

## **Protest music as adult education and learning for social change: a theorisation of a public pedagogy of protest music**

John Haycock  
Monash University

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*Since the 1960's, the transformative power of protest music has been shrouded in mythology. Sown by musical activists like Pete Seeger, who declared that protest music could "help to save the planet", the seeds of this myth have since taken deep root in the popular imagination. While the mythology surrounding the relationship between protest music and social change has become pervasive and persistent, it has mostly evaded critical interrogation and significant theorisation. By both using the notion as a theoretical lens and adding to scholarship in the field, this article uncovers understandings of the public pedagogical dimensions of protest music, as it takes place as a radical practice and critical form of contemporary mass culture. In doing this, this article provides a theorisation of public pedagogy as it encapsulates protest music, and those who are conceptualised as the critical and radical public pedagogues who produce this mass cultural form.*

**Keywords:** public pedagogy; protest music; adult learning; education for social change

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*Maybe it's just the time of year  
 Maybe it's the time of man  
 I don't know who I am  
 But life is for learning...*

Joni Mitchell, *Woodstock*, (1970), [side B, track 5].

## Introduction

The emergence of protest or a political popular music in the 1960s has been inextricably linked in the popular imaginary and public history with social change and youth revolt. At the forefront of this linkage are persistent and enduring myths connecting social protest produced as popular music with resistance, rebellion, rejection of the status quo and social norms, and oppositional politics. This is particularly the case in mass-mediated, advanced capitalist and later neoliberal democracies, as both protest music and activities and movements for social change have been associated with progressive politics of 'the left' (Berger, 2000). Mythology connecting protest music with social change can be seen in claims made by folk musician Pete Seeger, that "if used right", protest songs might "help to save the planet" (Seeger, 2009 as quoted in Pareles, 2014).

It is little surprise that these myths about protest music and social change have claimed some hold in mass consciousness. They are ideas reflected in the popularity and commercial success, particularly from the early 1960s and beyond, of artists who answered Seeger's call to 'save' or change the world for the better with their music. Bob Dylan and Joan Baez, for instance, became iconic for writing and performing what have been known as 'finger-pointing', 'topical', 'message' or 'protest' songs (Denisoff, 1983). Ron Eyerman and Andrew Jamison (1998:2) have located some of the mythology around such artists, and the protest music they produced, in their notion of "the sixties of popular consciousness". This phenomenon is expressed, they argue, as a longing for "a better, more innocent time 'when we were good'" (Eyerman & Jamison, 1998:2, authors' emphasis retained). Akin to these authors, Ray Pratt (1990:viii) sees the 1960s as a watershed moment in (popular) protest music-making and, through this, "an expression of more fundamental social longings". Yet, while referring to a "nostalgic fetishisation" of the much-reproduced and mediated versions of the

decade, Pratt cautions against dismissing “efforts to establish a political popular music” as merely nostalgia. As Eyerman and Jamison (1998:2) similarly warn, viewing such expressions in this way tends to overlook or downplay some “fundamentally important connections between culture and politics”.

Key in the contentions of these authors is the critical linkage they make between protest music and social change in mass consciousness. Eyerman and Jamison (1998) argue that while protest music may not have significantly moved people into direct social action, it has functioned to highlight the causes of the Civil Rights, Anti-War and Women’s Liberation movements. I want to add that it is not only protest music itself, but the persistent myths around this mass cultural formation that have greatly contributed to the notion, in public consciousness, that protest music can make people more socially conscious. More importantly, however, is what these myths reveal about the public pedagogical dimensions of protest music as a radical practice and critical form of contemporary mass culture.

It is in such terms that this article explores the relationship between protest music and social change, as it occurs through processes and practices of adult learning and teaching, as public pedagogy. As a component of the wider context of popular music, protest music is examined as a mass cultural practice and form. In this respect, protest music is considered as social protest produced and exchanged as a form of commodified popular music, or popular protest music, meaning that it has been made commercially available to audience-consumers through the global mass-(multi)media. The term adult learning, as it relates to this context, denotes pedagogical processes and practices as they take place through the production and exchange of popular protest music, beyond the bounds of formal, institutional education. Lastly, the exploration of these processes is undertaken as an analysis of protest music, its producer/performers and audiences, as they can be seen to take part in a public pedagogy, in mass-mediated, capitalist or later neoliberal consumer culture.

## Framework for theorising the radical practice and critical public pedagogy of protest music

The relationship between protest music and social change, particularly as this might occur through processes of adult learning and education or public pedagogy, is under researched and under theorised. Most notably, such relationships have not been significantly explored in terms of the coinciding mythologies and underpinning philosophies of both protest music and adult education for social change, as the latter context resides at the foundations of more recent '*public pedagogy scholarship*' (Sandlin, O'Malley & Burdick, 2011). As it is engaged with in this article, this latter-named field of inquiry refers primarily to relatively recent research represented by definitive engagements with the notion of public pedagogy by Robin Wright and Jennifer Sandlin (2009); Sandlin, Brian Schultz and Jake Burdick (Eds.) (2010); Sandlin, Wright and Carolyn Clark (2011) and Sandlin, Michael O'Malley and Burdick (2011). In this sense, public pedagogy or pedagogies is broadly defined by Sandlin, Schultz and Burdick (2010:1) as "spaces, sites, and languages of education and learning that exist outside of the walls of the institution of schools" and other formal and institutionalised educational settings.

The linkage between public pedagogy and the broader field of adult education for social change comes via two concepts, forming the epistemological foundations of these discourses. They are Antonio Gramsci's (1971) concept of '*hegemony*', together with Paulo Freire's (1970) notion of '*conscientization*'. Where these two theoretical concepts intersect with public pedagogy is in the understanding of mass, popular and media culture as an educative or pedagogical site that reinforces hegemony, while also offering spaces where this might be critiqued, contested and reimagined (see, for example, Sandlin, O'Malley & Burdick, 2011). Gramsci (1971) and Freire's (1970) concepts provide for an examination of protest music, in its potential to take place or be facilitated by protest musicians, as a form of critical pedagogy and radical education. Public pedagogy scholarship adds a relatively fresh epistemological lens that enables an interrogation of protest music as it is produced and exchanged in mass culture with the intention of bringing about social change. From this perspective, this article is chiefly concerned with the inherent knowledge and cultural production and exchange processes of protest music as a form of mass/popular music;

how musicians as performers and producers of popular/protest music texts might be understood as public pedagogues; how the texts produced through performance by protest musicians might be considered pedagogical; and how audiences, consumers or users of protest music texts might be considered adult learners.

Finally, as to this last point and what might occur for audiences as learners, or what learning from protest music might look like: the possibilities for this reside at the crux of public pedagogy scholarship, again in the theory of Gramsci and the practice of radical adult education. Gramsci's (1971) theory suggests that, while remaining a product of popular culture that is produced hegemonically, protest music has potential counter-hegemonic effects and influences in public consciousness. As Abrahams (2007) has argued, it is public or mass consciousness that represents contestable terrain in mass-mediated consumer culture, essentially for a critical pedagogy of music to exploit. Protest musicians can be (re)imagined as radical adult educators, working within yet against the capitalist system which is, to the greatest extent, responsible for the production and exchange of social protest as commodified popular music. It is in this respect that some protest music can provide other narratives about contemporary mass mediated consumer culture, potentially giving voice to alternate views in and of society, offering possibilities for individuals to think critically and learn about the world in which they live, and possibly act to change it. As Wright and Sandlin (2009:133) have proposed in their conception of public pedagogy as a product of popular culture, protest music holds the hope for listeners to "imagine a world that is less self-destructive", and a cultural horizon less inhibited than that presented by the prevailing capitalist or neoliberal hegemony.

## **Popular protest music**

The 1960s, and particularly the early years of that decade, were undoubtedly a watershed moment in the production and exchange of social protest as commodified popular music (Pratt, 1990). As Ian Peddie (2006:xvi) suggests, however, sixties popular music—like all popular music since its inception in the mid-1950s - "emerges already grounded in the social, as an avenue of cultural contestation or social and political engagement". A key contention is that popular music beyond the strict confines of the sixties' protest song has worked to inform, educate and

raise popular consciousness since the 1950s. While, more recently, it has been co-opted and somewhat overwhelmed by the production processes of capitalism, what I am referring to here as popular protest music presents similar possibilities into the 21st century. In this sense, protest music is an under-theorised source of and practice in public pedagogy, through which adult or other learners outside the realm of schooling and formal educational contexts might learn skills required to participate actively and effectively in processes of social change. This section is a brief examination of the evolution of this contemporary popular protest music as a source of counter-hegemonic messages and learning, followed in the remainder of the article by a theorisation of this cultural form and practice as public pedagogy.

Working to perpetuate myths about the resistance and rebellion of rock'n'roll and (later) other genres of popular music, is its derivation from, emergence out of, and colonisation of the culture of slave work songs and 'the blues' of African-American people. As David Szatmary (2004:ix) discusses popular music's social history, this followed the migration of African-Americans from the southern U.S. states to Chicago, and started as an "urbanised, electric rhythm and blues". The rising popularity of this form of commodified popular culture is intrinsically linked to television replacing radio as the dominant mass medium and dramatic economic, educational, political and social changes in industrialised nations in the 1950s (Miller, 2000). As far as the emergence of a political or protest music is concerned, one key area of social change was the 'baby-boom generation' providing a rapidly growing audience of listeners, viewers and consumers for this burgeoning form of Western mass culture (Szatmary, 2004). Initially, this growing crowd of consumers was driven by and formed around teenagers in the 1950s; and then as this social group, as Frith (1981) describes, overly represented by white working class males, transformed to youth culture into the 1960s.

Critically, it was with this change in the nature of its audience that the topics for popular songs also changed and the commodified protest song, born out of the folk revival of the early 1960s, burst to prominence, particularly in North America and the UK. Instead of being mostly about 'girls', cars and going to the '*sock hop*' (Szatmary, 2004), lyrics took on issues that had been largely suppressed in the 1950s. The subject matter

of so-called ‘songs of social significance’, as Denisoff (1983) refers to them in the title of his book - like those of Bob Dylan that are definitive of this era - included: McCarthyism (‘*Talkin’ John Birch Paranoid Blues*’, 1962); the Civil Rights movement (‘*Pawn in Their Game*’, 1963), the Cold War (‘*Talkin’ World War Three Blues*’, 1962); potential threat of nuclear annihilation (‘*Let me Die in my Footsteps*’, 1963); and more broadly social justice and change (‘*Times They Are A Changin’*’, 1963). In doing this, artists - to a large extent led by Dylan into the realm of folk-as-commodified-popular-music, and those acts that recorded his songs, such as Peter, Paul and Mary (‘*Blowin’ in the Wind*’, 1963) - dramatically redefined what popular music could be written about and used for, in transmitting ideas and propaganda. In these terms, the public pedagogical dimensions of popular music were radically expanded. Moreover, it is these dimensions of protest music that intersect with the radical and critical dimensions, along with the mythologies, philosophy and purpose of adult education for social change.

Later in the decade, “the sixties of popular consciousness” (Eyerman & Jamison, 1998:2) takes place in the popular imaginary and public history as rebellion against and subversion of conservative social norms, led by the growing ‘counterculture’ and the ‘hippies’. Initially coming out of North American college campuses, the counterculture movement sought to end the war in Vietnam with peace marches, rallies and civil disobedience, at times developing into riots. Across the Atlantic, there were the events of 1968 which also escalated to riots in France, starting with youths protesting against a restrictive education system and growing US military involvement in Vietnam (Kurlansky, 2004). Kurlansky (2004:182) reports that *Life* (magazine) defined the prominent popular music emerging at this time as “the first music born in the age of instant communication”.

The early 1970s saw the post-war boom come to a crashing halt with the oil embargo of 1973, resulting in slumps in national economies that ended a long era of full employment. England had not enjoyed all the spoils of this boom time, having incurred a large foreign debt in order to ‘win’ the war. By 1975, England was in recession and unemployment, particularly amongst school leavers, was at its highest since before World War II (Savage, 1991). The tabloid press, such as Murdoch’s *Sun*, served notice on the libertarianism of the 1960s. The new language of fear

about social issues, such as pornography, education and vandalism, saw middle-class Britain seeking refuge in a Conservative Party moving to the right, led by Margaret Thatcher and her assertion of the individual over society (Savage, 1991).

The optimism and utopian idealism of the 1960s had seemingly died from an excess of part two in contemporary music's 'unholy trinity' (sex, drugs and rock 'n' roll): three of the decade's big stars - Jimi Hendrix, Janis Joplin and Jim Morrison - expired within months of each other in 1970 and 1971. The rebellious edge of the previous decades' music had been blunted, having been increasingly marketed as an acceptable commodity and purchased into the mainstream by the maturing 'baby boomers'. This environment in 1977 London spawned punk, with young people rejecting mainstream conformism and corporatism (the 'politics of boredom') as an angry rebellion against consumerism and 'as a deliberate reaction to the mass commercialism of music' (Oh, 2002). While the directly educative power of punk is debatable - lyrics were often sung quickly, mispronounced and screamed over distorted guitars - there is a strong anti-authority/corporatist theme, both stylistically and when the angry and 'chaotic' noise is stripped back to reveal the lyrics. Punk, however, serves more as an historical and strident expression of anarchism, if not revolution, set against the backdrop of emerging neo-conservatism and commercialism. Artists like The Clash, lingering on into the early 1980s with their socialist overtones, raised the awareness of a young adult audience about the Spanish Civil War ('*Spanish Bombs*', Strummer & Jones, 1979), US imperialism and the Sandinistas ('*Washington Bullets*', Strummer & Jones, 1980).

Punk significantly influenced later artists and sharpened the rebellious edge of popular music up to today. At least on some level, it seems much of the political and resistant forms and genres of popular music coming after the 1970s was inspired or influenced by punk. Clearly, punk's attitude and loud and raucous style goes into the 1990s and beyond with grunge bands such as Pearl Jam, Soundgarden and Nirvana, who became famous for their resistance to authority and rejection of the system and status quo in their versions of protest music. However, as Szatmary (2004:271-284) observes, the popular myth of protest music remained ever-present with whom he refers to as the 'children of the sixties' in the mid-to-late 1980s. Those he includes as examples of producers of

music with a social conscience, and artists who had returned to and re-awakened “1960s idealism” in their brand of popular music, are Tracy Chapman, Suzanne Vega, REM, The Indigo Girls and Australian band Midnight Oil. Sixties idealism has continued in the musical styles of performers and songwriters like Neil Young, Bruce Springsteen and other artists from the 1960s and 1970s, who have continued to tour and record protest music. Punk and artists such as these have also inspired overt protest music bands like Rage Against the Machine, who became popular in the 1990s.

Musical movements led by people of colour - including 1970s’ reggae and hip-hop or rap, popular from the late 1980s - have provided a significant source of informal learning that has crossed racial, cultural and geographical lines to influence (mostly young) adults on a global level (Oshun, 2005). With its strong social liberation theme, reggae brought to the forefront many of the issues that people of colour had been singing about since the 19<sup>th</sup> century, including oppression at the hands of white people, black spirituality, and religious freedom -often with an attempt to raise the critical and political consciousness of the listener. While its name is now a marketing term applied to ‘softer’, more commercially acceptable, music of this genre, ‘hip-hop’ is more a culture than just music: ‘it is the heartbeat of American ghetto youth who claimed their own self-expression and used it to rise above their physical circumstances’ (Oshun, 2005).

Hip-hop is one of the few forms or genres of protest music that has captured the attention of public pedagogy inquiry (Savage & Hickey-Moody, 2010; Dimitriadis, 2001). One of the more significant contributions to this field comes from Lance Williams (2010), who argues that some hip-hop

*has various aesthetic contributions which allow it to operate as a springboard for discourse surrounding youths’ attitudes and beliefs about issues such as identity, violence, marginalisation, hegemony, resistance, and social justice. (Williams, 2010:221, citing Cohen, 2007)*

Williams examines this cultural formation as protest music that is potentially a catalyst for the transformation of society through the empowerment of marginalised groups. By making these connections,

he is linking together protest music with education for social change, by conceptualising this form of hip-hop as counter-hegemonic and, in some ways, a critical public pedagogy of protest music. What is perhaps more important about hip-hop, however, is that it is this genre that has taken the baton for protest music from the 1980s and bands like Public Enemy, and most likely still offers counter-hegemonic resistance today. Even locally, the Australian variation on the theme called ‘skip-hop’, with bands like The Herd, hold the most promise for continuing to produce music expressing political and social change sentiments into the 21st Century.

### **Protest music as adult education for social change**

Social protest produced as popular music, whatever era or genre it comes from, is protest music because it is intended to be such by its authors or those who produce and perform it. Critically, it is in this intent, purpose or philosophy where protest music coincides with the underlying hope and ontological intent of adult learning and education for social change. Serge Denisoff, a pioneering sociological researcher on protest music, is cited by Lawrence Berger where he argues “that social protest, intended to achieve social change, is the fundamental purpose of music” (Berger, 2000:58, citing Denisoff, 1970). As Berger further outlines the foundational roots of this cultural formation, music produced as ‘social protest’ is educative or pedagogical in its intent. It is meant to “raise consciousness and awareness” in its listeners, and “build solidarity through its emotional and intellectual appeal” (Berger, 2000:58). Crucially, this literature suggests that protest music as a cultural form and practice is ideally about education for social change.

The mythology, philosophical foundations and intent of protest musicians to change the world, through the protest music they produce, is clearly linked with the hope and ontological foundations of adult education for social change. For the latter cultural field, this takes place in its seeking to bring about societal transformation through critical pedagogical (Freire, 1970) and radical educative and counter-hegemonic interventions in civil society (Gramsci, 1971), or critical pedagogy and radical adult education. For protest music, such interventions occur in mass-mediated consumer society by way of the critical, radical and public pedagogical dimensions of this mass cultural formation. Thus,

protest music and those who produce it become an educative or public pedagogical form and practice, seeking to transform society. At the core of this process of production and exchange, and in line with adult education for social change, protest music seeks to: highlight social injustices and inequality (Foley, 2001); empower listeners to name and critique their circumstances (Shor, 1992); and inspire people through learning to act in processes of social change to redress oppression (Freire, 1970).

This ontological linkage, along with the evident coinciding mythologies between protest music and adult learning and education for social change, is one of two key distinctions that make protest music a form and practice of public pedagogy; or *a critical and radical public pedagogy of protest music*. The other distinction is that protest music is produced and exchanged in mass-mediated consumer culture, to take place as a form of mass-popular music. It is this mass cultural form and the practices that go into producing it which embody the central organising and operational dimensions of protest music as critical public pedagogy. In this sense, protest music can essentially be seen as *popular protest music*: it takes place as a popular cultural or media product and form of commodified music that is produced, as “social protest, intended to achieve social change” (Berger, 2000:58, citing Denisoff, 1970).

I am arguing that hegemony and counter-hegemony operate, or are facilitated in, contemporary mass-mediated neoliberal culture through a process of learning and teaching; in part, by way of a public pedagogy or, indeed, a *public pedagogy of media and popular culture*. As “products of popular culture”, protest music becomes, as Wright and Sandlin (2009:135) contend, a “facilitator of, and catalyst for” adult learning which is potentially “far more powerful, lasting, and lifelong than learning in formal educational settings and other traditionally researched areas of teaching and learning”. Taking this contention further, I want to argue that, in these public pedagogical transactions, protest music texts become the catalyst, and protest musicians—those who produce protest music through performance, whether that is live or recorded—become facilitators of adult learning. Indeed, through their protest music that is produced to raise critical consciousness and awareness, protest musicians are essentially facilitating critical pedagogy, and in this sense become critical public pedagogues. How protest musicians and protest

music function as a critical public pedagogy, and what goes on behind the scenes of Wright and Sandlin's (2009) pivotal contention - that popular culture takes place, is facilitated and becomes a catalyst for adult learning - is the focus of discussion in the next section.

### **Popular protest music as a radical practice in critical public pedagogy**

The idea that protest music - and for that matter, *all* popular music - is inherently pedagogical, can at first be located at the centre of a theorisation of *pedagogy itself*. Such a theorisation of the possibilities of pedagogy is found in David Lusted's (1986:3) frequently drawn on and most useful working through the term. Lusted's engagement is based on what he refers to as the application of his "prism of pedagogy" to the "*process through which knowledge is produced*" (author's emphasis retained) and learning can be seen to occur. For Lusted, pedagogy becomes not only central in addressing questions of how knowledge is transmitted or (re)produced; but along with this, it enables the interrogation of the "conditions and through what means we *come to know*" (Lusted 1986:3, author's emphasis retained). Lusted's (1986:2) theorisation thus provides, what he theorises, is a "prism of pedagogy" that functions to highlight the interactions between agencies in a "process of production and exchange" (Lusted, 1986:3). Crucially, as Lusted (1986:3) further argues, pedagogy is "the transformation of consciousness", taking place "in the interaction of three agencies - the teacher, the learner and the knowledge they together produce".

As this article has argued, there is a teaching and learning from which knowledge is produced, occurring through and within the performative cultural production and exchange processes of popular protest music. This occurs as a result of the activities, practices and interactions of conceptually the same three pedagogical agencies Lusted (1986) invokes in his theorisation of pedagogy: the teacher, the learner and the knowledge produced as a result of the pedagogical processes, activities and practices of the three agencies. These pedagogical agencies can be seen to occur in the knowledge and cultural production and exchange of protest music in the following three ways:

1. *Teachers or pedagogues* in the knowledge, cultural production and exchange of pedagogy itself, become the musicians, artist-performers and composers of protest music and can be known as

*pedagogues of popular protest music.*

2. Knowledge that gives way to a possible state of ‘becoming’ through learning, as described by Ellsworth (2005); and the knowledge which at first makes possible the ‘*pedagogical transformation of consciousness*’ described by Lusted (1986) is what *musicians-as-pedagogues* produce in the form of *popular/protest music texts*. These texts can be seen as the *content* or *curricula* in a pedagogy of popular/protest music.

3. As embodiments of knowledge, encodings of values, ideologies (Giroux 2004a) and, critically, imbued with the pedagogy of their producers, protest music texts give way to the possibility of learning by audiences. As a result, the audience, listeners or consumers of popular music can be located in a pedagogy of popular/ protest music as (*adult*) *learners*.

Bridging the divide between Lusted’s (1986) theorisation of pedagogy itself and the production of protest music as public pedagogy is Walter Gershon’s (2010) contribution to public pedagogy scholarship. Here, Gershon refers to ‘all musicians’ as ‘public intellectuals’ (as the title of his chapter suggests). Where Gershon is most salient is in his part-conceptualisation of the function of musicians as “public pedagogues whose interactions are explicitly designed to educate”. Gershon usefully inserts musicians into what he sees as the position and place of public intellectuals in society. He refers to musicians and public intellectuals collectively, describing them as “performers who speak to audiences in an effort to move them, to entertain for the pleasure of thought through the senses” (Gershon, 2010:635). Though he never makes it exactly clear what these musicians as public intellectuals actually do with their pedagogy, other than bring pleasure through the entertainment their music might provide, Gershon does give insight to the possibilities for protest musicians as pedagogues or public intellectuals: the music protest musicians produce has other purposes in “speaking to audiences and moving them through their senses”, not only for pleasure or entertainment (Gershon, 2010:635) but also for resistance, to express oppositional politics, highlight injustices and possibly move audiences to social action.

Further implied in Gershon's (2010) work - and in what emerges perhaps more explicitly from other engagements with music and social change (Pratt, 1990; Berger, 2000) - is the foundation or basis provided for the possibilities of pedagogy through social protest produced as popular music. While he does not frame them as such, pedagogical possibilities clearly reside in the texts musicians as public intellectuals produce. Protest music texts become the central component and agency in the cultural and knowledge production and exchange processes of protest music. As a result, it is the performative production and exchange of these texts by protest musicians that undergird a pedagogy of protest music. Music, as Gershon (2010:628) argues - protest music texts as they are conceptualised here - becomes "organised/emergent sounds" capable of passing "implicit and explicit ideas" to listeners.

Taking this notion of popular and protest music texts a little further and into the realm of learning from - and by implication - teaching with and through music, Gershon (2010) notably cites Elizabeth Ellsworth (2005), whose work is pioneering in the field of public pedagogy (see Sandlin, O'Malley & Burdick, 2011). Drawing on Ellsworth, Gershon argues that music, as a way of knowing becomes a "literal" way of "making sense" (Gershon, 2010:628, citing Ellsworth, 2005), of "understanding the world and our relation to it". Critically, Gershon then adds, "[w]hen we remember lyrics that resonate with us or when the hair stands up on our necks at a particular song, we are learning" (Gershon 2010:628).

For Gershon, music contains knowledge or, as music occurs in textual form: protest music texts represent "a way of knowing" that can be "understood both cognitively and affectively" (Gershon 2010:628). Music texts thus become the foundation and operational core on which a pedagogy of protest music takes place. Protest music texts become not only the vehicle for the transfer of knowledge, but also the texts and pedagogy made available to audiences for learning. Protest music texts come to represent, contain and are the vehicle for the explicit encodings and transmission of meanings, values, ideologies, constructions of teachings (Giroux 2004a). Moreover, it is through this process in protest music production and exchange that these texts are made available for interpretation, decoding and meaning making by audiences as learners.

Protest music texts, together with the knowledge, cultural production and exchange practices that produce them, come together in what I have drawn on (Giroux, 2004b) to name *mass-mediated neoliberal consumer culture*. A broader definition is also provided by Giroux (2004a:59), when he describes this context as a “social field where goods and social practices are not only produced, distributed, and consumed but also invested with various meanings and ideologies implicated in the generation of political effects”. In part, he further defines the “culture” of “everyday life”

*as a circuit of power, ideologies, and values in which diverse images and sounds are produced and circulated, identities are constructed, inhabited, and discarded, agency is manifested in both individualized and social forms, and discourses are created.*  
(Giroux 2004a:59-60)

Here, Giroux provides a framework for a critical, radical and public pedagogy of protest music, both in its practice or facilitation by protest musicians as public pedagogues, and as it takes place in the catalytic learning spaces that protest music texts open up, in the public pedagogical context of mass-mediated everyday culture.

What is ‘produced, distributed, and consumed’ in the wider context of popular music can be located in Giroux’s (2004a:59) description as the ‘goods and social practices’. These ‘goods’ are predominantly recordings of performances as they are made available on various media, mostly via the Internet nowadays, but traditionally on CD, and before that cassette and record. What Giroux (2004a) also reveals here are the possibilities for how protest music is produced and exchanged as public pedagogy; and, in effect, how popular music texts are politicised or encoded with the social change sentiments of their producers to become protest music. The implication from Giroux is that a public pedagogy of protest music takes place as the “goods and social practices” - in this case popular music - are encoded with “meanings and ideologies implicated in the generation of political effects” (Giroux 2004a:59). Thus, popular music becomes protest music or social protest that is expressed through the “diverse images and sounds” (Giroux 2004a:59) of popular music. This is done, moreover, by musicians who practice in the tradition and underlying philosophy of protest music: “to educate, motivate, and raise

consciousness by” seeking to affect audiences “both emotionally and intellectually” (Berger, 2000:57).

What is transmitted and made available through these products of popular culture is the embodied and encoded knowledge in protest music texts, along with the pedagogy of their author/performers. Protest music texts become knowledge, content or curricula. More precisely, in terms of Lusted’s (1986) theorisation of pedagogy, these texts become the means by which knowledge is produced and through which learning by audiences potentially occurs. Therefore, it is these texts and the practices that produce them that become the *front-end* of the production and effective facilitation of a public pedagogy of protest music.

In Wright and Sandlin’s (2009:134) conception of public pedagogy, protest music texts become a ‘catalyst for’ critical and counter-hegemonic adult learning by opening up spaces in hegemonic neoliberal consumer culture, and potentially transforming mass consciousness. It follows that, by seeking to politicise, raise awareness, disturb, disrupt and resist dominant ideologies and contest hegemony, through their popular cultural products, protest musicians become, in Wright and Sandlin’s (2009:135) terms, ‘facilitators of’ a critical public pedagogy of protest music. Lastly, as Wright and Sandlin again suggest, audiences or consumers and users of protest music become adult learners through their potential to experience a “powerful, lasting, and lifelong” learning that most likely cannot be found in traditional educational contexts.

### **Conclusions: Protest music as critical public pedagogy**

This article began by highlighting some of the enduring myths associating protest music with social change. While these myths have seemed obvious in their association of protest music with social change, they have remained relatively untouched as a serious, critical research concern. In this regard, the connection this article has drawn is that social protest produced as popular music can be understood as fundamentally pedagogical, in that it is intended by its producers to bring about social change. In one sense, this means that the production through performance of popular music as a form of social protest is radically underpinned by the philosophy of protest music itself: it is intended to raise awareness and consciousness on social issues (Berger, 2000).

Most visibly, this link or relationship occurs through what I have termed the coinciding mythologies and philosophies of protest music and adult education for social change. While clearly more evident in the popular/protest music-making of the 1960s and the popularly accepted myths writ large about this decade, these links are dialogic: there is a crucial dialogue between music makers and audiences, on and around the production of protest music. In that this thread is dialogic, it is also inherently pedagogical. It springs forth from the emergence of rock out of the culture, slave work songs, and the blues of African-American people, melded together with folk and protest songs produced by troubadours, such as Woody Guthrie earlier in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, who was a very big influence on Bob Dylan. Undoubtedly, this musical dialogue and pedagogical thread—particularly as it is linked to education for social change—is difficult to see in prominent forms of pop(ular) music at the forefront of production and exchange through the music industry and global mass-(multi)media today. However, even this form of mass culture is inscribed with and bears signs of identity, resistance and social change politics, which have been inherent to popular music since its inception.

Given the inherent, dialogic thread running through it, its production and exchange in global mass-(multi)media spaces as popular music, together with its aim of raising critical consciousness, protest music is *a critical form and radical practice in public pedagogy*. More significantly, and specifically, not only is protest music a public pedagogical form and practice, it also takes place as critical pedagogy and as adult learning and teaching that potentially brings about the Freirian (1970) condition of conscientisation.

Finally and more broadly, one of the key, pivotal contentions coming from scholarship in this field, which has enabled my theorisation of protest music as public pedagogy, has come from Wright and Sandlin (2009:135). These authors argue that popular and media culture act as a “facilitator of, and catalyst for, self-directed learning”. What this article adds to knowledge in this regard, is a theorisation of what takes place behind the notion of public pedagogy; or what, specifically, goes into making protest musicians ‘facilitators of’ and protest music a ‘catalyst for’ adult learning. Undoubtedly, this has been an analysis carried out from the top of the production processes of protest music and as such,

leaves considerable scope for taking research on this topic further with regard to how protest music is used by audiences. What this article has found, however, is that a public pedagogy of protest music is not only a starting point for Knowles' notion of self-directed learning (Knowles 1980 as cited in Wright & Sandlin 2009), but offers the possibility of involving audiences directly in critical public pedagogy, as adult learners.

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## About the Author

**John Haycock** is a researcher and lecturer working in the field embracing the cultural sociology of education, media studies, and adult learning for social change. As the topic of his recently completed PhD thesis, ‘Revolution Rock: A Study of a Public Pedagogy of Protest Music’, his current research interest is in exploring protest music as a critical and radical public pedagogy.

## Contact details

*Dr John Haycock*  
*Cultural Sociology of Education,*  
*Faculty of Education*  
*Monash University*

*Email: haycock.john@gmail.com*