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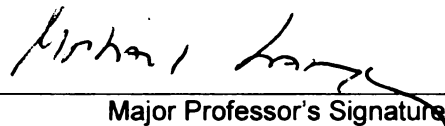
IMAGINING "EL PUEBLO": PAN-LATIN AMERICAN
SUBALTERN SOLIDARITY AND THE MUSIC OF NUEVA
CANCION

presented by

JAMES RYAN BODIFORD

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IMAGINING “EL PUEBLO”: PAN-LATIN AMERICAN SUBALTERN SOLIDARITY
AND THE MUSIC OF *NUEVA CANCION*

By

James Ryan Bodiford

A THESIS

Submitted to
Michigan State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

Department of Music

2007

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ABSTRACT

IMAGINING “EL PUEBLO”: PAN-LATIN SUBALTERN SOLIDARITY AND THE MUSIC OF *NUEVA CANCIÓN*

By

James Ryan Bodiford

This thesis is an examination of the origin and diffusion of the Pan-Latin American song movement *nueva canción*. It argues that the *nueva canción* movement represents a cultural process, through which members of the middle and lower classes in Latin America, in order to more effectively challenge the hegemonic presence of a globally interconnected elite, have “imagined” themselves to be part of a singular transnational subaltern community, signified in music through folkloric and historical references, and commonly referred to as “el pueblo”(the people). This discussion includes an analysis of the concatenated sense of aesthetics through which *nueva canción* artists have attempted to simultaneously reflect their “subaltern” social and political solidarity at both the national and international levels. It also argues that the lyrical themes included in many *nueva canción* compositions often function as a traditionalizing process through which the artists and aficionados connected to the genre symbolize their social condition and identity in the present by associating themselves with events and personalities in the past. Throughout this thesis the Chilean manifestation of the *nueva canción* movement is highlighted as it represents an adequate local reflection of the entire transnational community.

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INTRODUCTION

On a mild December evening in the heart of downtown Grand Rapids, Michigan, lights above the atrium of a small community theatre illuminated a sign reading “Oxaca benefit 7PM”. Shrugging off the irony of the failure of an event that had been organized to raise consciousness and funds for the peasant struggles occurring in southern Mexico to properly spell the state of “Oaxaca” correctly, I silently shuffled through the small group of strangers smoking and conversing outside and proceeded towards the entrance of the venue.

I had come both to support the cause and to observe the two featured events of the evening; the first being the premier screening of a documentary film that promised to recount the ongoing peasant resistance movements occurring in Guatemala and the southern Mexican states of Oaxaca and Chiapas, and the second - the performance of a local Latin rock band, with whom I had been conducting field research for the past few months. Since the repertoire of this band included a diverse collection of socially and politically conscious songs drawn from a variety of Latin American styles and nationalities, I assumed the juxtaposition of this music with the documentary and subsequent discussion session would present itself as an interesting ethnographic subject. However, as I passed through the doors of the recently renovated and yet still less than opulent theatre, I was completely unaware how significantly this event would alter my approach to this project.

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Once inside the small and clustered lobby, I maneuvered through a small group of people who were busy mingling, buying concessions, and glancing over two tables scattered with various commodities available for purchase. On one lay an assortment of printed t-shirts and buttons next to a small sign indicating that they were “Made in Oaxaca”. The other nearly overflowed with left-leaning literature ranging from works by Karl Marx and Michael Moore to news pamphlets with titles like *Socialist Worker*, *People’s Tribute*, and *Revolution*.

Having arrived just minutes before the 7PM start time, I quickly moved into the theatre and settled into one of the stiff retractable seats near the rear of the room. As I scanned the audience for familiar faces, I was struck by both the size and diversity of the crowd that had already assembled. Of the five hundred seats in the theatre, approximately a third were filled by boisterous students, grey-haired artists and intellectuals, entire Latino families, and a significant presence of young individuals who wore dreadlocks or who otherwise could be identified as part of the American counter-culture.

Soon a middle-aged man with a long grey ponytail approached a microphone at the front of the room and addressed the assembly. After introducing himself as the filmmaker and thanking the crowd for their attendance, he simply stated that the film was the product of twenty years working with the peasant class in Oaxaca and Guatemala and asked for feedback after the screening. Moments later the lights dimmed and the crowd grew still.

The film commenced with the camera slowly panning across an informal memorial adorned with the names and faces of dozens of individuals who had

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‘disappeared’ or perished in the enduring struggle for greater political power and economic security for the peasant and working classes in southern Mexico. After several minutes, the voice of the filmmaker broke through the silence as he began to recount his experience working to organize labor solidarity in the region. Throughout the rest of the documentary these personal reflections were used to connect otherwise seemingly random images of peasant life and political action into a coherent narrative, an endeavor that in my view fell somewhat short. However, several interesting interviews dispersed throughout the film did allow members of the local population to articulate persuasively, in their own words, their perspective of the class struggle in the area. While themes of police brutality, economic suffering, and political marginalization were common in these conversations, by far the most lasting impression left on me arose from the nearly unanimous admonition by various interviewees of the U. S Army School of the Americas¹. As one woman eloquently stated, the last thing Latin American countries need is more training on how to kill, torture, interrogate, and assassinate; instead, what is needed are individuals being trained to be doctors, engineers, and teachers.

For the climax of the film the filmmaker included some well-shot footage of a triumphant protest march in which several hundred unarmed peasants secured the release of two detained comrades from a military facility by tearing down a fence and a communications tower and visibly terrifying the small contingent of armed guards who were stationed there. Providing a vivid illustration of the power of collective action, the scene was meant to end the documentary with an air of hope and possibility for what the future may bring for an organized peasantry. In a similar vein, as the credits began to roll shortly thereafter they were accompanied by a passionate rendition of the Cuban *nueva*

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trova (new troubadour) song “Hasta Siempre Comandante”, recorded by some of the same musicians scheduled to perform later that evening and in which the final stanza declares:

Seguiremos adelante
como junto a ti seguimos
y con Fidel te decimos:
!Hasta siempre, Comandante!

We will carry on
as we did along with you
and with Fidel we say to you:
“Until Always, Comandante!”

With its lyrics overtly glorifying the heroes of the Cuban Revolution, the choice to end the documentary with this song clearly reflected a conscious desire on the part of both the filmmaker and the musicians who worked with him on this project to symbolically link the “people’s” struggle occurring in Mexico and Central America today with the victorious revolution that occurred in Cuba nearly a half century ago. For decades this tradition of incorporating the songs of Cuban *trovadores* has been used throughout Latin America by progressively political youth who see in the Revolution an important symbol of their aspirations and the capacity of grassroots activism to effect significant change (Moore 2006:168).

However, having appropriated for the film soundtrack two other songs (recorded by the same musicians) that arose from revolutionary movements in other regions of Latin America, the net of commonality cast by the filmmaker’s symbolic use of music extended well beyond Cuba. For example, one of the other songs used in the film, a composition by the Chilean group Quilapayún entitled “Responso al Guerillero Muerto” and dedicated to a recently deceased Ernesto “Che” Guevara, first surfaced in the late 1960s as part of the democratic socialist revolution in Chile. In this song the progression of a protest march is aesthetically mimicked by gradually increasing the intensity and number of voices in the piece to the constant pulse of a march rhythm (Oswaldo 76).

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Moreover, with the inclusion of this song in the context of the film, the peasant resistance documented in Mexico and Guatemala may be seen as running parallel not only to the aspirations of the guerilla “Che” Guevara, who stood for Pan-Latin American socialist revolution, but also to the successful revolutionary movement in Chile in which the song itself first surfaced.

Immediately following the screening, the filmmaker led a discussion session in which he fielded the audience’s questions and comments, most of which revolved around suggestions for improvements and inquires about how exactly we as American citizens might help the situation. When the discussion began to fizzle nearly a half hour later, the master of ceremonies announced an intermission and the large room again became alive with shuffling movement and the whispers of dozens of small conversations. Also, from the dark edges of the theatre a variety of instruments began to appear on stage as a sundry group of performers started to assemble and check their equipment in preparation for their imminent concert.

After a lengthy break the lights dimmed again and participants who were loitering outside or in the lobby gradually drifted back into the theatre to witness the band’s performance. Although it was obvious that a portion of the crowd had left the event as the night grew later, those who remained were enthusiastic and as the music commenced with a pulsating rendition of a tune by the Argentinean ska/rock group Los Fabulosos Cadillacs many moved to the front of the room and began to dance. Throughout the rest of the set, the group, which was comprised of two Chilean (guitars and voice), two Mexican (drums, keyboards, & voice) and four American members (saxophone, trumpet,

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bass, and hand percussion), performed a wide variety of politically conscious songs taken from various Latin American nationalities.

As with the songs inserted into the documentary, the performance of this music in the context of the Oaxaca benefit took on a highly symbolic significance. Thus, songs depicting police violence in Buenos Aires (“Matador” by Los Fabulosos Cadillacs), race relations in Peru (“Toro Mata” by Lucila Campos), and revolution in Cuba (“Hasta Siempre Comandante” by Carlos Puebla was also played live), when juxtaposed next to the images of oppression and resistance in Oaxaca, signified an interpretation of this conflict, not as an independent and isolated phenomenon, but rather as a new chapter in the history of a singular Pan-Latin American subaltern community entangled in a common struggle. This notion was further amplified as the lead singer, himself Chilean, at one point during the evening briefly reflected on the death earlier in the week of the Chilean dictator Gen. Augusto Pinochet. While for many there was a sense of joy in the death of a tyrant, he stated, there was also a sense of tragedy in the fact that Pinochet and *many others like him* had essentially escaped justice during their lives. Though the correlation was never explicitly stated, Pinochet, who had graduated from the School of the Americas, overthrown a democratically-elected socialist government, and then notoriously ruled over a 15 year long dictatorial regime characterized by the death and disappearance of thousands of dissenters, may be seen in this context to clearly represent a common source of oppression uniting the lower classes throughout Latin America—namely state-sanctioned repression and exploitative transnational capitalism.

Although the group’s performance that night had been, without a doubt, one of the best that I had seen, one moment during their set truly encapsulated the essence of the

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evening and thus served as the apex of the entire event. This came as the band presented one of the signature tunes in its repertoire, a song entitled “El Pueblo Unido Jamas Será Vencido” (The People United Will Never Be Defeated), which, since its emergence from Chile in the months just before Pinochet’s coup, has become an anthem of political resistance throughout the Americas. Before launching into a contemporary interpretation of this composition, one of the members of the band took a moment to clearly translate the title into English so that all in attendance could understand its relevance to the issues addressed by the benefit. Then, with all the excitement, anger, and defiance depicted by the peasant revolutionaries in the documentary, the musicians along with many in the crowd chanted the chorus of the song several times without accompaniment until wild strums on the guitar initiated the introduction of the more melodic verses.

Prior to this evening my research for this project had revolved around a primarily fieldwork-based inquiry of the complex internal dynamics of this band, with its multinational membership and diverse stylistic and political backgrounds. However, as the night unfolded I witnessed how powerfully the Pan-Latin American repertoire performed at the benefit symbolically connected the contemporary regional struggles in Central America to a wider historical and transnational battle for human rights, democracy, and socialist economics. It thus became increasingly apparent that my research needed to shift to a more historical investigation into the origins and evolution of the artistic and political lineage to which the band and the documentary connected itself. For this endeavor, my study has come to focus on an analysis of the emergence and diffusion of the Pan-Latin American popular song movement known generically as *nueva canción* (new song) since it was primarily artists associated with this genre who first popularized

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the signification, through the aesthetics and lyrical themes of popular music, of the existence of a transnational community defined by subaltern class solidarity and Latin American identity. The direct relationship of the band to this genre was reflected by the inclusion in their repertoire of several songs (including “El Pueblo Unido...”) borrowed from *nueva canción* artists and from Cuban artists who were part of a similar movement called *nueva trova*. However, even when songs were played that did not fall into these genres the group’s juxtaposition of politically conscious songs from various Latin American styles and nationalities still clearly reflected the spirit of the movement.

Originating in the southern-cone countries of Argentina and Chile in the 1960s, *nueva canción*, which has since manifested itself in some way in all Latin American countries, sought to engender a sense of Pan-Latin American cultural and political solidarity by drawing artistic inspiration from the local folklore of Latin American nations and ascribing to it a popular continental character (Carrasco 1982:73). The impetus for this appropriation of folklore came in part from the perception that U. S and European economic, political, and cultural imperialism posed a significant threat to Latin American identity and prosperity. Yet, since the local bourgeoisie were considered complicit with this external intrusion, the music was also shaped by an increasingly defined class struggle within Latin America. Lending its support to socialist and communist causes, the movement thus sought to define itself as “the voice of the worker, peasant, student as opposed to that of the patriarch, landowner, and oligarchy”(Fairley 1984:109). It is highly significant, however, that most of the musicians who were involved in the movement, as well as many of its supporters, were not themselves

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members of the working classes but were in fact members of the middle class, if not by origin then at least “by virtue of education”(1984:114).

Although much of the concern for the plight of the worker expressed in many *nueva canción* songs was surely sincere, given that many in the working class often expressed ambivalence towards the music, it may also be fair to argue that *nueva canción* tends to exhibit a trend in which the cultural and political planners of socialist movements, who typically come from the middle class and the petty bourgeois intelligentsia, act apparently on behalf of the exploited classes with the underlying intention of bolstering their own class interests as well (Moore 2006:12, Gonzalez 1976:111). This argument is supported by the political context in which the strongest current of the popular song movement first emerged in Chile, since, in the years immediately prior to its creation, the exportation of capital due to foreign ownership of business had led to a significant erosion of the middle class standard of living as well as that of the peasantry and the proletariat (Gonzalez 1976). Moreover, this notion was also reflected at the Oaxaca benefit, as many of the musicians and audience members present, who were also primarily members of the middle classes and who also likely harbored personal and class-derived resentment towards the same transnational bourgeoisie responsible for exploiting workers in Mexico, passionately expressed in their communal rendition of “El Pueblo Unido”, not only their sympathy, but also their solidarity with the exploited classes depicted in the documentary.

It shall, therefore, be the purpose of this thesis to examine the origin and diffusion of *nueva canción* as a cultural process, through which members of the middle and lower classes in Latin America, in order to more effectively challenge the hegemonic presence

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of a globally interconnected elite, have “imagined” themselves to be part of a singular transnational subaltern community, signified in music through folkloric and historical references, and commonly referred to as “el pueblo”(the people). This concept of an “imagined community” originated with Benedict Anderson, who has argued that “all communities, larger than primordial villages of face-to-face contact (and perhaps even these) are imagined”. This comes as individuals perceive themselves to be deeply connected, through “indefinitely stretchable networks of kinship and clientship” to innumerable others who they will never meet (1983:6). Although Anderson’s conclusions were derived from his reflections on the origins of nationalism, since he argues that “communities are to be distinguished, not by their falsity/genuineness, but rather by the style in which they are imagined”, national identity is by no means the only concept on which inclusion in an “imagined community” may be based. For instance, Laurie Sommers has argued that, much like nationalism, the concept of pan-ethnicity also has the potential to unite a community on an imagined basis (1991:34). Likewise, class consciousness may serve this purpose as well (Anderson 1983:77).

While for *nueva canción* the perception of *Boliviarana* or Pan Latin-American ethnic identity has certainly played a role in shaping the way in which community is imagined for this movement (Carrasco 1982:23), I argue that the notion of subaltern class consciousness or non-elite status, as expressed in the term “el pueblo”, has been an even more significant unifying concept. This becomes particularly evident when one considers that this music, and the socialist cause with which it has been associated, essentially drove a wedge through any all-inclusive sense of Pan-Latin American identity by deeply separating it into a right and left faction.

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It is also important to keep in mind, that, although the *nueva canción* movement conceives “el pueblo” in roughly the same way that Ranajit Guha has defined the terms “people” and “subaltern” to indicate the demographic difference between the total population and all those deemed to be the elite (2000:7), these terms reflect ambiguous and relative concepts since their existence is largely a matter of perspective. Hence, persons, particularly in the middle strata of national or international society, may in some circumstances be deemed elite and in others subaltern depending on more local circumstances (Ibid). It is my contention that it was this shifting and ambiguous nature of subaltern identity that the community of *nueva canción* musicians and supporters manipulated as they sought to culturally signify a political alliance with those classes that existed below it rather than those above.

Regardless of the characteristics that come to define it, for an “imagined community” to exist there must be some means through which otherwise disconnected individuals may begin to associate themselves as part of a collective entity. Anderson has argued that it was the emergence of print capitalism that allowed readers of newspapers and novels written in a common vernacular to imagine themselves as part of a nation (1991). However, far more relevant to this discussion, Michelle Bigenho states that “alternative modes of feeling membership in imagined communities” are also possible and that listening to and performing common music may bind people together on an imagined basis in a manner similar to that provided by literature (2002:3). While in our modern society imagined communities are surely sustained by a conglomeration of media, “[d]uring the 1960s, nueva canción musicians played key roles in the formation of democratic socialists that emerged as a community of resistance and opposition”

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(Mattern 1998:39). Thus, even though the music of this genre may not have constituted the only means through which community was imagined for left-leaning members of the middle class and lower classes in Latin America, it did have a measurable effect.

In order to grasp the evolution and diffusion of the music of *nueva canción*, it will be first necessary to examine the origins of the movement as well as the political context in which it first arose. This will be the objective for chapter one as it explores some of the early artists, political and artistic objectives, and means of distribution that shaped the musically imagined community of artists and aficionados now familiar throughout Latin America. While the spontaneous and independent impetus towards the musical and political characteristics later associated with *nueva canción* was present in various Latin American regions prior to the invention of the term, the group of musicians who most significantly defined and popularized the song movement came out of Chile in the mid-sixties as part of the democratic struggle for socialism in that country. In this chapter and throughout this thesis I will focus primarily on this collection of musicians in Chile for two reasons. The first is that it would be impossible to take a comprehensive approach, explaining all the artists and national variations of *nueva canción* in the space allotted for this analysis. The second is that Chilean *nueva canción*, more than any other national expression of this genre, significantly influenced the movement in its entirety and thus serves as an adequate, if not perfect, local reflection of the whole transnational community.

As stated earlier, the *nueva canción* movement imagined itself in contrast to the political and economic hegemony of both the local elite within various Latin American nationalities and the transnational capitalist/imperialist powers with which these local

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elites were perceived to be intimately connected. In chapter two, I will examine in greater depth the complex sense of aesthetics through which the music of *nueva canción* has come to symbolize a counter-hegemonic challenge to both local elite dominance within individual states and to the wider cultural and economic dominance of U.S. and European imperialism over the entire region of Latin America. With the incorporation of national folklore, which was most commonly drawn from indigenous and peasant communities, *nueva canción* signaled its defiance to the Euro-centric and commercial cultural expressions promoted by the local elite and, by extension, to the state which they controlled. However, because the “the state can no longer serve as the sole site of contestation for movements that find they have to be cultural as well as political, global as well as local, transnational as well as national”(Lipsitz 1994:30), *nueva canción* has also sought to situate these local expressions of counter-hegemonic nationalism in the wider context of Pan-Latin American socialist solidarity. Hence, I will also show how this relationship was aesthetically symbolized through the juxtaposition, in both live and recorded performances, of the national folklore of various Latin American countries and also by the incorporation of hybrid ensembles, which utilized instruments from across the continent.

This analysis shares much in common with academic examinations of other national music traditions that have maintained a dynamic relationship with transnational aesthetic and political sensibilities. For instance, Michael Largey has explained the practice through which Haitian composers turned to “lower-class Haitian religious practice, to bolster their claims of an ‘authentic’ national identity during the United States occupation...”, but also as a means “to forge intellectual connections with black people

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from other nation-states”(2006:4,6). Similarly, Ernest Brown has argued that the resilience of national expression in Zimbabwe, as represented by the use of the *mbira*, has also been influenced by and negotiated with the borrowing of aesthetics and values derived from a sense of Pan-African identity (1994). My analysis of *nueva canción* departs from these studies, however, since the transnational cosmopolitanism in which the national expressions of this movement merge, is not necessarily the “diasporic cosmopolitanism” described by Largey to indicate a predominantly racial identity (2006:18). Rather, it is primarily a socialist cosmopolitanism defined first by class and only secondly by ethnicity. Furthermore, unlike Largey who has examined an anti-imperial nationalism developed by the elite in Haiti, *nueva canción* is a middle class expression and thus it reflects what Florencia Mallon has defined as “alternative nationalism”, or “the more inclusive and egalitarian discourses” created by subaltern classes “to challenge accumulations of power and elitist definitions of citizenship” in the nation (1995:221).

Although chapter three will also address the national and Pan-Latin American identity of “el pueblo” as it was imagined in the songs of *nueva canción*, the discussion in this chapter will turn to an analysis of the lyrical themes which have served to symbolically connect the struggles of Latin American “people”, not only to one another, but also to an expanded history of subaltern struggle dating back to the European conquest of the Americas. This process, through which the themes of *nueva canción* “attempt to establish continuity with a suitable historic past”, has been defined by Eric Hobsbawm as “inventing tradition”, which he further explains as:

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a set of practices, normally governed by overtly or tacitly accepted rules and of a ritual or symbolic nature, which seek to inculcate certain values and norms of behavior by repetition...(1983:1)

Because invented tradition most commonly functions to establish or symbolize “social cohesion or the membership of ... real or artificial communities”(1983:9), this concept is highly relevant to Anderson’s notion of imagined communities. Furthermore, it is important to realize that the historical references made within the context of invented traditions are almost always used to symbolize the condition and legitimate the actions of communities in the present (1983:12). In this chapter, I will thus analyze several recurring themes reflected in the lyrics and theatrics of *nueva canción* in order to further elucidate the contemporary political and social worldview shared by the artists and supporters of this movement. I will also argue that many of the lyrical themes, which tend to focus on establishing continuity with a “suitable history” of solidarity, oppression and resistance, help to sustain the perspective of middle class artists and intellectuals that their political and cultural history has been more closely related to that experienced by the lower class “people” than to that of the bourgeoisie.

Finally, in chapter four I will attempt to briefly trace the relevance of the music, the artists, and, most importantly, the imagined community supported by *nueva canción*, to current musical trends and political concerns in Latin America and in the United States. For this discussion, I will review the appropriation of *nueva canción* by contemporary bands, such as the one performing at the Oaxaca benefit, to illustrate how, even though the aesthetics of the genre may have been largely eclipsed by more recent musical developments, the most identifiable artists and songs of this musical

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phenomenon have themselves been traditionalized and are often referenced when modern artists or politically committed individuals seek to connect their own efforts to the Pan-Latin American historical struggle of “el pueblo”. Indeed, much as the original *nueva canción* artists incorporated the folklore of indigenous and lower class communities to express their opposition to elite hegemony, for Latino immigrants, particularly second generation individuals who may identify themselves more by ethnicity than nationality, the music of *nueva canción* itself has become a form of Pan-Latin American folklore capable of expressing both ethnic and political solidarity (Sommers 1991:49).

Furthermore, because the music of *nueva canción* symbolizes class solidarity even more significantly than ethnic solidarity, I will argue that the meaningful participation of the predominately non-Latino assembly at the Oaxaca benefit was possible because, in this context, the music of *nueva canción* and other politically committed Latin American songs allowed even this relatively affluent population to imagine themselves as connected with “el pueblo”.

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CHAPTER 1: THE ORIGINS AND POLITICAL CONTEXT OF *NUEVA CANCION* IN CHILE

The 1960s were a turbulent time in Latin American politics as ideological battles, which pitted socialist and communist political challengers against bourgeois/capitalist hegemony, flared in many regions across the continent for the better part of the decade. It was in this climate of increasingly polarized social and political confrontation, particularly in Argentina and Chile, that the impetus for folkloric resurgence and political commitment characterized by *nueva canción* first emerged (Morris 1986:117).

In fact, this music became so intimately connected with the democratic struggle for socialist reform in Chile during this decade, that, in the context of the bitterly contested presidential race in 1970, Salvador Allende, who represented the leftist coalition party *Unidad Popular* (Popular Unity), at one point addressed a crowd of supporters standing beneath a banner proclaiming, “No hay revolución sin canciones” (There is no revolution without songs) (Fairley 1985: 307). While the inclusion of this banner served to acknowledge the influential role that popular musicians played in Allende’s narrowly successful campaign, it also endorsed the notion, emphasized by the *nueva canción* movement, that song could be used as a potent “weapon” in the revolutionary struggle for political, cultural, and economic change (Jara 1983: 113-142). Yet, for Allende and the other middle class and petty bourgeois leaders of the democratic socialist movement in Chile, perhaps the most significant role that *nueva canción* played

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during this political confrontation came with its ability to symbolically blur the distinctions between the middle and working classes by defining them collectively in contrast to the elite establishment.

In this chapter, I will examine the origins of *nueva canción* within the Chilean historical context in which it first became popularized and politicized. This comes as Eduardo Carrasco has suggested that:

[w]e are not able to consider art outside the reality in which it arises; and, if this ultimately is shaken by conflicts and struggles between the distinct sectors of society, then it is probable that art, especially popular art, will remain marked by this stamp. (1982a:42 my translation)

Since it was primarily in the middle sectors of society that *nueva canción* first took root, this analysis shall begin with an explanation of the shifting economic and political conditions facing many middle class Chileans in the mid-20th Century. The discussion will then examine how the artistic originators of this movement used the incorporation of folklore to voice their opposition to what they viewed as negative social and economic currents stemming from the compliance of the Chilean elite with U.S. imperialism. However, given that the cultural system was dominated by the same small sector of the bourgeoisie who the community of *nueva canción* artists and supporters sought to challenge (Gonzalez 1976:106), it will also be necessary to describe the alternative venues and methods of distribution which *nueva canción* used to circumnavigate the mass media and connect with its audience both nationally and internationally. Finally, I will briefly discuss the direct incorporation of *nueva canción* into the political process in Chile, as musicians, politicians, and other committed members of Chilean society used this symbolic cultural expression to inspire and mobilize others to support their ideological position.

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Class Conflict in Chile 1960-1970

Chilean social structure prior to the emergence of *nueva canción* was stratified into three tiers, which Lois Hecht Oppenheim has categorized “in general terms” as corresponding to:

a large popular sector, or lower class, of peasants, urban and rural workers, and urban shantytown dwellers; a heterogeneous middle sector consisting of teachers and other professionals, white-collar workers, bureaucrats, small merchants and the like; and an upper class of landowners and businessmen”(1999:5)

In the Chilean political sphere, which despite its diverse factions had for the most part maintained a relatively stable democracy since 1830, the balance of power had traditionally rested with the middle class and the centrist parties which entered into coalitions with parties on the left and right (representing unionized labor and capital interests respectively) in order to swing the direction of power in either direction (Mattern 1998:37). Because the middle class was a heterogeneous sector of Chilean society, however, this body often split, with some veering right out of fear that substantial change might disrupt their privileged position, and others believing that their natural political alliance was with the working classes on their left (Roddick 1976:17-19). The net result of this highly polarizing political environment was that all sectors of society, including those in the middle class who were already politically affiliated, were focused on swaying the uncommitted members of the middle class in order to influence electoral decisions.

In the latter half of the 1960s, these key uncommitted middle sectors were beginning to align with the left, in opposition to the government, for a variety of reasons. Chile’s long battle with inflation had led to an erosion of salaries “at the rate of 25-30

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percent a year and often more” and thus middle-class wage earners felt they could no longer “afford to leave their economic interests to employers’ benevolence” (Roddick 1976:17). Also, with 85 percent of all Chile’s export revenues coming from mineral operations owned by foreign companies, there was increasing support for the socialist agenda to nationalize mines in order to stop the flow of capital out of the country, as well as to sever a relationship in which the state often repressed its own workers in order to protect foreign interests (1976:1). But, perhaps the most significant motivation for this shift came from the fact that:

Chile had moved further in the direction of economic development than most countries in the Third World. Ironically, it was just this state of partial development which accounted for the frustration of educated Chileans as they looked at their economy and society. Broadly educated and literate, politically competitive, urbanized, and living in a society in which economic data had become part of the regular substance of political debate, they were more conscious of the shortcomings of the existing system than citizens of many other countries of the Third World (Sigmund 1977:20).

In the 1970 presidential election, Salvador Allende, as the candidate representing a broad coalition of progressive parties and interests united under a single Popular Unity party, was able to capitalize on the “chronic dissatisfaction” of the middle class by outlining a position that characterized the common plight of all those on the “left” in contrast to a set of mutual enemies on the “right” –“the *latifundistas*, financiers, and industrialists, as well as world imperialist powers, most notably the United States”(Sigmund 1977:21, Oppenheim 1999:18). Thus, just as *nueva canción* attempted to culturally shade the distinctions between the middle and lower sectors of society by imagining the concept of a unified “people” in contrast to a common

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Despite this external expression of egalitarian subaltern identity, however, internally the ideology of Popular Unity "restricted the activity of the working class to the economic field; [whereas] elsewhere, specialists would represent the class"(Gonzalez 1976:114). In this light, the middle class and petty bourgeoisie creators and supporters of *nueva canción* and other cultural expressions connected with the Popular Unity movement acted as a cultural vanguard which attempted to symbolically connect itself with the oppositional character of the lower classes without relinquishing their own privileged role in cultural and economic production. Even if, as musician Eduardo Carrasco asserts, the social and political affiliations of *nueva canción* did not develop as "the conscious and manipulated initiative of the committed parties and groups in the conflict"(1982a:42), their "spontaneous and necessary manifestation" still reflect the primarily middle class perspective and interests of its originators. While the following chapters will examine in detail the aesthetics and themes of *nueva canción* from this perspective, before advancing any further it is first necessary to briefly explore the early history of the movement along with its most influential artists.

Cultural Imperialism, Folkloric Resurgence and the Early Originators of Nueva Canción

Connected with their perception that the United States' (and to a lesser degree other European power's) dominance over Chilean economic and political affairs indicated an increasingly neo-colonial relationship, in the 1950s and 1960s the Chilean middle and lower classes began to express their growing concern regarding the negative influence of cultural imperialism as well. This came as foreign capital significantly

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influenced the mass media market in Chile (and elsewhere in Latin America) resulting in the predominance of North American popular culture on the airwaves and an artistic environment in which Chilean artists, in order to achieve commercial success, had to imitate these cultural styles. Joan Jara, wife of *nueva canción* artist and political martyr Victor Jara explains:

Pop Stars from the United States arrived to be promoted by their record companies, and so long as they were blond and Yankee-looking they were assured of instant success. The great majority of the radios, from the powerful networks to the local provincial stations, were owned by commercial corporations or large land owners... That meant that anything of which the establishment did not approve had virtually no access to the mass media. (Jara 1983:79-80)

This sentiment was also echoed by Andres Márquez, a member of the *nueva canción* ensemble Illapu:

In our country, as in almost all the continent, our own songs, our own creations, are ignored by the mass media and replaced by a foreign culture – the output of the multinational record companies, for example. This culture arrives *en masse*, the records, the posters and all the rest of it; an overwhelming economic and marketing effort which imposes on the country a kind of song, a kind of art, which doesn't speak of our people. (1983:8)

Reacting against this cultural trend in the 1950s, Argentinean President Juan Perón passed a law mandating at least fifty percent of the cultural programming on Argentinean radio broadcasts to be of national origin (Carrasco 1982b:604). This in turn helped to create a resurgence of interest in folk music and traditional dance rhythms, not only in Argentina, but also in Chile where this music “provided the only massive alternative to the imported pop sung in English” (Jara 1983:80).

It was in this context of state-sponsored cultural nationalism in Argentina that the songwriter Atahualpa Yupanquí emerged as one of the early forerunners of the *nueva canción* movement (Carrasco 1982b:604). Having traveled extensively throughout

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Argentina, Yupanquí collected folklore from the various regions of the country and incorporated it into his own repertoire. Yet, as an accomplished singer and virtuoso guitarist, his folkloric interpretations and compositions reflected his cultivated artistic background as well. As Eduardo Carrasco relates:

Atahualpa Yupanqui, with his flawless instrumental technique, not only established a new trend in composition and interpretation, but also opened a new way forward for the development of vernacular songs of the continent... He also did much for the dissemination of folk-music on the basis of his far-reaching study of sources. (1982b:605)

With his cultivation and dissemination of Argentinean folklore, Yupanqui's music emphasized the necessity to incorporate the musical textures and cultural heritage of Latin America into contemporary art in order to maintain a sense of cultural distinction and independence. This artistic philosophy heavily influenced many Argentinean composers and performers who were to come later, particularly Mercedes Sosa who became one of the leading interpreters of Argentine music in the mid-60s (1982: 606). It also greatly influenced the musical landscape in neighboring Chile as Argentinean records and radio broadcasts crossed the Andes and helped to inspire a new generation of Chilean musicians to seek their own national expression.

Indeed, the tradition of traveling the countryside in order to collect and disseminate national folklore was carried on in Chile by one of the most influential pioneers of the *nueva canción* movement, Violeta Parra, who herself had spent time in Argentina participating in the folkloric boom there in the early 1960s. Having traveled extensively both within Chile and internationally, Parra was a much older and more experienced performer than many of the students who would later become the driving force of the *nueva canción* movement in the late-1960s. She thus served as a model for

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the new generation, many of whom “took her musical production as their basic repertoire” (Fairley 1984:110). As Nancy Morris explains:

Violeta Parra’s love of Chile found expression in numerous artistic activities, but her devotion to the people and culture of her country was most evident in the effort she put into collecting hundreds of folk songs from every region of Chile so that they would not be lost forever. Through her efforts, the Chilean public was exposed to Chile’s powerful musical traditions. (1986: 119)

As with Yupanquí though, Parra not only collected and performed Chilean folk music but also composed her own songs based on Chilean folk rhythms and themes, which in turn set a pattern for other songwriters in the burgeoning movement to follow (Morris 1986: 119).

One of Parra’s most accomplished followers was a young musician and theatre director named Victor Jara, who had spent time in both the military and in seminary school before making a name for himself in the arts. Since Jara had been the only prominent *nueva canción* artist of *campesino* origin (Rodriguez 1984:63), his own collection of Chilean folk music was in part an effort to “rediscover the musical heritage that had come to him from his mother” (Jara 1983: 38). It is clear, however, that his interest was intensified through his friendship with Violeta Parra - whom he met at a café in Santiago in 1957- and also by the political and social atmosphere that surrounded him in the primarily middle class, progressive, university environment in which he worked as a professor and director of theatre (1983:45).

For Violeta Parra and Victor Jara, and for other prominent musicians in the early Chilean *nueva canción* movement such as Rolando Alarcón, Patricio Manns, and Violeta’s children Isabel and Angel Parra, the motivation for incorporating folk tradition came from their desire to provide a meaningful “alternative music” to the foreign

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Osvaldo Rodríguez relates:

all the most radicalized and progressive youth, of middle class, student origin, began to search for something to sing, in Spanish, that better expressed their concerns. This youth was not able to identify with the North American music... (1984:60).

Likewise, Andrés Márquez notes:

We wanted to create a movement which would fight for the cultural decolonization of our country so that people should feel identified with their own music, and that musicians should be able to represent our people in their songs, in their melodies, and in their rhythms (1983:8).

Although this sense of shared cultural and economic imperialism would eventually serve to unite the various national expressions of *nueva canción* into a unified Pan-Latin American song movement, it was not only foreign cultural trends that Chilean *nueva canción* reacted against. The movement also sought to promote a more “authentic” national expression rooted in the folkloric traditions of the indigenous peasantry and the working classes in stark contrast to the romanticized style of folklore favored by the elite and characterized by the *nueva canción* artists as “tourist” folk (Fairley 1984:109). For this reason, one of the greatest folkloric influences on the movement in Chile came from the styles and aesthetics associated with the indigenous Andean population, as these musical traditions reflected a distinction not only in relation to foreign cultural imperialism, but also in relation to the dominant national culture promoted by the Chilean elite.

This revalorization of rural and indigenous traditions became particularly overt with the creation, in the mid to late 1960s, of musical ensembles like Inti-Illimani, Quilapayún, and Cuncumén, who all took their names from the indigenous Aymara or

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Quechua languages in an effort to signify social solidarity between the middle class student populations from which they emerged and the Chilean peasantry who they considered to possess the most “authentically” Chilean identity and culture. In addition to their incorporation and cultivation of folkloric musical and lyrical structures, these groups performed on a variety of instruments linked to indigenous and *campesino* musical traditions. As Jorge Coulon, a founding member of Inti-Illimani explains:

We use the instruments of the Andean tradition, like panpipes and quenás, which are traditional flutes. We also use the charango, which is an instrument born in Bolivia after the Spanish settlement, because it’s a blend, a sort of mandolin, but it’s made with the shell of an armadillo.²

Furthermore, although the members of these groups were for the most part “relatively privileged students” from various universities in Santiago and Valparaíso (Mattern 1999:45), they also chose to perform in clothing that reflected a lower class identity. Inti-Illimani and Quilapayún both performed in the simple ponchos of the peasantry, and Víctor Jara, acting as artistic director of Cuncumén, advised the members of this group to change their uniforms from a style which imitated that of the *patrones* (small land holders) to something more closely related to the reality of the Chilean *campesino* (Rodríguez 1984:63).

In the context of the political struggle between the local and foreign elite and the subaltern classes in Latin America, the Chilean *nueva canción* movement largely defined its role as retrieving and re-popularizing the cultural heritage of Chile and of Latin America in general. Given that the dominant cultural expressions at the time were promoted by the same economic and political forces that the progressive members of this movement sought to displace, the only recourse for the movement was to seek inspiration from the marginalized cultural expressions that existed on the periphery of Chilean

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society. Considering that most of the musicians, with the exception of Victor Jara, were, according to Mark Mattern, “firmly rooted in white, urban, middle-, and professional-class life... to say that they were searching for their roots among these and other marginalized populations is misleading at best”(Mattern 1999:45-46). Indeed, as Mattern further suggests, “the process was as much about the *invention* of roots, and by extension, a contemporary identity, as about the *discovery* of those roots”(1999:46 emphasis in original). In the following chapters I will examine in greater detail how this imagined relationship between middle and lower class members of Chilean society shaped the aesthetics and themes of *nueva canción*. However, it is first necessary to explain the means through which this music was disseminated and popularized.

The Use of Alternative Venues and Methods of Distribution

The fact that the music of *nueva canción* posed a direct cultural and political challenge to the elite interests that dominated the mass media market meant that, logically, this music had little chance of being promoted through those venues. For instance, Joan Jara relates that:

Angel and Isabel [Violeta Parra’s children] had both been earning their living in Europe as Chilean folksingers, together with Violeta, but on returning to their own country they found that they were too authentic to be accepted on the radio, in restaurants or night clubs, which were the only places available for professionals to perform. (1983:80)

This obstacle was effectively overcome as the *nueva canción* movement established a “counterstrategy of dissemination” based on the creation of alternative venues, new production and distribution networks for records and later cassettes, and the support of

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various student, union, and other grass-roots organizations committed to social and political change (Reyes Matta 1989:449).

In the mid-1960s Violeta Parra and her children Isabel and Angel established two venues that were highly influential in shaping the style, themes, and attitudes that would later come to define *nueva canción*. The first of these venues was the *Peña de los Parra*, which was created by Isabel and Angel Parra after they returned from Europe and were unable to find work in other venues. A *peña* may be defined as “a small coffee house dedicated to folklore” (Morris 1986:120). Joan Jara explains:

The idea was simple – to create an informal atmosphere, without the usual censorship and commercial trappings, where folk singers could come in their everyday clothes to sing and exchange songs and ideas, a sort of artists’ co-operative where people could eat simple food and listen to Chilean and Latin American folk music. (1983:81)

The other venue that was equally important and served a similar role in stimulating a sense of community and artistic culture was developed by Violeta Parra herself. Returning from Europe shortly after her children, Violeta participated in Isabel and Angel’s *peña*, however, she had a longstanding vision of her own to establish a center for culture that would support not only music but handicrafts and artwork as well. In 1964, she opened this cultural center in a circus tent outside of Santiago (Jara 1983:101).³ Nancy Morris explains that:

She named the center “La Carpa de la Reina” and ran it almost singlehandedly. The music at La Carpa had to meet her high standards of quality and authenticity, and she coached promising musicians toward these ends. Many of the singers who became the foundation of New Chilean Song Movement performed at La Carpa. (Morris 1986:119)

The *Peña de los Parra* and *La Carpa* provided the initial settings for artists such as Victor Jara and Quilapayún to develop their craft in an informal atmosphere. It is

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significant, however, that despite the Parra's "hopes of attracting a working class audience who could become actively involved in using the space to explore recuperate, and create diverse cultural forms" (Nandorfy 2003:182), the audience was, in fact, comprised primarily of university students, intellectuals, other artists, and politicians who were open to the spirit of cultural and political resistance reflected in much of the music. Indeed, at times "Violeta Parra herself felt uncomfortable by [the *peña*'s] intellectual milieu", although she did acknowledge a distinction between the "cultural agendas" of academics and administrators in attendance and the more ethical ideals of the students (Ibid).

As these gatherings grew in popularity among the urban student population, new *peñas* began to spring up on university campuses throughout the country; thus providing a circuit of venues for artists to expose themselves to an ever-increasing network of supporters. It was, in fact, in this increasingly politically charged university environment that the *nueva canción* movement began to "emerge from the intimate atmosphere of the *peñas*, bound up with a mass movement which seemed to swell up and sweep them along with it" (Jara 1983:119).

As the music of Victor Jara, the Parras, Quilapayún, and other members of the developing genre of *nueva canción* grew in popularity, various organizations that existed outside the university atmosphere also began to identify with the political and cultural defiance represented by the music. As a result, these musicians were increasingly called upon to play at other non-typical venues such as union meetings, farmers' organizations, strikes, political rallies, etc. Since the *nueva canción* movement was denied access to the mass media market, it utilized its exposure to these various organizations of workers and

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students as an alternative means to promote its music and its cultural message to the public. In the words of Eduardo Carrasco, “these organizations were able to ensure that the music got the necessary hearing by means of their own cultural structures” (1982b:608). As the 1960s progressed, the themes expressed in the songs of the *nueva canción* artists began to reflect their interaction with the various causes for whom they performed, thus intensifying their popularity and exposing the issues of one organization to another.

The degree to which various organizations began promoting the music of *nueva canción* in order to further their own cause may be seen in one instance in particular. As Joan Jara states:

Perhaps because of this [growing of student political awareness] and of the growing importance of the song movement, in 1968 the Young Communists had taken the daring step of setting up an alternative record company – La Discoteca del Cantar Popular, or DICAP as it was usually called.... It had begun as a tentative experiment with the release of *Por Vietnam*, an album of international political songs, sung by Quilapayún, which had not the slightest chance of being released by a commercial company. (1983:125)

The significance of DICAP was absolutely vital to the development of the *nueva canción* movement; since, as Peter Manuel suggests:

the only significant alternative to [elite control over the mass media] may be the spread of various forms of inexpensive, grassroots-based micro-media, which provide dominated social groups with an unprecedented degree of access to, representation in, and control of mass media (1993:3)

Although artists like Victor Jara, Quilapayún, and others had released recordings before, some even with a certain degree of success, the creation of DICAP gave them the freedom to explore extremely controversial topics in their songs without fear of censorship. In fact, the members of Quilapayún describe DICAP as the “cultural bastion”

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of the *nueva canción* movement in that it allowed for the expansion and consolidation of both the themes and the artistic aesthetic which came to define the movement.⁴

In addition to *Por Vietnam* (For Vietnam), DICAP released around 60 productions until it was shut down after the military coup in 1973.⁵ These productions included several by Victor Jara, Inti-Illimani, Angel and Isabel Parra, Quilapayún, as well as posthumous releases of Violeta Parra's music. The record label also produced albums for artists from other parts of Latin America who were unable to access the mass media in their own countries, thus enhancing the sense of Pan-Latin American solidarity promoted by much of the music (Osvaldo 78). Ironically, some Cuban *nueva trova* artists even traveled to Chile to record due to Castro's initial suspicion and repression of the genre (Moore 2006:149).

In addition to *peñas*, and independent record labels, *nueva canción* was also promoted through "festivals of solidarity" throughout Latin America (Reyes Matta 1988:457). Although the first festival devoted to the "protest song" took place in Cuba in 1967, it was not until 1969, with the *Primer Festival de la Nueva Canción Chilena*, (The First Festival of New Chilean Song) that *nueva canción* became crystallized as a genre and received its name. The word "new" in the title referred both to the new interpretations of traditional styles found in the songs as well as the new cultural and political consciousness which these songs represented (Tumas-Serna 1992:144). This event, again according to Joan Jara, was:

conceived as an investigation into the current situation of Chilean popular music, with round-table discussions between composers, record producers and representatives of the mass media. It was also to include a competition between twelve invited composers who would submit songs to be judged by a distinguished jury. (1983:126)

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For this competition in which he tied for first place, Victor Jara composed one of his most memorable songs, “Plegaria a un Labrador” (Prayer to a Worker), a hauntingly powerful call for unity and strength among the working class in their fight for justice.

The *Primer Festival de la Nueva Canción Chilena* marked a major turning point for *nueva canción*, since it reflected the grassroots popularity for the music to the extent that even the mainstream media in Chile were forced to take notice. Thus, in the wake of the event, Victor Jara was repeatedly interviewed in the press and his music was granted limited exposure on the radio, and even television for the first time (Jara 1983:129-129).

Through continual pressure applied through the creation of alternative venues and alternative methods of production and distribution, the *nueva canción* movement achieved a degree of success in countering the foreign and bourgeois control of the traditional mass media, thus claiming a victory in the cultural dimension of class struggle. With the election of Salvador Allende in 1970, the supporters of *nueva canción* movement would have a similar victory in the political sphere as well.

Participation in the Political Process

Since its inception, *nueva canción*’s popularization of distinctly Latin American folkloric traditions always contained political overtones. Indeed, when one considers the economic and political pressures that were being exerted on the Chilean subaltern classes throughout the 1960s, the entire motivation for the counter-hegemonic expression of the movement appears to be more a response to the declining middle and lower class status in these arenas of society than to the superstructural issues of imperialist and bourgeois cultural hegemony. Thus, while members of the *nueva canción* community often

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referenced cultural imperialism as a key motivation for the creation of the genre, this issue largely represented a deeper dissatisfaction with materialist issues associated with economic imperialism and capitalist exploitation. Perhaps the best evidence to support this argument comes from the fact that many *nueva canción* artists were, in reality, significantly influenced by the aesthetics of both North American and bourgeois cultural expressions despite their public denouncements.⁶

Regardless of its politically ambiguous beginnings, as the class struggle in Chile became increasingly agitated in the later half of the 1960s, the political connotations of the *nueva canción* movement became far more overt with many of the song themes directly referencing the injustices imposed on the Chilean “people” by the political and economic establishment. The artists and the music also became increasingly intertwined with the political push towards socialism and communism during this period and hence many of the songs reflected this ideology and the spirit of national and transnational revolution as well.

With its wide spread popularity (particularly among the key middle sectors of society) and its increasingly oppositional artistic approach, by the presidential elections in 1970, *nueva canción* had become an effective political force. Connecting themselves to the fragile leftist coalition party, Popular Unity, and its presidential candidate Salvador Allende, the *nueva canción* artists sought to mobilize the various fragmented subaltern sectors of Chilean society to engage in the political process as a unified political alliance. As Nancy Morris explains, the “[a]rtists of the New Chilean Song movement accompanied Allende to political events, sang at meetings and rallies, and composed songs to spread Unidad Popular concepts among the voters” (1986:121). They also

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attempted to inspire voters with unifying anthems such as Sergio Ortega's "Venceremos" (We shall triumph), which Allende used as his campaign song.

"Venceremos"

Desde el hondo crisol de la patria
se levanta el clamor popular,
ya se anuncia la nueva alborada,
todo Chile comienza a cantar.

From the depths of our country
The cry of the people rises.
Now the new dawn is announced.
All of Chile begins to sing

Venceremos, venceremos,
mil cadenas habrá que romper,

We will Triumph, we will triumph.
A thousand chains will have to be
broken.

venceremos, venceremos,
la miseria sabremos vencer.

We will triumph, we will triumph
We will learn how to conquer

Campesinos, soldados, mineros,
la mujer de la patria también,
estudiantes, empleados y obreros,
cumpliremos con nuestro deber.

Peasants, soldiers, miners
and also the women of the country
Students, businessmen, and workers
We will carry out our duty.

Sembraremos las tierras de gloria,
socialista será el porvenir,
todos juntos haremos la historia,
a cumplir, a cumplir, a cumplir.⁷

We will sow the fields of glory.
The future will be socialist.
Together we will make history.
Carry on, carry on, carry on.

Although the *nueva canción* artists did seek to engage the working classes by performing at various union, indigenous, and agricultural organization meetings, it is debatable how much influence this music had in mobilizing these voters, particularly since "the music most working men and women listened to most of the time, was not this type of music" (Gonzalez 1976:123). The imagined concept of subaltern solidarity promoted by the songs of *nueva canción* and the political platform of Allende did apparently have some bearing on the key uncommitted middle sectors of Chilean society, however, as they played a significant role in narrowly tipping the electoral balance in Allende's favor in the fall of 1970.

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Throughout Allende's three-year presidency, the *nueva canción* artists continued to garner support for the Popular Unity's reforms through their music. As Nancy Morris notes, "Songs were written about every important event during the Allende era" (1986:121). Joan Jara also relates that "there was no doubt that the 'sound' of popular unity was that of the indigenous instruments that Inti-Illimani and Quilapayún had done so much to popularize" (1983:140). Furthermore, since Allende's presidency had been challenged even before he officially took office by a national and international campaign of disinformation promoted by the elite and capitalist forces from which he wrestled executive power:

the artists of the New Chilean Song Movement were now [also] called upon to play an international role, both in Latin America and in Europe, as representatives of Allende's Chile, as 'cultural ambassadors' of their country, helping to counteract the propaganda campaign against Popular Unity.(1983:167)

It was largely through this role as touring 'cultural ambassadors' that the music of the *nueva canción* movement was brought to much of Latin America. The Chilean *nueva canción* thus spawned similar song movements throughout the continent in which local artists were inspired to search for their own national musical expression and to "incorporate the strongest and most creative styles from elsewhere in Latin America" (Carrasco 1982a:34).

In 1973, the Chilean socialist experiment was brought to a sudden end, as a CIA-backed military coup led by General Augusto Pinochet overthrew Allende's regime, killing Allende along with 2,800 supporters who were brought to the Chilean Stadium and executed. The objective was the eradication of Marxism in Chile and the re-privatization of the sectors of the Chilean economy nationalized by the Allende regime. Perhaps the strongest testament to *nueva canción*'s persuasive role in the political process

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may be seen in the way this military junta viciously attacked the members and the music of this movement. Victor Jara was tortured and killed, Inti-Illimani, Quilapayun, and Isabel and Angel Parra were forced into exile, master tapes were destroyed at the DICAP headquarters and the music and even the traditional instruments on which it was initially performed were unofficially banned.

It is important to note, however, that even in this violently repressive atmosphere, the music of *nueva canción* continued to inspire resistance, again particularly among progressively minded middle class youth, as records, and eventually cassettes, were distributed through a clandestine network of supporters (Wallis and Malm 1984:41). Furthermore, in the latter half of the 1970s, a new genre, called *canto nuevo*, emerged with significantly subdued political affiliations, yet with a clearly subversive aesthetic connection to its predecessor.

To summarize this chapter, it is evident that *nueva canción* movement originated primarily among the middle sectors of Chile society as a cultural response to the economic and political pressures placed on this class by foreign imperialism and the complacency of the local elite to this situation. This movement sought inspiration and guidance from indigenous and working class folklore as an aesthetic foundation on which they could build, or imagine, a sense of collective subaltern cultural and political unity. These songs were disseminated through alternative venues such as *peñas*, student and labor organization meetings, political rallies, and the DICAP recording label. This in turn allowed the movement the freedom to address controversial social and political issues

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that would have otherwise been censored by the foreign-backed mass media establishment.

In the following chapter I will examine in greater detail the complex sense of aesthetics through which the Chilean *nueva canción* movement sought to engender both an alternative sense of nationalism and a Pan-Latin American socialist cosmopolitanism, both rooted in the imagined concept of subaltern social and political solidarity.

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CHAPTER 2:
ALTERNATIVE NATIONALISM, PAN-LATIN AMERICAN SOCIALIST
COSMOPOLITANISM, AND THE AESTHETICS OF COUNTER-HEGEMONY

Thus far I have discussed the political and social motivations that inspired the middle class originators of the *nueva canción* movement to symbolically link themselves to an imagined notion of subaltern solidarity. In this chapter I will shift my focus to a more in depth analysis of the complex sense of aesthetics developed by these artists to represent this imagined community musically. As stated earlier, the economic and political alliance connecting the dominance of the local elite in Latin American countries to a wider network of transnational capitalist imperialism served as the primary motivation for the counter-hegemonic cultural expression presented by *nueva canción*. The principal objective of this chapter, therefore, will be to analyze the cultural processes through which *nueva canción* constructed its counter-hegemonic aesthetic framework in relation to the dominant national and international cultural discourse. I will explain how, at the national level, *nueva canción* incorporated aesthetic influences from lower class traditions to reflect an “alternative” nationalist discourse in contrast to the “official” nationalist discourse championed by the local elite. Similarly, I will elucidate how the movement also incorporated aesthetic sensibilities that signified and supported its inclusion in a Pan-Latin American socialist “cosmopolitan” network as opposed to the

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dominant capitalist cosmopolitanism promoted by the transnational bourgeoisie.⁸

Finally, since the impulse to simultaneously reflect both a nationalist and cosmopolitan subaltern identity presented somewhat of an artistic and political challenge for the *nueva canción* movement, I will further analyze the cultural process of aesthetic negotiation through which *nueva canción* musicians attempted to balance the representation of these two seemingly contradictory, and yet equally significant, characteristics of their imagined community.

In establishing its aesthetic representation of “el pueblo,” the *nueva canción* movement was influenced by a variety of social and political pressures that arose both from within the various nationalist manifestations of the movement and from without, as these national groups sought to establish cosmopolitan cultural and political ties with the outside world. The primary concern of each of these national expressions of the movement, however, was first and foremost the realization of political control over their own nation-state. It shall thus be beneficial to initiate this analysis of the dynamic aesthetic influences which have shaped *nueva canción* by first relating what Thomas Turino has defined as the twin paradoxes of nationalism.

As Turino explains, the first paradox of nationalism is that “nation-states are dependent on cosmopolitanism, but are simultaneously threatened by it: unless nation-states maintain their unique identity, they will disappear as distinct, and thus operative, units on the international scene”. The second paradox is that “nation-states celebrate and are dependent on local distinctiveness, but they are simultaneously threatened by it”. This comes as “the core doctrine of nationalism is that distinctive cultural groups (‘nations’) should be in possession of their own states” (2000:15). While each of these

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twin paradoxes are intimately related to the aesthetic development of *nueva canción*, it is necessary to draw a few distinctions between this Latin American song movement and the post-colonial Zimbabwean popular music trends to which Turino directs these theoretical observations.

The first distinction is that, while Turino is concerned with the “dominant modernist-capitalist” cosmopolitan influence on the Zimbabwean musicians whom he is studying (2000:10), the cosmopolitan loop connecting the various national manifestations of *nueva canción* is primarily a subaltern socialist formation.⁹ As explained in the previous chapter, one of the founding principles of the *nueva canción* movement was the rejection of the commercialized cultural production epitomized by the dominant capitalist cosmopolitanism. Hence, through the creation of alternative transnational networks of production and diffusion -- such as the DICAP recording label and international song festivals -- the *nueva canción* movement was able to partially circumnavigate the dominant mass media market by participating in and helping to sustain an alternative socialist cosmopolitanism.

It is important to note, however, that while the primary cosmopolitan identity for *nueva canción* is derived from a keen sense of class consciousness; in addition to this, the ethnic Latino identity has also played a key role in sustaining and providing the boundaries for both the imagined community of *nueva canción* and the cosmopolitan network which unites it. For this reason, the transnational nature of the movement bares resemblance to Michael Largey’s definition of “diasporic cosmopolitanism”, which he uses to refer to the potential for diasporic communities “to merge their race and class interests in ways that circumvent dominant narratives of cultural influence”(2006:18). In

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Largey's analysis of the cultural relationship between Haitian and African American composers, race provides the primary cosmopolitan link uniting these two communities while class plays a secondary role. However, for the imagined community represented by *nueva canción*, the emphasis is reversed. Thus, while ethnic identity has certainly played a prominent role in defining the aesthetics of *nueva canción*, in the next chapter I will present a few examples that illustrate how the themes used by these artists have at times extended the imagined notion of "the people" beyond the Latino ethnic boundaries on the basis of subaltern class solidarity. Despite these anomalies, in this chapter I will refer to the transnational aspects of *nueva canción*'s aesthetic sensibilities as a reflection of Pan-Latin American socialist cosmopolitanism.

Another point of clarification I will make is one that Turino himself could have further elucidated in his own analysis of Zimbabwean popular music. While Turino speaks of the twin goals of nationalism as that of "nation-building" and "securing the state"(2000:14), it is important to consider that these are arenas of conflict and that nationalism itself, according to Florencia Mallon, is "a series of competing discourses in constant formation and negotiation"(1995:4). When the musical genres of *chimurenga* in Zimbabwe and *nueva canción* in Chile were first developed, the revolutionary movements which these genres represented were not yet in control of the nation-state. Thus, the nationalist imagery presented by these artists must be considered in relation to the pre-existing dominant or "official" national discourse which in both of these cases represented the interests of the elite as they struggled to protect their own vision of the nation and maintain control over the state.¹⁰ In order to distinguish the subaltern nationalist perspective from that promoted by the elite, I will therefore use Mallon's term

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“alternative nationalism” throughout this chapter to refer to the counter-hegemonic cultural discourse which shaped the aesthetics of *nueva canción* (1995:220-221).

Regardless of these distinctions, Turino’s twin paradoxes of nationalism are as relevant to “alternative” nationalist movements as they are to the official nationalism promoted by the leaders of the nation-state. This is true since these movements must also engage cosmopolitan networks in order to bolster transnational support for their cause; yet, they must do so while maintaining their unique oppositional national identity as well. Furthermore, in establishing a lucid vision of the “alternative” nation, these movements must also grapple with the paradox of representing a “nation” inclusive of all its internal cultural (and class) distinctions, while simultaneously suppressing any challenging conceptions of the nation that might emerge from these distinct sectors of society.

In this chapter I will analyze the concatenated aesthetic values of the *nueva canción* movement in relation to the dynamic and multifaceted network of national and cosmopolitan cultural and political pressures from which it has emerged. I will begin by briefly outlining the theoretical principles of hegemony and counter-hegemony as defined by Antonio Gramsci in order to more fully contextualize what Mark Mattern has described as the “confrontational” nature of *nueva canción* in both the national and international arenas (1999:25). I will then turn to an explanation of the alternative nationalist dimension of *nueva canción* aesthetics by examining the political and cultural battle in Chile between the elite conception of the Chilean “nation”, with its corresponding cultural representations, and the “alternative” view put forth by middle class *nueva canción* artists and socialist political challengers in the late 1960s. Finally, I will examine how this alternative nationalist aesthetic representation has been influenced

by and negotiated with a Pan-Latin American socialist cosmopolitanism. I will argue that participation in this cosmopolitan community has led to the artistic cultivation of indigenous cultural expressions in order to meet the aesthetic expectations of a transnational middle class community. Furthermore, this cosmopolitan inclusion has also led to the juxtaposition of unique national traditions in *nueva canción* performances and recordings in order to reflect a political and cultural confederation among subaltern sectors in various Latin American nationalities.

Theoretical Explanation of Hegemony and Counter-Hegemony

In order to fully explain the cultural reaction of *nueva canción* artists to what I have argued was primarily an economic and political stimulus, it is necessary to briefly sketch the theoretical principle of hegemony as introduced by the Italian Marxist, Antonio Gramsci. According to Gramsci, dominant social groups maintain their control over subordinate sectors of society by manipulating both “political society” and “civil society”. While power in political society is maintained through “direct domination” or “command exercised through the State and ‘juridical’ government”; in the civil or “private” sector of society, domination is sustained through what Gramsci defines as “social hegemony”(1971:12). This term corresponds to:

[t]he ‘spontaneous’ consent given by the great masses of the population to the general direction imposed on social life by the dominant fundamental group; this consent is ‘historically’ caused by the prestige (and consequent confidence) which the dominant group enjoys because of its position and function in the world of production. (Ibid)

Through social hegemony the values of the dominant class, which fundamentally support their privileged status in society, are internalized by subordinate classes as they

are constantly reinforced through all manifestations of social life, i.e. religion, culture, education, etc. Moreover, the relationship between the state and civil society is tightly interwoven, since the “direct domination” of “state coercive power” may be used to enforce “discipline on those groups who do not ‘consent’ either actively or passively” to the hegemony of civil society. Likewise, hegemony may be used quite effectively to maintain political domination in situations where force alone may be insufficient (1971:12).

The significance of this concept to the present discussion comes with Gramsci’s assertion that the intellectual grasp of dominant hegemony over the masses must be conquered first before the attainment of state, and by extension economic, power by a revolutionary movement is possible (1971:57). This requires the creation of an alternative or counter-hegemonic frame of reference from which a challenge to dominant hegemony may be effectively maneuvered and sustained. Although Gramsci believed that it was the Communist Party that should play the primary role in shifting the ideological perception of the masses away from that which was promoted by the elite sectors of society (1971:53), the success of the democratic socialist movement in Chile shows that cultural productions like *nueva canción* may play a significant counter-hegemonic function in revolutionary movements as well.

As I illustrate in this chapter, the aesthetics of *nueva canción* developed as a counter-hegemonic discourse in relation to the Euro-centric hegemony promoted throughout Latin America by the primarily white, bourgeois class. It is important to consider that the nature of this hegemony was itself based on the cosmopolitan inclusion of the local Latin American elite in a Pan-European imagined community supported by a

belief in the cultural and racial superiority of people of direct European descent.¹¹ Since these principles of national and transnational bourgeois hegemony supported the economic and political privileges enjoyed by this class, the counter-hegemonic value placed on distinctly Latin American and subaltern cultural aesthetics by *nueva canción* artists was directed at destabilizing the hegemonic control of the bourgeoisie over the civil sectors of Latin American societies. From the Gramscian perspective, once an ideological alternative had been effectively established, it would then be possible for the revolutionary party (Popular Unity in the Chilean case) to mobilize the subaltern masses to wrestle a degree of political and economic power away from the elite establishment, both at the state and international level.

In the next section I will examine how this counter-hegemonic cultural strategy shaped the nationalist dimensions of the *nueva canción* aesthetic, again using the Chilean manifestation of the genre as a model. Following this discussion, I will turn to the equally counter-hegemonic cosmopolitanism promoted by socialist movements throughout Latin America and the influence that this imagined identity also had on the artistic aesthetic of the movement.

The Musical Aesthetics of Alternative Nationalism in Chile

In the previous chapter I outlined the economic and political conditions during the 1960s that spurred many members of the middle class and petty bourgeois intelligentsia in Chile to sever their political association with the Chilean elite and instead ally themselves with the working class and peasant sectors of Chilean society. This political shift was mirrored, and in many ways inspired, by an equally significant cultural transition, in which middle class Chilean artists and cultural aficionados sought to

symbolically position themselves outside the domain of elite hegemony in order to more effectively challenge the dominance of this social group. As George Lipsitz relates, this reflects a long tradition in which:

Leninist vanguard parties and artistic avant-gardes alike have attempted to position themselves outside dominant systems. They sought 'free spaces' and 'liberated zones' as prerequisites for the kinds of ideological mobilization that they felt would be necessary for radical change"(1994:35).

For the *nueva canción* movement, these "free spaces" were found in the indigenous and working class folk traditions and aesthetics that had survived just outside the margins of what elites considered "authentic" national culture. Since the democratic socialist community in Chile considered these traditions and aesthetics a "domain of sovereignty", or an expression of subaltern cultural autonomy in the midst of elite hegemony (Chatterjee 1993:6), they were consciously highlighted in the music of *nueva canción* as a reflection of their alternative socialist view of "authentic" Chilean culture.

It is important to consider, however, that the contradictory and competing claims to cultural "authenticity" presented by the "official" nationalism of the elite establishment and the "alternative" nationalism promoted by their subaltern challengers both reflected political and economic agendas. Thus, while the indigenous and working class cultural aesthetics and themes of exploitation and misery promoted by *nueva canción* presented a national image in which the bourgeois leaders of the state had failed to act in the interest of the "people", the national cultural expression of the elite obfuscated the suffering of those sectors of society served least by the state, either by ignoring them or distorting the reality of their condition (Rodriguez 1984:11). This "official" nationalism chose to instead culturally signify, in a positive light, the bourgeois leadership's role as *patróns*, or employers, of the "people". It also cultivated a pastoral and patriotic view of the Chilean

nation which glossed over the internal social and political fault lines that divided the country.

As suggested by Mike Gonzalez, prior to, and even during, the Allende period in Chile, the ideological struggle between bourgeois and subaltern nationalism was “waged over the use of identical concepts – people, nation, masses...”(1976:109). The true battle, therefore, was not over cultural “authenticity”; but rather, over who would have the power to define and culturally represent these concepts for the nation-state. For this reason, in order to better understand the cultural aesthetics incorporated by the *nueva canción* movement to represent its version of Chilean nationalism, it is necessary to first analyze in further detail the values and cultural representations of the official bourgeois nationalism which these artists opposed.

* * *

Perhaps the single greatest concept that shaped the national (and the cosmopolitan) discourse of elite hegemony in Chile was the notion of modernity. For the bourgeoisie, this notion was equated with industrialization and inclusion in the transnational capitalist market. As Thomas Turino explains:

Drawing on earlier social-evolutionist theory which defined the “modern” industrialized countries (civilization) as the present and “traditional” societies (the savage and barbarian stages) as the past, the discourse of modernity defines *itself* as the all-encompassing present and future, and all alternatives (“the traditional”) as an outmoded past (2000:6-7 citing Fabian 1983)

Since the Chilean bourgeoisie was primarily of European descent, the “civilization” which they advocated as part of their modernist discourse was patterned on the dominant European cultural, economic, and political model. Furthermore, this discourse attempted to justify the elevated status of the bourgeois class in Chilean society by insinuating that their role was to lead the “people” away from the “backwardness”

associated with the indigenous and *campesino* way of life and towards the modernized and industrialized future for which the elite alone held the key.

As already mentioned, the distinctly European cultural affiliation of the Chilean elite led to the preeminence of cultural products from Europe and the United States in the Chilean mass media market. This community did, however, cultivate some uniquely nationalist cultural representations as well. In accordance with Turino's notion of the dual paradoxes of nationalism, these nationalist representations evolved from the Chilean elite's desire to simultaneously represent their distinct identity on the international stage and to "celebrate the local distinctiveness" within the nation-state. Yet, while this "official" national culture included elements of both bourgeois and subaltern cultural traditions, representations of distinctly lower class local traditions were marginalized and manipulated at the national level in order to minimize the threat that these traditions posed to the nationalist discourse of the elite.

For instance, prior to the Allende period, dances and musical styles commonly associated with the indigenous and peasant communities, along with the instruments and peasant costumes with which they were performed, were relegated by the Chilean government and by the elite-controlled mass media almost solely to the Independence Day celebrations that occurred during the month of September (Nandorfy 2003:202, Sáez 1999:108). Throughout the rest of the year, the absence of this type of folkloric music on the radio, in night clubs, and in connection with state sponsored events signified the irrelevance of the subaltern communities that this music represented to the everyday existence of the "modernizing" urban population. In the words of Martha Nandorfy:

[t]his kind of institutionalized display of music and dance conveys that the nation's indigenous roots are celebrated as a salute to the past. Indigenous culture

and existence is represented as a picturesque vignette lifted from a historical reality with no relation to the present or to the continued survival and resistance of native people in the future (2003:202-203).

Thus, while the local culture of the indigenous population was celebrated within the “official” nationalism of the elite, it was as a part of Chilean history from which the nation-state was considered to be moving away on its progression towards “modernity”.

While the “artificially concocted and controlled” inclusion of subaltern musical traditions within the bourgeois nationalist discourse supported the hegemonic suppression of the lower classes (Ibid), the Chilean elite also cultivated their own national musical expressions which supported and de-politicized their elevated status in Chilean society. For this representation, the bourgeoisie primarily glorified the image of the *huaso* - a term that may be loosely defined as a “cowboy”, although in the Chilean context it also often signifies a member of the *patrón* or small landholding class (Rodriguez 1984:246, Garcia 2001:5). Even though, like the representation of the Indian, the *huaso* identity also has a tendency to evoke the past, the image played into the bourgeois modernist discourse by signifying a trajectory in which Chileans of European descent had historically cultivated the country’s natural resources and “civilized” the native population through employment, education and religion. Of course, the image also provided a strong connection between the white population and the Chilean countryside which served to further enhance the bourgeoisie’s claims to national legitimacy.

Before *nueva canción* groups such as Inti-Illimani and Quilapayún redefined Chilean music throughout the world, *huaso* music provided the most significant musical representation of the nation at the international level. This came through the performances of two groups in particular - Los Cuatro Huasos and Los Huasos

Quincheros. Although the repertoire of these groups included some of the same styles and folkloric dances (such as the *cueca* and the *tonada*) which were also later incorporated by *nueva canción*, the *nueva canción* artists considered this music “tourist” folk because its themes “sentimentalized and idealized rural life” in Chile (Fairley 1984:109). According to Osvaldo Rodriquez, since the genre catered to a bourgeois audience, its performers, who were also often drawn from the bourgeois class:

[d]ecided to sing of the countryside that they saw, not of the exploitation, nor the misery, nor the lack of schools and hospitals, but of the beauty of the central zone with forests and snow-peaked mountains, as seen through the eyes of the landholder (1984:42 my translation).

In the context of the official nationalist discourse, the music associated with the *huaso* and its primarily de-politicized imagery served a dual purpose. On the one hand, it further marginalized the suffering of the lower classes by either ignoring them or distorting the reality of their condition within the nation-state. On the other hand, it supported urban bourgeois rule by depicting their rural counterparts and predecessors as strong and yet benevolent caretakers of both the “people” and the “nation”.

In the mid to late-1960s, however, as standards of living for middle class and petty bourgeois sectors of Chilean society began to erode, many from this segment of the population began to question the notion that the Chilean elite were acting in their or the nation’s best interests, particularly considering their collusion with foreign economic and political interests. In the Chilean political realm, the dissatisfaction of the middle class led to significant factions of major centrist parties breaking off to join Allende’s leftist coalition party, Popular Unity, in order to present a strong democratic challenge to elite rule. While this party’s platform of industrial nationalization and agrarian and educational reform presented a clear picture of their alternative political and economic

objectives for the nation-state, in order to establish an alternative nationalist discourse in the cultural dimension of Chilean life, the artists associated with this movement had to position themselves aesthetically outside the domain of elite hegemony.

The difficulty presented by this endeavor came from the fact that the cultural traditions and aesthetics which were most familiar to the urbanized middle sectors of Chilean society were precisely those which had been imparted on them through their exposure to the channels of elite hegemony – i.e. the mass media, public education, institutionalized religion, capitalist commerce, etc. Since these cultural traditions embodied the values and ideologies promoted by the bourgeoisie, they provided few aesthetic resources which could be used to effectively represent a counter-hegemonic alternative nationalism. Therefore, the *nueva canción* movement and similar movements in the visual arts and literature sought inspiration from lower class cultural traditions which had maintained an oppositional stance in relation to elite hegemony and which had thus been marginalized or suppressed by the elite establishment. At the national level, therefore, the entire impetus for the middle class *nueva canción* artists to collectively imagine themselves as part of the unified subaltern community of “el pueblo” was rooted in their desire to cultivate a new counter-hegemonic nationalist discourse based on what Kenneth Aman has described as the clearly “alternative” nature of Chilean “popular culture”(1991:2).¹²

According to Gabriel Salazar, this alternative nature of Chilean popular culture was derived from the fact that, due to their marginalized position within the socially segregated Chilean state, the lower class segments of the population were “forced to create their existence in any way possible on the edge of – even outside of – the national

resources and the moral and cultural practices permitted by mainstream society”(1991:27). Interestingly enough, despite being denied cultural, political, and economic inclusion in the ordinary operations of dominant society, “this did not lessen the punishment they received for having gone beyond the cultural and moral limits allowed by the dominant system” (1991:28). As Salazar explains, largely as a result of this social paradox:

punishment in turn did not lessen [subaltern] efforts to continue creating life and society on the margins. The poor became identified with a special culture, one that implied social change (Ibid).

While the suppression of this alternative ideological and cultural discourse by the elite establishment certainly served to perpetuate the marginalized social status of the subaltern communities that created it, the bourgeois leadership was also likely motivated by their fear that this discourse might spread outside these communities and thus weaken their hegemonic control over the more central and politically influential middle sectors of society as well. This was, in fact, exactly what happened during the democratic socialist revolution that gave rise to *nueva canción* in Chile. As Kenneth Aman explains:

Popular culture ... offered a kind of opening, or space, where at first sporadic defiance and later more organized resistance ... found expression. Indeed, middle-class intellectuals, artists, activists in the church, and other opponents of the military regime and even of its more moderate Christian-Democratic successor have increasingly discovered in popular culture a certain inspiration, so much so that some have warned of a kind of romanticism that imputes to *el pueblo* (the people) more coherence than it possesses or can sustain (1991:2).

While in this quotation Aman is speaking of Chilean cultural politics in the post-Allende era, the middle-class appropriation of popular culture in this period is but a continuation of the same cultural process that was occurring during *nueva canción*'s emergence in the 1960s. Since working class culture “implied social change” as Salazar

suggests, the aesthetics associated with these classes became the cultural reservoir which *nueva canción* and other revolutionary movements used to signify their own attempts to generate social change during this time.

It is outside the purview of this discussion to provide detailed musical analysis or transcriptions of the specific rhythms, lyrical structures, or melodic motives borrowed from lower class musical traditions in the creation of *nueva canción*. For an analysis of this nature one may look to Gonzalez (1989), Merino (1999), or Nettl (1990). It is necessary, however, to trace, in at least general terms, the association between the musical and visual aesthetics of the *nueva canción* movement and the two key areas of subaltern cultural autonomy, or, to borrow Partha Chatterjee's term, "domains of sovereignty" (1993:6), from which they drew their inspiration in Chile. The first of these domains of sovereignty was discovered in the aesthetics and traditions associated with the indigenous population. The second was found in the traditional dances, rhythms, and lyrical structures that were first formed by Creole nationalists as part of their push for independence from Spain in the early 19th Century, but which had long since become the "popular domain of the people" (Rodriguez 1984:18).

Turning first to the indigenous influence on the aesthetics of *nueva canción*, in her book Sounding Indigenous: Authenticity in Bolivian Music Performance, Michelle Bigenho has explained what she defines as *indigenismo*, as "a political and cultural current found in many Latin American countries in which mestizo-Creoles have used references to indigenous cultures to bolster a national or regional identity"(2002:97). Similarly, Jean Franco has further elucidated this cultural trend by noting two distinct

functions of the appropriation of Indian aesthetics in the modern culture of Latin America (1967:107).

One was to fulfil [sic] a direct social purpose by arousing a general awareness of the plight of submerged sections of the population. The other ... was to set up the values of Indian culture and civilization as an alternative to European values (Ibid).

In shaping the musical and visual aesthetics of the *nueva canción* movement, both of these functions of *indigenismo* played a direct role. As stated before, many of the middle-class artists and intellectuals associated with the democratic socialist movement in Chile were genuinely dedicated to helping alleviate the suffering of both the indigenous peasant and proletariat populations. This compassion came as a result not only of their sympathy for these populations, but also through a sense of solidarity rooted in their imagined notion of mutual subaltern identity.

Even more important to the creation of the movement's alternative nationalist discourse, however, was the counter-hegemonic and oppositional identity maintained by the indigenous people in Chile. For instance, Sara McFall and Roberto Morales have observed that the members of this community, which is often referred to collectively as *Mapuche*, have continually sought "to strengthen themselves as a group by underlining difference from Chilean society" (2000:131). The symbolic association of middle-class artists, intellectuals, and even politicians with this identity was thus effectively employed to dispute the dominant Euro-centric, capitalist-modernist discourse of bourgeois nationalism in Chile. Furthermore, as Jean Franco suggests, "the Indian represented the national, the patently non-foreign", and hence the aesthetics and values associated with Mapuche cultural traditions directly countered the current of foreign cultural imperialism that was infiltrating the Chilean mass media market in the 1960s as well.

As a symbolic representation of the inclusion of the Mapuche community, and even more importantly, their counter-hegemonic identity in the imagined community of “el pueblo”, aesthetic references to this culture are ubiquitous in the artistic expression of Chilean *nueva canción*. For instance, it became a tradition for many of the ensembles associated with the movement to take their names from Mapuche languages -- hence band names such as Quilapyún (three beards), Concummén (ripple of water), and, in Valparaíso, the group Ruca Millarepu (house of the path of gold) (Rodríguez 1984:51). Similarly, Andean instruments such as the *quena* (bamboo flute), the *panpipes*, the *bombo* (drum), and the *charango* (ten stringed instrument arranged in five courses and often made out of an armadillo shell) came to clearly distinguish the sound of the genre and signify its oppositional political stance as well (Fairley 1984:112). Even the covers of several *nueva canción* albums displayed imagery that was directly associated with the native population and their cultural traditions.¹³

As far as the compositional aesthetic of the genre, the use of Andean flutes led to the predominance of the pentatonic scale in many of the instrumental melodic phrases integrated into the music. Also, indigenous influence was evident in the common usage of an Andean accompaniment pattern which Bruno Nettl has described as “a series of arpeggios based on two fifths, with roots a minor third apart, presented in a rhythmic figure of an eighth followed by two sixteenths” (1990:201). Moreover, John Schechter has also observed a compositional tendency to integrate mixed modes, as well as a common rhythmic pattern that may be identified by its “simultaneous feeling of 3/4 and 6/8 meters”, both of which he claims may be traced to pre-Columbian origins (2005: 267).

While the following chapter will examine the lyrical themes of *nueva canción* in greater detail, it should also be briefly noted here that, in addition to incorporating melodic and rhythmic influences from Mapuche musical traditions, lyrical references to the culture and identity of the Mapuche also became a significant element of the poetic aesthetic used by many *nueva canción* composers and performers. Although countless examples could be cited, this tendency is particularly evident in Violeta Parra's 1966 recording of a song entitled "El Guillatún", which depicts an integral Mapuche ritual of the same name. As Sara McFall and Roberto Morales explain, in the Mapuche community, this ceremony served a dual function of:

demonstrating the value of the Mapuche language and ritual [and also creating] a powerful sense of autonomy and a counter-hegemonic space where values are reversed, and where all that is associated with *winka* [non-Mapuche] world is excluded and even despised (2000:140).

For the *peña* audiences of middle class intellectuals, artists, and politicians for whom Parra was accustomed to performing, the Mapuche inspired poetry of songs such as "El Guillatún" symbolized the possibility of cultural and political resistance to the dominant nationalist discourse. It is interesting, however, that while the middle class democratic socialists identified with Mapuche resistance to the extent that they imagined themselves to be part of the same subaltern community and claimed their cultural aesthetics as their own, the actual cultural traditions of the Mapuche drew a sharp distinction between their community and the entirety of non-Mapuche Chilean society. It is also worth mentioning that, despite their overwhelming representation in the alternative nationalist discourse associated with *nueva canción*, the Mapuche comprised merely three percent of the Chilean population (Castillo-Feliú 2000:11). This fact further supports the assertion that Mapuche cultural aesthetics were borrowed by democratic

socialist artists primarily as an act of counter-hegemonic symbolism rather than as an attempt to accurately reclaim, as part of their national discourse, the true cultural heritage of the Chilean masses.

Clearly, the integration of aspects of indigenous culture and symbolism with the aesthetics of the *nueva canción* movement provided an overtly oppositional response to the values of elite nationalism, particularly considering the deeply racist view that the Chilean elite held against the native population (Nandorfy 2003:131). However, *nueva canción* artists were heavily influenced by a more subtle aspect of working class cultural autonomy as well. This “domain of sovereignty” was discovered in working class folkloric traditions that claimed “authentic” ownership of elements of Chilean national folklore that had originated with the elite but which had long since been marginalized and re-contextualized by the dominant nationalist discourse.

For example, since the national dance, the *cueca*, and its corresponding rhythm first surfaced as part of the Creole-led independence movement in the early 19th Century, it was originally imbued with a strong oppositional political commitment spurred by Spanish oppression (Rodriguez 1984:19). Yet, as the Creole community established their own dominance over Chilean society after Independence, the political commitment of national traditions like the *cueca* narrowed until they “represented only the point of view of the landowning bourgeoisie and the sectors of society that serviced them”(1984:25 my translation). Furthermore, as the Chilean elite became increasingly invested in the cultural manifestations of capitalist-modernist cosmopolitanism in the 20th century, even the de-politicized, romanticized versions of traditional Chilean folklore (as characterized by the Los Huasos Quincheros and Los Cuatro Huasos) became

marginalized, to the extent that they were rarely promoted by the state or by the mass media except during Independence Day celebrations in mid-September. Therefore, while the Chilean elite never fully abandoned their connection to national musical styles like the *cueca*, the *tonada*, and other distinctly Chilean folkloric genres, the ambivalence which they displayed towards these cultural expressions provided a gap in the dominant nationalist discourse which subaltern groups exploited in challenging the legitimacy of their rule (Reyes Matta 1988:449).

Despite the attempts of the elite to re-contextualize the *cueca* as a de-politicized symbol of national unity and patriotism, throughout the history of the Chilean nation-state, various subaltern groups have appropriated the original oppositional character of the national dance as a symbol of defiance to elite hegemony. Hence, these groups used the *cueca* and other folkloric traditions to sing of the “true affections of the multitude”, rather than to reiterate the national perspective of the bourgeoisie (Rodriguez 1984:25). They also used this national symbol to challenge the national political legitimacy of various oligarchic regimes. For instance, this cultural strategy first surfaced in the annals of history in 1886 with the “Cueca de Balmaceda”, which supported the liberal, anti-imperialist candidate José Manuel Balmaceda (Garcia 2001:3).¹⁴ Similarly, in the presidential elections in 1901 and again in 1907, the liberal party circulated *cuecas* that supported their candidates and opposed the candidacy of the conservative, Pedro Montt (Rodriguez 1984:34). Although, according to Jan Fairley, it is unclear to what extent these folkloric traditions were truly performed by the rural and working class population in the 1960s, what is certain is that, for *nueva canción*, this “hispanic-based music...now stood for them, the realities of their way of life and their culture, their

struggles”(1984:111). Therefore, as *nueva canción* artists performed traditional folksongs gathered from working class communities and composed their own politically committed songs using folkloric rhythms and lyrical styles, this was done in support of their “alternative” nationalist discourse which claimed to present a more “authentic” representation of both the “people” and the “nation”.

The success of the *nueva canción* movement’s attempts to engender a counter-hegemonic nationalist discourse may be seen, not only with the success of Salvador Allende’s presidential campaign, but also in the venomous reaction of the Chilean bourgeoisie to this cultural trend. Fernando Reyes Matta had characterized this response by noting that:

such forms of artistic manifestation evidently irritate, disturb, and provoke the hegemonic forces... The images [this music] projects achieve greater coincidence with the struggles of the neglected popular masses and their mobilization than those of any other form. This is why the movement is fought against and repressed and, inevitably, situated in a zone of confrontation and defiance (1988:449).

Prior to and even during the Allende regime, many members of the *nueva canción* movement (particularly Victor Jara) were repeatedly scandalized in the right wing press and banned from right wing radio, primarily as a result of the oppositional political commitment that they connected with traditional symbols of Chilean national identity such as the *cueca*.¹⁵ Furthermore, this reaction of the elite establishment to *nueva canción* took a more sinister turn in the aftermath of the military coup in 1973 with the execution of Victor Jara and the exile and imprisonment of other prominent musicians. But perhaps the most telling elite response to the alternative nationalist discourse symbolized by *nueva canción* came with the unofficial ban that Pinochet’s dictatorship placed on the traditional instruments and ponchos that had come to symbolize Allende’s

democratic socialist movement (Marquez 1983:8). It may also come as no surprise that the military Junta re-installed the conservative group Los Huasos Quincheros as the musical ambassadors of the reconfigured Chilean state (Rodriguez 1984:103).

Before shifting to an analysis of the influence of Pan-Latin American Socialist Cosmopolitanism on *nueva canción*, it is necessary to briefly discuss one more significant dynamic which shaped the nationalist aesthetic of *nueva canción*. Keeping in mind the second of Turino's twin paradoxes of nationalism, which states that while "nation-states celebrate and are dependent on local distinctiveness, ... they are simultaneously threatened by it", it is important to contextualize the aesthetic sensibilities of *nueva canción* artists, not only in relation to the dominant cultural discourse, but also with a consideration of their attempts to limit and control the actual working class cultural discourse from which they drew their inspiration. This discourse had the potential to challenge the privileged position of the middle class as the cultural vanguard of the democratic socialist movement and thus unravel the concept of subaltern solidarity as imagined and defined by this class. Indeed, in the political sphere it was exactly this form of internal working class revolt within the coalition party of Popular Unity that weakened Allende's support and helped to pave the way for the Coup that occurred in 1973.

For this reason, despite appropriating elements of the culturally autonomous expressions commonly associated with the most marginalized communities within their nation, "Leninist parties," according to George Lipsitz, "always replicated the very structures of hierarchy and exploitation that they presumed to challenge (even after they

seized state power)...”(1994:35). The cultural representations of alternative nationalism put forth by the *nueva canción* movement were no exception to this trend as the indigenous and working class musical aesthetics and traditions which they incorporated were altered and cultivated to better reflect the middle class cultural perspective of the artists themselves.

Furthermore, as suggested by Robin Moore, “[w]ithout necessarily intending to” the cultivation of lower class traditions “create[s] cultural hierarchies” in which the works of the elevated class are “perceived as more important than those they take inspiration from”. This perception, in turn, is used to legitimate their cultural dominance (2006:23). In the case of Chilean *nueva canción* the cultivation of folkloric influences served to exclude most working class musicians from actually participating in representing, through music, the imagined community of “the people”. It also supported the dominance of middle class and petty bourgeois interests within Salvador Allende’s coalition political party, Popular Unity.

Although the cultivation of national folkloric expressions clearly acted to suppress lower-class cultural and political challenges to the middle-class nationalist discourse, it also played a vital role in establishing an aesthetic link between the middle class communities associated with the various national manifestations of the *nueva canción* movement. This cultivation was influenced almost entirely by the aesthetics of European classical music and North American popular music which both were common throughout most of Latin America due to the shared experience of Iberian colonial rule and contemporary North American cultural imperialism. Since the cultivated nature of *nueva canción*’s various nationalistic expressions helped to sustain the cosmopolitan loop that

united the imagined Pan-Latin socialist community, this topic will be considered in more detail as part of the following discussion.

Pan-Latin American Socialist Cosmopolitanism

Early in the development of Latin American socialism, the leaders of the various national manifestations of this movement realized that, in addition to challenging the hegemonic control of the national bourgeoisie at the state level, they must confront the transnational dimension of exploitative capitalism at the regional and even the global level as well. This political necessity led to the impulse, on the part of socialist activists, to engender an alternative socialist cosmopolitan network that could effectively counterbalance the influence of the dominant capitalist cosmopolitanism on the economic, political, and cultural spheres of Latin American society. For socialist artists and aficionados throughout the 20th century, the desire to support and participate in this burgeoning socialist cosmopolitanism inspired attempts to cultivate a shared sense of artistic aesthetics that symbolized not only their counter-hegemonic national identities, but also the political and cultural solidarity of subaltern classes throughout Latin America. This cosmopolitan undercurrent became particularly evident with the emergence of Chilean *nueva canción* in the 1960s, as the musicians associated with this movement consciously sought to establish cultural and political ties between the democratic socialist movement occurring in Chile and similar movements taking place elsewhere in Latin America and beyond.

As previously argued, the national bourgeois classes in Latin America had, for centuries, been engaged in a cosmopolitan loop that strongly linked them both to each other and to the centers of transnational capitalism in Europe and later in the United

States (Anderson 1991). While this cosmopolitan relationship functioned to support the collective political and economic interests of the dominant classes in most Latin American countries, it also reinforced a transnational manifestation of “social hegemony” in the cultural and ideological realm of Latin American society. This came as the cultural and material products shared by this “capitalist-modernist” cosmopolitanism strongly reflected the dominance of the most “powerful sites” around which this cosmopolitan network had formed (Turino 2000:8).

Since the United States and to a lesser extent Western Europe stood as the center of global capitalism throughout the 20th century, the cultural aesthetics that were shared through the channels of capitalist cosmopolitanism in this century were “heavily influenced” by those which had emerged from the popular and cultivated cultural traditions of these regions (Ibid). From the perspective of the economically and politically disaffected protagonists of the Latin American socialist movement, however, the endorsement of these dominant cosmopolitan cultural values and aesthetics by local elites indicated their collusion with foreign imperialism. In the words of Robin Moore, “the exploitation and subversion of third-world culture by first-world nations...” was considered by Latin American socialists to be “part of a larger pattern of socioeconomic dominance that has existed since the early colonial period” (2006:21).

In response to the socioeconomic and political conditions created by the deeply interconnected national and international manifestations of the dominant capitalist system, the *nueva canción* movement sought to signify, through their music, the existence of an oppositional and yet equally interconnected community of Pan-Latin American socialists. Hence, as George Lipsitz has theorized, the notion that “similar and

interconnected kinds of austerity, inequality, and social disintegration” were being experienced by the subaltern and particularly middle-class segments of society throughout Latin America led to the emergence of “a transnational [subaltern] culture speaking to [their] shared social realities (1994:7). Yet, since the counter-hegemonic aesthetic symbols that Chilean *nueva canción* artists used to express their alternative nationalist sentiments often differed from those utilized elsewhere in Latin America, the aesthetic representation of the Pan-Latin American cosmopolitan dimension of “el pueblo” had to be negotiated with the individual national expressions of the various manifestations of the movement.

The attempts to establish a counter-hegemonic cosmopolitan musical tradition were further complicated by the fact that, prior to *nueva canción*, the musical aesthetics shared by the various Latin American nations were primarily those imparted through the shared experience of Iberian colonialism and North American cultural imperialism. Thus, Latin America was, for the most part, culturally united by the same dominant cosmopolitan connection that the *nueva canción* movement sought to subvert. Furthermore, the control that elites maintained over the majority of the cosmopolitan loops (i.e. the mass media) through which Latin American communities traditionally communicated with one another also served to significantly curtail the cosmopolitan transmission of counter-hegemonic cultural expressions.

These obstacles to the formation of a socialist cosmopolitan community were, to a large extent, effectively overcome by *nueva canción* artists through their utilization of three key cultural strategies. The first strategy primarily addressed the issue of aesthetic negotiation between the alternative nationalist and socialist cosmopolitan representations

of “el pueblo”, as this community was imagined by *nueva canción*. This was characterized by the juxtaposition, in *nueva canción* performances, recordings, and festivals, of various national symbols, i.e. folkdances and rhythms, instruments, songs, and even the national origins of the performers themselves. While these various elements of the genre maintained their national identity in an often uncompromised manner, the juxtaposition of symbols representing several different nations within a single context signified the cosmopolitan confederation and solidarity of a Pan-Latin American socialist community.

In addition to addressing the issue of national/cosmopolitan negotiation, the second and third strategies also dealt with the difficulty of establishing and maintaining a cosmopolitan cultural connection between Latin American nations without losing the essence of its counter-hegemonic symbolism. For instance, the second strategy may be seen in *nueva canción*’s incorporation of historically subaltern cultural traditions that spanned several nationalities – particularly those connected with pre-Columbian indigenous empires and the descendents of enslaved Africans. The third is evident in the artistic cultivation of national folklore, which compromised distinctly Latin American or native aesthetics with more Euro-centric aesthetic values. While this strategy did bend somewhat in the direction of elite hegemony, it allowed the primarily middle class musicians and supporters of the *nueva canción* movement to maintain a cosmopolitan aesthetic basis with which they could integrate the counter-hegemonic aesthetic elements of various national folkloric traditions.

Turning first to an analysis of *nueva canción*’s cosmopolitan cultural strategy of juxtaposing various Latin American icons, it is important to consider that nationalism and

cosmopolitanism are not necessarily always at odds with one another. For instance, George Lipsitz has also noted that:

Even under ...circumstances of global integration, local identities and affiliations do not disappear. On the contrary, the transnational economy often makes itself felt most powerfully through the reorganization of spaces and the transformation of local experience... (1994:5)

Since, prior to emergence of *nueva canción*, there were very few cosmopolitan cultural expressions that signified the collective interests of the subaltern sectors of Latin American society; the artists of the *nueva canción* movement employed this strategy of transforming national counter-hegemonic cultural expressions into an expression of Pan-Latin American socialist identity. According to Fernando Reyes Matta, this was accomplished as musicians attempted “to link their own musical and poetic reality with the instruments and lyrics from other countries that recognize the culture of liberation” (1988:448).

From the earliest beginnings of the Chilean *nueva canción* movement, nearly all the artists who performed in the various *peñas* and song festivals and who recorded for the DICAP label incorporated elements of folklore into their repertoire that reflected not only their own Chilean national identity but also the national identities of several other Latin American countries (Rodriguez 1984:61). Since the imagined community of “Latin America” was defined largely as a confederation of the various nations that together comprised the region, this strategy of juxtaposing national musical styles, instruments and personalities allowed *nueva canción* artists and supporters to express and celebrate their national heritage without limiting their inclusion in a larger Pan-Latin American socialist community. As Chilean artists performed Cuban *sons*, Mexican *corridos*, or *zambas* from the Bolivian *altiplano*, therefore, the gesture was not only one of solidarity

with the communities that originated this music, it also was inspired by the imagined notion that these styles also belonged to them as part of their own Latin American cultural heritage.

In the recorded context of Chilean *nueva canción*, the juxtaposition of styles allowed artists to share their continental identity, not only with members of the democratic socialist community in Chile, but also with oppositional communities in other parts of Latin America.¹⁶ This cosmopolitan connection, as argued in previous chapter, was shared through the alternative means of production and distribution established by the movement. Moreover, according to Eduardo Carrasco, the influence of this cultural strategy made possible the “assimilation of experience” which further enhanced the sense of Pan-Latin American cosmopolitan identity among the various national manifestations *nueva canción*’s imagined community.

In the international festival context, in addition to appropriating a diverse Latin American repertoire and juxtaposing various Latin American instruments within the performances of individual artists and ensembles, the juxtaposition of the artists themselves also signified the cosmopolitan solidarity of the movement. This came as the various participants in these international song festivals inevitably represented their country of origin; thus, the combination of their individual performances within the context of the festival ultimately signified their mutual Pan-Latin American identity.

Interestingly, Laurie Sommers has observed a similar phenomenon occurring as part of Hispanic solidarity festivals in the United States as well. As she explains:

In particular, festive gatherings and parades provide a structure for national and ethnic [Latin American] expression within a larger panethnic event frame. The resultant unity in diversity model allows inner and outer boundaries to be

maintained simultaneously. The same dualism between ethnic and panethnic expression is revealed at the level of song, style, and musical structure (1991:49).

As explained in the introduction, the diverse repertoire of the band performing at the Oaxaca benefit in Grand Rapids clearly used this cultural process of juxtaposition to express both their national and Latin American identities as well. I did, however, also observe this group perform at a Latin American festival in Holland, MI, in which their performance was combined with that of musical ensembles expressing other national identities, thus further enhancing the expression of Sommers's model of "unity in diversity".

Although the second cultural strategy employed by *nueva canción* to engender a cosmopolitan and yet counter-hegemonic sense of aesthetics is perhaps the weakest, it is worth considering since it did influence the style of Chilean *nueva canción* – particularly that of groups such as Inti-Illimani and Quilapayún. This cosmopolitan strategy was based upon the understanding that a great deal of the Andean folklore that Chilean artists used as their cultural reservoir for establishing an alternative nationalist expression was also shared by other Latin American nations. As Eduardo Carrasco relates, "[t]he limits of folklore and of popular culture do not absolutely correspond with geographical and political limits: Andean music exists in Bolivia and Peru principally, but also in Ecuador and the northern zones of Chile and Argentina" (1983a:49). For this reason, the aesthetics of Andean folklore did provide Chilean musicians with a "symbol of cultural unity" that allowed them to establish a subaltern cosmopolitan connection with many other alternative nationalist movements on the South American continent.

The tendency to employ this strategy is perhaps most evident in the Andean musical influences and symbolism incorporated by the Chilean group Inti-Illimani.

While most ensembles in Chilean *nueva canción* movement chose names drawn from the languages of the more localized indigenous population, the Mapuche, the language from which Inti-Illimani (sun/mountain in Bolivia) chose its name indicated a connection to “the pre-historic past of the Aymara and Quechua races who had been dominated by the Incas” (Fairley 1984:112). According to Jan Fairley, since this pre-Columbian civilization spanned several contemporary South American nations, Inti-Illimani’s name, as well the symbolism used on several of the group’s album covers,¹⁷ articulated their connection to “a continental rather than simply a national political struggle”(Ibid).

Despite the fact that the appropriation of Andean traditions and symbolism served to provide Chilean *nueva canción* artists with a cultural basis for a regional subaltern cosmopolitanism, it was a limited strategy for establishing a lasting Pan-Latin American cosmopolitanism. This was also true with the incorporation, by other manifestations of the *nueva canción* movement, of similar transnational subaltern cultural traditions which united other regions of Latin America – for instance, the use of African aesthetics in the Caribbean or Mayan symbolism in Central America. The musically imagined community of “el pueblo” sought to extend itself throughout all of Latin America, as well as to the diasporic Latino communities living in other parts of the world. For this reason, in order for the use of regional aesthetic symbolism to be relevant as an expression of Pan-Latin American socialist cosmopolitanism, these expressions had to be juxtaposed with other regional expressions in much the same way that national expressions were juxtaposed by the *nueva canción* movement.

The final cultural strategy that *nueva canción* artists utilized in establishing a cosmopolitan sense of aesthetics for their musically imagined Pan-Latin American

community was expressed through their cultivation of lower class musical traditions. As Eduardo Carrasco explains:

One of the principal incentives that emerged from the creative impulse of Chilean *nueva canción* has been bringing the modes of popular expression closer to more cultivated forms of expression without abandoning the character of mass diffusion (1983a:28 my translation)

While Carrasco maintains that this cultural process was “not elitist”(Ibid), at the national level, it did play a key role in supporting the slightly elevated social position of middle-class artists as the cultural vanguard of the socialist movement. At the transnational cosmopolitan level, however, the artistic cultivation of local lower class cultural expressions provided an essential aesthetic link between the various middle-class artists and supporters of the movement throughout Latin America. This was possible by compromising lower-class aesthetic elements, which maintained their counter-hegemonic symbolism, with aesthetic elements from the dominant culture, with which middle-class communities across Latin America were familiar due to their common interaction with capitalist cosmopolitanism.

As explained above, prior to the emergence of the alternative socialist cosmopolitanism created in part by *nueva canción*, Latin America was culturally united, in its entirety, almost exclusively by the dominant capitalist cosmopolitanism. Moreover, much as middle-class communities in Latin American had been considerably influenced by local elite hegemony within their individual national contexts, the middle-class segment of Latin American society was heavily influenced by dominant hegemony at the cosmopolitan level as well. For instance, Carrasco has observed that, despite their anti-imperialist rhetoric, the middle-class and student populations from which *nueva canción* arose in Chile were ironically the segment of the population most influenced by foreign

music (1983a:14). Similarly, Eric Zolov has noted a comparable cultural background for supporters of politically oriented folkloric movements in Mexico as well (1999).

Since the Euro-centric musical aesthetics promoted through capitalist cosmopolitanism were familiar to all the musicians of the *nueva canción* movement, these formed a cosmopolitan aesthetic basis with which these artists were able to integrate the counter-hegemonic symbolism of their local lower-class aesthetic influences. This common aesthetic basis was necessary since the middle-class members of Latin American society, whose allegiance *nueva canción* artists sought to sway, often, as Robin Moore suggests, “did not personally identify or fully appreciate all forms of working-class art” in their own country let alone those which originated elsewhere in Latin America (2006:12). Hence, within the *nueva canción* movement, the disassociation between the middle-class cosmopolitan communities these artists were attempting to reach and the working-class communities from which they drew their counter-hegemonic inspiration led to “a desire to re-vitalize and re-create [folk traditions], so that the material was relevant to its new audience” (Fairley 1984:111). Jan Fairley further explains this impetus towards folkloric cultivation by noting that:

It affected instrumentation, instrumental technique, vocal and instrumental harmony, arrangements for solo voices and group and the texture achieved by their interaction, the register, timbres and tones of the voices ..., the dynamics employed in arrangements, [and] the relationship between vocal and instrumental parts (Ibid)

Before leaving the topic of folkloric cultivation, it is important to note that while this cultural strategy did help to reinforce the Pan-Latin American cosmopolitanism shared by middle-class socialists; it also opened the door for some lower-class segments of the population to revolt against *nueva canción*'s appropriation and re-contextualization

of their distinct counter-hegemonic identity in relation to the nation-state. For instance, Michelle Bigenho has written extensively about working-class musicians in Bolivia who have “produced alternative Bolivian national musics” primarily in opposition to the “stylized,” “Pan-Andean” national expression reflected by the popular Bolivian *nueva canción* group *Kjarkas*. This example, along with the relatively low disposition expressed for *nueva canción* by the lower-class segments of society throughout Latin America (Zolov 1999:231), supports the notion that many among the working-classes are unable to relate to *nueva canción* because the folkloric cultivation expressed through this middle-class genre exhibits a form of cultural domination similar to that employed by the elite.

In summary, the cultural aesthetics promulgated by *nueva canción* have been molded by the movement’s desire to simultaneously signify both the nationalist and Pan-Latin American cosmopolitan dimensions of their imagined community, “el pueblo”. In both these arenas this movement sought to express an oppositional political and cultural identity in relation to the hegemony of transnational capitalism and the local elite. The result of this cultural process at the national level in Chile has been the incorporation of aesthetics borrowed from marginalized traditions within the nation (i.e. indigenous and historically oppositional but largely forgotten bourgeois musical styles, instruments, symbolism, etc.) in order to represent musically an alternative nationalism. This alternative nationalism challenged the values and the legitimacy of the official nationalism established by the elite and attempted to supplant the values and aesthetics

associated with more subaltern communities as the “authentic” representation of the nation.

The aesthetics shared by the movement also sought to symbolize and sustain the existence of a Pan-Latin American socialist cosmopolitanism capable of competing at the international level with the dominant capitalist cosmopolitan network. This influence inspired the movement to establish three key cultural strategies which allowed *nueva canción* artists to simultaneously express their individual alternative nationalist identities and their inclusion in a wider cosmopolitan community. These strategies were: the juxtaposition of various counter-hegemonic nationalist symbols and expressions in order to signify what Laurie Sommers has termed “unity in diversity”, the incorporation of cultural traditions and aesthetics associated with regional subaltern communities (i.e. pre-Columbian, African), and the artistic cultivation of lower-class national folkloric traditions in order to meet the pre-existing cosmopolitan aesthetic expectations shared by the middle class sectors of Latin American society.

In the following chapter, the national and cosmopolitan dimensions of the musically imagined community “el pueblo” will be further analyzed in relation to the lyrical themes commonly incorporated by *nueva canción* artists. However, in addition to analyzing the use of lyrical text as a means of symbolizing the common struggle and social status of the Latin American “people” in the present, this chapter will examine how *nueva canción* incorporated symbolically loaded themes to connect their middle-class movement to an expanded history of subaltern struggle in the past as well.

CHAPTER 3:

THE THEMATIC TRADITIONALIZATION OF “EL PUEBLO”

While much of the discussion concerning the dual influences of alternative nationalism and Pan-Latin American socialist cosmopolitanism is equally pertinent to the creation of the lyrical text that accompanied many *nueva canción* compositions, the themes utilized by the artists of the movement often supplied an additional dimension of historical continuity to the character of their musically imagined community. By referring to both contemporary and historical events in the themes of Chilean *nueva canción*, artists associated with the democratic socialist movement in Chile were able to symbolically contextualize their national political struggle as part of a wider Pan-Latin American and even global struggle taking place throughout history. Moreover, the incorporation of these themes also served to support the cosmopolitan social cohesion of the movement as *nueva canción* artists from various nationalities drew lyrical inspiration from many of the same events and personalities in Latin American history –thus implying their shared continuity with the same “imagined” point of origin (Bigenho 2002:18).

As explained in the introduction to this thesis, Eric Hobsbawm has defined this “attempt to establish continuity with a suitable historic past” in order to symbolize the condition, cement cohesion, and legitimate the actions of communities in the present as “inventing tradition” (1983:1,12). The relevance of this theoretical concept to the present discussion comes with Hobsbawm’s assertion that even revolutionary movements (like

the democratic socialist movement in Chile) display a tendency to “back their innovations by reference to a ‘people’s past’..., to traditions of revolution..., and to its own heroes and martyrs”(1983:13). Interestingly, Hobsbawm has also observed that the impetus to invent tradition should be expected “to occur more frequently when a rapid transformation of society weakens or destroys the social patterns for which ‘old’ traditions had been designed” (1983:4). Hence, for Chilean *nueva canción* artists, intellectuals, and socialist activists, the motivation to “invent” a ‘new’ tradition that signified their inclusion in a Pan-Latin American subaltern community may be traced in large part to the dramatic decline in economic, social, and political stability for the middle-class sectors of Chilean society that took place in the mid-20th Century (Chapter 1).

Although there are countless cultural mediums through which the impulse to “invent” a tradition may manifest itself, musical performance is particularly powerful since, as Mark Mattern has observed, its “communicative capacity...opens the possibility of sharing experience both temporally and spatially...” (1998:15,17). In much the way that musical performance is able to bind an imagined community (Bigenho 2002, Turino 1999), it is, therefore, also capable of traditionalizing the identity and actions of the community by appropriating powerful images from history in order to establish a relationship between the present and a meaningful past (Largey 2000:241). For *nueva canción*, even though the incorporation of musical aesthetics and styles associated with marginalized communities certainly helped to link the movement to a “suitable history” of local and cosmopolitan opposition to elite hegemony, the music’s thematic content provided an even more explicit means through which *nueva canción* artists “invented”

their revolutionary tradition. This tradition thus evolved as both the artists and political activists connected with the democratic socialist movement used thematic imagery to symbolically connect their own revolutionary political and social identity with that established by revolutionary heroes and movements throughout Latin America, both in the present and in the past.

In this chapter I will analyze the lyrical texts of several compositions to reveal a series of reoccurring themes that *nueva canción* artists have used to traditionalize their “subaltern” social and political identity as well their inclusion in a unified Pan-Latin American subaltern community. To further elucidate the worldview reflected through the artistic expressions of this imagined identity, I will examine three general social characteristics that Chilean *nueva canción* artists sought to associate with themselves and the democratic socialist movement in Chile through the thematic content of their songs. The first of these characteristics is evident in *nueva canción*’s appropriation of several themes that expressed the collective identity and solidarity of the subaltern “people” and, even more importantly, the inclusion of the middle class in this community. Secondly, many themes in the music of *nueva canción* also indicate the historically oppressed nature of their imagined subaltern community while simultaneously characterizing the Latin American elite and the agents of global imperialism as tyrannical. A third characteristic of “el pueblo” traditionalized through the themes of *nueva canción* was the notion that this community has been historically inclined to resist their oppressed condition and in many instances have succeeded in securing political and economic justice. While many of the prominent themes incorporated by *nueva canción* often simultaneously signified all three of these social characteristics, I will examine these

concepts independently by analyzing the lyrical texts and themes of influential compositions in relation to the characteristic of “el pueblo” that they most clearly reveal.

Themes of Solidarity

Since, as Hobsbawm has argued, one of the most significant motivations for inventing a tradition is to cement the social cohesion of and define membership in “real or artificial communities”(1983:9), the musical tradition of *nueva canción* included several thematic references that signified the solidarity and collective identity of their imagined subaltern community. For instance, much of the thematic imagery incorporated into *nueva canción* blurred class distinctions between the relatively privileged leaders of the movement and those individuals who occupied the lower levels of the social hierarchy. This symbolic association with workers, peasants, and students, and the corresponding aversion to themes associated with elite identity allowed the artists and proponents of *nueva canción* to signify the social cohesion of a “subaltern” community which was defined solely in contrast to the elite and thus included the middle classes. Moreover, the lyrics of several *nueva canción* compositions also attempted to traditionalize the transnational solidarity of the movement by highlighting the notion that the Latin American “people” share a single social and political identity rooted in their common history of Iberian colonization. Interestingly, in some cases, as will be shown below, the social boundaries of the imagined community “el pueblo” were even extended beyond Latin America, as many *nueva canción* artists also included occasional references to popular struggles that had occurred or were occurring in places like Vietnam, Spain, Russia and various regions in Africa.

Turning first to themes of subaltern class solidarity, perhaps the most emblematic expression of subaltern social cohesion included in the repertoire of Chilean *nueva canción* may be seen in the lyrical text of “El Pueblo Unido, Jamás Sera Vencido” (The people united will not be defeated). Composed by Sergio Ortega and Quilapayún in 1973 as Salvador Allende’s regime became increasingly destabilized by intense economic pressure from the international and local elite, the song was written with the hope that it might rekindle the fragile political and social alliance that brought Popular Unity to power in 1971. This was particularly necessary since internal divisions, primarily between middle and working class factions within the Popular Unity party, had further weakened Allende’s burgeoning socialist government and led to wide-spread speculation about an imminent military coup. Thus, while many of the song’s lyrics expressed the notion of unity in general terms (“we’re going to triumph, already the flags of unity are advancing, and you come marching together with me”) one stanza in particular directly addressed the need for a continuation of intra-class solidarity.

...ya estás aquí
junto al trabajador

... already you are here
together with the worker

Y ahora, el pueblo
Que se alza en la lucha
Con voz de gigante
Gritando: adelante!

And now, the people
Rise in the struggle
With a gigantic voice
Shouting: Forward!

El pueblo unido, jamás sera vencido

The people united, will not be
defeated
(my translation)

In this song, the call to march “together with the worker” may be safely assumed to have been directed at the highly influential middle sectors of Chilean society, many of whom had begun to withdraw their support for Popular Unity by 1973. However, in the years since its creation, the song’s general references to the social and political unity of

“the people” have allowed it to become a politically-charged anthem throughout Latin America. Indeed, when “El Pueblo Unido...” was performed at the Oaxaca event detailed in the introduction of this thesis, it was this song’s expression of social cohesion between the middle and lower classes (based on their shared opposition to a mutually despised political and economic elite) that enabled it to symbolically connect the event’s relatively affluent audience with its beneficiaries in rural Mexico.

In addition to general lyrical texts, like “El Pueblo Unido...”, the notion of solidarity between the various factions of non-elite society was also re-enforced through the incorporation of several themes that referenced specific social conditions experienced by miners, students, factory workers, Indians, etc. These themes were then juxtaposed by *nueva canción* artists in their performances and recordings to help support the perception of a shared subaltern identity. This cultural strategy thus bears much in common with the movement’s tendency, explained in Chapter 2, towards juxtaposing national symbols in order to enhance the cosmopolitan unity of the movement. However, since many of these themes also reflected what I have characterized as the “experience of oppression” connected with the traditionalized identity of “el pueblo”, they will be analyzed in the following section.

Along with the concept of intra-class “subaltern” solidarity, several of the lyrical texts associated with *nueva canción* also attempted to traditionalize the concept of *boliviarana*, or Pan-Latin American solidarity, as part of the social and political identity of “el pueblo”. In this thematic field two songs in particular stand out, as they were both included in the repertoires of several *nueva canción* musicians. These were Violeta Parra’s song “Los Pueblos Americanos” and Rolando Alarcón’s “Si Somos Americanos”

(If we are Americans), which was subsequently recorded by Inti-Illimani as part of their 1969 album of the same name. Both of these songs are worth sharing in their entirety.

“Los Pueblos Americanos” Violeta Parra

Los pueblos americanos
Se sienten acongojados
Porque los gobernadores
Los tienen tan separados

The American People
They feel distressed
Because the rulers
Have them so separated

Cuando será ese cuando,
Señor fiscal
Que la América sea
Solo un pilar

When will the time come
...
That America will stand
As one pillar

Solo un pilar, ay si
Y una bandera:
Que terminen los ruidos
En las fronteras

One pillar, ay yes
With one flag
That ends the commotion
At the borders

Por un puñado 'e tierra
No quiero guerra.

Because I do not want a war
For a handful a handful of earth
(my translation)

“Si Somos Americanos” Rolando Alarcón 1965

Si somos americanos
Somos hermanos, señores,
tenemos las mismas flores,
tenemos las mismas manos.

If we are Americans
We are brothers
We have the same flowers
We have the same hands

Si somos americanos,
seremos buenos vecinos,
compartiremos el trigo,
seremos buenos hermanos.

If we are Americans
We will be good neighbors
We will share the harvest
We will be good brothers

Bailaremos marinera,
refalosa, zamba y son.
Si somos americanos,
seremos una canción.

We will dance the marinera,
Resfolosa, zamba and son
If we are Americans
We will be one song

Si somos americanos,
no miraremos fronteras,
cuidaremos las semillas,
miraremos las banderas.

If we are Americans
We will not see borders
We will care for the seed
We will see the flags

Si somos americanos,
seremos todos iguales,
el blanco, el mestizo, el indio
y el negro son como tales.

If we are Americans
We are all equal
The white, the mestizo, the Indian
And the black are all the same

In each of these songs the unified social identity of the Pan-Latin American “people” is expressed through lyrical references that de-emphasize national identities, which are symbolized in both texts by allusions to borders and flags. Furthermore, the reference to the “marinera, resfolosa, zamba, and son” in Alarcón’s composition reflects the view that each of these national musical traditions are in fact the cultural heritage of all Latin Americans based on their inclusion in what *nueva canción* artists have imagined to be a single “American” community.¹⁸ For her part, Parra adds to this sentiment the accusation that it is “the rulers” who have separated, assumedly for political and economic gain, what otherwise should be a unified America. It is also worth noting that, in addition to traditionalizing a Pan-Latin American social identity, Alarcón’s reference to the equality of the various races present in the Americas also supports the notion of cross-class solidarity.

While many *nueva canción* songs addressed the issue of Pan-Latin Americanism in general terms, the traditionalization of this concept was also accomplished through the inclusion of lyrical themes that referenced specific historical and contemporary figures, such as Simón Bolívar, Samuel Martín, and Che Guevara, whose political ideologies suggested the need for Pan-Latin American social and political solidarity. For example, on their self-titled debut LP, Inti-Illimani included an interpretation of a song entitled “Simón Bolívar”, composed by the Uruguayan artist, Rubén Lena. Having been a revolutionary leader who helped to secure independence from Spain for several South American countries in the early 19th century, Bolívar hoped to establish a South

American republic similar to that which had previously been established in the United States. Thus, as the lyrics of Lena's song extol the virtues of Bolivar - noting that he "signaled the true course" and "opened a new time in history," the reference, within the context of Inti-Illimani's record, was clearly an attempt to traditionalize the *nueva canción* movement's own efforts towards reigniting a contemporary Pan-Latin American social and political alliance.¹⁹

In addition to Bolivar and his counterpart in the southern regions of South America, Samuel Martín, Che Guevara also became a major symbol of Pan-Latin Americanism for the *nueva canción* movement. Indeed, the composition "Zamba del 'Che'", written by Rubén Ortiz and subsequently popularized by Victor Jara, clearly suggests an attempt to characterize Guevara's contemporary efforts to engender Pan-Latin American solidarity as a historical continuation of the transnational struggle initiated by Bolivar and Martín. For example, the lyrics of "Zamba del 'Che'" include a stanza proclaiming:

Explotan al campesino
al minero y al obrero,
cuánto dolor su destino,
hambre miseria y dolor..
Bolívar le dio el camino
y Guevara lo siguió:
liberar a nuestro pueblo
del dominio explotador.

They (dictators) exploit the peasants
the miners and the workers
making pain their destiny,
miserable hunger and pain..
Bolívar showed him the path
and Guevara followed it
liberating our people
from the domination of the exploiter.

The association of Guevara with Bolivar, and the further association of both these revolutionary leaders with the *nueva canción* movement shares much in common with what Michael Largey has defined as "recombinant mythology", or the process "whereby people in the present use mythologically oriented language to highlight praiseworthy characteristics of cultural heroes"(2005:328). As Largey explains, "recombinant

mythology creates a chain of meaning linking ... [the] past with the present through a series of concatenated stories”(2005:328). In the instance of Guevara, therefore, the connection to Bolivar highlights his revolutionary success in Cuba as well as his attempts to initiate “a continental rather than simply a national political struggle” (Fairley 1984:328). Interestingly, in the years since the movement emerged, the *nueva canción* artists, and particularly Jara, have themselves become symbols of Pan-Latin American solidarity for more contemporary artists –like those who performed at the Oaxaca event. The “chain of meaning” initiated by the *nueva canción* tradition has thus been further extended into the present. This issue will be briefly taken up in the final chapter of this discussion.

It is important to note that the notion of Pan-Latin American fraternity was traditionalized not only by the themes that Chilean *nueva canción* artists included in their music, but also by those themes which were left out. Hence, *nueva canción* completely averted using any lyrical themes which referenced historical or contemporary conflicts between Latin American nations. This aversion was clearly expressed by Inti-Illimani’s Jorge Coulon, in an interview transcript included in the group’s biography. Commenting about the influence of the popular music group Los Cuatro Cuartos on his music, Coulon noted that, despite his fondness for the group, their decision to record an album about the 1879-84 War of the Pacific between Chile, Peru, and Bolivia had, in addition to causing riots in Peru, “wounded his sense of Latin Americanism”(Cifuentes 2000:5).

Finally, although in most cases the themes associated with the *nueva canción* movement traditionalized the social boundaries for the transnational subaltern community “el pueblo” to include primarily those individuals living in Latin America and the Latin

American Diaspora, in certain cases this imagined community was extended to include popular struggles in other parts of the world as well. This fact supports the view that, while Latin American identity certainly played a major role in the way the proponents of *nueva canción* imagined their community, the most important determinant for inclusion in “el pueblo” was the association with subaltern struggle –particularly against imperialism or for communism. This was especially true as several *nueva canción* artists attempted to traditionalize a sense of solidarity between the political struggle taking place in Chile and in other parts of Latin America and the struggle for communism occurring in Vietnam in the 1960s and 1970s. Hence in 1968 Quilapayún released an album entitled *Por Vietnam* (For Vietnam). Similarly, in 1971 Victor Jara released the album *El Derecho a Vivir en Paz* (The right to live in peace) in which the title track proclaims:

Tío Ho, nuestra canción
es fuego de puro amor,
es palomo palomar
olivo de olivar.
Es el canto universal
cadena que hará triunfar,
el derecho de vivir en paz.

Uncle Ho, our song
is the flame of pure love
it is a dove
the olive of the olive branch
it is the universal song,
the bond that will make triumphant
The right to live in peace.
(my translation)

In addition to expressing solidarity with Vietnam, several other *nueva canción* compositions symbolically associated the movement with manifestations of the “universal” subaltern struggle taking place in other parts of the world as well (i.e. South Africa, Congo, Spain, The United States, etc.).

Themes of Oppression

In traditionalizing the social condition of the participants of the *nueva canción* movement and the corresponding Pan-Latin American community in which they

imagined themselves to be included, *nueva canción* artists have also incorporated various themes into their repertoire that represent the experience and history of oppression that they believed to be shared by all “subaltern” people. Indeed, more than anything else, it was the perception held by the middle-class originators and aficionados of the movement that they were being economically and politically oppressed by an imperialist and bourgeois alliance that allowed them to identify with the oppression experienced by members of the lower classes. However removed these experiences may have been from their own, since the members of the *nueva canción* movement came to imagine themselves as part of single subaltern community, the suffering of the working classes was often related as if it were their own in the context of their songs. Moreover, by highlighting various themes which related the oppressed condition of the “people” both locally and across Latin America in the context of the democratic socialist struggle in Chile, *nueva canción* artists and socialist activists were able to further traditionalize the identity of their elite political opponents as tyrannical, greedy, unsympathetic, and thus unworthy of holding political power.

One of the best examples of the *nueva canción* movement’s attempts to traditionalize for itself a history of oppression under the tyranny of the conservative elite, is illustrated by “La Cantata Santa Maria de Iquique”, which was composed by Luís Advis and performed for the first time by Quilapayún at the *Second Festival of Nueva Canción Chilena* in 1970 (Mattern 1998:40). This cantata detailed the 1907 massacre under the leadership of the conservative president Pedro Montt of more than 3600 striking miners, along with some of their wives and children.²⁰ Despite the fact that “by 1970 the old pattern of violent confrontation between the state and the working class had

become ancient history,” as Jacqueline Roddick relates, this issue was “sentimentally preserved by the parties of the Left,” primarily as a means for traditionalizing the potential of the ruling class to violently oppress the Chilean “people” again if adequately provoked (1976:2). As the victory of Allende and the Popular Unity party became increasingly plausible in the run up to the 1970 presidential campaign, many on the left feared that the bourgeoisie would not give up their power without a struggle. Hence, in the final verses of “La Cantata Santa Maria de Iquique,” which premiered less than a month before the election, Advis included a warning that an event similar to this infamous massacre could happen again if the Chilean “people” did not remain vigilant.

Ustedes que ya escucharon
la historia que se contó
no sigan allí sentados
pensando que ya pasó.
No basta sólo el recuerdo,
el canto no bastará.
No basta sólo el lamento,
miremos la realidad.

Quizás mañana o pasado
o bien, en un tiempo más,
la historia que han escuchado
de nuevo sucederá.
Es Chile un país tan largo,
mil cosas pueden pasar
si es que no nos preparamos
resueltos para luchar.
Tenemos razones puras,
tenemos por qué pelear.
Tenemos las manos duras,
tenemos con qué ganar.

Now that you have listened
to the story that I have sung
don't just sit there
thinking that it is in the past.
It's not enough to only remember
nor will this song be enough.
It's not enough to only lament,
We must see the reality

Maybe tomorrow or later
or even in the more distant future
the story that you have heard
could happen again.
Chile is a long country,
a thousand things could happen
if we are not prepared and
determined to fight.
We have pure causes,
for them we must fight.
We have strong hands,
With them we must win.
(my translation)

Of course, in the wake of the 1973 military overthrow of the socialist government in Chile, in which Allende and thousands of his supporters were murdered, these sentiments appear to have been eerily premonitory.

In a similar vein to the emotional theme of injustice depicted in “La Cantata de Santa Maria de Iquique,” many other *nueva canción* compositions highlighted more contemporary acts of violence perpetrated against the subaltern classes to further traditionalize the oppressed nature of “el pueblo” and the tyrannical nature of their political adversaries. Of particular importance was Victor Jara’s “Preguntas de Puerto Montt” (Questions about Port Montt), which detailed the 1969 attack on a group of peasant squatters that resulted in the shooting deaths of seven peasants and a baby who died of suffocation from tear gas (sixty individuals were also injured). This event had a profound impact on many Chilean citizens since, according to Joan Jara, “the police were shooting indiscriminately against unarmed people, and they were shooting to kill”(1983:121).

In “Preguntas de Puerto Montt” Victor Jara directly challenged the Minister of the Interior, Edmundo Pérez Zúcovic who ordered the attack on the peasant settlement to answer for this decision. As Joan Jara relates, Pérez Zúcovic was a wealthy businessman, responsible for using the “repressive machinery of the police... on countless occasions against demonstrators, striking workers and their families and students”(Ibid). The direct reference to him in Jara’s song thus helped to characterize the seemingly senseless murders of homeless peasants as an act of unprovoked aggression carried out by the agents of the greedy and unsympathetic ruling elite. This view resonated with middle-sectors of Chilean society, not only because it appealed to their compassion, but also because it invoked the fear that given the proper circumstances the harsh injustice of the elite establishment might someday directly affect them as well.

While the sentiment “you might be next” was more or less implied in many *nueva canción* songs, it was explicitly stated in the text to Angel Parra’s “Mexico 68”. This song was a bitter commentary on the massacre in Mexico City of hundreds of student demonstrators that occurred as part of a government crackdown on dissent in the weeks before the 1968 Olympic Games. By referencing this event Parra clearly characterized the ruling elite’s potential for brutality when faced with the demands of their most disenfranchised citizens. Unlike Jara’s “Preguntas por Puerto Montt”, however, “Mexico 68” also directly expressed the notion that the elite’s wanton use of the state’s coercive power could eventually be turned on the members of the middle-class if left unchecked. In the first three stanzas of this text this warning, along with Parra’s expression of personal connection to the victims of the massacre, is movingly shared with his audience.

Para que nunca se olviden
las gloriosas olimpiadas
mandó a matar el gobierno
cuatrocientos camaradas.

So that no one would forget
the glorious Olympics
the government killed
four hundred comrades

Ay, Plaza de Tlatelolco,
cómo me duelen tus balas,
cuatrocientas esperanzas
a traición arrebatadas.

Ay, Plaza of Tlatelolco
Your bullets hurt me,
as four hundred hopes
were seized by treachery

¿Cómo harán los granaderos
cuando llegan a sus casas?
¿Amarán a sus mujeres
con manos ensangrentadas?

What will the soldiers do
when they come to your houses?
Will they touch your women
with their bloody hands?

In addition to evoking the sense that the potential for elite repression was a mutual experience for both middle and lower-class individuals, in the context of the democratic socialist struggle in Chile, songs like “Mexico 68” helped to traditionalize the oppression of the subaltern “people” by the elite establishment as part of a larger phenomenon occurring throughout Latin America. Hence, much as “La Cantata Santa Maria de

Iquique” maintained the relevance of its subject to contemporary Chilean society despite the fact that these events took place decades earlier, Parra’s song suggested that the massacre in Mexico was also intimately connected to the Chilean people despite the vast geographical distance between the two countries. This concept is most clearly revealed, albeit in poetic terms, in the final stanza of the song:

A pesar de estar tan lejos
se escuchó aquí la descarga
de esos valientes soldados
que mataban por la espalda.

Despite being so far
I heard the sound here
of the valiant soldiers
who shot them in the back.

Within the context of the Chilean *nueva canción* movement from which these compositions emerged, “La Cantata de Santa Maria de Iquique”, “Preguntas por Puerto Montt”, and “Mexico 68” all helped to characterize the identity of the subaltern “people” associated with the socialist struggle in Chile as an often violently repressed community. When considered together, these themes, along with countless others, helped to traditionalize the notion that this repression was both rooted in history and shared by the Pan-Latin American community at large.

Although themes depicting the physical oppression of the subaltern masses were certainly central in many *nueva canción* texts, themes referencing the economic, ethnic, and political oppression of “el pueblo” were also ubiquitous within the movement. For evidence of this type of lyrical theme one may look to Violeta Parra’s “Arauco tiene una pena” (In Aruaco there is a pain). In this song, Parra detailed the history of the Spanish conquest of the indigenous population in Chile with the full application of her poetic gift. Moreover, she also explained the suffering that the contemporary indigenous community experienced as a result of centuries of oppression. In the opening verse of the composition Parra relates:

Arauco tiene una pena
que no la puedo callar,
son injusticias de siglos
que todos ven aplicar,
nadie le ha puesto remedio
pudiéndolo remediar.

In Arauco there is a pain
about which I cannot remain silent.
For the centuries of injustice
that they have seen applied
no one has offered a remedy
capable of healing them.

Much of the rest of the song characterizes the greed and brutality of the gold hungry

Spanish conquistadors, while simultaneously describing the deterioration of the

indigenous way of life. In the climax of the song Parra asserts that:

ya no son los españoles
los que les hacen llorar,
hoy son los propios chilenos
los que les quitan su pan.

It is not the Spanish,
those who make them cry,
who today are the true Chileans,
but those from whom they take bread
(my translation)

For Parra, who spent time living with the Mapuche and even learned some of their language, the intention of this song was surely a genuine tribute to the plight of the indigenous people. However, as fellow *nueva canción* artist, Andrés Márquez, has observed, others found a subtext in songs like “Aruaco tiene una pena” which referred to indigenous oppression. This was particularly the case for middle-class socialist activists who saw the Indian as an emblem of the oppression experienced by the “people” as a whole. As Márquez explains:

For them, the Spanish invader is the dictator, while the Indian is the people.
There is a change of characters. When the Spaniard is spoken of as the colonizer,
the person who comes to make off with the people’s identity, rob them of their
liberty and steal their land, it’s the dictatorship which is being referred to.
(1983:10)

While Márquez refers in this quotation to the dictatorship, in the days before Pinochet’s coup, this “change of characters” was also applied to imperialists and the local elite establishment.

In the extensive repertoire of Chilean *nueva canción* countless other examples could be given of thematic references that served to characterize the identity of the “people” as being both historically and contemporaneously oppressed. In “Plegaria a un labrador” (Pledge to the worker), for example, Victor Jara invokes the lyrical form of the Lord’s Prayer to sing “Deliver us from the master who keeps us in misery, thy kingdom of justice and equality come”(Jara 1983:126-127). Equally illustrative of the propensity for invoking themes of oppression, Inti-Illimani’s rendition of “Zamba de los humildes” (Zamba of the humble) describes the songs of those with “the sunken faces in the ponchos”. Furthermore, songs like “Que lindas son las obreras” (How beautiful are the workers) and their interpretation of Jara’s “El minero” (The miner), show that Quilapayún invoked similar images on several occasions as well.

In the context of *nueva canción* performances and recordings, the juxtaposition of these vignettes of oppression signify that the various experiences they describe were so intimately related that they pointed to the existence of a single subaltern community. Even more importantly, however, as songs like Quilapayún’s “Soy del pueblo” (I am of the people) suggest, the middle-class creators and supporters of *nueva canción* sought to traditionalize their own identity as being part of this mutually oppressed community.

Themes of Resistance

The final unifying concept that the *nueva canción* movement attempted to traditionalize as part of the collective identity of their imagined community was the notion that the oppressed “people” have been historically inclined to band together in resisting their social and political condition. It shall be recalled that, in addition to cementing social cohesion and symbolizing the condition of a community, the third

motivation cited by Eric Hobsbawm to be most commonly connected to the “invention” of tradition is the desire of a given community to legitimize its actions. In the 1960s, therefore, artists associated with the democratic socialist movement in Chile “invented” the *nueva canción* tradition, in part, to help provide a sense of historical legitimacy for their community’s attempts to overthrow the longstanding conservative/centrist government in Chile and weaken the grip of imperialism on the Latin American region as a whole. This sense of legitimacy was cultivated by *nueva canción* artists through their appropriation of thematic material that symbolically contextualized the political resistance of the Leftist coalition in Chile as part of a much larger Pan-Latin American subaltern struggle taking place throughout history. In keeping with the nationalist/cosmopolitan dichotomy of the *nueva canción* movement, these thematic references were drawn from “suitable” events and personalities associated with popular struggles from the annals of Chilean, Latin American, and in some cases even global history.

Beginning with the nationalist imagery conjured up by Chilean *nueva canción* artists to promote social and political resistance to the elite establishment and its imperialist allies, many compositions referenced the Chilean independence movement in the early 19th century along with one of its most popular heroes, the revolutionary Manuel Rodríguez. As Guillermo Castillo-Feliú relates:

The image of Manuel Rodríguez that emerges from the pages of history is that of a man recognized as much for his patriotic zeal as for his roguish character, the latter exhibited in his attempts to further the aims of the rebels against Spain. There was something of both Paul Revere and Robin Hood in Rodríguez that even today elicits the admiration of those who learn about him. (2000:32-33)

With his historical reputation for defending the disenfranchised and for often daringly humiliating the ruling elite (Castillo-Feliú 2000:33-34), it is not surprising that the emerging *nueva canción* movement in many instances sought to associate itself with, or at least aspire to, the popular memory of Rodríguez. Indeed, this theme was introduced early on in the evolution of *nueva canción* with Violeta Parra's song entitled "Hace falta un guerillero" (We need a guerilla), in which she protests the inequity of the contemporary social situation in Chile and suggests the need for resistance (Rodríguez 1984:53). Having written the song in the late 1950s nearly a decade before the democratic socialist movement came into full fruition, Parra hoped that it might inspire in some of her contemporaries the same type of revolutionary zeal exhibited by Rodríguez (Ibid). Thus in the first few stanzas of "Hace falta un guerillero" Parra declares:

Quisiera tener un hijo
brillante como un clavel,
ligero como los vientos,
para llamarlo Manuel,
y apellidarle Rodríguez,
el máspreciado laurel.'

I would like to have a son
bright like a carnation,
quick like the winds,
I would call him Manuel,
and with the last name Rodríguez,
the most esteemed laurel.

De niño le enseñaría
lo que se tiene que hacer
cuando nos venden la patria
como si fuera alfiler;
quiero un hijo guerrillero
que la sepa defender.

I would teach this child
what he has to do
when they sell our country
as if it were a pin;
I want a guerrilla child
who knows to defend it.

In this song Parra references the historical memory of Manuel Rodríguez to insinuate that, just as Rodríguez and many of his contemporaries were forced to rebel against Spanish colonial rule and its loyalist supporters, Chileans in the present should rise up in protest against the forces of imperialism and its local bourgeois beneficiaries. Interestingly, this implied suggestion again points to the interpretative shift employed by

many *nueva canción* songs in which references to Spanish colonial rule symbolically represent contemporary North American imperialism.

While “Hace falta un guerillero” used Rodríguez’s image to reflect solely on the Chilean subaltern condition, in a later composition Parra conjured him once again to characterize his unwavering willingness to resist oppression as being indicative of the type of leadership found in popular struggles, not only in Chile, but also around the world. Hence, in her song, entitled “Un río de sangre” (A river of blood), Parra juxtaposed the popular memory of Manuel Rodríguez with that of the founder of the Communist party in Chile, Luis Emilio Recabarren, and also with that of the Mexican revolutionary Emiliano Zapata, the Argentinean revolutionary Vicenta Peñalosa, the revolutionary Spanish poet Federico García Lorca, and the Congolese anti-colonial leader Patrice Lumumba (Rodríguez 1984:56). Along with depicting the collective valor of these various revolutionary voices, the song refers to the fact that, with the exception of Recabarren who committed suicide, each of these individuals was assassinated for their efforts. When considered within its context as part of the *nueva canción* movement in Chile, therefore, this song aided in the traditionalization of the legitimacy of the social and political struggle occurring there by implying that it was connected to a much larger cause for which many have given their lives over the years.

Moving away from the more nationalist-centered themes of resistance, Parra’s references to Emilio Zapata and Federico García Lorca in “Un río de sangre” point to two events that occurred outside of Chilean history but which became extremely prominent in the thematic material incorporated by many Chilean *nueva canción* musicians in the late 1960s. As these musicians sought to artistically associate their own political resistance

with the historical struggles advanced in other regions of their imagined community, many found inspiration in songs which had originated with the Mexican Revolution and the Spanish Resistance. In fact, in 1968 Inti-Illimani's first published recording was a collection of songs from the Mexican revolution entitled "A la Mexicana Revolución". Interestingly, Inti-Illimani's renditions of these songs only occupied one half of an LP. On the flip side was an equally politically motivated collection of songs drawn from the Spanish Civil War interpreted by Rolando Alarcón and perhaps not surprisingly entitled "A la resistencia española".

Concerning the Spanish Civil War, much of the *nueva canción* movement's interest in this historical confrontation was inspired by the association of the resistance fighters with the communist cause -which of course many *nueva canción* artists also supported. The decision to interpret *corridos* from the Mexican Revolution, however, was rooted in the desire of Chilean *nueva canción* artists to traditionalize their democratic movement as an extension of the same subaltern momentum that was perceived to have been at least temporarily successful in effecting social change in Mexico. As Jean Franco relates, the Mexican Revolution:

...altered the structure of the country by removing many of the old landowning elite. New elements –peasants and workers –had been brought into national life. The programme [sic] which emerged from the revolution was a broad one of social reform designed to remove grave injustices and diminish the foreign stranglehold on Mexico's economy. (1967:71)

Thus, for the Chilean *nueva canción* movement, the ideals and successes of the Mexican Revolution meshed with, and some cases came to signify, the aspirations shared by the imagined subaltern community "el pueblo" as a whole.

Despite their identification with these ideals and the revolutionary personalities who came to represent them, however, by the late 1960s it was apparent to the proponents of *nueva canción* that the corruption and brutal repression exhibited by the contemporary Mexican revolutionary state (as shown in Angel Parra's "Mexico 68") meant that this regime could not be incorporated as a model for the socialist movement in Chile. For this reason, many members of the movement chose to pin their aspirations on the burgeoning revolutionary state in Cuba instead. Hence, in the words of Osvaldo Rodríguez, the Cuban Revolution became another of the "obligatory themes" of the Chilean *nueva canción* movement as its members sought to traditionalize the potential social and economic benefits of their political rebellion against the elite establishment (1984:70).

Since the Cuban Revolution had only taken place a decade before the emergence of Popular Unity, Chilean socialists who looked to Cuba for inspiration were unburdened by the contradictions that a wider historical perspective of this regime may have elicited. This lack of historical perspective thereby allowed the members of the Chilean socialist movement to "invent" for themselves the significance of the Cuban Revolution. Moreover, with the incorporation of thematic imagery associated with Cuba, *nueva canción* artists were able to associate the historical trajectory of their own political struggle as being directed towards the same essentially invented ideal signified by the Cuban communist state.

Although dozens of songs could be used to illustrate the symbolic importance of the Cuban Revolution to the *nueva canción* movement, perhaps no one encapsulated the essence of this theme more passionately than Victor Jara, who composed a tribute to the

communist state in 1969 entitled "A Cuba" (To Cuba). Jara had traveled to Cuba as part of a theatrical group shortly after the overthrow of the Batista regime and, as Joan Jara relates, the experience had left a significant impact on him:

They stayed there for two or three weeks and saw the frenzied activity, the changes, the construction. Of the whole group, Victor was perhaps the most politically aware and he explored, asked questions, saw as much as he could, making friends, trying to understand everything that was going on. (1983:52)

Years later, in the height of the democratic socialist campaign, Victor drew on the impression of this experience as he poetically demonstrated the common revolutionary cause which he, along with many others, perceived to be shared by both the Chilean and Cuban "people". The artistic representation of this symbolic connection is clearly revealed in the lyrics of "a Cuba".

A Cuba – Victor Jara

Si yo a Cuba le cantara,
le cantara una canción
tendría que ser un son,
un son revolucionario,
pie con pie, mano con mano,
corazón a corazón,

...

como se le habla a un hermano.
Si me quieres, aquí estoy,
qué más te puedo ofrecer,
sino continuar tu ejemplo,
comandante compañero,
viva tu revolución.

Si quieres conocer a Martí y a Fidel
a Cuba, a Cuba, a Cuba iré,
si quieres conocer los caminos del Che,
a Cuba, a Cuba, a Cuba iré,
si quieres tomar ron pero sin Coca Cola,

a Cuba, a Cuba, a Cuba iré,

...

To Cuba

If I was to sing a song to Cuba,
the song I would sing it
would have to be a *son*,
a revolutionary *son*
walking together, hand in hand
heart to heart

...

as if speaking to a brother
If you want me, here I am
What more can I offer you
than to follow your example
comrade commander
Long live your revolution

If you want to know Martí and Fidel
to Cuba, to Cuba, to Cuba you go
If you want to know the ways of Che
to Cuba, to Cuba, to Cuba you go
If you want to drink Rum without
Coca Cola
to Cuba, to Cuba, to Cuba you go

...

Como yo no toco el son
pero toco la guitarra
que está justo en la batalla
de nuestra revolución
será lo mismo que el son
que hizo bailar a los gringos,
pero no somos guajiros
nuestra sierra es la elección.

Well I do not play the *son*
but I do play the guitar
which is just in the battle
of our revolution
It will be the same as the *son*
that made the gringos dance
but we are not *guajiros*
our mountain is the election.

The imagery that Jara employs in this composition unambiguously relates the Chilean struggle against “gringo” imperialism as a continuation of the historical “example” of revolutionary resistance provided by the leaders of the Cuban Revolution. Jara does, however, make one clear distinction between the two revolutionary movements by asserting that the Chilean struggle for economic and political justice shall be achieved with an “election” rather than through armed insurrection.

Interestingly, this distinction points to one of the most glaring contradictions in the traditionalization of the democratic socialist revolution in Chile. Although there were a few on the fringes of the leftist coalition that advocated armed rebellion, for the most part the protagonists of the socialist movement hoped to bring about a peaceful redistribution of social, political, and economic power in Chile. However, much of the thematic imagery appropriated by *nueva canción* invoked historical and contemporary acts of violent resistance. I see two possible explanations capable of reconciling this apparent inconsistency. This first is that the *nueva canción* artists used this imagery to insinuate the capacity of the “people” to resort to armed resistance if their demands were not achieved through democratic means. The second is that, for the traditionalization of this particular aspect of the character of “el pueblo”, the inclination to resist oppression simply eclipsed the significance of the means through which resistance was manifested. Perhaps the most likely scenario is a combination of both these explanations.

It should be noted, however, that some *nueva canción* themes did attempt to traditionalize a history of democratic resistance. This phenomenon is exemplified by Quilapayún's 1969 rendition of "Cueca de Balmaceda", which, as explained in the previous chapter, first surfaced in 1886 as part of the campaign to elect the liberal, anti-imperialist candidate José Manuel Balmaceda. Another example may be cited in the interpretation by both Angel Parra and Quilapayún of a song entitled "Canto a la Pampa" (Song for the Plains) which first emerged as part of the early 20th century democratic worker's movement in Chile (Garcia 2001:3).

To summarize this chapter, much of the thematic material incorporated by *nueva canción* artists in Chile may be construed as an attempt to contextualize, or traditionalize, the Chilean democratic socialist movement as part of a wider Pan-Latin American and in some cases even global subaltern community. In support of this effort to "invent" a tradition capable of sustaining the imagined community of "el pueblo", *nueva canción* artists drew lyrical inspiration from both historical and contemporary events and personalities that highlighted the general social characteristics that this community hoped to associate with itself. As revealed by an analysis of several prominent *nueva canción* themes, the three most distinguishable social characteristics that *nueva canción* artists attempted to link with "el pueblo" were the notions that the various "subaltern" communities in Latin America and around the world constitute a single unified community, that this community shares a history of common oppression, and finally that this community has been historically inclined to resist their oppressed condition.

CHAPTER 4: THE CONTEMPORARY CONTINUATION OF THE IMAGINED COMMUNITY “EL PUEBLO”

In the decades since *nueva canción* first surfaced in Chile and in other politically contentious regions of Latin America, the genre, as it was originally conceived, has been largely eclipsed by more recent developments in both popular music and politics. Clearly much of the waning of interest in the movement over the years may be attributed first to the direct suppression of the music and its creators by General Augusto Pinochet's military dictatorship in Chile and similar regimes that took root in other parts of Latin America during the 1970s and 1980s. However, the predilection of new generations of Latin American youth for musical genres such as rock, ska, and punk also rendered the folkloric aesthetics of *nueva canción* increasingly obsolete in the cultural marketplace. While these and other circumstances may have resulted in the at least partial dissolution of *nueva canción* as a vibrant transnational artistic community, the movement has left a considerable impression on the popular memory of many Latin American citizens. The reason for this lingering impression may be traced in large part to the fact that the Pan-Latin American subaltern community “el pueblo”, which was imagined in part through the music of *nueva canción*, continues to be an important concept in Latin American political and social life. Thus, even as many contemporary musical artists attempt to reach their audiences by incorporating more globally cosmopolitan musical aesthetics, the repertoire and the personalities associated with *nueva canción* continue to be invoked

when these artists, or similarly-minded political activists, seek to draw their own symbolic connections to the imagined notion of “el pueblo”.

With this chapter I will briefly analyze the relevance of the original manifestation of the *nueva canción* movement in Chile to the artistic production of more contemporary musicians such as those who performed at the Oaxaca event detailed in the introduction to this thesis. I will begin by showing how, within the context of the oppressive military regime that governed Chile from 1973 to 1989, the relevance of *nueva canción* to Chilean social and political life shifted away from its previous role as a direct public expression of subaltern identity. Instead, the movement took on a new role as a politically-charged memory that was invoked through a variety of veiled gestures. This was apparent, for instance, as musicians and disk jockeys attempted to circumnavigate Pinochet’s censors by playing the politically benign love songs of Violeta Parra, Victor Jara, and other *nueva canción* musicians in an effort to symbolically conjure in the minds of listeners the subaltern struggle previously associated with these artists. Similarly, artists who continued to perform during the Pinochet era also referred to prominent themes and personalities linked to *nueva canción* within their own artistic works as a means of covertly expressing their solidarity with the repressed “people”.

With this symbolic shift one may begin to see how the *nueva canción* movement has itself been traditionalized into the political and cultural memory of non-elite Chilean society. In the remainder of this chapter, I will further illustrate how the traditionalized memory of the *nueva canción* movement, along with the imagined community that its creators and their music have come to symbolically represent, has been extended to the

Latino community and in some cases, as evidenced by the Oaxaca benefit, even to the non-Latino community in the United States.

As explained in Chapter 1, the military coup that supplanted the Allende regime in Chile in 1973 was followed by a wave of repression that resulted in the assassination of Allende and the death or disappearance of thousands of his supporters. In addition to this, much of the music of *nueva canción* was unofficially banned and the prominent artists associated with the movement were either killed (Victor Jara), imprisoned (Angel Parra), or sent into exile (Inti-Illimani, Quilapayún). Yet, even during this highly repressive era, the music of *nueva canción* continued to be subversively shared through a clandestine circulation of recordings and highly secretive performances.

This new role as part of the Chilean underground reflected a shift, however, in which *nueva canción* transitioned from what James C. Scott has termed the “public transcript” to an expression of what he defines as the “hidden transcript” of subaltern discourse. According to Scott, the former of these terms corresponds to subordinate discourse that takes place in the presence of the dominant, while the latter is used to describe “discourse that takes place ‘offstage,’ beyond direct observation by powerholders” (1990:4).

Nueva canción’s transition from the “public” to the “hidden” domain of subordinate discourse is significant because it forever changed how the movement was used to imagine the subaltern community of “el pueblo”. Thus, instead of being a direct medium through which “el pueblo” was imagined, when *nueva canción* did eventually resurface in the public discourse it was as a symbolic memory appropriated by subsequent generations who attempted to traditionalize the importance of the movement

into their own artistic and political expressions. Much like *nueva canción*'s previous incorporation of themes and aesthetics that conjured the imagined notion of a Pan-Latin American subaltern community, for those who followed this movement, references to *nueva canción* itself came to symbolize the presence and identity of "el pueblo".

This shift became evident as early as the later half of the 1970s in Chile with the emergence of another song movement called *canto nuevo* (new song). Despite the fact that many considered *canto nuevo* to be a continuation of *nueva canción*, many differences set the two genres apart. As Andrés Márquez explains, *canto nuevo*:

had the same objective and took the same road of asserting our own cultural values and trying to decolonize our culture; but the obvious difference was that there was great repression aimed at its words. You couldn't sing anything overtly critical. (1983:8)

Moreover, Márquez also notes that *canto nuevo* represented "a new way of disagreeing"(Ibid). This is particularly evident when one compares the way in which *canto nuevo* and *nueva canción* artists each expressed their oppositional identity in relation to the ruling elite. While access to the public transcript allowed *nueva canción* artists to often make explicit connections between the subjects of their thematic material and their contemporary social and political environment, *canto nuevo*'s connection to the subaltern struggle was maintained primarily through its subliminal association with the "hidden transcript" of *nueva canción*. One of the ways this association was made was through the interpretation by *canto nuevo* artists of the most politically benign songs from the *nueva canción* repertoire. As Mark Mattern relates, "by covering songs of *nueva canción* musicians, even if the songs contained no clear political content, [for an initiated audience] they recalled the significance and meaning of those musicians and the political events of the 1960s and early 1970s"(1998:58). For *canto nuevo*, therefore, the solidarity

of “el pueblo” was signaled not through direct expression, but rather through the subtle invocation of the popular memory of *nueva canción* with which the concept of a Pan-Latin American subaltern community was already firmly associated.

By the late 1980s, in addition to being institutionally suppressed, the music and the aesthetics associated with both *nueva canción* and *canto nuevo* were also overshadowed by popular Chilean rock groups like Los Prisoneros and a renewed interest in foreign music. However, the memory of *nueva canción* still factored into the themes of politically conscious musical artists of all genres as they sought to link their own political struggle towards reestablishing democracy in Chile in 1980s with the democratic socialist movement that took place in the 1960s and early 1970s (Mattern 1998:62-63). This was especially true as Pinochet’s weakening grip on power allowed for more explicit public references to events and personalities that had previously been excluded from the public transcript. Indeed, as Catherine Boyle observes, along with Salvador Allende and the poet Pablo Neruda, allusions to Victor Jara became a “foundation for a poetics of resistance in Chile”(2000:97). Perhaps nowhere was this poetic tendency more clearly reflected than in the lyrics of Santiago del Nuevo Extremo’s “Homenaje” (Homage), which the group dedicated to Jara.

No vacilaremos
en tenderle una canción
un millón de voces
le dirán que no fué en vano
que nos diera de su boca
el pan del aire y una flor
Víctor, gran ausente
desde siempre te cantamos

We won’t hesitate
to offer you a song
a million voices
will tell you that it was not in vain
what you gave us from your mouth
the bread of air and a flower
Victor, great absent one
for all times we sing to you.
(Translation by Mattern 1999:62)

While songs like “Homenaje” illustrate how the historical significance of Chilean *nueva canción* has been traditionalized by subsequent generations in Chile, it is important to mention that the music and the personalities associated with this movement have also made a significant impression throughout the rest of Latin America as well. Thus, despite the brevity of its existence, the success of the democratic socialist movement in Chile became an emblem of the power of popular struggle for various artistic and political movements throughout Latin America in the years following Popular Unity’s demise. Likewise, the brutality of the military coup and the well-known involvement of the CIA in bringing about the downfall of Allende were also traditionalized as an example of the oppressive nature of capitalist imperialism and the local rule of the Latin American elite. While these events factored into the imagined history of “el pueblo” for many members of the Latin American subaltern community, they were particularly relevant to musicians who often invoked this era to reflect the potential of musical expression to affect both social and political change.

Over the years, examples of the traditionalization of Chilean *nueva canción* as a symbol of the solidarity and resistance of the “people” have been ubiquitous in many genres of politically and socially conscious Latin American music. For instance Fernando Reyes Matta speaks of a “permanent renationalization process” through which “the creations of the Chilean Nueva Canción movement acquire new meanings among the committed artists of Columbia, Costa Rica, and Mexico”. Reyes Matta further explains this phenomenon by noting that that:

[i]n addition to contributing ... to the gestation of an alternative and combative Latin American culture, the popular collective memory assumes certain ballads as its own and inscribes them within its particular culture, recognizing a meaning that is historically local and relevant. ‘Gracias a la Vida’ (‘Thanks to Life’) by

Violeta Parra and “Te Recuerdo, Amand’ (‘I remember you, Amanda’) by Victor Jara are two examples of this process of cultural adoption. (1988:448)

In a similar vein, the traditionalization of Chilean *nueva canción* may also be seen with the insertion of references to this movement in the original compositions of many Latin American artists. An interesting example of this tendency is reflected in the song “Matador” by the Argentinean ska-rock group Los Fabulosos Cadillacs in which Victor Jara’s name is referenced after the line “I am the voice of those who were silenced”. Similarly, the Mexican artist Lila Downs also refers to Jara (along with other revolutionary figures like Zapata and Pancho Villa) within her interpretation of the Mexican folksong “La Cucaracha”. Many other examples could also be given.

Finally, in the years since its creation the music of Chilean *nueva canción* has also been appropriated by several political and revolutionary movements that sought to draw a symbolic connection between their own “subaltern” struggle and the Chilean political struggle that this music and its originators have come to represent. In the last several decades, therefore, songs like “El Pueblo Unido Jamás Será Vencido” and “Venceremos” have been frequently chanted in the streets throughout Latin America as anthems of subaltern solidarity and resistance.

* * *

Returning to the point of origin for this thesis, the musical performances included as part of the Oaxaca benefit explained in the introduction to this thesis represent the attempt, on the part of both the filmmaker and the musicians, to extend the imagined community of “el pueblo” to include even individuals in the United States, both Latino and non-Latino, who were sympathetic to subaltern social and political causes. At this event, the music of *nueva canción* and that of other politically conscious musical genres

from various regions of Latin American was used to traditionalize the political struggles occurring in Oaxaca, Chiapas, and Guatemala as local manifestations of a much larger historical and transnational subaltern struggle. This process of traditionalization was accomplished by associating the events in these regions with the lyrical content within the songs as well as with the revolutionary history of the songs themselves. However, the music also helped the various participants who were present to “imagine” themselves as connected to both the protagonists of the political struggles invoked by the music and those depicted in the documentary.

Thus, for the Latino participants present at the event, the interpretations of *nueva canción* songs and the juxtaposition of various other politically conscious Latin American compositions performed in the context of the Oaxaca benefit were partially meant to invoke a sense of solidarity with the subaltern community in Mexico and Guatemala by implying the notion that there exists a single Latino culture which they share. This phenomenon supports Laurie Sommers’s argument that, for the Latino community living in the United States, “a new folklore of panethnicity is emerging, expressed in large part in newly created or reinterpreted cultural performances that explore possible models for coexistence and cultural expression”(1991:49).

Since the music of *nueva canción* has been traditionalized in the popular memory of members of the Latino community as a Pan-Latin American genre, it is well-suited to establish this type of shared folkloric connection both between members of the Latino community in the United States and also between this community and the Latin American community as a whole.²¹ Moreover, since the repertoire of *nueva canción* has itself become a significant symbol of Pan-Latin American identity, musicians have been

able to mold the aesthetics through which these songs are performed to their own preferences and those of their audiences without losing meaning. This was true of the band performing at the Oaxaca event, since the instrumentation that they used was primarily electric and their interpretations of the repertoire were heavily influenced by more contemporary styles like rock and ska.

Despite the fact that Pan-Latin American ethnicity has always been associated with *nueva canción*'s conception of "el pueblo", the imagined connection that linked the participants at the Oaxaca event with the event's beneficiaries was primarily the concept that these two local communities shared a common "subaltern" identity in relation to the transnational capitalist elite. Indeed, it is important to keep in mind the fact that artistic expressions like *nueva canción* that prioritize "subaltern" identity, and even more importantly the socialist politics commonly associated with it, often sharply divide the Latino population as whole (Summers 1991:49).²²

But while musical expressions that imagine the social boundaries of "el pueblo" primarily in relation to class and political affiliation may divide the Latino community, they also have the potential of evoking a sense of solidarity with members of other non-Latino groups that share their class affiliation. Thus, as the entire audience at the Oaxaca event, both Latino and non-Latino alike, shouted in unison "El pueblo unido jamas será vencido"(The people united will never be defeated), all who were present were able to at least temporarily imagine themselves to be included within the collective sanctuary of a single subaltern community.

Notes

¹ This controversial facility currently located at Fort Benning in Georgia was created after WWII to train military personnel from Latin American countries in counter-revolutionary tactics in the effort to curtail the spread of communism; however, the school has long been accused of supporting dictatorial regimes, death squads, and military coups throughout the Americas.

² This quote was taken from an interview of Jorge Coulon attributed to the 'Mixdown' Monthly ~ Issue #66, October 6, 1999. It was located on the web at <http://users.bigpond.com/apertout/Inti-Illimani.htm>, accessed September 19, 2005, and I was unable to find the original source for verification.

³ Violeta Parra's extremely innovative and influential life was unfortunately cut short on February 5, 1967 when she tragically took her own life alone in her circus tent (Jara 1983:101). Her significance in the development of the *nueva canción* movement cannot be overstated. She was not only vital to the creation of its sound but also to the creative spirit through which it was dispersed to the public.

⁴ This information was retrieved from the Quilapayún website located at <http://www.quilapayun-chile.cl/> on October 28, 2005.

⁵ For a complete listing of releases on the DICAP label see <http://www.abacq.net/imaginaria/disc00a.htm>

⁶ For instance, the Cuban *nueva trova* artist Silvio Rodríguez loosely patterned his early musical style on songs by Bob Dylan and Paul McCartney (Moore 2006:145), and Víctor Jara and members of the band Inti-Illimani have expressed similar influences. (Jara 1983, www.trovadores.net/literatura -*la revolución y las estrellas*)

⁷ All Spanish transcriptions of lyrics in this thesis come from www.trovadores.net.

⁸ I use the term "cosmopolitan" to indicate the transnational dimension of the *nueva canción* movement, since, as Thomas Turino has defined it, this term refers "to objects, ideas, and cultural positions that are widely diffused throughout the world and yet are specific only to certain portions of the populations within given countries" (2000:7).

⁹ Turino also argues that multiple cosmopolitan formations are able to coexist, noting that while modernist-capitalist cosmopolitanism was the dominant cosmopolitan formation for the Zimbabwean situation, the modernist-socialist formation served as an alternative in this region as well (2000:10)

¹⁰ Benedict Anderson has defined "official nationalism" as the anticipatory strategy adopted by dominant groups threatened by an emerging nationally-imagined community (1991:101). While Anderson is speaking of the relationship between colonial powers and Creole political challengers, I would argue that this term is also relevant to post-colonial states which are being challenged internally.

¹¹ In describing the political support of the United States offered to the embattled white elite in Zimbabwe between 1965-1980, Gerald Horne has also noted that "this contribution was in the service of a Pan-Europeanism that preceded and in some ways prompted a Pan-Africanism designed to counter racialism" (2001:55). Furthermore, Benedict Anderson has also argued that "in world-historical terms bourgeoisies were the first classes to achieve solidarities on an essentially imagined basis" (1983:77).

¹² Aman defines "popular culture" as that which has been shaped by "the values, customs, organizational forms..., daily routines, and social pressures...shared by masses of working-class, underemployed, and unemployed citizens" (1991:2). This is to be viewed in contrast to the dominant culture "displayed every evening on television, in the gourmet restaurants scattered about Santiago and other cities, in the powerful newspaper *El Mercurio* and perhaps most of all in the beautiful garden apartments and gracious homes of *Providencia*, *Las Condes*, and other comfortable middle-class sections" (Ibid)

¹³ For instance, the cover for Quilapayún's 1970 album *Quilapayún IV* depicts a Native American in a rainbow colored poncho shouting in defiance. Similarly, Inti-Illimani's 1968 self-titled album includes the image of the pre-Columbian sun god Inti.

¹⁴ The presidency of José Balmaceda has been compared to that of Salvador Allende, since, like Allende, Balmaceda initiated sweeping reforms which nationalized foreign-owned industries and eventually sparked a civil war in 1891 between a faction led by Balmaceda's executive branch of government and another led by representatives of the bourgeoisie in congress ([http://www.memoriachilena.cl/mchilena01/temas/index.asp?id_ut=josemanuelbalmacedafernandez\(1840-1891\)](http://www.memoriachilena.cl/mchilena01/temas/index.asp?id_ut=josemanuelbalmacedafernandez(1840-1891)))

¹⁵ This is particularly evident in an episode related by Víctor Jara's wife Joan:

One morning, as we were having breakfast, a friend who lived nearby came to see us with the news that Victor was in the headlines. The front page of La Tribuna – seditious gutter-press to us, voice of the [conservative] National Party to others – bore a headline with the story that Victor had been caught at an all-night homosexual party with little boys, ‘dancing a perverted cueca’ (1983:165).

Although the story had no basis in reality, the inclusion of the “perverted cueca”, was obviously a reaction to Jara’s counter-hegemonic appropriation of the national symbol in his repertoire.

¹⁶ Inti-Illimani’s self titled album, which was released in 1968, is a particularly good example of this cultural process as it includes interpretations of Chilean *cuecas* and *tonadas* as well as traditional folkloric songs from several other Latin American nationalities.

¹⁷ For instance, the album cover of Inti-Illimani’s self-titled release depicts an icon of the pre-Columbian god Inti. This image is connected to the ruins of the ancient city, Tiahuanaco, near La Paz, Bolivia.

¹⁸ In their interpretation of the song Inti-Illimani sing “refalosa, huayno, and son”

¹⁹ Simón Bolívar- Rubén Lena

Simón Bolívar, Simón,
caraqueño americano,
el suelo venezolano
le dio la fuerza a tu voz.
Simón Bolívar, Simón,
nació de tu Venezuela
y por todo el tiempo vuela
como candela tu voz.
Como candela que va
señalando un rumbo cierto
en este suelo cubierto
de muertos con dignidad.

Simon Bolivar, Simon
Caracan American
The Venezuelan ground
Gave force to your voice
Simon Bolivar, Simon
he was born of you Venezuela
and his voice burned
As a candle always
As a candle that goes
signaling the true course
in the covered ground
Of death with dignity

Simón Bolívar, Simón,
revivido en las memorias
que abrió otro tiempo la historia,
te espera el tiempo Simón.
Simón Bolívar, razón,
razón del pueblo profunda,
antes que todo se hunda
vamos de nuevo Simón.
Simón Bolívar, Simón,
en el sur la voz amiga,
es la voz de José Artigas
que también tenía razón.

Simon Bolivar, Simon
Revived in the memories
That opened another time in history
Time waited for you Simon
Simon Bolivar, reason
profound reason of the people
that before were ruined
But now we are new, Simon
Simon Bolivar, Simon
In the south a friendly voice
as the voice of Jose Artigas
Who also has a cause
(my translation)

²⁰ This statistic comes from Osvaldo Rodriguez (1984:83), although it should be noted that other sources list the number killed closer to 3000 (Roddick 1976:2).

²¹ It is interesting that with *nueva canción*’s transition from being a form of popular music based on folklore to its presently more common incarnation as a Pan-Latin American folkloric expression itself, one may see the culmination of a cultural cycle. Thus, to paraphrase Eduardo Carrasco’s reflections on this cultural process, just as folklore is able to become popularized when it leaves its circle of origin and penetrates the mass culture; popular music may also become folklore when it is reviewed with meaning and begins to occupy a ceremonial or symbolic place in the scope of a tradition (1983a:9)

²² To illustrate the depth of this division, in an interview one of the band members spoke of a previous performance at a Latino event in which a group of Cuban attendees motioned the slitting of a throat to intimidate the group as they performed the pro-Castro *nueva trova* song “Hasta Siempre Comandante”.

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