White boots marching in a yellow land:
Representations of war and their linguistic conveyance
in anti–Vietnam War song lyrics
# Table of Contents

1 Introduction .................................................................................................................. 2
2 Material and context ....................................................................................................... 5
   2.1 Vietnam War (1954–1975) ................................................................................. 5
   2.2 American protest music before and during Vietnam ........................................ 9
   2.3 Folk music ............................................................................................................ 11
   2.4 Pete Seeger .......................................................................................................... 12
   2.5 Bob Dylan ........................................................................................................... 14
   2.6 Phil Ochs ............................................................................................................. 16
3 Stylistics and classical rhetoric ...................................................................................... 18
4 Representations of war ................................................................................................. 20
   4.1 War as a crime against humanity ................................................................. 20
   4.2 War as unnecessary sacrifice ........................................................................... 22
   4.3 War as a display of power ............................................................................... 25
   4.4 War as a betrayal of the American values .................................................... 27
5 Persuasive language at work ....................................................................................... 30
   5.1 Personal pronouns .............................................................................................. 30
      5.1.1 First person pronouns .............................................................................. 31
      5.1.2 Second person pronouns ....................................................................... 36
      5.1.3 Third person pronouns ........................................................................... 38
   5.2 Clause types ......................................................................................................... 40
      5.2.1 Interrogative ............................................................................................... 41
      5.2.2 Imperative .................................................................................................. 45
   5.3 Rhetorical devices ................................................................................................. 47
      5.3.1 Satire, irony and parody ......................................................................... 48
      5.3.2 Metaphor .................................................................................................... 52
      5.3.3 Allegory ....................................................................................................... 54
      5.3.4 Simile .......................................................................................................... 56
   5.4 Cognitive stylistics ............................................................................................... 57
6 Conclusion .................................................................................................................... 60
References ....................................................................................................................... 63
1 Introduction

Language as a means of persuasion is a phenomenon that has been fascinating scholars since the days of Ancient Greece, when the art of public speaking was studied by rhetoricians. The discipline of rhetoric has later evolved into stylistics, and the two share the view that linguistic devices enable tasks like persuading, convincing and arguing (see Bradford, 1997, pp. 3, 5, 13). The focal point of this thesis is a different type of ‘public speaking’, namely songs. Persuasive linguistic devices are obviously detectable in song lyrics as well. The question of whether music actually has the power to make a difference, or even change the world, has been the initial inspiration for this study. When approaching the question of the manipulative force of music, it is appropriate to explore songs that serve some kind of an agenda, and thus have a motivation to persuade the audience. Therefore, the material of this study consists of political songs; more specifically, songs protesting the Vietnam War.

The golden age of political songs was the 1960s, a decade of social activism especially in the United States, where young people attended movements for example promoting African-American civil rights and protesting American involvement in the Vietnam conflict. Music, specifically folk and folk rock, played an essential part in those movements; therefore, this is a fruitful context for this study (see e.g. “Folk music,” 2017). A typical feature of the ‘folk revival’ was the participatory nature of the songs, and communal singing – combined with emotive lyrics – functioned as a strengthener of the collective identity of the audience: the songs expressed the stance of a whole “generation of people determined to bring about political change” (Boucher, 2004, p. 154). This paper examines lyrics written by three American singer-songwriters who had a central role in the folk music scene: Pete Seeger, Phil Ochs and Bob Dylan. The lyrics chosen for this study have been adopted by the peace movement, especially in the context of opposing the Vietnam War. Some of the songs assail war in general, while others specifically criticize the active part of the United States in the conflict between North and South Vietnam.

Although the songs examined in this study were written fifty years ago, they still resonate with today’s world: injustice, wars and deceitful politicians have not gone away. Phil Ochs’s song ‘Here’s to the State of Richard Nixon’ (1974), which contains for example the lines “criminals are posing as advisors to the crown / . . . / and the speeches of the President are the ravings of a clown”, has inspired several amateur musicians to upload their updated versions to YouTube:
there are at least five different variations of ‘Here’s to the State of Donald Trump’, in which Ochs’s lyrics have been slightly altered – but with the abovementioned lines meaningfully left untouched. Furthermore, the role of the United States as the World’s Police, commented in Phil Ochs’s ‘Cops of the World’ (1966), is still an undeniable fact, judging by the involvement in the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan, for instance. Finally, what gives the ultimate touch of topicality to the subject of this paper is the fact that in 2016, Bob Dylan received one of the most prestigious recognitions a writer can get: the Nobel Prize in Literature; "for having created new poetic expressions within the great American song tradition” (“The Nobel Prize”, 2016).

Apart from the apparent timelessness of some of the texts studied in this thesis, and despite originating from an American context, the lyrics are not strictly bound to the United States: Bob Dylan’s ‘Blowin’ in the Wind’ (1963) and Pete Seeger’s ‘Where Have All the Flowers Gone’ (1955) have been sung at protest marches around the world, thus being examples of the transnational character of protest music (Kutschke, 2015, p. 322). Songs written by Pete Seeger, Bob Dylan and Phil Ochs have also been translated into several languages, which is a proof of their universal appeal.

This thesis is founded on two research questions that are both connected to rhetoric: the first one is related to argumentation and the second one to style. The first question is: What kinds of arguments do the songwriters provide to support the anti-war cause, or, how do they represent the war in their songs? The second question is: What kinds of linguistic means have the songwriters used in order to make their songs effective? The concept of ‘effectiveness’ refers to the fact that as political songs, the songs have two objectives: firstly, to change people’s attitudes, opinions, and behaviour; and secondly, to strengthen the convictions of those already in the movement. It is reasonable to presume that this intent is visible in the lyrics of the songs; that by choosing certain arguments and using a certain kind of language, the songwriters have aimed at making their songs more persuasive. Of course, measuring the influence of the songs on the minds of the audience is beyond the scope of this study, not to mention entering the minds of the songwriters to examine their motives for writing a particular line. However, the fact that Seeger, Ochs and Dylan are influential representatives of their genre indicates that importance has been placed upon their songs, and that they have succeeded in creating powerful lyrics. Whether they have been aware of the means they have used or not, it is nevertheless meaningful to try to delineate the constituents that contribute to the effectiveness of the lyrics; after all, as Ken
Stephenson justifies his analysis of rock music: “Most people do not know why eggs are nutritious, and chickens know even less about the matter, but the ignorance of producer and consumer does not invalidate research in biochemistry” (2002, p. xii). As for the methodology of this thesis, the analysis related to the first research question – how do the songwriters represent the war in their songs – is material-driven, while in the analysis of the second question – what kinds of linguistic features they use for persuasion –, some features of a stylistic approach have been applied.
2 Material and context

The material of this study consists of 25 songs that take an opposing stance on the embroilment of the United States in the Vietnam conflict. The songs were written by Pete Seeger (8 songs), Phil Ochs (10 songs) and Bob Dylan (7 songs). Musically, the songs are categorized as folk or folk rock. Seeger, Ochs and Dylan were chosen because all three are regarded as key characters in the 1960s folk and protest song scene; their songs appear on every list of “the most important protest songs of the ‘60s” (see e.g. Iredale, 2009; Lindsay, 2015; White, 2016). Moreover, they represent different approaches to songwriting: Seeger and Ochs described themselves as a ‘topical singers’, openly taking a stance opposing the American involvement in the Vietnam War, whereas Dylan wanted to avoid the “finger-pointing mode”, and rejected the role of a leader on the issue, making only oblique references to Vietnam in his songs (“Phil Ochs,” 2016; Boucher & Browning, 2004, p. 2; Gamble, 2004, p. 23).

2.1 Vietnam War (1954–1975)

The songs examined in this study protest the Vietnam War and frequently refer to different events and phenomena related to it. Pete Seeger, Bob Dylan and Phil Ochs sing for example about the atrocities committed by the U.S. soldiers, the nepotism of the President of South Vietnam, the ever-increasing casualties, draft evasion, the disproportionate share of ethnic minorities among the conscripts, and the difficult readjustment of veterans, in addition to criticizing the pro-war mentality in general. Therefore, it is in order to provide some background information concerning the war. The principal source for this chapter is the thorough article “Vietnam War” in Encyclopaedia Britannica.

The issue at stake in the Vietnam War was the spread of Communism: The North Vietnamese government, together with a guerrilla force called Viet Cong, and backed up by material support from China and the Soviet Union, wanted to unify the northern and southern parts of Vietnam and create a Communist state. The South Vietnamese government and its allies, mainly the United States, wanted to prevent this from happening. The Vietnam War has also been referred to as the Second Indochina war, thus being a part of a larger regional conflict. With the Soviet Union and the United States supporting the opposite sides, the Vietnam conflict can also be seen as a
manifestation of the Cold War, although the Soviet Union only provided weapons, supplies and advisers to the North but did not send any troops.

There were U.S. military advisers in South Vietnam as early as in the 1950s. Paramilitary activities began in 1954, when U.S. President Dwight D. Eisenhower became worried about the spread of Communism in Asia and sent advisers to train and re-equip the South Vietnamese Premier Ngo Dinh Diem’s army. Although Roman Catholic Diem represented a counterforce to Communism, he was a problematic figure in many aspects: he mistrusted anyone who was not a member of his own family, and, among his local officials, extortion and bribery were rife. In 1955, he declared himself president of the Republic of Vietnam (South Vietnam) without elections. In 1963, unpopular Diem was murdered by his own army, with the silent approval of the United States. The situation did not improve much after Diem’s death: after a short-lived military junta, he was succeeded by dictator General Nguyen Khanh, soon followed by General Nguyen Van Thieu, who was supported by the U.S. but disliked by the local population. Thieu, who was the head of state from 1965 until 1975, had a corrupt and inefficient government, and his army was inexperienced, unmotivated and heavily dependent on help from U.S. troops.

The fighting between the Viet Cong and the South Vietnamese army began in 1959. Following Eisenhower’s suit, Presidents John F. Kennedy and Lyndon B. Johnson continued sending military advisers to Vietnam. They believed that the United States should prove it was able to fight Communist subversion in Southeast Asia, but were reluctant to send combat troops. In 1965, the U.S. finally began to bomb North Vietnam to boost the morale of the South Vietnamese, and to show its commitment to its ally. However, the Communists continued to succeed in South Vietnam, leaving the U.S. with no choice but to send its own troops for combat to avoid defeat. In July 1965, 100,000 American soldiers were sent to Vietnam without a declaration of war.

The U.S. bombed North Vietnam heavily, dropping more bombs than in any war before that, but for very little effect. More questionable means of warfare were also used: in order to prevent the Communists from concealing their movements and bases in the dense jungle, the U.S. Air Force sprayed the forest with an herbicide, “Agent Orange”, that killed the vegetation but also caused serious ecological damage to Vietnam and exposed thousands of people to toxic chemicals, which led to severe or fatal health problems later on. Furthermore, the Americans were also guilty of more immediate violence towards civilians: in 1968, U.S. soldiers murdered several hundred
unarmed men, women, children and infants in the My Lai Massacre. The mass killing was kept secret until the end of 1969, when its exposure caused global outrage.

Besides committing reprehensible actions, the U.S. army kept losing men in the battlefield. The North Vietnamese army and the Viet Cong managed to gain some important victories, which damaged the credibility of the U.S. army. Some of those Americans who did not belong to any peace movement opposed the war because of the increasing casualties and because they were not convinced of the ability of the U.S. to win. In a 1967 poll, over a half of American citizens were against the war. President Johnson sought a way to negotiate for peace, with no results. When Richard Nixon was elected president in 1968, he saw that a military victory seemed impossible, but continued bombing North Vietnam to protect U.S. credibility. In 1969, Nixon finally began to withdraw U.S. troops, and South Vietnamese were trained to replace them. The withdrawals were popular at home, but they considerably lowered the morale of the troops that were still in Vietnam. The frustration at a pointless war was manifested for example in increased drug abuse and more frequent and serious racial incidents. Nevertheless, the war went on: in 1970, Nixon attacked Cambodia to destroy sanctuaries used by the Viet Cong; an act that caused another wave of protests in the United States. In a protest at Kent State University in Ohio, four students were killed by National Guard troops, which intensified the protesting even more. The general attitude towards the war was increasingly critical: in a 1971 poll, 71 per cent of Americans believed that sending troops to Vietnam had been a mistake.

After several failed attempts for peace, “the Agreement on Ending the War and Restoring Peace in Viet-Nam” was finally signed in 1973, and all the U.S. troops were withdrawn from Vietnam. However, the Vietnamese continued to fight, and in 1975, the North occupied the South Vietnamese capital, Saigon. In 1976, the country was officially united as the Socialist Republic of Vietnam. The longest and most controversial war in U.S. history had failed in its objective – but cost the lives of 2 million Vietnamese civilians, 1.1 million North Vietnamese and Viet Cong fighters, over 200,000 South Vietnamese soldiers and 58,000 Americans. Henry Kissinger, U.S. Secretary of State and National Security Adviser, wrote: “[Vietnam] has created doubts about American judgment, about American credibility, about American power – not only at home, but throughout the world” (as cited in Arnold, 1991, p. 322). Although the termination of the war was in a way a victory for the peace movement and the American Left, the shine was taken off by the
news of the harshness of the new establishment in Vietnam and the mass murders committed by
the Communists in Cambodia (Hilamaa & Varjus, 2015, p. 164).

The anti-Vietnam War movement came into being towards the end of 1964, before actual combat
troops were sent to Vietnam (Marwick, 1998, p. 536). From 1965 on, over a hundred ‘teach-ins’ on
the war were organized at campuses all around the United States, and debate on Vietnam became
intense (Marwick, 1998, p. 542). Moral disapproval of the war led to open protests. In a
nationwide two-day protest in October 1965, around 100,000 people marched on military bases
and draft board offices (Marwick, 1998, pp. 542–543). Although the majority of protesters were
young people, the Vietnam issue was seen as a universal cause that brought together protesters of
different ages and different types (Marwick, 1998, pp. 542–543). Many of those who spoke out
against the war, especially liberals, wanted to emphasize that opposing the war did not equal to
supporting Communism (Marwick, 1998, p. 544). In October 1967, more than 100,000 pacifists,
students, militants and ordinary Americans united in a march outside Pentagon; according to
Arthur Marwick (1998), the event was “a most impressive demonstration” that achieved a victory,
“a powerful affirmation of opposition to the war” (p. 545).

Much of the discontent of the Americans was directed at the selective service system, which was
considered unfair: young men from racial minorities and poor backgrounds were conscripted in
disproportional numbers, while men from more privileged classes were allowed to defer
conscription for example invoking their studies (“Vietnam War,” 2017). Civil Rights movement
leader Martin Luther King lamented in 1966 that the black had to “bear the heaviest burdens at
the front and at home” (as cited in Marwick, 1998, p. 544). ‘Draft dodging’ was also a common
phenomenon: during the Vietnam conflict, about half a million men illegally evaded conscription
(“Vietnam War,” 2017). Organizations like SDS (Students for a Democratic Society) encouraged
young people to conscientiously object the conscription, and there were cases of publicly tearing
or burning draft cards (Marwick, 1998, p. 543). More than 200,000 men were charged and more
than 8,000 convicted for draft evasion. Most of them were later offered clemency during the
programs run under Presidents Gerald R. Ford and Jimmy Carter, but many of them had to face
the consequences (“Vietnam War,” 2017). One of the most famous examples was boxer
Muhammad Ali, who refused to go to Vietnam and was deprived of his championship, indicted for
draft evasion and fined 10,000 dollars (“Muhammad Ali”, 2017). Due to the general unpopularity
of the war and the unjust racial distribution of the recruits, the Congress abolished the draft in 1973, and ever since the U.S. has had an all-volunteer military (“Vietnam War,” 2017).

The war had its effects on those who took part in it. Veterans returning from Vietnam often had difficulties adjusting to civilian life (Scurfield, 2004, p. 67). Instead of a warm welcome, they faced hostile attitudes in the United States, where they were called “baby killers” by the opponents of the war (MacNair, 2002, p. 162). Many veterans had the bitter feeling that they had been “used up and thrown away by their country and government” (Scurfield, 2004, p. 68). Although many of them suffered from psychological effects of war-related trauma, they were discouraged from discussing the horrors they had experienced: the memories, and symptoms like nightmares and flashbacks, were kept private even among friends, families and other veterans (Young, 2001, p. 5; MacNair, 2002, p. 163). The situation improved when the American Psychiatric Association accepted Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) in its official list of recognized conditions in 1980, after a political struggle by psychiatric workers and activists (Young, 2001, p. 5). Symptoms of PTSD include for instance re-experiencing the traumatic events, feelings of detachment or estrangement from others, deadened emotions, sense of a foreshortened future, sleeping difficulties, and outbursts of anger (American Psychiatric Association, as cited in MacNair, 2002, pp. 4–5). Typical stressors that had caused PTSD in Vietnam veterans were the death and injury of others, threat of death to oneself, killing others, committing abusive violence, and loss of meaning and control (Fontana & Rosenheck, 1999, pp. 111–112). The National Vietnam Veterans Readjustment Study conducted in 1986-88 revealed that over 700,000 veterans had either full-blown or partial PTSD (Scurfield, 2004, p. 2).

2.2 American protest music before and during Vietnam

There have probably been protest songs as long as there have been any forms of inequality in communities and societies. In America, one significant precursor of 20th century protest songs is religious music (Denisoff, 1970b). John Wesley, the founder of Methodism, believed that singing could have a central role in the process of conversion; a belief that was later adopted by Socialists and the International Workers of the World (the IWW, or ‘Wobblies’) that was formed in Chicago in 1905 and published the Little Red Songbook (Denisoff, 1970b, pp. 176, 178; Jones, 2004, p. 62). Both hymns and Socialist songs were intended both to propagate the doctrines and to serve as a
cohesive power for the community of believers, and one essential method to achieve these aims was communal singing that was supposed to cause an emotional response: “the songs were based on the appeal of ‘singing ecstasy’, that is, total physical and emotional involvement” (Denisoff, 1970b, pp. 176, 178). The protest in Socialist and ‘Wobbly’ songs was targeted at Capitalism and oppression. The Communist party has been reported to stress that “a people who can sing will make a revolution”, so the power of collectivist music was firmly believed in (as it happens, this claim ironically proved to be true, albeit in another time and place: in 1991, Estonia declared independence from Communist Soviet Union in a so called “Singing Revolution”) (Denisoff, 1970b, p. 178; Waren, 2012). Wobbly songs had a significant influence on the protest songs that were written during the American labour disputes of the 1930s (Denisoff, 1970b, p. 178; Jones, 2004, pp. 62–63). In violent union disputes, singing served the functions of expressing solidarity and raising morale (Jones, 2004, p. 63).

The gulf between the working class and the ruling class was not the only inspiration for protest songs. Another major branch of protest music arose out of the racial inequality experienced by the African American people. The tradition goes back all the way to Negro spirituals sung in the time of slavery in the 18th and 19th centuries: biblical liberation stories symbolised the slaves’ desire for freedom (Denisoff, 1970b, p. 179). After the abolition of slavery, the lot of the African Americans was still not easy, and the harsh life was reflected in the lyrics of American blues music that developed at the turn of the 20th century (see e.g. “Blues,” 2017). Although most blues songs were about love, blues singers also sang songs protesting racism, such as “Strange Fruit”, a metaphorical song commenting on the lynchings of African Americans, most famously performed by Billie Holiday (Giddins, 2004, p. 359). In the 1950s and 1960s, the American Civil Rights movement struggled to secure federal protection of basic civil rights that were granted to African American people after the Civil War (“American civil rights movement,” 2017). The Civil Rights movement adopted a new version of an old gospel song We Shall Overcome as its key anthem, that was sung in freedom marches and demonstrations all over the country (see e.g. “About Pete Seeger,” 2017). The Civil Rights cause was close to the hearts of American folk musicians: at the beginning of the 1960s, Pete Seeger, Bob Dylan, Phil Ochs, and many other folk singers passionately wrote songs about racial injustice, before turning their attention to the escalating Vietnam War. Social protest song became the anti-war protest song. Moreover, the Civil Rights movement strongly adhered to the anti-war cause, as its most famous spokesperson, Martin Luther King, stated in 1965 that
I am not going to sit by and see war escalated without saying anything about it . . . It is worthless to talk about integrating if there is no world to integrate in . . . The war in Vietnam must be stopped. (As cited in Marwick, 1998, p. 544)

In general, the opposition to the war was resounding, and the “nasty war” did not appeal to the patriotism of many a young man (Marwick, 1998, p. 543). This was visible in the music: there were some pro-war songs as well, but as Gene Lees states, “for the first time in U.S. history nearly all the songs were anti-war songs” (as cited in Arnold, 1991, p. 320). Not only folk musicians, but also composers of art music wrote compositions protesting the Vietnam War, hoping like Elie Siegmeister that their contribution would “shorten the miserable Vietnam disgrace by at least one minute” (Arnold, 1991, p. 318). According to Ben Arnold (1991), “in no time before the Vietnam conflict had such a large number of composers produced such an extensive body of war-related art music contrary to the desires and policies of the government” (p. 326). Although it is argued that the isolation of the arenas in which protest music was performed significantly limited its social impact, it was seen as a dangerous weapon – at least judging from the fact that many songs were banned from the mass media (Denisoff, 1970a, p. 808). In 1963, the Fire and Police Research Association of Los Angeles even called for an investigation of folk music “as a tool in the subversion of American youth” (Denisoff, 1970a, p. 811).

2.3 Folk music

By its basic definition, folk music is rural traditional music that is typically passed down orally (“Folk music,” 2017). It is often participatory, and associated with work, games, or enculturation (“Folk music,” 2017). Since folk music has usually been seen as a genre that broad segments of the population identify with, it has often been harnessed for political causes (“Folk music,” 2017). The American folk boom of the 1960s is but one example of such revival. The folk revival in the United States was in fact part of a continuum that had its origins in the Great Depression of the 1930s (“Folk music,” 2017). The most important folk musician of the 1930s and 1940s was Woody Guthrie (1912–1967), who not only performed traditional folk tunes, but also wrote new songs “giving voice to the struggles of the dispossessed and downtrodden” (“Woody Guthrie,” 2017). In 1940, Guthrie met young Pete Seeger, who was to become the best-known folk musician of post-World War II United States, and the two began traveling and performing together (“About Pete Seeger,” 2017; “Folk music,” 2017). Guthrie became increasingly leftist, and continued to write
politically charged songs even in the 1950s, when the Right Wing gained power in the United States ("Woody Guthrie," 2017). Huntington disease caused Guthrie’s hospitalization in 1954 and death in 1967, but his music was a major inspiration to the folk revival of the 1960s: Among the young admirers who visited him in the hospital were Bob Dylan and Phil Ochs, who picked up the torch of using music to attack fascism and support humanitarian causes ("Woody Guthrie," 2017).

The folk music revival of the 1960s started out as a purist movement: traditional ‘people’s music’ was performed with acoustic instruments, and commerciality was frowned upon ("Folk rock," 2017). In the mid-1960s, however, folk music fused with rock: the electric instruments of rock were combined with the socially conscious lyrics of folk music that had already adopted a political agenda ("Folk music," 2017; "Folk rock," 2017). This new hybrid style, folk rock, was preceded by commercial folk pop already in the 1950s, when Harry Belafonte and Kingston Trio had mixed contemporary material with spirituals, Appalachian mountain music, early blues, and English and Celtic ballads ("Folk rock," 2017). The style represented by the folk trio Peter, Paul and Mary has also been defined as folk pop: they recorded commercially successful versions of protest songs written by Woody Guthrie, Pete Seeger, Phil Ochs and Bob Dylan, thus creating a “bridge between traditional folk music and later folk rock” ("Peter, Paul and Mary," 2017; "Folk rock," 2017). This tendency culminated in the release Bob Dylan’s partly electric album *Bringing It All Back Home* (1965), and especially in his legendary performance in the 1965 Newport Folk Festival, where the use of amplified instruments shocked and offended at least the most purist segments of the audience ("Folk rock," 2017; Jones, 2004, p. 55). Folk rock quickly became the “trend of the moment”: The Byrds, The Mamas and the Papas, and Simon and Garfunkel, among others, recorded hit songs that did not have a strict connection to the traditional sources ("Folk rock," 2017). After its heyday in the mid-1960s, folk rock melted into psychedelic rock, although some bands and songwriters, such as Jackson Browne and Bruce Springsteen, continued to cultivate the socially conscious style of writing music ("Folk rock," 2017).

2.4 Pete Seeger

Peter “Pete” Seeger (1919–2014) was an American singer and songwriter. He is regarded as the embodiment of the 1960s folk revival in the United States (Jones, 2004, p. 59). He became interested in authentic folk music at a young age: when he was 19 years old, he travelled across
the country and gathered country ballads, work songs and hymns, “dedicating himself to the ‘music of the people’” (“About Pete Seeger,” 2017; “Pete Seeger,” 2017). Seeger’s father, who had been in the Communist party, had passed on to Pete the idea that music could be “part of the whole big struggle” (Shen, 2012). In 1940, Pete Seeger formed a politically oriented quartet called Almanac Singers, together with the folksinger and composer Woody Guthrie who also encouraged Seeger to start writing his own songs (“About Pete Seeger,” 2017). In 1948, Seeger organised another group, the Weavers, which achieved national fame, but got blacklisted and banned from most TV and radio shows for alleged Communist sympathies – Seeger had earlier been active in left-wing and labour politics (“About Pete Seeger,” 2017; “Pete Seeger,” 2017). In 1950, Seeger’s name appeared on the Red Channels pamphlet, a list of Communists operating in the entertainment business, which shut the doors of many concert stages for him (Hilamaa & Varjus, 2015, pp. 28–29). The ban did not stop Seeger from composing and performing, for example on college campuses, where the performers were not sifted so strictly (“About Pete Seeger,” 2017; Hilamaa & Varjus, 2015, p. 29). Over the years, the accusations faded, and by the 1990s, Seeger had earned the status of “a cherished American institution” (“Pete Seeger,” 2017). He even performed in the inauguration concert of President Barack Obama in 2009 (Hilamaa & Varjus, 2015, p. 32). Seeger has also received a National Medal of Arts and several Grammy Awards (“Pete Seeger,” 2017). He remained musically and politically active throughout his life (“Pete Seeger,” 2017). Pete Seeger died in 2014, at 94 years of age.

Participation was the core of Seeger’s work: he made songs for the Civil Rights and peace movements, as well as environmental causes, and frequented marches and rallies (“About Pete Seeger,” 2017). In his banjo, he had inscribed the motto “This machine surrounds hate and forces it to surrender”, inspired by the slogan “This machine kills fascists” in Woody Guthrie’s guitar (“Pete Seeger,” 2017). Seeger was never a Communist fundamentalist, but he was committed to standing with the ‘people’ in their resistance of the oppression (Jones, 2004, p. 59). To him, music was “the people’s medium of choice”, an effective way to express the experiences, values, needs and goals of the people (Jones, 2004, p. 59). Seeger believed that the power and potential of music was realized through participatory music; when oppositional songs were sung together, collectively, they became “vehicles to rally and inspire those in struggle” (Jones, 2004, pp. 59–60). Accordingly, the audience was encouraged to sing along both in folk festivals and in campuses, and for example in the 1963 Newport Folk Festival, several performers gathered on stage for certain
numbers, singing together to emphasise the collectiveness of anti-war and anti-racist causes (Boucher, 2004, p. 155; see also Shen, 2012).

In this thesis, eight songs by Pete Seeger have been chosen for closer examination: ‘Where Have All the Flowers Gone’ from The Bitter and the Sweet (1962), ‘King Henry’ from Dangerous Songs!? (1966), ‘Waist Deep in the Big Muddy’ from Waist Deep in the Big Muddy and Other Love Songs (1967), ‘Bring Them Home’, ‘All My Children of the Sun’ and ‘Ballad of the Fort Hood Three’ from Young Vs. Old (1969), ‘Last Train to Nuremberg’ from Rainbow Race (1973) and ‘The Emperor is Naked Today-O’ (originally titled ‘As the Sun Rose’) from Circles & Seasons (1979).

2.5 Bob Dylan

Bob Dylan (born 1941, original name Robert Zimmerman) is an American singer and songwriter. He started his career as a folk musician in the late 1950s, adopting the surname Dylan after the Welsh poet Dylan Thomas (“Bob Dylan,” 2017). After his performance at the Newport Folk Festival in 1963, he was hailed as “the King of Folk Music” and labelled as a protest singer (“Bob Dylan,” 2017). In the mid-1960s – to the disappointment of many of his fans – he went over to rock music, but his lyrics remained as challenging as they had been before (“Bob Dylan,” 2017). After that, his style has undergone several ‘phases’, such as a country rock phase and a profoundly religious period after his converting to Christianity in 1979 (“Bob Dylan,” 2017). During his long career, he has written more than 500 songs and received numerous awards, the most exalted being the Nobel Prize for Literature in 2016 “for having created new poetic expressions within the great American song tradition” (“Bob Dylan,” 2017; “The Nobel Prize,” 2016). His lyrics are characterized by intellectual features of classic literature and poetry, and he has been called the “Shakespeare of his generation” (“Bob Dylan,” 2017). Vietnam is hardly ever directly mentioned in his lyrics; indeed, according to David Boucher, what made Bob Dylan exceptional compared to other protest singers of the 1960s was his talent for “conjuring up the image without having to spell out the message in literal terms” and thus “stimulating the imagination of the listener” (2004, p. 159).

As a political protest singer, Bob Dylan was a contradictory character: although he had a period of writing topical songs early in his career, and his song ‘Blowin’ in the Wind’ is considered “one of the classic protest songs of the 1960s”, Dylan did not want to be identified as a ‘political’ singer; he has even been reported saying that he did not want to be responsible for the political aspirations
of his audience (Boucher, 2004, pp. 154–155, 162). Accordingly, in the mid-1960s, there was a sharp shift in his style in terms of both content and delivery: his early albums *The Freewheelin’ Bob Dylan* (1963) and *The Times They Are a-Changin’* (1964) consist of acoustic folk songs dealing with love, war and civil rights, whereas on *Bringing it All Back Home* (1965) and *Highway 61 Revisited* (1965) he is backed up by electric instruments, singing more abstract and expressionist verses, and consciously “turning his back on the folk revival and political movements” (Browning, 2004, p. 119; Boucher, 2004, p. 166).

Since both Pete Seeger and Bob Dylan operated in the folk music scene and performed at the same festivals at the beginning of the 1960s, they naturally knew each other. By then Seeger had already earned his status as one of the spearheads of folk, although his fame was based on the earlier, 1940s folk movement which leaned substantially on socialist ideals (Hilamaa & Varjus, 2015, p. 32). When Bob Dylan was beginning his career, Seeger took a liking to his views on society, and became a kind of patron to him (Hilamaa & Varjus, 2015, p. 46). Seeger also appreciated Dylan’s affection for Woody Guthrie, a folk legend and Seeger’s old friend, whom they both used to visit at the hospital (Hilamaa & Varjus, 2015, p. 46). Their relationship was put to the test when Dylan adopted electric instruments, which for many old folk musicians were a symbol of commercialization; besides, as a collector of folk music, Seeger had made a major contribution to the establishment of acoustic guitar and banjo as the “authentic voice of American radicalism” (Jones, 2004, p. 65; see also Hilamaa & Varjus, 2015, p. 47). Legend has it that when Dylan performed with an electric guitar at the 1965 Newport Folk Festival, Seeger – a board member of the festival – was so incensed that he tried to axe the main power cable, although he has later explained that he had only wanted to turn down the volume that was disturbing the audience (Jones, 2004, p. 65; Hilamaa & Varjus, 2015, p. 51).

The material for this study contains song lyrics from Dylan’s ‘protest song’ phase as well as from his ‘inspirational’ phase: ‘Blowing in the Wind’ and ‘Masters of War’ from *The Freewheelin’ Bob Dylan* (1963) and ‘With God on Our Side’ from *The Times They Are a-Changin’* (1964) are conventional anti-war songs, whereas ‘Highway 61 Revisited’, ‘Tombstone Blues’ and ‘From a Buick 6’ from *Highway 61 Revisited* (1965) have abstract, almost surreal lyrics that nevertheless are inspired by the Vietnam War (see Gamble, 2004, pp. 23–24; Boucher, 2004, p. 164). In addition to these 1960s songs, a later song associated with the Vietnam War and its consequences has been included in this study: ‘Clean-cut Kid’ from *Empire Burlesque* (1985).
2.6 Phil Ochs

Phil Ochs (1940–1976) was an American journalist, folksinger and songwriter. During the first half of the 1960s, Ochs’s songs were characterized by “strident leftist views and dry wit”, and he was regarded as a potential challenger of Bob Dylan for the title of the of the most notable folksinger of the mid-sixties (“Phil Ochs,” 2016). Like Dylan, he began writing non-political texts in the late 1960s (“Phil Ochs,” 2016). He realized that his musical idiom, which was based on simple traditional folk music, was becoming outdated, so he made an unsuccessful attempt to move to the direction of pop music (Hilamaa & Varjus, 2015, p. 161). Although Ochs’s songs are regularly mentioned in different listings of “The best Vietnam War protest songs” – for example on a list compiled by James M. Lindsay, the senior vice president at the Council on Foreign Relations – he never became a commercially successful singer (Iredale, 2009; Lindsay, 2015; White, 2016; “Phil Ochs,” 2016). Ochs suffered from depression from the late 1960s on, and committed suicide in 1976 (“Phil Ochs,” 2016; Broadside & Ochs, 1976).

In an interview in 1968, Ochs stated that songs have to make a point, “not a vague philosophical point that can be taken any way by anybody” (Broadside & Ochs, 1976). He followed this objective in his songs, which aim at topicality rather than timelessness; he often directly refers to contemporary issues, such as the Vietnam War or the civil rights. He described himself as a “semi-journalist, semi-singer, and semi-writer”, not an actual artist (Broadside & Ochs, 1976). To him, America had been poisoned by a network of corruption, and it had been the music industry that had been on “the vanguard of comment”, representing humanity and intelligence; until after 1965, it, too, had been corrupted by “profiteers and businessmen” (Broadside & Ochs, 1976). When folk music had arrived on the scene at the turn of the 1960s, it had represented a pure, humane, and basic approach that reached its heyday in 1965 – the most creative years of Phil Ochs himself were the early 1960s – but after that, music industry had been “killed by greed” (Broadside & Ochs, 1976).

Phil Ochs and Bob Dylan had similar backgrounds: they were almost the same age, and both came from Jewish middle-class families. However, the way they saw their roles as musicians differed significantly between the two. Dylan’s artistic ambitions were multidimensional, and he did not want to be called “the voice of his generation”, whereas Ochs wanted to be a “singing journalist”, passionately attacking Capitalism, oppression and war (Hilamaa & Varjus, 2015, p.47). After the
1964 Newport Folk Festival, Paul Wolf from the *Broadside* magazine presented Dylan and Ochs as complete opposites: he saw Ochs representing meaning, sincerity and idealistic principles, while Dylan was attributed with disregard and self-assertive egoism (as cited in Hilamaa & Varjus, 2015, p. 161). This was a cold comfort for Ochs, since the audience and critics still loved Dylan; consequently, Ochs’s relationship to Dylan was marked by a contradictory mixture of jealousy and admiration (Hilamaa & Varjus, 2015, p. 160). Ochs even criticized Bob Dylan: although he thought Dylan was “great”, Ochs considered him to have “slipped down” as a writer after the 1965 album *Highway 61 Revisited* (Broadside & Ochs, 1976). In Ochs’s view, everybody had fallen in love with Dylan and refused to see the fact that “the emperor had no clothes” anymore (Broadside & Ochs, 1976). The two singers used to mock each other despite being friends: Ochs remembers Dylan having arrogantly said to him: “Phil, you’re not really a writer, you’re a journalist, and you shouldn’t try to write [songs]” (Broadside & Ochs, 1976).

The ten Phil Ochs songs examined in this study are ‘Talkin’ Vietnam’ from the album *All the News That’s Fit to Sing* (1964); ‘I Ain’t Marching Anymore’ and ‘Draft Dodger Rag’ from *I Ain’t Marching Anymore* (1965); ‘I’m Going to Say It Now’, ‘Is There Anybody Here’, ‘Cops of the World’ and ‘There But For Fortune’ from *Phil Ochs in Concert* (1966); ‘White Boots Marching in a Yellow Land’ and ‘The War is Over’ from *Tape from California* (1968); and ‘Here’s to the state of Richard Nixon’ from *Chords of fame* (1976). All these songs are rather clearly connected to Vietnam War. Musically, the ones recorded before the year 1967 represent more traditional folk music, accompanied only with a simple acoustic guitar, whereas after 1967, Ochs began to fuse features of classical and rock music into folk, using for example string and brass instruments in his arrangements.
Stylistics is a practice or an approach rather than a theory or a method (see e.g. Barry, 2009, p. 196; Toolan, 1990, p. 28). In stylistic reading, systematic and analytic attention is paid to the language of a text; the aim is "to show how the technical linguistic features of a literary work, such as the grammatical structure of its sentences, contribute to its overall meanings and effects" (Barry 2009, p. 203). Stylistics is not restricted to any specific genre; instead, it can be applied to political speeches or advertisements just as well as to expository prose (Barry 2009, p. 204). What adds to the convenience of stylistics to the study of political songs is that it is closely related to rhetoric, which dates back to Ancient Greece and focuses on the use of public speaking as a means of persuasion (Bradford 1997, p. 3).

According to classical rhetoric, the three modes of persuasion are the rational appeal (logos), the emotional appeal (pathos) and the ethical appeal (ethos) (Burke, 2014, p. 22). Logos means reasoning; producing solid arguments to support the thesis argument. Pathos focuses on “how emotions are triggered by language” and then “channelled within the minds of the people in an audience”, and it is said to be the most efficient mode of persuasion (Burke, 2014, p. 22). Although the concept of pathos dates back to the times of classical rhetoric, its efficiency is confirmed also by modern theories of communication and persuasion in the field of social psychology (Burke, 2014, p. 22). As for ethos, it focuses on how the speaker himself is seen by the audience, and how he is trying to affect the attitude the audience has towards him (Burke, 2014, p. 22). The material studied in this thesis leans firmly on the pathos mode; a song is characteristically a medium whose strength lies in its capability to stir emotions, and it can be argued that anti-war songs attempt to arouse feelings of anger, grief and compassion.

Stylistics takes an analytical view of the modes of persuasion by dividing the text into its components. A stylistic reading can focus on linguistic features at any level of language, from phonetics to syntax or semantics (Simpson, 2004, p. 5). The fundamental assumption is that patterns of for example vocabulary and grammar serve various functions in discourse (Simpson, 2004, p. 8). While aspiring to gain a better understanding of how language works, the challenge for the stylistician is to identify those particular features that “contribute most crucially to the distinctiveness and effectiveness” of the discourse in question (Toolan, 1990, pp. 43, 68). From the spectrum of potential linguistic features, the ones chosen for this study are personal pronouns,
clause types and certain figures of speech, but other features, such as participant roles will also be considered alongside them – after all, the different levels and features of language are interconnected and depend upon one another (see Toolan, 1990, p. 68; Simpson, 2004, p. 5).
4.1 War as a crime against humanity

One of the central reasons for the Americans to oppose the war was the human suffering that they could hear and read about in the news (“Vietnam War,” 2017). This applied to songwriters and composers as well: they were more concerned about the fate of the enemy than in any previous war, and considered the suffering of the enemy equal with that of the Americans (Arnold, 1991, p. 325). Pete Seeger, Bob Dylan and Phil Ochs share the humanitarian view that human dignity belongs equally to all people. In their songs, they identify with the destinies of the Vietnamese and condemn dehumanizing attitudes towards the enemy. In other words, they represent the war as a crime against humanity.

The news of the violations against the civilian population in Vietnam began to disturb Pete Seeger even before the scandalous My Lai Massacre. In ‘King Henry’ (1966) he describes a nightmare vision: “In my dreams I stare at this family I love / all gutted and spattered with napalm”. A similar
image of likening the Vietnamese civilians to the American ones can be found in an authentic interview with a Vietnam veteran:

When I got home, there was my family sitting in the living room. . . . And they were lined up just like this Vietnamese family in that hooch that we had busted into looking for VC [Viet Cong] and had killed them. Killed them as they were sitting there all lined up, just like my family. (Scurfield, 2004, p. 68)

Seeger also connects the horrible treatment of civilians to a real-life example in his documentary-like song ‘Ballad of the Fort Hood Three’ (1969), where he paraphrases Private David Samas’s testimony: “We’ve been told in training that in Vietnam we must fight / and we may have to kill women and children and that is quite all right”. Despite bringing out the unacceptable and inhuman victimization of the civilians, neither Seeger, Dylan nor Ochs wallows in repulsive details in their lyrics. The subject is disturbing enough even when mentioned in a single line of the song, like in Phil Ochs’s ‘Cops of the World’ (1966): “When we’ve butchered your sons / have a stick of our bubble gum”.

With regard to the mistreatment of the civilians, Phil Ochs presents two types of soldiers: those who realize that what they are doing is not right, and those who have a nonchalant attitude. The first type appears in ‘White Boots Marching in a Yellow Land’ (1968) and ‘I Ain’t Marching Anymore’ (1965). The soldier speaker of the first mentioned song comprehends that the war causes human tragedy, and that for example for those orphaned in the war, no explanation will justify the actions of the Americans:

It's written in the ashes of the village towns we burn
It's written in the empty beds of the fathers unreturned
And the chocolate in the children’s eyes will never understand
When you're white boots marching in a yellow land

A similar epiphany causes the soldier speaker in ‘I Ain’t Marching Anymore’ to convert to pacifism: “When I saw the cities burning / I knew that I was learning / that I ain't marchin' anymore”. When the hearer is given what appears to be an insider perspective to the reprehensible destruction involved in the war, his emotions are likely to be moved, which in turn is an efficient means of persuasion (see Burke, 2014, p. 22). Apart from these humane soldier characters who clearly have a conscience, Ochs introduces another example, whom the military training has apparently managed to harden and brainwash. In the army, dehumanizing the enemy is a strategy for detachment; necessary for being able to function in the absurd circumstances of war. Accordingly,
the soldiers recruited to fight in Vietnam were trained to treat the Viet Cong “like animals, or something other than human” (Scurfield, 2004, pp. 22–23). The soldier speaker in Phil Ochs’s ‘Talkin’ Vietnam’ (1964) is a product of such manipulation; he even refers to the purpose of being in Vietnam as “training”, since the U.S. had not declared a war:

Friends, the very next day we trained some more  
We burned some villages down to the floor.  
Yes, we burned out the jungles far and wide,  
Made sure those red apes had no place left to hide.

Referring to the Vietnamese as “red apes” makes the soldiers and the whole military system look disrespectful, inhuman and repugnant; hence, the song is likely to outrage the hearers and stir opposition to the war.

The lament for the human suffering takes less straightforward forms as well. Pete Seeger’s ‘Where Have All the Flowers Gone’ (1955) portrays a universally valid image of war as a tragedy of entire generations: young girls marry young men, then the men go to war and die, and flowers cover their graves. Seeger does not specify any nationalities – there are mourning widows both in Vietnam and in the United States, not to mention all the other countries involved in all the other wars. Bob Dylan’s equally iconic ‘Blowin’ in the Wind’ (1963) is a similar universal cry for humanity and peace: “How many ears must one man have / before he can hear people cry? / Yes, and how many deaths will it take ‘til he knows / that too many people have died?”. These two songs oppose war in general and express empathy towards all the individuals who lose their lives in war, as well as those who grieve for their loved ones; therefore, they have been the most potent of all the songs studied in this thesis in transcending time and place.

4.2 War as unnecessary sacrifice

Another argument presented by the opponents of war, closely related to the previous one but taking a different perspective, is that sending young men to war is senseless sacrifice and waste of lives. Around 1967, even those Americans who were not active in the peace movement began to grow alarmed as the news of increasing American casualties kept coming in (“Vietnam War,” 2017). The songwriters frequently brought up this aspect of the war in their song lyrics: Phil Ochs’s ‘White Boots Marching in a Yellow Land’ (1968) contains for example the line “casualties arriving like the dropping of the rain”, which creates the impression that America was entangled in an
insane and futile enterprise. Pete Seeger, Bob Dylan and Phil Ochs also described for example the fear of death experienced by the recruits, the mourning of the parents who have lost their son, and the consequences of war for those who return from the battlefield.

Pete Seeger reminds that war is not just thrilling gunplay, but a life-threatening business; the finality of death eventually has to be faced by those who are left behind. The remaining silence is described in ‘Where Have All the Flowers Gone’ (1955), which is a suitable example for this subchapter as well, with the young husbands who end up under flowers in graveyards. Another example is ‘King Henry’ (1966) where Seeger offers a more specific story, an anecdote about a recruit named Simon. Simon is sent to Vietnam, from where he writes a letter to the speaker of the song, complaining about the circumstances. After giving Simon a history, a personality and, in a sense, a ‘life’, Seeger briefly concludes that specific part of the song: “He wrote this last month, last week he was dead / and Simon came home in a casket”. Simon’s precipitous death leaves the listener stupefied and reminds that a detail to Vietnam might dash all the plans and dreams one had had for the future.

A general critique of wasting the men who would have had their whole life ahead of them is expressed by Bob Dylan in ‘Masters of War’ (1963) and by Phil Ochs’s ‘I Ain’t Marching Anymore’ (1965). They target their disapprobation at the leaders who orchestrate the wars and then, in Dylan’s and Ochs’s opinion, “sit back and watch” as their dirty work is being done for them. Ochs states in his song that “It’s always the old to lead us to the war / It’s always the young to fall”. Ochs refers to the age of the victims in the beginning of the song as well: “The young land started growing / the young blood started flowing”. He rejects the patriotic view that dying for one’s country is a glorious destiny, and instead questions the sensibility of such sacrifice: “Now look at all we’ve won with the sabre and the gun / Tell me, is it worth it all?”. Dylan is more aggressive in his attack against those who treat young lives as disposables, suggesting that the ‘masters of war’ view bloodshed as some kind of perverted entertainment:

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You fasten all the triggers
for the others to fire
then you sit back and watch
when the death count gets higher
You hide in your mansion'
as young people's blood
flows out of their bodies
and is buried in the mud.
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The sacrificial theme appears in a more symbolical form in the first verse of Bob Dylan’s ‘Highway 61 Revisited’ (1965). Although Vietnam War is not mentioned in the song, both Andrew Gamble and Gary Browning, who have studied Dylan’s songs, hear the following biblically tinged story as a reference to the “willingness of fathers” – or in Browning’s version, “political fathers” – “to sacrifice their sons” in the Vietnam War (Gamble, 2004, p. 23; Browning, 2004, p. 120):

Oh God said to Abraham, "Kill me a son"
Abe says, "Man, you must be puttin' me on"
God say, "No." Abe say, "What ?"
God say, "You can do what you want Abe, but
The next time you see me comin' you better run"
Well Abe says, "Where do you want this killin' done ?"
God says. "Out on Highway 61".

In this view, the soldiers are not the perpetrators described in the previous subchapter, but victims of the arbitrary decisions made by the authorities. The order to “kill a son” sounds like a sudden whim, and Abraham does not even ask for any reasons. Questioning the meaningfulness of the orders is an effect that is also used by Pete Seeger: in ‘Waist Deep in the Big Muddy’ (1967), a captain character urges his men to wade into a river that gets deeper and deeper, and finally drowns in the water. The story is set in the year 1942, but towards the end of the song, Seeger connects it to the prevailing situation: “every time I read the papers / that old feeling comes on: /
We’re waist deep in the Big Muddy / and the big fool says to push on”. Seeger strongly insinuates that the leaders are only getting men killed in a senseless enterprise.

As for Phil Ochs, he did not content himself with lamenting the destinies dictated from above, but encouraged the draftees to take their fates into their own hands and resist the orders: in ‘Draft Dodger Rag’ (1965), the speaker makes up a list of humoristic excuses to convince the draft board that he is not suitable to be recruited, but among the jokes about his medical and mental condition he mentions some concerns that were probably shared by thousands of young men (with the exception of the invalid aunt) : “Oh, think of my career, my sweetheart dear, and my poor old invalid aunt / Besides, I ain’t no fool, I’m a-going to school, and I’m working in a defense plant”. Since Ochs’s audience consisted mainly of young people whose plans for the future probably did not include an untimely death in a foreign jungle, the appeal to join the peace movement was likely to fall on fertile soil.
While Ochs emphasizes the responsibility of those who accept to be drafted by reminding that evading the draft is a real option – and from the point of view of the peace movement, a recommendable and honourable one –, Dylan empathizes with the young draftees who are sent into the inferno of Vietnam. Dylan perceives the recruits not as homicidal militarists, but as ordinary people who have been taught to follow the rules of the society despite possible personal suspicion. In ‘With God on Our Side’ (1963) the speaker character confesses: “So now as I’m leavin’ / I’m weary as hell / The confusion I’m feelin’ / Ain’t no tongue can tell”. The confusion, panic and helplessness felt by a young conscript is expressed even more hauntingly in ‘From a Buick 6’ (1965), which represents Dylan’s more abstract phase of songwriting:

Well, you know I need a steam shovel mama to keep away the dead  
I need a dump truck baby to unload my head  
She brings me everything and more, and just like I said  
Well, if I go down dyin’ you know she bound to put a blanket on my bed.

The songwriters also remind about the possibility that the result of going to war might be neither death nor a glorious homecoming, but that the experience can leave a permanent imprint – either physical or mental – on those who return alive. Phil Ochs provides a graphic depiction of this in ‘The War is Over’ (1968): “One-legged veterans will greet the dawn / and they’re whistling marches as they mow the lawn”. Losing a limb can, however, be a small price compared to the mental consequences: in Bob Dylan’s ‘Clean-Cut Kid’ (1985), the protagonist of the song is so distressed and unbalanced after the war that he ends up taking his own life. Although his body has not been killed in the battlefield, his soul has, and that makes him a casualty of the war. Dylan accuses the authorities for his downfall: they “sent him to a napalm health spa to shape up”, gave him “blood to spill”, and turned his head “inside out”. Dylan also empathizes with the parents of the “clean-cut kid” and, by implication, with the loved ones of all the victims of the war: “His mama walks the floor, his daddy weeps and moans”.

4.3 War as a display of power

The idea of war as ‘unnecessary sacrifice’ entails questioning the motives for war. Most people would probably agree that if something valuable can be gained through warfare, for example preventing one’s home country from being invaded by an enemy, it is worth putting one’s life at risk. Even Pete Seeger admits in ‘Bring Them Home’ (1969) that “If an army invaded this land of
mine . . . / you’d find me out on the firing line”. The case of Vietnam War, however, was not as unambiguous: for many Americans, it was difficult to understand how interfering with the internal issues of a distant country could be justified. In the military training, the trainees were reassured that the war had “a strong military, anti-communist justification” based on the domino theory: if Vietnam fell to the Communists, other South East Asian countries would follow (Scurfield, 2004, p. 10). The theory, or at least its implementation, did not convince everyone: for example, the three factual privates quoted in Pete Seeger’s ‘Ballad of the Fort Hood Three’ (1969) declare that the war is “illegal, immoral and unjust” and “a war of aggression”, and purport that “the government’s not been honest in telling us about Saigon”. In their opinion, “the fight for freedom can be made right here in our own land”. For Seeger, Dylan and Ochs, the most frequent assumption regarding the true motive of the war is that it is a mere show of force, not a necessity.

Pete Seeger voices the conception of war as a display of power in ‘Bring Them Home’ (1969): he suggests that the reason for being in Vietnam is that the generals “want to test their weaponry”. Phil Ochs also refers to weapons in ‘Cops of the World’ (1966): “our pistols are hungry and our tempers are short”, “and guns will be guns and boys will be boys”. Ochs’s song is full of accounts of the aggressive and disrespectful behaviour of the American soldiers, for example the lines “You’d best get down on your knees, boys” and “we’ll smash down your doors, we don’t bother to knock”. This impudence is justified with the status and wealth of the United States in the lines “We’ve got too much money, we’re looking for toys”, “We’re the biggest and toughest kids on the block”, “We own half the world”, and in the refrain, “We’re the cops of the world”. Seeger’s and Ochs’s songs snort at the illusion of “fighting for a noble cause” and downgrade the war to childish boast and rampage.

In ‘Tombstone Blues’ (1965) Bob Dylan also presents a military character who lacks empathy but bursts with brute force: This “Commander-in-Chief” says “death to all those who would whimper and cry”, and drops a bar bell, a bodybuilding instrument whose deliberate and audible dropping is usually a demonstration of its weight to the fellow exercisers. In these lines, Dylan expresses a view that the warmongers despise weakness and emotionality, and value strength, toughness and ruthlessness. Dylan demonstrates that the war-glorifying attitude also permeates the American educational system: in ‘With God on Our Side’ (1963), the speaker says about the Spanish-American War and the Civil War that “the names of the heroes / I’s made to memorize / with guns in their hands / and God on their side”. In the same song, he notes that with the new nuclear
weapons, the United States is even more powerful and dangerous: “One push of the button / and a shot the world wide”. These images are likely to move the hearer by highlighting the coldness and frightfulness of war.

4.4 War as a betrayal of the American values

One central theme shared by Seeger, Dylan and Ochs is disappointment with their home country. On the other hand, they demonstrate a fondness towards what they consider the ‘true soul’ of America: Seeger had dedicated himself to getting acquainted with the traditional music of the United States, and to fighting for the cause of the ordinary American people; and for Dylan, the ideal America would have been “a model of peace, harmony and community to the rest of the world” (Gamble, 2004, p. 24; Jones, 2004, p. 59). Folk music, as their style of choice, is ‘people’s music’ by definition, so their identity is fundamentally ‘American’. It is the ‘system’ and the leaders they are disappointed with, but they feel that the political actions of the ‘official America’ bring shame upon the whole nation. In Pete Seeger’s view, the country can be vindicated by active, righteous people who rise up against injustice and immorality; a belief he sounds for example in ‘Ballad of the Fort Hood Three’ (1969): “We can help them set our country straight on the right track again / when a man can hold his head with pride and say, ‘I’m an American’”. The same idea is expressed through a metaphor in ‘The Emperor is Naked Today-O’ (1970): “Why don’t we be the ones to exclaim / The emperor is naked today-o”. In his songs, Seeger also expresses a moral obligation to share the guilt. In ‘Last Train to Nuremberg’ (1973), he lists the names of some of the people he judges as ‘war criminals’, ending the list in “the voters, me and you”. The view, that passively enabling the reprehensible policy exercised by the government is in fact an act of betrayal towards the values United States was once founded on, is also conveyed in ‘King Henry’ (1966):

I mind my own business, I watch my TV  
Complain about taxes but pay anyway  
In a civilized manner my forefathers betray  
Who long ago struggled for freedom.

Phil Ochs also mourns for the betrayed ideals, but unlike Seeger, he seems to think that it may be too late to ‘set the country on the right track’. In ‘Here’s to the State of Richard Nixon’ (1974), Ochs accuses President Nixon of having “torn out the heart of” the United States, suggesting that
the country has had a heart, but the leaders have corrupted it and now “criminals are posing as advisors to the crown” and “the wars are fought in secret”. Another difference between Seeger and Ochs is that to Ochs, the responsibility of individual Americans for the war is associated not so much with their nationality per se, but with the choice of accepting to be drafted. Ochs shows his pessimism and accusation in ‘The War is Over’ (1968):

So do your duty, boys, and join with pride
Serve your country in her suicide
Find the flags so you can wave goodbye
But just before the end even treason might be worth a try
This country is too young to die.

Ochs also highlights with ironic remarks, that although the United States prides itself on things like democracy and progressiveness, its actions in Vietnam of are in fact a travesty of democracy from the point of view of the Vietnamese. Ochs’s songs ‘Cops of the World’ (1966) and ‘Talkin’ Vietnam’ (1964) depict, how the noble values are sullied by the questionable war:

We own half the world, oh say can you see
The name for our profits is democracy
So, like it or not, you will have to be free
'Cause we're the Cops of the World, boys
We're the Cops of the World

Through these lines from ‘Cops of the World’, Ochs points out that interfering with the national issues of Vietnam and forcing the Vietnamese to adopt American ideas does definitely not cohere with values like freedom and democracy; keeping in mind also that President Ngo Dinh Diem, whom the U.S. backed, had declared himself president without elections. In ‘Talkin’ Vietnam’, the speaker character meets the ghost of President Diem, who commends that “you’re fighting to keep Vietnam free / for good old Diem-o-cracy / That means rule by one family / and 15.000 American troops, give or take a few” [the song was written in 1964, before the troops started to pour in with vengeance]. Diem faced a lot of domestic opposition, not only from the Communists of North Vietnam, but also from armed religious sects and even subversive elements of his own army; however, the opposition was bought off or intimidated by the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) (“Vietnam War,” 2017). Diem publicly opposed the elections, and his followers were not democratically chosen either; hence, one of the central arguments of the peace movement was that the U.S. was in fact supporting a dictatorship (“Vietnam War,” 2017). In the last verse of
'Talkin' Vietnam', Ochs insinuates that the U.S. had a significant role in choosing Diem’s successors, despite pretending to be ignorant:

Well now old Diem is gone and dead
All the new leaders are anti-Red.
Yes, they're pro-American, freedom sensations
Against Red China, the United Nations.
Now all the news commentators and the CIA
are saying, "Thank God for coincidence."

For Bob Dylan, the ideal America is comprised of pure countryside, simplicity, and the attitude of the “independent, rugged, self-reliant pioneers” of the Wild West, but the modern America is stained by lies, corruption and greed (Gamble, 2004, pp. 15–16). The free expression and authentic creativity valued by Dylan (see Browning, 2004, p. 129) has been replaced with mind-blunting commerciality: for instance, in ‘Clean-Cut Kid’ (1985), after the system has made the “clean-cut kid” fight in Vietnam and “turned his head inside out”, he is compensated with nothing but the hollow symbols of modern American welfare state: “He drank Coca-Cola, he was eating Wonder Bread / He ate Burger Kings, he was well fed”. In Dylan’s view, “the political world” had made America forget “its true self” and trampled upon the American virtues of liberty, equality and independence; America was not what it used to be (Gamble, 2004, p. 16). The Vietnam recruit in ‘Clean-Cut Kid’ is similarly disillusioned: “Everybody’s asking why he couldn’t adjust / adjust to what, a dream that bust? / [ . . . ] / He bought the American dream but it put him in doubt / only game he could play was Russian roulette”.
5 Persuasive language at work

After coming up with materials for arguments, the producer of a persuasive discourse has to order his discourse, and then pay attention to the stylisation, that is, “saying or writing things well and in a persuasive manner” (Burke, 2014, p. 21). Apparently, Pete Seeger, Bob Dylan and Phil Ochs have all succeeded in writing effective and persuasive songs, judging from the estimations written about them: Bob Dylan is said to have used art to “arouse emotion and motivate a politically conscious public to act” with his anti-war songs (Boucher, 2004, p. 156). Phil Ochs has been described as an “iconic American troubadour” whose songs “became anthems of the anti-war movement” (Kornfeld, 2016). As for Pete Seeger, he is regarded as “one of the principal inspirations for younger performers in the folk revival of the 1960s” (“Pete Seeger,” 2017). In this chapter, the lyrics of their songs are anatomized to see how they have formulated their message to effectively deliver it to the audience. A stylistic analysis of the language employed by these songwriters reveals a broad repertoire of linguistic means that contribute to the appeal of their songs. Some of those means are related to grammar, while others can be categorised as rhetorical devices.

5.1 Personal pronouns

Pronouns can contribute to subtle textual strategies and emphases (Toolan, 1990, p. 67). In the songs under examination, personal pronouns are used to signal the speaker or the addressee, or to refer to people. Since song lyrics can usually be considered ‘fictional discourse’, the pronominal system does not correspond to that of spoken language (see Black, 2006, p. 4). The ‘I’ in the lyrics does not automatically refer to the songwriter, nor the ‘you’ to the hearer; one or both of these pronouns may refer to characters designed by the songwriter, and this is made apparent in the context and content of the song. In that case, the first and second persons have elements of the third person; someone outside the immediate discourse (see Black, 2006, p. 5). In these songs, pronouns also have a strong implicatory effect: their referents are not always mentioned, but the audience can easily deduce who is being talked about. After all, pronouns, as substitutes for nouns, are sometimes used “to avoid the necessity of definite statement” (Jespersen, 1929, as cited in Toolan, 1990, p. 125). Furthermore, personal pronouns are also connected to narratorial choices: third-person narratives involve an omniscient narrator describing the actions and...
surroundings of the protagonist, while first-person narratives carry an air of verisimilitude, suggesting that the speaker is reporting what he is actually feeling, seeing and doing (Black, 2006, pp. 55, 61). The perspective through which a story is told is an important factor in the feel and colour of a text; with a different narrator, the effect could change considerably (Simpson, 2004, p. 26; Black, 2006, p. 54).

5.1.1 First person pronouns

In song lyrics written from a first-person perspective, the identity of the speaker can be a part of the persuasive strategy. In fictional texts, the ‘I’ cannot routinely be conflated with the author; hence, the reader must first deduce who the ‘speaker’ is (Herman, 1989, p. 213). In the songs written by Pete Seeger, the first-person pronoun usually refers to himself; in this sense, he seems to prefer sincerity to tactical composition. In some cases, he gives the floor to other real characters, as in ‘Ballad of the Fort Hood Three’ (1969). Phil Ochs and Bob Dylan also often identify with their first-person speakers, but there are also occasions where they pretend to sing in the voice of ‘the enemy’. In terms of discourse presentation, the use of first person signals direct discourse, where the hearer seems to have direct contact with the character (see Black, 2006, p. 70). Lexical and grammatical choices of the first-person characters can indicate for example their attitudes or background (Black, 2006, pp. 66, 70). Since the use of first-person pronouns alludes to a subjective statement, it has more provocative power than the more distant third-person pronoun usually used in storytelling: if it is suggested that the person holding certain views is present, it makes a stronger invitation to either agree or disagree.

Pete Seeger’s ‘Ballad of the Fort Hood Three’ (1969) refers to a true story about three U.S. army privates who refused their deployment in Vietnam and filed a lawsuit, the main argument of which was that the war was illegal (Hall, 2015). The song has four different ‘I’ characters. First, Seeger introduces the story as himself, the storyteller:

Come all you brave Americans and listen unto me
If you can spare five minutes in this 20th century
I’ll sing to you a story true as you will plainly see
It's about three U.S. soldiers they call "The Fort Hood Three"

He takes on the identity of a messenger, whose task is to sound the bravery of the “fort hood three” and the injustice they have faced. Hence, Seeger joins the tradition of broadside ballads
which used to function as predecessors of newspapers, offering "rhymed accounts on current events" (see “Ballad,” 2017). After setting the frame for the song, Seeger presents the heroes of the story one by one, telling a few words about their background, and then quotes each one in turn. The apparent authenticity enhances the effect of the song, and the fact that these words have come from U.S. army privates instead of some ‘pacifist hippie’ gives the song special credibility. First, Seeger quotes what he says are the “own words” of Private Dennis Mora:

I call this a war of aggression, the whole world knows it's so
We're supporting a dictator who holds Hitler his hero
There is a war we ought to fight, it's the war on poverty
with jobs for all, no matter who, in this democracy.

The privates emphatically condemn the war and accuse the American government of dishonesty. The approximate content of the quotations is taken from the statement that the three read at a press conference in New York (see Hall, 2015). The key line of the joint statement, as paraphrased by Seeger, was: “We say this war’s illegal, immoral and unjust”. The illegality argument was based on the fact that President Johnson had dispatched troops to Vietnam without a declaration of war or an address to Congress; officially, United States was not at war at any point of the conflict (“Vietnam War,” 2017). As for the immorality of the war, Seeger reports a politically sensitive insider claim that the soldiers were told in training that they “may have to kill women and children and that is quite all right”, which is easily the most shocking line of the song. The fact that civilians were becoming the chief victims of the war was one of the main arguments for anti-war demonstrators, and the revelation that this barbarity actually had the blessing of the authorities was nothing less than outrageous (see “Vietnam War,” 2017). What is likely to rouse the audience to an even greater anger is Seeger’s narration preceding the disclosure: “The policemen told his father something quite absurd: They’d arrange for him a discharge if he’d just retract these words” – a disillusioning testimony to the corruptedness of the system. Nevertheless, Seeger still had faith in the power of people: “At the moment that I’m singing the story’s far from through, the next verses of the ballad may be partly up to you . . . We can help them set our country straight on the right track again”. For the Fort Hood Three, this invitation to join the protest came too late: by the time Seeger’s album was released, they had already been convicted to jail for insubordination and the suit filed by them had been dismissed by the Court (Hall, 2015). Notwithstanding, in ‘Ballad of the Fort Hood Three’ Seeger gives the audience inspiring examples of disobedience, and an exhortation to appeal to authorities both in this particular case and in the general cause for peace.
The use of first person to ‘give the floor’ to the three privates, combined with Seeger’s solemn and proud *a cappella* rendition, emphasizes the gravity and significance of the story, and creates an unyielding atmosphere that leaves very little room for dissenting opinions.

Pete Seeger favours first-person narratives, almost without exception, in his fictional songs as well. By representing himself as a character of his story, he creates the impression of speaking from personal experience. This coheres with his ideal of having a direct contact with the audience. The illusion of recounting a true story may also be a way to attract the audience – after all, it is a popular technique in literature, one of the most quoted examples being Marlow’s first-person narrative in Joseph Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness*. Moreover, the perspective of an eyewitness may add to the plausibility of the story. Pete Seeger’s song ‘Waist Deep in the Big Muddy’ (1967) begins with a first-person account defining the context of the story:

> It was back in nineteen forty-two,
> I was a member of a good platoon.
> We were on manoeuvres in-a Louisiana,
> one night by the light of the moon.

It can be argued that this type of subjectivity makes the story interesting, catches the attention of the hearers and makes them eager to hear how the tale proceeds. Seeger’s ‘All My Children of the Sun’ (1969) is a similar narrative, this time about the crew of a warplane:

> Five hundred miles from nowhere we belly landed on a river
> We bid a quick goodbye to that ship of silver
> Twenty five piled out the window, twenty reached the shore
> We turned to see our metal bird sink to rise no more

Narratorial choices and colourful details make these two songs entertaining adventures as such, but to extract the message from the story, they have to be read as allegories. The allegoric interpretations of the songs are presented in chapter 5.3.3.

Similarly to Pete Seeger, Phil Ochs and Bob Dylan also use first person, both singular and plural, to create an illusion of an authentic insider perspective. In Ochs’s song ‘Cops of the World’ (1966), the ‘we’ speaker represents soldiers fighting in Vietnam. Unlike Seeger, Ochs does not identify with the speaker but disagrees with him, and attempts to show him in an unfavourable light. The use of a first-person pronoun implies that we are listening to the actual thoughts of these people; however, the heavy exaggeration of their repulsiveness makes it obvious that we are dealing with
grotesque irony. In the song, the soldiers for example tell the Vietnamese to bring their daughters to the port so that the “hairy and horny” Americans may “pick and choose” as they please. This detestable image is further bolstered by lines like “We'll spit through the streets of the cities we wreck”, “We’ll smash down your doors, we don’t bother to knock” and “When we’ve butchered your sons / have a stick of our bubble gum”. The text clearly aims at arousing disapproval of U.S. actions in Vietnam and questions the justification of their presence there, depicting Americans as intruders.

Bob Dylan also uses first-person soldier characters, but for a completely different effect. In his song ‘With God on Our Side’ (1963), the use of first person creates the impression of honesty and genuineness. His soldier character is not depicted as evil, but as a victim of the system, brainwashed by the government. He is obediently following rules, conventions and orders, just like he is taught to do. Others make the decisions for him: about “weapons of the chemical dust”, he says “if fire them we’re forced to / then fire them we must”. It is typical for Dylan to sympathise with perpetrators rather than to blame them, for in his view, they are victims of poverty, propaganda and lies in a “sick society” (Browning, 2004, p. 118; Boucher, 2004, p. 166). In this song, the key justification for all the wars in the American history is the hypocritical claim that God is on their side – and one simple man could not possibly dare to challenge such a powerful statement:

Oh my name it is nothin'
My age it means less
The country I come from
is called the Midwest
I's taught and brought up there
the laws to abide
and the land that I live in
has God on its side.

... So now as I'm leavin'
I'm weary as Hell
The confusion I'm feelin'
Ain't no tongue can tell
The words fill my head
and fall to the floor
If God's on our side
He'll stop the next war.
Phil Ochs also uses a more sympathetic first-person soldier character in one of his best-known songs, ‘I Ain’t Marching Anymore’ (1965). What is special about this character is that he is a generic representative of all the young men who have been ordered to fight in various wars throughout history. He has been as dutiful as Dylan’s soldier in ‘With God on Our Side’, even killing his own brother in the Civil War, but now he has finally had enough and is questioning the whole meaningfulness of warfare. He is no longer interested in the consequences of refusal: “Call it ‘peace’ or call it ‘treason’ / . . . / but I ain’t marching anymore”. It can be argued that this song is specifically designed to convert people to the peace movement; to encourage them to follow the example of the protagonist who realizes the lunacy of war as he learns to think for himself:

For I marched to the battles of the German trench
in a war that was bound to end all wars
Oh I must have killed a million men
and now they want me back again
but I ain’t marchin’ anymore

It’s always the old to lead us to the war
It’s always the young to fall
Now look at all we’ve won with the sabre and the gun
Tell me is it worth it all

What distinguishes the soldiers in ‘I Ain’t Marching Anymore’ and ‘With God on Our Side’ from those in ‘Cops of the World’, and creates two opposite soldier images, is their participant role: in ‘Cops of the World’, the soldiers are the actors, acting intentionally in material-process clauses (“we’ll spit through the streets of the cities we wreck”), which, according to Michael Toolan, is typical for characters in control of events (1990, p. 263). In the two other examples, the soldiers are acted upon; they are either syntactic subjects of passive-voice clauses (“I [wa]s taught and brought up there the laws to abide”) or affected participants (“They want me back again”, “It’s always the old to lead us to the war”), which indicates submission to external direction (see Toolan, 1990, pp. 263–264). The change in the participant role causes a significant shift the responsibility for the actions: In ‘Cops of the World’, the soldiers themselves are responsible for their arrogant and immoral behaviour – after all, showing respect or disrespect is one’s own choice and independent of military commands – while in ‘I Ain’t Marching Anymore’ and ‘With God on Our Side’, the soldiers are only following orders when they are sent to war, and the ultimate responsibility lies with the leaders.
5.1.2 Second person pronouns

Second person pronouns typically refer to the addressee of the text. Sometimes the discourse functions at one level only, when the songwriter is addressing his audience directly; that is the case in most Pete Seeger songs. However, there might also be other levels of discourse involved: either between the songwriter and another party defined in the song; or between characters created by the songwriter, so that neither the ‘I’ nor the ‘you’ is actually present in the physical performance of the song. The design of these levels can contribute to the persuasiveness of the song: If the message in the ‘fictional’ level of discourse, manifested in the song lyrics, is “when we’ve butchered your sons, boys / . . . / have a stick of our bubble gum” (‘Cops of the World’ by Phil Ochs), the unstated message in the ‘real’ level of discourse – between the songwriter and the audience – is more or less “See, the way Americans treat the Vietnamese is outrageous; this war is a disgrace” (see e.g. Simpson, 2004, p. 34 on ‘dialogue in drama’).

Pete Seeger often addresses the listeners with a second-person pronoun in his lyrics, thus defining the songs as a form of interaction. In ‘Ballad of the Fort Hood Three’ (1969), he uses personal pronouns to articulate the roles of the ‘reporter’ and his audience, constructing a frame narrative of a sort: “I’ll sing to you a story true as you will plainly see”. Similar roles appear in ‘Waist Deep in the Big Muddy’ (1967): “Well, I’m not going to point any moral; I’ll leave that for yourself”. Direct addressing creates an impression of intimacy, and functions as an appeal for attention. However, Seeger expects the hearers to be more than passive recipients. In ‘Last Train to Nuremberg’ (1973), he calls the listeners to share the indirect guilt for enabling the war: after asking, if the more obvious war criminals are on board the train to Nuremberg (a site of famous military tribunals), he finally asks “Do I see the voters, me and you?”. In ‘Ballad of the Fort Hood Three’, he reassures the hearers that they have the power to make a difference: “The next verses in the ballad may be partly up to you”.

Another effective way of using the second person pronoun is to address the perpetrators, as in Bob Dylan’s ‘Master’s of War’ (1963). Here, the pronoun ‘you’ conveys a piercing accusation:

Come you masters of war
You that build all the guns
You that build the death planes
You that build all the bombs
You that hide behind walls
You that hide behind desks
I just want you to know
I can see through your masks.

The lyrics, combined with Dylan’s grim rendering, create an ominous atmosphere. The song gives the impression that Dylan has in fact identified the culprits and is watching them. When he gets to the lines “And I hope that you die / and your death will come soon / I will follow your casket / in the pale afternoon”, the hearer is inclined to think that should the ‘masters of war’ be listening, they would be shaking in their shoes by then. The second person pronoun, together with the address form ‘masters of war’, also underlines the fact that war is neither a faceless ‘force of nature’ nor an inevitable necessity but there actually exist people in authority who promote war and profit from it. The repetition adds to the incriminating effect; in the first stanza, the pronoun ‘you’ appears in every single line. The direct address form allows Dylan to freely pour out his anger: if the song were in third person, “they that build all the guns”, part of its venomousness would be lost, and the ‘masters of war’ would be distanced from the discourse situation.

Phil Ochs also directly addresses a leader character in a second-person form in his song ‘I’m Going to Say It Now’ (1966). While the indictment is not as fierce as in the previous example, the use of the second person creates a defiant impression; a young student narrator is questioning the actions of the ‘ruling class’ and even alluding to a rebellion:

Oh, I am just a student, sir, and only want to learn
But it’s hard to read through the risin’ smoke
from the books that you like to burn

. . .
I’ve read of other countries where the students take a stand
Maybe even help to overthrow the leaders of the land
Now I wouldn’t go so far to say we’re also learnin’ how
But when I’ve got something to say, sir, I’m gonna say it now.

The address form ‘sir’ creates an interesting contradiction. Normally, the use of ‘sir’ would signal an unequal encounter, acknowledging the addressee as someone with power and authority (see Herman, 1989, p. 220). Here, however, it is somewhat at odds with the content of the message, creating an impression of repressed discontent; the student speaker still holds on to traditional conventions to some extent, but expands their limits by demanding a right to speak out and questioning the status quo. He also directly declares that deference is conditional: “we’ll respect our elders just as long as they allow”. These meaningful words override the reverential address form and raise the student to an equal position of power with the older man. Like in Dylan’s
'Masters of War', the second person pronoun gives the illusion of directly targeting the leaders and making them uneasy by reminding that the tables might well turn someday. It is obviously unlikely that these songs were ever heard by the ones they were ostensibly intended to, but the actual audience could identify with the speakers, join the collective prosecution, and feel the togetherness between those who thought alike.

5.1.3 Third person pronouns

While the first and second person pronouns refer to the participants of a direct discourse, the speaker and the addressee, the referent of a third person pronoun is someone (or some people) outside the discourse situation. Third person singular, ‘he’ or ‘she’, is usually used in narration, as in the cases of Pete Seeger’s ‘King Henry’ (1966) and Bob Dylan’s ‘Clean-cut Kid’ (1985) which are discussed later in this chapter. However, in the material of this study, the third person plural, ‘they’, seems to have a more interesting role in the design of the message. ‘They’ is the antonym of ‘we’; it marks its referent as ‘other’. The separating function of ‘they’ is visible when it refers to the opposing side, whether it be the American leaders or the Vietnamese. In these cases, the referent of ‘them’ is usually not mentioned, which can cause ambiguity, but on the other hand it can be a very effective strategy; again, Dylan’s ‘Clean-cut Kid’ is a good example. When referring to the leaders, ‘they’ often has an accusatory tone, similar to that created by the ‘you’ in ‘Masters of War’. In the case of the Vietnamese, on the contrary, the tone can be either disrespectful or confusedly alienating, depending on the strategic role of the speaker.

Within the lyrics of ‘King Henry’ (1966), Pete Seeger has incorporated a narrative about a man called Simon. Simon’s story is told in third person, as in traditional storytelling, with Seeger being a participant narrator, i.e., a character within the story. The function of the story appears to be to provide a sad example of the fate of a young recruit:

Simon was drafted in sixty three  
In sixty four, sent over the sea  
Last month this letter he sent to me  
He said, "You won't like what I'm saying"

He said, "We've no friends here, no hardly a one  
We've got a few generals who just want our guns  
But it will take more than that if we're ever to win  
Why, we'll have to flatten the country"

...
He wrote this last month, last week he was dead
And Simon came home in a casket.

Although the story is very plainly told, it appeals to emotions: Simon is introduced by name and even given a voice, and then, all of a sudden, his life ends abruptly. Simon’s destiny is likely to stir pity and a sense of injustice. The hearer is also aware that “Simon” is but one of the regrettably many young men who face an untimely death in a questionable war.

Another story about a Vietnam recruit is told by Bob Dylan in ‘Clean-cut Kid’ (1985). The protagonist of the song is referred to in the third person, with Dylan adopting a role of a heterodiegetic, omniscient narrator. Dylan begins by describing the happy childhood of the “clean-cut kid”: “He was on the baseball team, he was on the marching band / When he was ten years old he had a watermelon stand”; then, his becoming a pawn in a wider game: “They sent him to a napalm health spa to shape up”. This has disastrous effects, “They took his head and turned it inside out”, which lead to his untimely end: “He was wearing boxing gloves, took a dive one day / off the Golden Gate Bridge into China Bay”. Leaving the name untold and using only the third person pronoun is a deliberate choice: This way, the song grows into a “lament for a generation of anonymous clean cut kids who are wasted by war and lies”, as described by Gary Browning (2004, p. 115).

Apart from the protagonist, the undefined antagonists of the song are also referred to with a third person pronoun, this time in plural, ‘they’: “They took a clean-cut kid / but they made a killer out of him / that’s what they did”. In the pronoun ‘they’, the leaders, the government, the army, and the society are merged into a faceless, malevolent, manipulative power that does not care what happens to the individuals who are deprived of their prospects (“He could’ve sold insurance, owned a restaurant or bar”) and forced to serve their cause (“They gave him dope to smoke, drinks and pills / a jeep to drive, blood to spill”). After the individual has fulfilled his duty, he is on his own; simply sent “back to the race without any brakes”.

Almost all the clauses in the lyrics of ‘Clean-cut Kid’ are in the active form, that is, containing a subject who functions as the agent of the clause. ‘They’ is the most common subject of the song, usually occurring in two-participant, transitive clauses where ‘he’ (the “clean-cut kid”) is the affected participant. This kind of clause composition implies the unequal distribution of power and control between ‘him’ and ‘them’, while highlighting the fact that someone is actually responsible for the brute fate of the clean-cut kid: “they made a killer out of him”. This implication would be
less clear if a passive voice was used instead: ‘he was made a killer’; and it would be completely lost in a form like ‘he became a killer’. Thus, the use of ‘they’ has a strong accusatory force in the song, and since ‘they’ by definition excludes ‘you and me’, the hearer is invited to join the reproachful side. An explicit clarification of ‘their’ identity is considered unnecessary: the initiated hearer is trusted to know who is being talked about.

Another case of using the third person plural are the references to the Vietnamese. In Phil Ochs’s ‘White Boots Marching in a Yellow Land´ (1968), the speaker is an American soldier, but unlike the ones in ‘Cops of the World’, he shows no arrogance; on the contrary, he sounds melancholic and tired, and seems to be thinking that, being “the white boots marching in a yellow land”, the Americans are intruders who should not have interfered in Vietnam’s internal affairs in the first place. Apart from the very title of the song, this impression is created by lines like “We’re fighting in a war we lost before the war began”. Although the use of the undefined ‘they’ could also be perceived as ‘dehumanizing the enemy’, there is guilt and shame echoing from between the following lines:

Blow them from the forest and burn them from your sight
Tie their hands behind their back and question through the night
But when the firing squad is ready, they’ll be spitting where they stand
at the white boots marching in a yellow land.

In this example, ‘they’ are others; strangers that have been designated as ‘enemies’ by American politicians. The speaker, however, does not seem to be convinced of the justification of this policy, but instead insinuates that ‘they’ in fact have a more legitimate right to exist in their “yellow land” than the American troops.

5.2 Clause types

Most of the lines of the songs studied in this thesis are declaratives, or statements. It can be argued that these types of clauses are unilateral: the speaker produces the utterance and the hearer is the passive recipient of information. In these cases, it is the content rather than the grammatical mood of the clause that creates the possible effect. There are two clause types, however, that are bilateral by nature: interrogative, or question; and imperative, or order. In normal interaction, both interrogative and imperative require a response; either in the form of an
answer, an implementation, or a refusal. This presumed reciprocity makes these two clause types interesting research objects when studying persuasive song lyrics.

5.2.1 Interrogative

There are at least two types of interrogatives, or questions. When people ask questions to gain information, they expect someone to answer them. One may also utter a rhetorical question, which does not require a direct answer, but functions more as a challenge or ‘food for thought’. When a question is sung in song lyrics, the singer obviously does not expect the audience to give him answers. Nevertheless, it can be hypothesized that the questions have a purpose: to trigger processes of thinking that may lead to the formation or clarification of an opinion. The questions in the lyrics studied in this thesis come in many tones: some of them are abstract and philosophical, while others seem more practical and concrete. Some questions are answered in the song lyrics, whereas others are left open, in which case the hearer may continue debating the possible answers in his mind.

Pete Seeger’s ‘Where Have All the Flowers Gone?’ (1955/1960) is basically a sequence of questions and answers. Within one verse, a question is asked, repeated, and finally answered:

Where have all the flowers gone? 
Long time passing. 
Where have all the flowers gone? 
Long time ago. 
Where have all the flowers gone? 
Young girls have picked them every one. 

At the end of each verse, there is also a rhetorical question “Oh, when will they ever learn?” – in some versions in the form “Oh, when will you ever learn” or “when will we ever learn” – the implication of which seems to be that “They will never learn”. The pessimistic impression is supported by the circular structure of the song: the last verse is identical to the first one; the same story begins again and history repeats itself. In fact, the circularity of the song can be accredited to Joe Hickerson, who wrote the last three verses (“Where have all the flowers gone,” 2000). Seeger had originally written only three verses, and on the other hand, his version had more respect for the power of reasoning of the hearers: if the first two question–answer pairs are “Where have all the flowers gone? Young girls have picked them every one” and “Where have all the young girls
gone? They’ve taken husbands every one”, the answer of the third question sounds ominous enough for the probable continuation of the story to be deduced: “Where have all the young men gone? They’re all in uniform” (Or in some versions “Where have all the husbands gone? Gone for soldiers every one”). Both the original and the extended version have their strengths: the effectiveness of the shorter version lies in its implicatory force; the hearer can complete the story in his mind while at the same time feeling flattered for being trusted to do so. While Hickerson’s additional verses (“Where have all the soldiers gone? Gone to graveyards every one”, “Where have all the graveyards gone? Covered with flowers every one”, “Where have all the flowers gone? Young girls have picked them every one”) strip this chance by explicitly revealing the fate of the soldiers, they also create new effects, such as the insightful circularity. The circular form is aesthetically appealing, and contains philosophical meditations about the thick-skulled human nature. Moreover, the longer version, together with the repetitive lyrics and clear structure, makes the song even more suitable for communal singing, which for Seeger was the quintessence of a successful political song (see Jones, 2004, pp. 59–60).

Another Seeger song that is based on questions is ‘Last Train to Nuremberg’ (1973). The song begins with a chorus:

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Last train to Nuremberg!
Last train to Nuremberg!
Last train to Nuremberg!
All on board!
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Despite its ostensible simplicity, the chorus is very meaningful, namely for the German city it refers to. Nuremberg (or Nürnberg) had been the site of the famous trials where those responsible for the Holocaust and other war crimes of World War II were convicted in 1945–46 (“Nürnberg trials,” 2017). Since the war in Vietnam had by the time of the writing proved bloody and brutal – the news of the My Lai Massacre had reached the public and the majority of the U.S. citizens condemned the war – Seeger felt that it was justifiable to compare the atrocities committed in Vietnam to those committed in World War II, and by implication demanded that those responsible for the sufferings be sent before the International Military Tribunal. The first verse after the initial chorus is a series of questions:

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Do I see Lieutenant Calley?
Do I see Captain Medina?
Do I see General Koster and all his crew?
Do I see President Nixon?
Do I see both houses of Congress?
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Do I see the voters, me and you?

The questions resemble a roll call, and show whom Seeger is accusing of war crimes; in his opinion, these people should be aboard the train to Nuremberg. The list starts with the names of army officers who were guilty of particular actions – Lieutenant Calley, Captain Medina and General Koster were connected to the My Lai Massacre – and proceeds to a more general direction, to the source of political decision making (see “My Lai Massacre,” 2017). The chain of guilt goes all the way down to the ordinary people, who have elected the leaders in the first place. Even Seeger himself is willing to take the blame for belonging to the people who have let terrible things happen. The second verse of the song clarifies Seeger’s view, that it is not the individual soldier alone who is responsible for the atrocities, but there is a whole network behind him that has made the war possible:

Who held the rifle?
Who gave the orders?
Who planned the campaign to lay waste the land?
Who manufactured the bullet?
Who paid the taxes?
Tell me, is that blood upon my hands?

Again, Seeger is making his point using interrogatives. In a war, the number of people who have contributed to each killing is always larger than one. It is easy to agree that those holding the rifle and giving the orders are guilty, but Seeger’s last question is more complicated to answer. The line combines an imperative, “tell me”, and an interrogative, “is that blood upon my hands?”, which makes it desperately plead for an answer and challenges the hearer to really face the dilemma – after all, should the hearer answer ‘yes’, he would have to share the shame, given that he was a contemporary American. Although Seeger is only asking questions and not giving any answers in this song, he is communicating a view that the Vietnam War is a collective national disgrace.

A similar combination of an imperative and an interrogative can be found in Phil Ochs’s ‘I Ain’t Marching Anymore’ (1965): “Now look at all we’ve won with the sabre and the gun / Tell me, is it worth it all?”. The question has a doubtful tone: by questioning the achievements of warfare, Ochs implies that his answer would be in the negative, and expressing this in the form of an interrogative invites the hearer to come to a similar conclusion.

In his song ‘Is There Anybody Here’ (1966) Phil Ochs’s utilizes the interrogative form to express his opinion of the soldiers who view the participation in the Vietnam War as a glorious act of
patriotism. The verses of the song begin with a series of questions whose fundamental message is “Is there anybody here who would like to go fight in Vietnam”, but the design of the questions reveals that for Ochs, willingness to be drafted is a sign of either naïve idealism or perverted blood lust:

Is there anybody here who’d like to wrap a flag around an early grave?
Is there anybody here who thinks they’re standing taller on a battle wave?
...
Is there anybody here who thinks that following the orders takes away the blame?
Is there anybody here who wouldn’t mind a murder by another name?

The beginning of these questions, “Is there anybody here”, make them sound very concrete: the deictic marker “here” connects the lines to the actual place and time of the live performance, and one can almost imagine the hearers looking around them to see if any hands are rising. Such direct and attitude-charged questions spur the audience to explicitly choose their side and identify themselves as representing the opposite of the image conjured up by the questions.

Bob Dylan’s ‘Blowin’ in the Wind’ (1963) consists of nine questions that all include the words “how many”. The questions are philosophical and impossible to answer: “How many roads must a man walk down / before you call him a man?”. Dylan does not give any answers but ambiguously states that “the answer is blowin’ in the wind”. The content of the questions exhibits Dylan’s anti-war sentiments: lines like “how many times must the cannonballs fly / before they’re forever banned” and “how many deaths will it take ‘til he [a man] knows / that too many people have died” contain the message that instruments of war should be banned, and that too many people have indeed died in wars. The questions “how many times must a man look up / before he can see the sky” and the rather abstract “how many ears must one man have / before he can hear people cry” suggest that people are blind and deaf for things that are already there, waiting to be realized. Most of the questions demonstrate Dylan’s desire for the situation to change, but juxtaposing them with ones like “how many years can a mountain exist / before it is washed to the sea” hints that he does not expect the change to happen very fast. According to Andy Gill, the inspiration for Dylan to write the song came from the idea that silence equalled complicity in the crime, and asking questions was “at the very least to begin the process of collective self-reflection, a demand for the authorities to justify and defend what they take for granted” (as cited in Boucher, 2004, p. 159).
Instead of trying to answer Dylan’s rhetorical questions, the hearer is likely to join the inquiry and the humanistic appeal for peace and justice: “yes, how many indeed?”.

5.2.2 Imperative

Imperatives are used for giving orders, advice, and instructions, which makes them reciprocal by nature: they are always addressed to someone. In linguistics, imperatives usually mark directives, which are speech acts that are to cause the hearer to take a particular action (Fitch, 2008). Directives can also be realized by other syntactic forms than the imperative (‘Do this’), such as the interrogative (‘Could you do this, please?’) or more indirect forms (‘I recommend that you do this’, ‘It would be nice if you did this’ or ‘You’d better do this’). Since directives can appear in a considerably wide range of forms, identifying them requires a close inspection of the functions of the utterances. In the songs examined in this thesis, the function and the addressee are the main questions of interest regarding imperatives or other directives. Imperatives are intrinsically in the second person form, directed from the speaker to the hearer, but as discussed in chapter 5.1.2, the ‘you’ of the lyrics is not necessarily the actual listener of the song: in some cases, the reference system of the pronouns operates within the fictional level of discourse realized in the song lyrics. An example of this is Phil Ochs’s ‘Cops of the World’ (1966) which is analysed later in this chapter.

Pete Seeger’s ‘Bring Them Home’ (1969) has an imperative in its very title. In the lyrics, the same appeal to “bring them home” is repeated in every other line throughout the song as a refrain:

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

The request to bring the American soldiers back home from Vietnam is addressed to U.S. leaders, who have the actual power to withdraw troops. It can also be interpreted as an invitation for ‘ordinary people’ to join the cause; an encouragement to raise their voices against the war. Half of the Americans already agreed with Seeger and disapproved of the war that, in the light of what they saw on television, seemed downright futile (“Vietnam War,” 2017). Seeger suggests that withdrawing the American troops would be a patriotic act, a sign of “loving Uncle Sam”, the personification of the United States. He justifies his demand by denouncing the war as a childish
show of force: “It’ll make our generals sad, I know, (bring them home, bring them home), they want to tangle with the foe, (bring them home, bring them home). They want to test their weaponry, . . . , but here is their big fallacy.” He also offers an alternative for warfare: “For defense, you need common sense, . . . , they don’t have the right armaments, . . . . The world need teachers, books and schools, . . . , and learning a few universal rules”. In live performances, Seeger used to sing the changing lines, and the audience joined him every other line in “bring them home” (listen, e.g., Vietnam War Song Project, 2014; 2old2Rock, 2009). The insistent repetition of the imperative “bring them home” not only tempts the hearers to sing along, which is a major feature in many of Seeger’s songs, but also gives the message demandingness and urgency.

In Phil Ochs’s ‘There but for Fortune’ (1966) the imperative form creates a feeling of reciprocity. Although one could call these lines ‘rhetorical imperatives’ in a sense that Ochs does not expect anyone to literally implement his wishes, they are nevertheless directed to the hearer who is given the role of an interlocutor:

Show me a prison, show me a jail,  
Show me a prisoner whose face has gone pale  
And I’ll show you a young man with so many reasons why  
And there but for fortune, may go you or I

The imperatives also constitute an anaphora, that is, the words “show me” are repeated at the beginning of successive clauses. This is a rhetorical device that is used in all the four verses of the song. The third line of each verse balances the structure with a promise to show something in return, and the fourth line is a refrain repeated in every verse. Semantically, the speaker is asking the hearer to show him examples of individuals who have somehow failed in their lives: a prisoner, a hobo, and a drunk. Then he in return shows a “young man” who has avoided such destiny, but reminds that it could just as well be the other way around: if it were not for the sheer luck of the young man, he could be equally degraded. The last verse connects this idea to the war:

Show me the country where bombs had to fall,  
Show me the ruins of buildings once so tall,  
And I’ll show you a young land with so many reasons why  
There but for fortune, go you or go I -- you and I.

Ochs suggests that Vietnam’s misfortune could just as well be fallen on the United States. His message seems to be that there is no reason for the Americans to feel superior, since the fate of
neither individuals nor nations is in their own hands: the reason for one’s success is luck rather than his own excellence. Moreover, one cannot choose in which country he happens to be born. As a whole, ‘There but for Fortune’ is a song promoting humanity and humility, condemning not only war but also all forms of arrogance. The structure with the alternating imperative and declarative clauses contributes to the conveyance of the message by emphasizing the juxtaposition of the fortunate and the less fortunate, as well as by incorporating the hearer into the text and thus making it feel more intimate.

In Phil Ochs’s ‘Cops of the World’ (1966), the speaker using the imperative is not the singer, but the ‘we’-narrator representing American soldiers. The lines of the soldiers are addressed to Vietnamese men. The address form is a significant constituent of the song’s persuasive strategy: the soldier speaker condescendingly addresses Vietnamese men as ‘boys’, which is a refrain constantly repeated throughout the song. This kind of derogatory address form signals inequality, placing the Vietnamese in an inferior role with respect to the Americans. The narrator’s position of authority is further demonstrated by the use of the imperative; the Americans are telling the Vietnamese what to do: “Dump the reds in a pile, boys”; “Clean the johns with a rag / if you like you can use your flag, boys”. After several offhand commands, the speaker suddenly introduces a polite ‘please’ in his order: “Please stay off of the grass, boys”. In this context, the use of ‘please’ creates a mocking impression, which is confirmed in the abrupt change of register in the next line: “Here’s a kick in the ass, boys”. Apart from the actual imperative, Ochs also employs the more indirect “you’d better” structure for the same commanding function, and this form seems to carry an even more threatening tone, since the implicated continuation for this request would probably begin with the words “or else…”: “You’d better watch what you say, boys”; “You’d better wipe off that smile, boys”. To sum up, incorporating an addressee within the song gives Ochs an opportunity to construct roles of power and to emphasize the crude attitude of the Americans towards the local population in Vietnam, which is likely to arouse condemnation in the hearer.

5.3 Rhetorical devices

To make an argument more persuasive, it can be formulated utilizing rhetorical devices, more specifically a range of figures of speech. They are textural or structural effects, which often involve a juxtaposition between two different phenomena ("Rhetoric," 2016). Among the figures of
speech that appear in the lyrics studied in this thesis are for example metaphor, simile, allegory, irony, parody and *interrogatio* (or rhetorical question, that was already covered in chapter 4.2.1). In classical rhetoric, a style that features such figures is said to be “the most effective style to move, delight and produce emotion in listeners” (Burke, 2014, p. 25). The effectiveness of figures of speech is based for example on their interpersonal aspect: identifying and appreciating such a figure gives pleasure to the recipient; firstly, through the playful, thought-stimulating element of the figure, and secondly, through the flattering sense of belonging to the selected group that understands it (see e.g. Black, 2006, pp. 87, 103, 104, 109, and 115).

5.3.1 Satire, irony and parody

In satire, “human or individual vices, follies, abuses, or shortcomings are held up to censure by means of ridicule, derision, burlesque, irony, parody, caricature, or other methods, sometimes with an intent to inspire social reform” – in other words, satire is a manifold term (“Satire,” 2016). Many of the songs in this study are considered satirical (see e.g. Gamble, 2004, p. 23). Before the Vietnam War, cynical or satirical texts had been used in popular songs to make fun of the enemy, but in these songs, satire is targeted almost exclusively at American troops and leaders (see Arnold, 1991, p. 323). Bob Dylan’s satire is subtle or abstract, whereas Phil Ochs prefers a kind of dry humour to draw attention to political evils. In the songs examined in this paper, satire mostly presents itself in the form of irony; there are also some instances of parody. As for the loutish soldiers in Ochs’s ‘Cops of the World’, they fall into the category of caricature with their exaggerated repulsiveness – which nevertheless has a suspicion of truth in it. In this chapter, however, the concept of satire is approached through irony, parody, ridicule and derision.

According to Elizabeth Black (2006, p. 119), irony involves two conflicting perspectives, one of which is condemned and associated to someone else than the speaker. In the songs examined in this study, irony is often used to suggest attitudes attributable to those in favour of the war. Irony is often characterized by exaggeration or contrafactual statements (Black, 2006, p. 30). Both features are present in one of Phil Ochs’s most famous songs, ‘Draft Dodger Rag’ (1965). During the Vietnam conflict, about half a million men illegally evaded conscription into the military service, and they were pejoratively called “draft dodgers” (“Vietnam War,” 2017). Draft evaders
probably faced some scorn and mockery, but Phil Ochs cleverly used the sneers to create a hilariously exaggerated, self-ironic description of an unmanly draft dodger:

Sarge, I'm only eighteen, I got a ruptured spleen and I always carry a purse
I got eyes like a bat, my feet are flat, and my asthma's getting worse
. . .
I've got a dislocated disc and a racked up back
I'm allergic to flowers and bugs
And when the bombshell hits, I get epileptic fits
and I'm addicted to a thousand drugs
I got the weakness woes, and I can't touch my toes
I can hardly reach my knees
And if the enemy came close to me
I'd probably start to sneeze.

The image is so hyperbolic that it is clear that Ochs is not expressing his personal opinion of the characteristics of a typical draft evader. When the song is examined in the context of Ochs’s further oeuvre, it is evident that he is ridiculing the attitudes that his pro-war countrymen display towards “draft dodgers”. Moreover, part of the message of the song could be that no excuse is too embarrassing if it helps in keeping one out of an indefensible war. Besides, laughing at oneself is generally considered a sign of a strong self-esteem. Ochs stands firm in his conviction, and by contrast questions the choices of those who follow the orders to join the armed forces.

Phil Ochs also uses irony to highlight the inconsistency between the pro-war rhetoric and the actual practices: The United States was supposed to fight “for freedom and against Communism”, but its methods were not exactly democratic. The U.S. for example supported Ngo Dinh Diem, who openly opposed elections and declared himself president. In ‘Cops of the World’ (1966) Ochs first declares that “We’ll find you a leader that you can’t elect” and later states: “So, like it or not, you will have to be free”. A more blatant example of such ironic ‘freedom’ can be found in Ochs’s song ‘Talkin’ Vietnam’ (1964): “[We] threw all the people in relocation camps / under lock and key / made damn sure they’re free”. These lines refer to the Strategic Hamlet Program, which meant relocating the rural population of Vietnam in order to protect them from the Viet Cong. The peasants were not very content with the campaign, for they were forced to leave their homes and work hard to establish new villages, the walls of which did not keep the Viet Cong out anyway (“Vietnam War,” 2017).
Another form of satire that appears in these songs is parody. In parody, the linguistic form of an utterance resembles that of another, typically well-known one, often to create a ridiculing effect (Black 2006, p. 120; “Parody”, 2016). A good example of such an utterance appears in Phil Ochs’ song ‘Talkin’ Vietnam’ (1964), in which the speaker – a soldier character – recalls meeting the ghost of the former President of Vietnam, Ngo Dinh Diem, who was known for his paranoid nepotism. Diem says that a “free” Vietnam is ruled by “one family and 15,000 American troops”, and goes on introducing his administration: “Meet my brothers, meet my aunts / with the government that doesn’t take a chance”. In conclusion, Diem cheerfully adds “Families that slay together, stay together!” which is a macabre variation of the slogan “Families that pray together, stay together”. The parodied line ingeniously caps the section of the song that comments on Diem’s regime in what is supposed to be his own voice. Ochs’s satirical song echoes the critical opinion possessed by many opponents of the war: that the United States was in reality supporting a corrupt and oppressive dictatorship in Saigon (see “Vietnam War”, 2017).

In his song ‘Is There Anybody Here’ (1966), Phil Ochs employs both irony and parody. The song begins with Ochs enquiring if anyone would like to “change his clothes into a uniform” – in other words, if anyone would be eager to go fight in Vietnam; and if such a person were to be found, Ochs would express his admiration: “I want to see him / I want to wish him luck / I wanna shake his hand / wanna call his name / Pin a medal on the man.” However, this praise turns out to be mockery, since other lines of the song reveal what Ochs really thinks about such ‘bravery’: “Is there anybody here who thinks that following the orders takes away the blame? / Is there anybody here who wouldn’t mind a murder by another name?”. What contributes to the irony created by this discrepancy are the sections where Ochs parodies the jingoistic pro-war jargon, using its vocabulary to ridicule those blindly believing it: “Is there anybody here with glory in their eyes / loyal to the end, whose duty is to die? / . . . / Is there anybody here who would like to do his part / soldier to the world and a hero to his heart?”. In the ironic lyrics of his song, Ochs echoes words that are attributable to those glamorizing war, while dissociating himself from them clearly enough to manifest his position.

The abstractness of the songs of Bob Dylan’s ‘inspirational phase’ makes them elude analysis, but through some decoding, possible meanings can be extracted from them. Dylan’s ‘Tombstone Blues’ (1965) is full of allusions: a cavalcade of characters from contexts ranging from biblical to popular culture make brief appearances. In the first verse, the “city fathers” are “trying to endorse
the reincarnation of Paul Revere’s horse” – a reference to a hero of American Revolution – which can be interpreted as a depiction of conservative patriotism, with which the Vietnam War was justified. The following lines can be construed as an expression of Dylan’s distrust of the American political system:

The ghost of Belle Starr she hands down her wits
to Jezebel the nun, she violently knits
a bald wig for Jack the Ripper who sits
at the head of the chamber of commerce.

In this image, a criminal is installed in an important position, and behind him is a network of plotters and evil masterminds – Jack the Ripper was an English murderer, Jezebel an Israeli queen who appears in the Old Testament and is known as “an archetype of the wicked woman”, and Belle Starr a notorious American outlaw in the 1800s (see “Jack the Ripper,” 2017; “Jezebel,” 2017; “Belle Starr,” 2017). Portraying Jezebel as a nun is a comment on religious hypocrisy, and Jack the Ripper’s wig is a disguise that makes him a wolf in sheep’s clothing. Dylan felt a profound antipathy towards the ‘political world’ and saw it as the antithesis of authenticity, and it was typical for him to refer to politics and politicians in a cynical or derogatory manner (Gamble, 2004, p. 20). The type of satire displayed here is derision, which is emphasized by Dylan’s careless and contemptuous recitative. Another means of realizing the satire is ridicule; a knitted bald wig sounds comical and makes the attempt to hide the scoundrel’s true nature seem rather pitiful and transparent. These verses can be seen as a reminder to stay alert and critical, and not be blinded by disguises or imposing apparitions.

Pete Seeger’s style of songwriting is generally more serious and sentimental than that of Dylan or Ochs. Some instances of satire can, however, be detected from Seeger’s songs as well. In ‘Waist Deep in the Big Muddy’ (1967), the captain character, arguably representing either leaders in general or President Johnson in particular, is depicted as reckless and over-confident: when he is warned about the risks involved in fording a deep river, he replies “Sergeant, don’t be a Nervous Nellie / . . . / all we need is a little determination / men, follow me, I’ll lead on”. In the end of every verse, the captain is referred to as “the big fool”, and eventually the nickname proves to be justified, when the enterprise ends with him drowning: “All at once, the moon clouded over / we heard a gurgling cry. / A few seconds later, the captain’s helmet / was all that floated by”. Despite the grimness, it can be argued that the attitude of the captain – or the President – is satirized by ridiculing him, and making him indeed look like a “big fool” whose carelessness turns out fatal.
5.3.2 Metaphor

Metaphor is a mental process of transferring properties of one concept to another: the first concept, or the ‘source domain’, is usually something physical, while the second, the ‘target domain’ is a more abstract concept (see e.g. Simpson, 2004, pp. 41–42; Chilton, 2006, pp. 63–64). Metaphors are used for example to reduce complexities and to illustrate ideas (Simpson, 2004, pp. 92–93): one could, for instance, compare the society to a house, with the constitution representing the foundations and so on. Metaphors pervade all language regardless of genre or register, and can even develop into fixed expressions like ‘to burn the candle at both ends’; a metaphor suggesting that ‘energy is a burning fuel’ (see e.g. Simpson, 2004, p. 93; Chilton, 2006, pp. 63–64). What distinguishes the use of metaphor in literary discourse from that in everyday discourse is that writers often aim at novelty in their expression, seeking fresh connections between unlike entities (Simpson, 2004, pp. 92–93). Since the ‘source domain’ of a metaphor is not spelled out explicitly, variety in the interpretation is allowed (Black, 2006, p. 109).

The phrase in the title and refrain of Bob Dylan’s most famous song, ‘Blowin’ in the Wind’ (1963) is clearly metaphorical. ‘Wind’ is a convenient metaphor for the purposes of the peace movement: in a meteorological context, wind often signals a change in the weather. A blowing wind can be a metaphor of revolution or similar action taken by conscious people who demand a change to the current situation. Thus, when Dylan asks “how many times must the cannon balls fly / before they are forever banned?”, and tells that “the answer is blowin’ in the wind”, he invites the audience to collectively determine the answer. In this light, the song would seem to have a rather optimistic tone. On the other hand, wind is an intangible force on which one cannot take a grip; if Dylan attempts to define the answer as something vague and ever-escaping, it gives the song a pessimistic ring. This kind of poetic ambiguity can be regarded “as an element of dynamic meaning” (Empson, 1930, as cited in Bradford, 1997, p. 33). Indeed, saying that the answer to certain fundamental questions is “blowin’ in the wind” sounds very equivocal, but it also gives the song poetic beauty, a sense of mystery – and above all, timelessness: it can be applied to almost any issue of peace or freedom, since the message is general rather than particular.

While the use of a metaphor makes things vaguer in the case of ‘Blowin’ in the Wind’, it can also be used to add effectiveness and clarity. Since song lyrics, similar to poetry, usually consist of short lines, the message has to be put in a concise form. With a well-chosen metaphor, the writer can
stimulate associations, avoid lengthy and prosaic clarifications, and condense the essential. In Bob Dylan’s ‘Clean-cut Kid’, the tragedy of the song is compacted in the line “They sent him back to the race without any brakes”. In this metaphor, the Vietnam veteran – the former clean cut kid – is the driver, his morale and mental balance are the brakes, and the daily life in the ‘normal’ society is the race. He has been brutalized and unhinged by Vietnam, but has not received any support in coping with and recovering from his experience. According to Raymond M. Scurfield (2004), many people even in psychiatric professions ignored the possibility that war experiences could cause long-term difficulties, until Posttraumatic Stress Disorder was finally established as an official diagnosis in 1980 (p. 206). Like the ‘Clean-cut Kid’ of Dylan’s song, many veterans ended up committing suicide (MacNair, 2002, p. 19). The race car metaphor illustratively sums up the message of the song: a certain quarter is responsible for tampering the brakes – or at least for exposing them to tampering – and for not making any attempts to fix them; and a car race without brakes is likely to end in disaster. Dylan is demanding the responsibility of those who exposed the soldiers to the horrors that left indelible imprints on their minds.

By choosing a certain metaphor, the author can also express his attitudes towards the subject in question. In ‘Cops of the World’ (1966) Phil Ochs portrays American soldiers as aggressive and repulsive bullies, describing their arrogant behaviour towards the local population in Vietnam. This is underpinned by metaphors suggesting the immaturity of the fighters – or rather their leaders: The lines “We’ve got too much money, we’re looking for toys / and guns will be guns and boys will be boys / but we’ll gladly pay for all we destroy” likens guns to toys and war to an entertaining game. In a similar vein, the line “We’re the biggest and toughest kids on the block” sounds adolescently defiant and boastful, and implies that it is merely the superior strength that justifies the misdeeds. This line, along with the ‘cop’ metaphor in the title and refrain of the song, can be retraced to what Ochs seems to regard as the main motive for the United States to join the war: to demonstrate its power by proving its capability to impact on geopolitical issues anywhere in the world.

Pete Seeger’s ‘All My Children of the Sun’ (1969) is an allegorical adventure story that is told in a traditional and realistic manner, as a chronologically proceeding chain of events. However, it includes one deviating element, a line that appears in the title as well as in the end of every verse: “all my children of the sun”. The line seems a little disconnected from the rest of the song, but at the same time it sums up Seeger’s humanistic and all-embracing view of human equality: despite
the conflicts between nations and individuals, deep down we are all the same; we belong to the same human race and live under the same sun. The song refers to two types of conflict. Firstly, the story tells about a group of soldiers on a mission in a foreign land, which makes the line “all my children of the sun” sound sorrowful, disappointed and reproachful: the soldiers are fighting their own brothers, children of the same sun. Secondly, there is a conflict within the group, when one man stubbornly keeps warning the others of a forthcoming danger and gets killed by an annoyed comrade before it turns out that he had been right. Apart from the brotherhood aspect of the line “all my children of the sun”, the ‘children’ metaphor can also refer to a view that in essence, humans always remain children: it is human nature to be short-tempered, quarrelsome, impatient and selfish, and these features surface especially in extreme circumstances, when overwhelming stress causes regression. The unfortunate part is that in the adult world, such childlike behaviour might be lethal, as pointed out in the song.

5.3.3 Allegory

An allegory is basically an extended metaphor that operates at the level of the whole text rather than of a single expression (Reisigl, 2006, p. 600). Allegories seem to depict situations and events while actually conveying implicit meanings (“Allegory,” 2017). Symbolic allegories, in which the characters and situations represent recognizable persons and events, have often been used in political satire (“Allegory,” 2017). In some of the songs studied in this thesis, earlier historical events have been transferred and transformed into allegories of the Vietnam War. By disguising the critique as a historical story, the songwriters could present it in a seemingly discreet manner and give their audience the pleasure of “cracking the code”. However, the true meanings of the allegorical lyrics did not go unnoticed by the authorities; for example, Pete Seeger’s ‘Waist Deep in the Big Muddy’ was banned from The Smothers Brothers Comedy Hour television show (“About Pete Seeger,” 2017).

Pete Seeger’s ‘Waist Deep in the Big Muddy’ (1967) tells a fictional story of a platoon “on manoeuvres in-a Louisiana” in 1942. The captain in charge orders his men to ford a river that gets deeper and deeper, ignoring the warnings of his sergeant:

The Sergeant said, "Sir, are you sure this is the best way back to the base?"
"Sergeant, go on! I forded this river
'bout a mile above this place.  
It'll be a little soggy but just keep slogging.  
We'll soon be on dry ground."
We were waist deep in the Big Muddy  
and the big fool said to push on.

Finally, when the patrol is neck deep in the water, the captain suddenly drowns and the sergeant tells the men to turn around. Seeger makes the connection to the Vietnam conflict clear in the sixth verse, in which he states that every time he reads the papers, “that old feeling comes on:  
We’re waist deep in the Big Muddy and the big fool says to push on”. The story reflects the mentality behind the escalating war: at first, it was believed that the war could be easily won, but as it turned out, the American tactics and equipment did not work very smoothly in the Vietnamese jungles, and the mounting casualties gradually started to worry even the non-pacifist citizens (“Vietnam War,” 2017). President Johnson declared that the war was being won, but the claim conflicted with what people saw on television (“Vietnam War,” 2017). Therefore, the stubborn captain, the “big fool”, in Seeger’s song probably refers to President Johnson, who kept sending troops to Vietnam.

In Seeger’s ‘All My Children of the Sun’ (1969), the actual referents of the allegory are vaguer; it operates in a more general level. The song is a story about a group of soldiers who try to escape from the wilderness after their plane has crash-landed on a river. The navigator of the plane says that there is a town downstream, so the crew builds a raft and starts to paddle, “all except one young guy who kept arguing with the navigator / He said he’d read about a waterfall we would come to sooner or later”. The others are annoyed and ignore the warnings, saying “Why don’t you pitch in and do your part? Be constructive for a change!”. Finally, the young man gets knocked into the river by his irate crewmate who has caught him sabotaging the raft. When the remaining men paddle to the shore to fix the raft, they find out that there indeed is a big waterfall ahead, and the drowned man had been right all along. The morale is similar to that of ‘Waist Deep in the Big Muddy’: pushing on obstinately and scorning those issuing warnings may have fatal consequences. In anti-war terms, Seeger is demanding a call of retreat: His message is that in order to avoid a total catastrophe, the troops should be withdrawn from Vietnam before it is too late.
5.3.4 Simile

A simile is an explicit comparison of two separate phenomena, easily identifiable by the words “like” or “as” (“Simile”, 2016). A simile presupposes a commonality shared by the two entities. The choice of those particular entities creates associations, and the interpretation of a simile is affected by the context. The emblematic nature of a simile can facilitate understanding, but it can also be used to suggest attitudes to a topic, similarly to metaphor in the previous paragraph.

Phil Ochs’s song ‘White Boots Marching in a Yellow Land’ (1968) contains two similes. The simile in the line “The casualties arriving like the dropping of the rain” refers to the similar temporal density of fatalities and raindrops, and suggests that the American troops are constantly losing men. Another ominous simile in the line “Raw recruits are lining up like coffins in a cage” points to the fact that the number of both recruits and coffins gradually increases, but also suggests that there is a connection; it is easy to see the line as a grim prediction of the fate of the recruits. At the time of the writing of this song, news of the mounting casualties had changed the attitudes of more and more Americans against the war (“Vietnam War”, 2017). The similes emphasize the madness of sending inexperienced young men to a foreign jungle and question the point of such sacrifice.

In Bob Dylan’s ‘Masters of War’, there are two bold similes that reflect Dylan’s attitude towards war-promoting leaders. In the lines “Like Judas of old / you lie and deceive” Dylan draws a parallel between pro-war authorities and the man who betrayed Christ. By using the information provided by both his encyclopaedic knowledge and the context, the hearer can recover the implicatory elements of this simile, for example a similarity both in the motives and the consequences of their actions: Judas Iscariot received thirty pieces of silver in exchange for his betrayal, while the subjects of Dylan’s diatribe make their fortunes by supplying the weapons of war; as a result of their greed, one innocent life is sacrificed on the cross, and others in a war. Dylan continues his excoriation: “But I see through your eyes / and I see through your brain / like I see through the water / that runs down my drain.” The association created by this simile is rather gross; when ‘water’ is mentioned together with ‘drain’, the hearer is not likely to think of fresh, clean and crystal clear water but rather murky, yet see-through liquid infected with filth. In short, these two similes exhibit profound contempt towards the subjects of the song.
5.4 Cognitive stylistics

In cognitive stylistics, the focus is on the reader and the cognitive structures they employ in their reading process (Simpson, 2004, p. 39). One of the central concepts in cognitive stylistics is the *idealised cognitive model*, which means the mental representation, or a kind of prototypical image we form in our mind when reading or hearing a certain word (Simpson, 2004, p. 40). Idealised cognitive models (ICMs) develop through multiple experiences, and consequently, each individual has his own ICMs that may differ from those of others (Simpson, 2004, p. 40). The text does not need to contain more than the slightest syntactic or lexical marker to activate an ICM in the mind of the reader or hearer (Simpson, 2004, p. 40). The ICMs, for their part, account for the various associations and interpretations provoked by a text that, on the face of it, does not seem to have an explicit message; therefore, the concept of ICM is a useful tool for analysing the lyrics of Bob Dylan’s ‘inspirational phase’.

The lyrics of Bob Dylan’s ‘Tombstone Blues’ (1965) have been described as “inspirational poetry with no necessary external referents and with an internal logic of its own”, and as poetry delighting in images and mystery (Boucher, 2004, p. 148-149). ‘Tombstone Blues’ is not a narrative, so the themes are not elaborated further; instead, the lyrics consist of a series of very enigmatic images, full of allusions to characters like Paul Revere, Jack the Ripper and Beethoven. Nevertheless, the inspiration of the poetic images of the song “happens to be the Vietnam War” (Boucher, 2004, p. 164). Vietnam is not mentioned in the lyrics, but ICMs and encyclopaedic knowledge, directed by knowledge about the situation at the moment of the writing, encourage certain interpretations. According to Andrew Gamble, the following lines “have often been taken to be a direct reference to the escalating war in Vietnam”:

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The king of the Philistines his soldiers to save
puts jawbones on their tombstones and flatters their graves
puts the pied pipers in prison and fattens the slaves
then sends them out to the jungle.
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‘The king of the Philistines’ literally means the leader of an ancient people that used to live in Palestine, but by another definition, a ‘philistine’ is an unenlightened person who is hostile to art or culture and has material interests (Oxford English Dictionary). The image of a kingdom of philistines seems to reflect Dylan’s view that war makes “the worst elements of American society come out on top” and transform the United States into the antithesis of the world of love and
community (see Gamble, 2004, pp. 20, 23). In the context of the 1960s’ America, the “king” is President Lyndon B. Johnson, and the “pied pipers” he “puts in prison” are the draft dodgers. The term ‘pied piper’ hints to the dangerousness of draft evaders; that by their example, they might entice others to follow their suit. ‘Piper’ also refers to musicians, such as Dylan himself, and a ‘pied piper’ has some extraordinary charm that attracts followers. Protest singers were not actually thrown in jail, but in certain circles their activities were undoubtedly considered unpatriotic and harmful.

The ‘fattening of the slaves’ also conjures various associations. In the American context, the typical first association, or an ICM, awaked by the word ‘slave’ is an African American person; the word choice also implicates that racial inequality is still very much a fact. ‘Fattening’ is a word normally used in the context of feeding animals to make them fit to be killed. The objects of fattening are usually unaware of the goal of their treatment and often mistake it for benevolence; accordingly, what Dylan could have meant here is the fact that despite solemnly signing the Civil Rights Act that prohibited racial segregation, President Johnson did nothing to put right the fact that black people were disproportionally represented in the battalions of Vietnam (see e.g. “Civil Rights Act”, 2017, and “Vietnam War”, 2017). In the song, the fattened slaves are sent “out to the jungle”, which at the time of the writing easily translated as Vietnam. Furthermore, the Vietnamese jungles, that the locals so skilfully took advantage of, were a central cause of the difficulties faced by the American troops. The fact that the “slaves” are “fattened” before sending them to the jungle, makes the project sound like a conscious sacrifice. To sum up, even though neither Vietnam nor Afro-Americans are directly mentioned in this passage of ‘Tombstone Blues’, it can be read as a comment on the unjust percentage of black people in the troops sent to Vietnam.

Another verse of ‘Tombstone Blues’ that can be connected to the Vietnam War is:

Well, John the Baptist after torturing a thief
looks up at his hero the Commander-in-Chief
saying, “Tell me great hero, but please make it brief:
Is there a hole for me to get sick in?”
The Commander-in-Chief answers him while chasing a fly
saying, “Death to all those who would whimper and cry.”
And dropping a bar bell he points to the sky
saying, “The sun’s not yellow, it’s chicken.”

A typical image of ‘John the Baptist’ is probably a religious man who baptized people by immersing them in water. Thus, the subject choice of this line could tell us at least two things: Firstly, it
implies that seemingly religious people are capable of cruelty, or even use religion as a justification for their actions. This conforms with the critique Dylan has expressed towards religious hypocrisy and complacency in his other songs, such as ‘With God on Our Side’ (1963). Secondly, within the context of the line itself, “John the Baptist after torturing a thief”, the name hints at the form of torture: the hearer is likely to imagine that the “thief” – the enemy – has been subjected to dunking. However, the subsequent lines reveal that the torturer has only been following orders, and that such inhuman actions eventually make him feel sick. The ways in which participating in atrocities affected the individual soldiers was a concern that Dylan encapsulated twenty years later in ‘Clean-cut Kid’ (1985). The “Commander-in-Chief” figure, on the other hand, is by definition a representative of the military, and by implication, the government. In fact, the United States Constitution defines the President as the commander in chief of the country’s military, so Dylan is apparently referring to President Lyndon B. Johnson (see “Presidency of the United States of America,” 2017). Dylan’s Commander-in-chief is a tough character, a bodybuilder (“dropping a bar bell”) who does not tolerate any signs of weakness (“Death to all those who would whimper and cry”). He is a satirical caricature of a “model soldier”: an unemotional, robotic killing machine.

The Commander-in-Chief’s last comment is perhaps the most enigmatic – and famous – line of ‘Tombstone Blues’: “The sun’s not yellow, it’s chicken”. Since there are several interpretations available, none of which have been confirmed right or wrong, another one is now provided. Firstly, some of the features that can be attributed to ‘the sun’ are enormous, vital, and the centre of our solar system; the sun has also been worshipped as a god in various cultures (see e.g. “Sun worship,” 2017). Therefore, it can be argued that the sun symbolises ultimate power. Secondly, should the military imagery of the verse in question bring Vietnam to mind, the association created by ‘yellow’ is likely to be the stereotypical depiction of the skin colour of an Asian person. For the sentence to make sense semantically, the contrast to ‘yellow’ should be another colour, so according to this interpretation, ‘chicken’ would be an adjective (in the same sense as ‘orange’) rather than a noun. The colour of a chicken’s skin, for its part, resembles that of a white person; hence, the meaning of the line would be that in the Commander-in-Chief’s view, the ultimate power lies with the white race, which justifies their interference in the affairs of other peoples. In conclusion, through the design of the Commander-in-chief character, his traits and opinions, Dylan attacks the mentality promoting the war in Vietnam.
6 Conclusion

In this study, ideas from classical rhetoric have been applied to anti–Vietnam War songs written by Pete Seeger, Bob Dylan and Phil Ochs: when one wishes to persuade his audience, he first has to come up with firm arguments, and then stylize his message; that is, pay attention to how to use language for the desired effect. This study has focused firstly on the various arguments expressed by Seeger, Dylan and Ochs to oppose the Vietnam War, and secondly, on the linguistic conveyance of those arguments. It can be assumed that Pete Seeger, Bob Dylan and Phil Ochs have written the songs examined in this study to express their stance towards the American involvement in the Vietnam War, to strengthen the convictions and togetherness of the hearers who agree with the songwriters, and to change the opinions of those who disagree. Among the more specific targets of critique in these songs are for example the war-promoting leaders, the compulsory draft sending young American men to war, the actions of the U.S. troops in Vietnam, and the “World Police” role that justifies the intrusion of the United States into the internal affairs of other countries. Seeger, Dylan and Ochs justify their protest by throwing into relief various negative characteristics of the Vietnam War: They represent the war as a crime against humanity, as unnecessary sacrifice, as a display of power, and as a betrayal of American values. These representations are expressed in an emotive manner, using stories that aim at rousing feelings of compassion, anger or guilt.

With respect to the linguistic design of the critique, it can be argued that certain linguistic means help create certain effects, and thus have a significant role in conveying the desired message. This study shows that features like personal pronouns, clause types and certain rhetorical devices have important functions in anti–Vietnam War songs. The songwriters operate personal pronouns for example to create an illusion of verisimilitude, to arouse empathy or antipathy, to construct roles of power, and to indicate responsibility. As for different clause types, since declarative clauses are usually the norm, deviating types like interrogatives and imperatives can be used for effect, to catch the attention of the hearer and to challenge him to reflect on his potential response. Rhetorical devices, such as irony, parody, metaphor and simile, are used to illustrate ideas, to suggest attitudes, to highlight evils and contradictions, and to create associations by connecting certain characters with certain images. As for Bob Dylan’s more abstract lyrics, ideas from cognitive stylistics help in shedding light to the mechanisms that allow them to be perceived as anti–Vietnam War songs despite never mentioning the words ‘Vietnam’ or ‘war’: hearing a certain
word activates certain prototypical images in the minds of the audience, and directs the interpretation.

Since the different levels of language are interconnecting, the resulting effect of an utterance is always a sum of several factors: choosing a certain pronoun does not automatically guarantee that the message will come across successfully. Thus, the linguistic features examined in this paper should not be perceived as the sole factors accounting for the persuasive power of these songs but rather as considerably significant contributors that create their effect jointly with other features such as the syntactic design, lexical choices and overall narrative structure – not to mention the context of the physical performance. Accordingly, the scope of study could be expanded in the future through a more profound analysis of the language used in the songs. Should one agree with Lars Eckstein (2010), on the other hand, one could examine the lyrics through their vocal and musical actualisation, since “the art of lyrics is fundamentally . . . a performance art” (p. 10). Further studies could examine the effects of musical elements like melody and harmony, and the combination they form with the lyrics: a certain word can be highlighted for example using a higher pitch or a longer note, or placing it at the beginning of a bar. Another possible starting point for future research could be to widen the perspective and connect the songs to the image that the mass media – mainly television and newspapers – created of the Vietnam War. After all, none of the songwriters examined here served in Vietnam, so they must have based their songs on secondary sources. Finally, it would be interesting to compare the American anti–Vietnam War songs to the ones written in Finland: the tone of the Finnish Vietnam songs, at least those written by Aulikki Oksanen, is considerably anti-American, whereas Vietnam and the Vietnamese are idealized.

These songs obviously have the same objective as political speeches, and according to Aristotle, a speech that appeals to emotions has the power to change the opinions of the audience and to move them to action (Aristotle 2.1.8). Both at the thematic and at the stylistic level, it is possible to point out instances where the songs are likely to stir the emotions of the audience, whether it be the anger aroused by the disrespectful intruders in Phil Ochs’s ‘Cops of the World’ or the empathy caused by the confused recruit in Bob Dylan’s ‘With God on Our Side’. If songs and music indeed have the power to change the way people think, it is a weapon that can be used for good as well as for evil. Therefore, it is useful to be able to recognize persuasive features that can be used in song lyrics. Furthermore, one’s own communication skills can be enhanced through the
increased awareness of the ways in which the design of the message, the “package” in which it is delivered, crucially contributes to its effect.
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