slowly becomes acquainted, through friends, album notes, magazines, books, and other sources, with more "authentic" music such as that in the Library of Congress collection. Coffeehouse and concert performances intimate the possibility of her own transformation—and soon she has retired to her dorm room to compare her own efforts on the guitar to what she

hears on the record albums.[16]

Major universities had folk music clubs, which organized folk concerts and published folk music magazines. In Minneapolis, the eighteen-year-old Robert Zimmerman, who would later call himself Bob Dylan, learned about folk music from Paul Nelson, the University of Minnesota student who worked at a local record distributor. Nelson loaned Zimmerman the Harry Smith's *Anthology of American Folk Music*. As Zimmerman immersed himself into the world of folk music, he began calling himself Bob Dylan, changing his look from jeans, motorcycle jacket, and boots to corduroy pants and plain shirts. His particular interest was Guthrie. While listening to Guthrie's records, Dylan read his autobiography *Bound For Glory*.[17] In Guthrie's life, Dylan found an image of outsider who wanders around. Dylan also read Jack Kerouac's *On The Road*. Like Guthrie's image in *Bound For Glory*, Dylan found the character Sal Paradise in *On The Road* hoboing around the country searching for self. In the meantime, at Ohio State University, Phil Ochs first found his interest in politics such as the Cuban Revolution, Fidel Castro, and the Cuban missile crisis, and then he met a fellow student named Jim Glover who brought Ochs to the world of folk music and taught him how to play the guitar. Combining his dream to become a journalist and his new fascination with folk music, Ochs found his suitable form of expression—writing and singing topical songs.

It is no exaggeration to say that the college atmosphere as an intellectual enclave created the folk music revival. There were folklorists and faculty from other disciplines who possessed extensive knowledge about folk music and American folklore. They served as mentors and reliable guides for folk revivalists at campus. Some of the revivalists, like John Burrison at Penn State, became folklore professors. And there were

well-informed students like Paul Nelson and Jim Clover. Without Nelson, Bob Dylan might not have been produced. Without Clover, Ochs might not have moved to New York. From the academic courses on folklore and related subjects to campus folk music festivals, fraternity or sorority folksinging for recreational purpose, publishing folk music magazines, and "extracurricular" activities like hanging around coffeehouses near campus (Dinkytown at the University of Minnesota, for instance), and personal acquaintances with faculty and fellow students, university provided several channels for students to discover folk music.

Some folk revivalists had, however, experienced folk music earlier in their lives. Dick Weissman, who would form the Journeymen and made a debut from Capitol Records in 1961, recalls that his first encounter with folk music was at the Progressive Party Convention in 1948 when he was thirteen. He saw Pete Seeger sing and play the banjo there. Before long thirteen-year-old Weissman bought a banjo to play himself. As he learned to play the banjo, his interest in folk music grew and he began collecting 78 rpm records of Brownie MacGhee, Leadbelly, and Woody Guthrie. In 1952 he enrolled at Goddard College in Vermont. After graduation, he moved to New York to study sociology at Columbia University. While studying at Columbia, he recorded some songs. His first recording was for Stinson, accompanying the West Indian singer Dick Silvera. Then, his first album with Billy Faier and Eric Weissberg *Banjos, Banjos, and More Banjos* was released from Riverside. In the summer of 1958 he appeared on two TV programs—NBC special program *The Ragtime Years* and ABC's Labor Day Show.

In a similar way, Ralph Rinzler and Roger Abrahams attended Pete Seeger's concert together at Swarthmore College in 1953 when they were students there.

Influenced by Seeger's banjo playing, Rinzler and Abrahams began learning to play the banjo. However, this concert was not Rinzler's first encounter with folk music. Before he was ten, Rinzler had been listening to the Library of Congress field recordings. He knew the names of folksingers and their songs, and he just liked listening to folk music. It was just a music he liked, no more, no less. However, it was at the Swarthmore concert that he sensed significant impact from Seeger's folk singing and banjo playing and thought that this was what he wanted to do for the rest of his life. Seeger looked "absolutely coherent" with "everything fit together." Abrahams recalls that Seeger showed them "clarity of spirit and vision."[18]

Despite the difference in when, where, or how they learned folk music, it is at university that folk revivalists discovered their dedication to folk music. In addition to the growing population of middle class families that could afford to have their children attend colleges, the G.I. Bill of Rights allowed returning soldiers to earn degrees. Universities increased their presence and significance after the war. Not only had they become an institution for educating all Americans, universities played a pivotal role as central institutions of scientific development, backed up by the government, to counter the Cold War race against the Soviet Union. As the size of a university expanded, it became the same as a large corporation. Many historians and critics pointed out that the Cold War university had become a place of conformity, which New Left student activists harshly attacked. A professor's life had become, as Clark Kerr called it, a "rat race of business and activity," just like a corporate organization man's.[19]

While American colleges in the late 1950s were the places of conformism, folk music functioned as a marker of differentiation from the majority of students who

followed that conformism. In the winter of 1958 at Cornell University, the future novelist Thomas Pynchon, then junior editor on the campus literary magazine *Cornell Writer*, met Richard Farina, who would later move to Greenwich Village to become a folksinger. Pynchon describes the rebellious manner of Farina: he was "not wearing a jacket or tie," he had "more hair than was fashionable," and he had a "dangerous presence." At Cornell, Pynchon writes, undergraduate women had to be inside dormitories or sorority houses by around eleven p.m. on weeknights and midnight even on Saturday nights.[20] College students like Farina politicized folksinging as to differentiate them from other conformist students and as a manifestation of their defiance against what they saw as the oppression of the university.

At Boston University in 1958, Joan Baez's college life began with her refusal to wear the customary beanie to the freshman class picnic. Unwilling to conform to the norm the university had set, Baez instead frequented coffeehouses in Cambridge to sing folk songs. She ended up dropping out of college before her second semester. Despite her traditional singing style and her contract with the classical label Vanguard, she was a "rebellious, barefoot, antiestablishment young girl." In contrast to the feminine image of that era, she represented the "negative image of Marilyn Monroe; thin, dark, strong, smart, virtuous—still, young and attractive to men."[21]

The music scholar Barry Shank observes that a similar relationship between folk music and non-conformist students occurred at the University of Texas, Austin, in the early 1960s. At Austin, folksinging students distanced themselves from other student organizations like fraternities, sororities, and varsity sports teams. Folk music, as it did at many other colleges, carried an aura of authenticity and at the same time it meant

rebellion. Rebellious student groups at Austin gathered at a coffeehouse and they performed folk songs. In a heavily conformist cultural milieu like Austin, Shank concludes, folk music became a means of constructing a difference.[22]

The Legacy of Leftist Politics

Until the early 1950s, the perception of folk music as a left-wing cultural weapon to instill communist propaganda still remained at universities. The Yale graduate John Cohen, who would form the New Lost City Ramblers, notes that most Yale students in 1952 and 1953, when he was a freshman and organizing hootenannies at campus, considered folk music strictly left-wing and he was repeatedly cautioned by the administration that he should quit playing the banjo. Folksinging at Yale, however, began gradually attracting more and more students. Campus hootenannies were full of students. But this was in the midst of McCarthyism hysteria and Cohen heard of fist fighting at dormitories where students attempted to prevent their roommates from going to hootenannies because they thought that attending hoots might hinder roommates' opportunities to get jobs.[23]

By the mid-1950s, however, the perception of folk music as left-wing political propaganda seemed to disappear. The Weavers' reunion concert at Carnegie Hall in December, 1955 was a tipping point at which folk music transformed itself into a politically neutral form of music that would reach a wide range of audience including college students. After the successful hit "Goodnight Irene" in 1950s, the Weavers had been troubled with the Cold War political tension. In the same year, *Red Channels: Communist Influence on Radio and Television* listed Seeger as a communist member. In

1952 a supposed communist informant testified before HUAC that Seeger and other members of the Weavers were members of Communist Party. Since these events Seeger had been prohibited from appearing in commercial media and, consequently, Decca Records stopped recording the Weavers.

It was around this period that Seeger began touring colleges. Seeger found his new audience at colleges in lieu of union workers. The transition of Seeger's audience from the working-class union members to the young middle-class audience also indicates the transformation of American sociocultural condition after the war—from the emphasis on production to which workers had contributed, to consumption-based society from which the baby boomer middle-class youth to a great extent benefited. On Christmas Eve in 1955, the Weavers appeared at a concert at Carnegie Hall for the first time in three years. What the new urban audience saw at the Weavers' reunion concert was a total freshness of their sound, lyrics, and harmony, rather than the remnant of left-wing political atmosphere. Peter Yarrow recalls that the reunion concert was a "unique experience" of his life. "We don't copy their devices because they don't use devices. They became themselves on stage," said Yarrow. The record of this concert came out from Vanguard in 1957. On the back cover was a quote from the review article of their Town Hall concert in 1950: "They enchanted a capacity and wildly partisan audience. And small wonder; they do their best kind of repertoire to perfection with plenty of spirit and enthusiasm." Perhaps, the Weavers had not changed their spirit and musical style at all. The new audience rediscovered the authenticity or "spirit and enthusiasm" in their unchanged manner.[24]

The new audience of folk music at universities embraced folk music not so much

because they felt sympathy toward the leftist activism, but because they thought that folksinging represented, as Peter Yarrow mentioned, authenticity and spiritedness. Even though they might have heard a union song, they no longer sang it as the union workers did in order to unite and to confirm their working-class virtue. College folk revivalists—most of whom came from the middle- and upper-class families—were not a potential political constituency who might gain material benefit from left-wing activism. They were not protesting against the system, nor were they an economically oppressed group. Folk revivalists found in union songs that the "spirit and enthusiasm" rooted in the sense of suffering connected to them as sufferers from the zeitgeist of postwar urban America. It is the recognition that they were rootless Americans who were trapped in a psychological fissure in which they found it difficult to identify who they were and what kind of role they had been playing and would be playing in the future.

In the early 1960s, the New Left movement spread out at campuses across the nation. The New Left, which set a clear political goal for creating a more democratic society, had several similarities with the folk revival although one was a political movement and the other a cultural movement. Both movements emerged from campuses at which middle- and upper-class students, who felt alienation from the rest of society despite their relatively privileged social background, sought for a new value and self identity. Students for a Democratic Society, a left-wing organization of college students that was formed in the early 1960s and created its chapters throughout the nation, played a leading role in the New Left movement. In the Port Huron Statement in 1962, they affirmed the human "potential for self-cultivation, self-direction, self-understanding, and creativity." From this statement, it is possible to assume that SDS had been aware of the

issue of authenticity. The search for authenticity, as Doug Rossinow argues, lay at the heart of New Left.

Folk revivalists held a similar premise as the New Left for their involvement with folk music. They found themselves trapped into alienated social and cultural condition in which they found it difficult to establish the self identity. Folk music sounded ideal to them because the songs they listened to were so fresh and simple. In sharp contrast to complexity of postwar America, folk music represented what was missing in postwar America.

As SDS claimed as its core principle of its political movement that full participation in society was essential, the folk revivalists held an idea that the essence of their folk revival movement was participation. Many folk music critics pointed out this characteristic. Robert Shelton aptly called the folk revival "an involvement art."[25] In contrast to mass culture that, it was believed, brought alienation, the folk revival was the movement that connected people to people. Of course, folk music was available through records and a person could listen to them individually in their bedrooms, but the revivalists did not satisfy themselves simply by enjoying folk music by themselves. The revivalists sought to recreate a quasi-premodern community similar to the one that used to exist in which folk music they were listening to had been created. They looked for a place to socialize, hear songs, and sing along with them.

The involvement principle was demonstrated in their participation in the civil rights movement beyond the folk community. The singings by Marian Anderson, Joan Baez, Bob Dylan, Harry Belafonte, Josh White, Mahalia Jackson, and Peter, Paul & Mary at the March on Washington on August 28, 1963, was one of the most memorable

moments in how the folk music revival movement involved itself in the civil rights movement. But even before the March on Washington, folk singers had actively involved in the civil rights cause and politics in general. Theodore Bikel supported the JFK presidential campaign and sang at SNCC-sponsored benefit concerts. Folk music, in Theodore Bikel's words, was a "fusion between artist and activism."[26] Before the civil rights movement caught the national attention, young black folk singers rarely were involved in the folk revival scene. There were, of course, eminent black folk singers such as Odetta, Josh White, and Paul Robeson on the scene, but they were veteran singers having performed since the 1940s and early 1950s. The upsurge of the civil rights movement in some way helped young black singers join the folk music revival movement that had been dominated by the urban white middle-class or upper-middle class singers and audience. At the Albany Movement in November 1961, the first mass movement in the civil rights movement history, two field secretaries of SNCC—Charles Sherrod and Cordell Reagan—held a singing event filled with spiritual songs sung by African Americans. After the Albany Movement, more and more white folk singers began participating in the civil rights campaigns. The Freedom Singers, a four-person chorus group formed by SNCC to raise money and spread the SNCC idea, performed alongside numerous white folk singers including Pete Seeger, Joan Baez, and Bob Dylan. At the 1963 Newport Folk Festival, the Freedom Singers appeared to sing "We Shall Overcome" as well as Dylan's "Blowin' in the Wind" at the closing.

Conclusion

Folk revivalists grew up surrounded by mass-produced entertainment such as movies,

radio, records, magazines, and television. They formed their cultural identity through the process of creating the revivalist movement. Identity is not a static concept. It is always in motion. Folk music revivalists found out their own meanings in and reflections of their personal experience. As a space for practicing popular culture, these participants constructed the folk community in an effort to create a sphere of autonomy by committing themselves to various folk music practices.

The consumption of folk music became a means of identification. But this does not mean that the act of purchasing folk records or other related materials automatically builds up a community. Forming the folk communities resulted from folk revivalists' desire to create their own community that would represent their ideas, ideals, concerns, and tastes. They inscribed their cultural identification with heroes such as James Dean, Little Richard, and folk singers like Woody Guthrie as well as unknown folk singers, but at the same time, they perceived the notion of folk as something that related their identity to the society in which they lived, in a historical context.

The folk identity was constructed out of a larger sociocultural landscape in the 1950s and 1960s. Identity mattered to the revivalists. Throughout the process of seeking cultural heroes during their teens, these adolescents encountered folk music which aided them in creating the image of their own social roles. Nostalgic in part, but future-looking, the folk identity was a noble concept that enabled them to re-evaluate their lives and America.

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[1] David A. De Turk and A. Poulin Jr., *The American Folk Scene: Dimensions of the Folksong Revival* (New York: A Laurel Original, 1967), 21.
[2] Kip Lornell, *Introducing American Folk Music: Ethnic and Grassroot Traditions in the United States* (Boston: McGraw-Hill, 2002), 255,

[3] For discussion on identity, see Angela McRobbie, *Postmodernism and Popular Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1994), 58; Stuart Hall, "Cultural Identity and Diaspora," in *Identity: Community, Culture, and Difference*, ed. Jonathan Rutherford (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1990), 225.
[4] Warren Susman, *Culture as History: The Transformation of American Society in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1973), 271,
[5] George Herbert Mead and Charles W. Morris, *Mind, Self, and Society: From the Standpoint of a Social Behaviorist* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1962), 7,
[6] Ibid., 175, 177,
[7] Erving Goffman, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1959), 252-253.
[8] Philip Gleason, "Identifying Identity: A Semantic History," *The Journal of American History* 69, no. 4. (March 1983): 910-931.
[9] Peter L. Berger, *Invitation to Sociology: A Humanistic Perspective* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1963), 100-06.
[10] Angela McRobbie, *Postmodernism and Popular Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1994), 58; Stuart Hall, "Cultural Identity and Diaspora," in *Identity: Community, Culture, and Difference*, ed. Jonathan Rutherford (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1990), 225.
[11] Leerom Medovoi, *Rebels: Youth and the Cold War Origins of Identity* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005), 5-6; Erik H. Erikson, *Childhood and Society* (New York: Norton, 1964).
[12] John Updike, "Sparky from St. Paul: A Biography of Charles Schulz," (Review of David Michaelis, *Schulz and Peanuts*), *New Yorker*, October 22, 2007, p.166.
[13] C. Wright Mills, *White Collar: The American Middle Classes* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1953); Vance Oakley Packard, *The Status Seekers; an Exploration of Class Behavior in America and the Hidden Barriers That Affect You, Your Community, Your Future* (New York: D. McKay Co., 1959); and Herbert J. Gans, *The Levittowners: Ways of Life and Politics in a New Suburban Community* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1967).
[14] David Hajdu, *Positively 4th Street: The Lives and Times of Joan Baez, Bob Dylan, Mimi Baez Fariña, and Richard Fariña* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2001), 67-68; Clinton Heylin, *Bob Dylan: The Recording Sessions, 1960-1994* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1995), 33-39,
[15] Marc Eliot, *Death of a Rebel: A Biography of Phil Ochs* (New York: F. Watts, 1989), 13, 17-18,
[16] Robert Cantwell, *When We Were Good: The Folk Revival* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1996), 331-332.
[17] Hajdu, *Positively 4th Street: The Lives and Times of Joan Baez, Bob Dylan, Mimi Baez Fariña, and Richard Fariña*, 70,
[18] Cantwell, *When We Were Good: The Folk Revival*, 243.
[19] David Kaiser, "The Postwar Suburbanization of American Physics," *American Quarterly* 56 (2004): 851-852.
[20] Richard Fariña, *Been Down So Long It Looks Like up to Me* (New York: Penguin Books, 1983), v-vi, Thomas Pynchon contributed his introduction to this edition.
[21] Cantwell, *When We Were Good: The Folk Revival*, 342, 344, David Hajdu, *Positively 4th Street: The Lives and Times of Joan Baez, Bob Dylan, Mimi Baez Fariña, and Richard Fariña* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2001), 21, 61.
[22] Barry Shank, *Dissonant Identities: The Rock 'n' Roll Scene in Austin, Texas* (Hanover, N.H.: University Press of New England, 1994), 44-47.
[23] Susan Montgomery, "The Folk Furor," *Mademoiselle*, December 1960, p. 100.
[24] "Weavers Are Heard in Folksong Concert," *New York Times*, December 25, 1950, p. 23; "Togetherness," *Newsweek*, May 13, 1963, p. 95; and Ronald D. Cohen, *Rainbow Quest: The Folk Music Revival and American Society, 1940-1970* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2002), 102-103.
[25] Robert Shelton and David Dahr, *The Face of Folk Music* (New York: Citadel Press, 1968), 3.
[26] Theodore Bikel, *Theo: The Autobiography of Theodore Bikel* (New York: HarperCollins, 1994), 268.

CONCLUSION

In its tenth anniversary issue in February/March 1961, *Sing Out!* featured a symposium titled "Folk Music Today." It asked ten key persons of the folk revival movement—folk singers, folklorists, record label managers, etc.—about the state of folk music. The arguments by the ten respondents reflected the transitional condition of folk music in the midst of the folk revival movement. On one extreme, the folk singer Cynthia Gooding, for example, defended the traditional and folkloristic definition of folk music as a practice between singers and audience without any business intervention. On the other extreme, Dave Guard, for example, one of the members of the Kingston Trio, argued that professional folk music performers were making their livings "in competition with other forms of entertainment available to the theoretically neutral public."

Whichever side of the debate one stood on, we have to admit that Dave Guard quite accurately understood the cultural condition of folk music in postwar America when he mentioned "other forms of entertainment available to ... public." The menu for cultural consumption was diverse, especially in New York. There were theaters, movies, paperback novels, TV, roller derby, boutique, ethnic foods, and so forth. One of other responders George Avakian, a veteran record producer for RCA Victor, offered a compromised view. He argued that "there is no opportunity to present the 'pure' or esoteric type of folk material, but with imagination and quality presentation there is an opportunity to record artists and songs of broad appeal, wherein the need for profit does not mean violation of artistic and musical principle."[1]

As the *Sing Out!* symposium suggests, how to reconcile the authentic folk music

experience with the commercial forces had been the center of discussion among revivalists. And it was this heated debate that enriched the folk revival movement. Presenting authentic folk singers living in the South before the urban audience at folk festivals or FOTM concerts not only satisfied authenticity-seeking audiences, but also made the whole community of folk revivalists realize that they had been living in the wasteland of modernity.

In my discussion of the folk music revival movement, I have often referred to the revivalists' nostalgia for and their romanticizing of the past. In addition, I have suggested that these sentiments did not necessarily reflect the revivalists' pessimism or hopelessness for the present or future. Instead, the folk music revivalists reinvented the folk music tradition to create a new relationship between their identity constructions and social awareness.

In the 1950s the growth of suburbia idealized the middle-class way of life. At the same time, sociological texts such as *Lonely Crowd*, *The Organization Man*, and *White Collar*, and popular literature like Sloan Wilson's *The Man in the Grey Flannel Suit* identified the new type of middle-class American personality. The children of the middle-class in suburbia felt culturally alienated from the middle-class normalcy. When they came to know folk music, they imagined the people in the 1930s and 1940s singing vernacular music somewhere in the south and found out that folk singing represented their middle-class values and identities as ordinary Americans. Henry Wallace, then vice president for Franklin Delano Roosevelt, declared a decade earlier that the twentieth century was "the century of the common man." The experiences of the Depression and WWII highlighted the idea that America had been built by the common men, or the

working-class people. Their music was the folk music that might represent the whole way of life—an organic representation of an archaic but heartwarming, spirited, and self-fulfilling lifestyle.

The postwar suburban middle-class youth understood folk music as one of the expressive cultures that embodied the value of working-class Americans in the South. To revivalists, a folk song epitomized folk people's way of life. They did not belong to the working-class culture in the sociological sense, but found it fascinating enough to embrace it as a counter culture of their own. The folk music revival might have functioned as an imaginary escape from their middle-class conformity, but they also took this opportunity to create a role for themselves in the Eriksonian sense.

As I discussed earlier, "folk" is not simply a name of musical genre that describes its musical or lyrical content. During the folk revival, the notion of "folk" became a means of constructing identity through the process of popularization of folk music. Since the mid-1950s America had witnessed the emergence of popular culture that affected the lives of the young generation. They had heard Elvis Presley shouting "Hound Dog" or watched James Dean or Marlon Brando playing a sensitive hero or anti-hero on the screen. Then they had read or heard about the Beat literature that rejected the American prosperity. Rock 'n' roll, Dean, and beatniks were all appreciated through commercial channels. For the first time in the American cultural history, cultural producers started creating products aimed at attracting the youth segment of the population. The 1950s was the decade in which the transformation of cultural hierarchy occurred and the cultural division was restructured. It was necessary then to take a look at the overview of cultural politics in the 1950s, which helped us understand the commercial success of folk revival

and its relationship with the identity formation among the folk revivalists.

The folk revival created a space or community, in which participants were connected, on the one hand, by personal interactions on campuses or in Greenwich Village, and, on the other hand, via mass media. Each participant discovered the musical tradition through records and radio, folk festivals, hootenannies, folk magazines, folk events on campus, and coffee houses. In Greenwich Village, the Folklore Center functioned as a physical space for folk audiences to communicate and share their tastes, ideas, and information. In such a space the revivalists appropriated the old musical culture adopting it to their own needs to construct their identities. Their interest in the old musical expression led them to reinterpret not only folk music but also the social and cultural condition of postwar American society.

It is important to note that terms other than the term "revival" have been used to describe this movement. Folk singer Sandy Paton, who had performed in America and England and founded Folk-Legacy Records in 1961, preferred "the folk arrival" to "the folk revival." "Arrival" connotes that the phenomenon was the arrival of traditional folk music, that had been played locally in the urban areas in the 1950s. To the urban audience, folk music was nothing but a new experience. Paton argued that the history of folk music had been a series of arrival of folk singers in urban America: Leadbelly was brought to New York by the Lomaxes in 1935; Woody Guthrie left Los Angeles for New York in 1940; Jean Ritchie moved to New York from Kentucky to work at the Henry Street Settlement in 1946.[2] Recent reissue album of concerts by the Friends of Old Time Music in the early 1960s was titled "Friends of Old Time Music: The Folk Arrival 1961-1965." FOTM brought traditional folk singers in front of audiences in New York.

"Arrival" thus meant that the southern and western folk singers finally reached the urban young audience.

Arguing a different line, the folklorist B. A. Botkin once compared "revival" with "survival." As the opposite meaning of "revival," "survival" is "dead-alive" and something that has outlived beyond its time. After he argued that many folk songs might be considered in this "survival" category, Botkin confessed that the revival movement had gone far beyond scholars' reach and control. Botkin's sense of difference between "survival" and "revival" was that "survival" was the subject of scholars' research, but "revival" was not because folk music became a business. Put simply, the music business revived folk music. The reverse is that the folk "survival" has its own value worth studying because surviving folk music is a token of folkloristic importance.[3]

Dave van Ronk called the folk revival "the Folk Scare," by which he meant that the sudden popularity of folk music changed the lives of folk singers including himself and the folk community in Greenwich Village, for better or worse. This naming was intended to emphasize the influence of the folk music business on the Village folk scene and on the entire course of folk music.[4] In a similar fashion, the folk music scholar Neil V. Rosenberg termed the movement "the Great Boom," implying a sense of explosion of folk music as a cultural product via mass media and its immediate fadeout of the national attention.[5]

While it seems that these different terms were mere semantic differentiations, the variety of names indicates the diversity of the folk music revival in its way of reception and interpretation, as well as its aesthetics. The folk music audience received the music not as a given culture, but as an alternative to mass/popular culture, to the Cold War

conformism, and to the mainstream American way of life. To the revivalists in the 1950s, folk music was an old culture, but they did not take it in the same way the older generation had appreciated it. Rather, the young revivalists reinterpreted folk music to resituate it in the socially and politically conservative condition of the 1950s and used it to construct their identities. The folk revivalists were not monolithic in their interpretations of folk music. As epitomized by the debate over commercialism, their ideas of "folk" were often in creative tension with one another. This fluidity of the meaning and imagery the revivalists projected on "folk" was largely responsible for the movement.

Also important is that it occurred in Greenwich Village. In the 1950s, inheriting the Village's tradition of bohemianism and cosmopolitanism, Greenwich Village had attracted many artists, journalists, and political activists from all over the country regardless of their ideological or aesthetic orientations. They created a distinctive cultural atmosphere that challenged the conventional discourse of the decade epitomized as conformity. In particular, the folk revivalists shared the same understanding of American society with the Beat generation and other Greenwich Village bohemians. All of them observed that America had become overwhelmingly complicated, controlled, and manipulated by the one-dimensionally prescribed way of life. As a way out, or as a personal solution, they found beautiful, simple, and mind-soothing culture in the culture of the past and in cultures from different regions. Beat writers embraced jazz, from which they extracted the notion of spontaneity or improvisation, which was something lost in modern America. Folk revivalists found "intensely personal" expression in southern country blues.[6]

The folk revival movement did not occur as a natural outcome of the resistance against capitalistic cultural force and postwar social transformation, but as a result of a dynamic process between production and consumption. It took place amid the changing nature of the postwar demographic in which teenagers became a major segment in the market; teens exerted their buying power, to which the popular music industry responded by providing rock 'n' roll music and then folk music. Rock 'n' roll was the first music that targeted the teenage market. Entering college, however, teenagers found folk music more fascinating in various ways. It represented the culture of the past and its very presence in the 1950s and early 1960s at concert halls or coffeehouses in Greenwich Village was taken as a sense of suffering and of jubilation. The suffering and jubilation seem contradictory ideas, but the revivalists took them as a cohesive set of values distinctive from the mainstream corporate-centered culture.

The folk revivalists were primarily sophisticated elitists who nonetheless yearned for the patronage of the masses. They were well-educated youth experiencing the social reality of the postwar America, and they looked to connect to the common people by way of constructing a folk identity. The construction of folk identity was a cultural invention brought about by their search for the sense of what folk meant. Being both creators and consumers of folk music, the folk revivalists found that those roles shaped their views of postwar America and their cultural and social consciousness. It was a crucial way to prevent themselves from being alienated and helped to make a positive relationship between the revivalists themselves and the society in which they lived.

Yet, at the same time, the folk music revival movement was a movement without a specific center. "No one sector has charge of the situation," Pete Seeger remarked, "not

the Right nor the Left, the cynic nor the romanticist, the purist nor the hybridist, the scholar nor the fan, the money-maker nor the money-spurner."[7] This was the very sociocultural condition in which folk revivalists struggled to construct their cultural identity and the very reason why they searched for that identity by participating in the folk music revival movement.

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[1] *Sing Out!*, February/March 1961, p. 20.
[2] Sandy Paton, "Folk and the Folk Arrival," in *The American Folk Scene: Dimensions of the Folksong Revival*, ed. David A. De Turk & A Poulin Jr. (New York: A Laurel Original, 1967), 38-43.
[3] B. A. Botkin, "The Folksong Revival: A Symposium," *New York Folklore Quarterly* 19, no. 2 (1963): 89-90.
[4] Dave Van Ronk and Elijah Wald, *The Mayor of Macdougal Street: A Memoir* (New York: Da Capo Press, 2005), 179.
[5] Neil V. Rosenberg ed., *Transforming Tradition: Folk Music Revivals Examined* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1993), 27-33; Ronald D. Cohen, *"Wasn't That a Time!": Firsthand Accounts of the Folk Music Revival* (Metuchen, N.J.: Scarecrow Press, 1995), 76.
[6] Samuel Barclay Charters, *The Country Blues* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1975), 17.
[7] Arnold Shaw, "Gitars [Sic], Folk Songs, and Halls of Ivy," *Harpers' Magazine*, November 1964, p. 43.

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