

# ‘Must Be Born Again’: resurrecting the *Anthology of American Folk Music*

KATHERINE SKINNER

## Abstract

Since the 1997 reissue of the 1952 *Anthology of American Folk Music* by Smithsonian Folkways Recordings, journalists, scholars and musicians have promoted this collection as the ‘founding document’ (Marcus 1997) and ‘musical constitution’ (Cantwell 1996) of the urban folk revival of the 1950s and 1960s. This reception differs markedly from that of its original issue, which sold few copies and attracted only minor critical attention. This article provides an account of the transformation in the *Anthology’s* cultural status – showing that the canonisation of the *Anthology* stems not just from its content, but from the interplay of its content and its sociohistorical context. I identify some of the factors that influenced the retrospective consecration of the *Anthology*, including the important work of key people, the growth of a new field (‘Americana’ music) and changes in the organisational structures of the recording industry.

## Introduction

In 1951, Moses Asch, founder of Folkways Records, met a bohemian record collector by the name of Harry Smith. During their first conversation, he convinced Smith to assemble an anthology from his extensive collection of rare commercial folk music recordings from the 1920s and 1930s. Smith complied for a much-needed two hundred dollar advance, and the following year, Folkways Records released the three-volume LP collection, the *Anthology of American Folk Music*.

Due in part to Folkways’ narrow distribution channels, the 1952 *Anthology* was expensive and largely unavailable to a commercial market. It appeared quietly, then disappeared from the market altogether for several years. The *Anthology* never earned inclusion in Folkways’ own ‘Best Selling LP Records’ lists and Asch’s ledger books demonstrate that *Anthology* sales remained consistently low throughout its lifespan with Folkways.

Forty-five years after its original release, a Smithsonian Folkways CD reissue of the *Anthology* (1997) garnered a flood of accolades, two Grammy awards, and healthy sales. Concurrent with the reissue, musicians, scholars and journalists widely acknowledged the *Anthology* as a significant cultural document: one that they claim informed, and helped to form, the urban folk revival of the late 1950s and 1960s. Celebrating the reissue, Fricke (1997, p. 101) reported in *Rolling Stone*, ‘Today, it is impossible to overstate the historic worth, sociocultural impact and undiminished vitality of the music in this set’.

This study addresses this dramatic shift in the valuation of the *Anthology* and highlights factors that contributed to the transformation of its status between 1952 and 1997. The organisation of the essay follows several threads over time – thereby showing the ‘tapestry’ of forces at play. I begin by turning to a literature concerned with issues of cultural production, including processes that underlie valorisation of cultural products. I then situate the *Anthology* in its broader sociohistorical context – comparing reviews that were written about the *Anthology* at the time of its reissue with those from the time of its original release; reviewing primary documentation concerning its production, sales and marketing; and evaluating the important roles played by key actors, including Asch and Smith. I next suggest that the emergence of new criteria for evaluating ‘folk’ and ‘roots’ music influenced the reception of the 1997 *Anthology* reissue.

### **‘He Got Better Things For You’: The interplay between content and context**

My approach to the *Anthology*’s change in status is informed by a theoretical understanding of canonisation and aesthetic classification as social processes. This perspective, as articulated by DiMaggio (1987), Levine (1988), Peterson (1997), and others, holds that hierarchical rankings for cultural products achieve meaning only through the active social processes that create, maintain and employ them. In other words, classification schemes, including such designations as ‘high art’, do not naturally arise from the content of the cultural texts that they are used to describe. Instead, categories and aesthetic standards that are commonly used to organise, segregate and rank works of art into genres are constructions that take work to build and maintain.

This perspective emphasises that the most exalted works within a genre do not automatically rise to the top. Their ranking largely depends on the formation and deployment of systems of evaluation, or ‘cultural valorisation’ (Corse and Griffin 1997). The content of a work does not determine its inclusion or exclusion from the canon. Instead, a range of factors, including ideological struggles and institutional contexts, converge to produce ‘fields’ or ‘art worlds’ and the canons that become associated with them (Becker 1982). This is not to say that the *Anthology* and other exalted works do not have artistic merit – only that how that merit is evaluated by key actors, be they critics or academics, also matters.

Aesthetic classification systems emerge when people collectively agree that certain cultural texts belong together in fields, that these fields have differing degrees of cultural significance, and that particular cultural texts within each field are superior to others (Becker 1982; Bourdieu 1984; DiMaggio 1987; Levine 1988). This process is heavily influenced by such factors as historical circumstances (including conceptions of race and class), organisational structures (including businesses and universities) and activities of key players who hold or compete for positions of power (including critics and entrepreneurs). These evaluative systems do not merely reflect their contexts, but also bear reciprocal influences upon them. Once established, a field and its canon serve as cultural signifiers; those who have familiarity with particular works hold cultural capital within groups that know and value those works (Bourdieu 1984; DiMaggio 1987; Levine 1988).

Both fields and canons are contested terrain – even after they have become established, they remain open to the continued influences of history, social processes, organisations and struggles between key actors (Binder 1993; Peterson 1997; DeNora

2002; Dowd *et al.* 2002; Roscigno and Danaher 2004). For example, when Zora Neale Hurston's novel, *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, was published in 1937, it attracted little critical attention, sold poorly and went out of print until the mid-1960s. By the 1990s, this novel had risen to critical acclaim as a central text of the African-American literary canon. In studying this phenomenon, Corse and Griffin (1997) identify key factors in the re-evaluation of Hurston's novel, including changes in the evaluative criteria applied to texts, the incorporation of new voices in literary criticism and shifts in broader social and political conditions – especially transformations concerning cultural perceptions of gender and race.

Like Corse and Griffin's work, much research that examines the institutionalisation of fields and the processes of canonisation concentrates on 'high art' forms such as literature and classical music (e.g. DiMaggio 1982; DeNora 2002; Dowd *et al.* 2002). Less attention has been given to the way that canonisation and valorisation function in arenas of popular culture. However, a recent flurry of work demonstrates that the processes may be similar in popular and high culture genres. Santoro's (2002) analysis of the emergence and institutionalisation of a genre, the *canzone d'autore*, in Italy, demonstrates that aesthetic classification systems that separate 'high' and 'low' culture are also at work in popular culture. And Baumann (2001) shows that the valorisation of film as 'art' instead of 'entertainment' resulted from the ways that its content was discussed in critical and intellectual discourses, including in new forums such as film journals, film festivals and film studies programs. Baumann reveals significant differences in critical appraisals of the same film at different moments in time. The constructs that moved film from popular culture to high culture, then, are similar to those that affected Hurston's text. Legitimizing ideologies were supplied by key players and a change in context led to a change in the valuation of certain cultural products (see Allen and Lincoln 2004).

### 'Brilliant Medley': critical reception

That's where the wealth of folk music was, on that particular record . . . it's all poetry, every one of those songs, without a doubt. (Bob Dylan, quoted in Kaganski 1998, p. 64)

Just as critical reception of particular novels and films differs considerably across time, the appraisal of the *Anthology* changed dramatically between the time of its original release in 1952 and its reissue in 1997. In this section, I begin with the accolades it received at the time of its reissue, and then look back to the reception that greeted the original release.

The 1997 *Anthology* reissue sought to preserve 'the breadth and focus of Smith's vision' (Seeger and Horowitz 1997, p. 3). To this end, Smithsonian Folkways Recordings replicated Smith's 1952 release, retaining the features of the original wherever possible. The *Anthology* reissue contains a facsimile booklet of Smith's original annotations from 1952 entitled 'American Folk Music' and three CD pairs that are modelled after the six original albums. The additions to this reissued box set include a sixty-seven page 'Booklet of Essays, Appreciations, and Annotations Pertaining to the *Anthology of American Folk Music*' (hereafter, the 'Booklet').

The 1997 *Anthology* reissue met with immediate critical acclaim. Journalists, scholars and musicians quickly situated the release as a canonical piece. This *Anthology*, according to critical reviews that accompanied its reissue, is the cornerstone upon which much contemporary American music rests – including the urban folk revival.

Piazza (1997, p. H32) of the *New York Times* called it 'the single most important source of material and inspiration for many young singers in the 1950s and 60s'. In *Sing Out!*, Greenberg (1997, p. 128) heralded the release as the 'definitive collection' of 'traditional and idiomatic musical styles'. Morris (1997, p. 8) of *Billboard* praised it as 'the most influential and magical document of the American urban folk revival'. In *Rolling Stone*, Fricke (1997, p. 101) described the *Anthology* as 'the mother river from which much of our popular music still pours forth', and Alterman (1998, p. 10) of *The Nation* insisted that, '[m]ore than any other single document, Smith's *Anthology* helped inspire the folk explosion of the early sixties, which in turn gave rock and roll its social and intellectual edge'. In effusive terms, these and numerous other critics focused upon the *Anthology* as a powerful force and central inspiration for American music.

Several scholarly and popular books published near the time of the reissue concentrated on the *Anthology's* seminal role in triggering the urban folk music revival of the 1950s and 1960s. Greil Marcus (1997, pp. 87, 102) noted that the *Anthology* 'was the founding document of the American folk revival', one that 'was meant to distinguish those who responded from those who didn't, to distinguish those who responded to themselves'. Cultural historian Robert Cantwell (1996, p. 189) termed the *Anthology* the urban folk revival's 'enabling document, its musical constitution'. From 1997 forward, nearly every book published about the music or musicians of the urban folk revival has mentioned the *Anthology* as a central document that informed this revival.<sup>1</sup>

Musicians, too, spoke of the canonical value of the *Anthology* at the time of its reissue, most notably in the 'Booklet', published by the Smithsonian to commemorate 'the original *Anthology's* intentions, its collected performances, and its impact' (Seeger and Horowitz 1997, p. 3). The 'Booklet' contains a collection of sixteen personal perspectives on Smith and the *Anthology*, written by or quoted from such individuals as Elvis Costello, Allen Ginsberg, Dave Van Ronk and Jon Pankake. The written essays and all but three of the quotations were solicited by Smithsonian Folkways Recordings by 1994 – with Marcus and Rani Singh (Harry Smith Archives) credited with 'research and commissioning of essays'. Presumably, the authors of the 'Booklet' essays were aware that they were producing testimonies that would be published with the reissue.

In the 'Booklet' tributes (all of which are by men), the writers and speakers remember the impact of Smith and his *Anthology*. Lawrence Cohn (1997, p. 28) called it the 'single greatest influence' on his life and recalled having worn out two sets of the *Anthology*. Luc Sante (1997, p. 31) asserted that this *Anthology* was 'a Rosetta Stone, a treasure map of an ancient and now-hidden America', and John Fahey (1997, p. 8) wrote that he would 'match the *Anthology* against any other single compendium of important information ever assembled'. Music journalist Jon Pankake (1997, p. 26) relates that when Paul Nelson introduced him to the *Anthology* in 1959, it 'quite literally changed the course of my life'. Bluegrass fiddler and sometimes rocker Peter Stampfel, who recorded numerous *Anthology* covers, recalls hearing the third volume ('everyone's favourite') of the *Anthology* in late 1959. 'If God were a DJ', asserts Stampfel (quoted in 1997, p. 25), 'he'd be Harry Smith . . . This is the Touchstone, the Grail, The Real Deal, The Nitty Gritty, Ground Zero. Long may it wave'. The 'Booklet', then, is not merely an accompaniment to the *Anthology*. Instead, it functions as a legitimising force for the CD set. The testimonies it contains serve to authenticate the *Anthology* by relating that it is a cornerstone of American music.

Within and beyond the 'Booklet', people cite the *Anthology* as a formative influence in the careers of such musicians as Bruce Springsteen, Pete Seeger, the New Lost City Ramblers, Roger McGuinn, Patti Smith, Lawrence Cohn, Neil Young, Joan Baez, Bob Dylan, the Kingston Trio, Dave Bromberg, Harold Leventhal, Ramblin' Jack Elliot, Dave Van Ronk, Jerry Garcia, Peter Stampfel, Nick Cave and Beck. Near the time of his death, Allen Ginsberg declared:

This box set was an historic bomb in American folk music. It turned on Peter, Paul and Mary, turned on the whole folk music world at the time, including Ramblin' Jack Elliot and everybody else . . . Happy Traum, everybody, including Dylan, [was] affected by it. Jerry Garcia learned blues from Harry Smith records, according to Garcia. (quoted in Singh 1998, p. 4)

Judging by the testimonies of key figures that were published in and after 1997, the 1952 *Anthology* release served as a major conduit for the urban folk revival and as a formative influence upon a number of eminent musical artists during the intervening decades. The high sales numbers, awards and accolades received by the 1997 *Anthology* reissue suggest that it continues to resonate with a contemporary audience. But the accolades that accompanied the 1997 reissue differ markedly from the critical reception of the original 1952 release.

The 1952 release seemingly emerged without inspiring so much as a whisper in the popular press. The earliest journalistic mention of this release apparently surfaced in the spring of 1958 in an issue of the nationally distributed folk music magazine *Sing Out!*. Rather than concentrating on the *Anthology* itself, this piece includes a transcription of 'The Cuckoo'. In the preface to the transcription, the editor mentions Clarence Tom Ashley's 1929 Columbia recording of this song, then notes that Ashley's version was 'reissued as part of Folkways massive three-volume *Anthology of American Folk Music* (FP 253)'.

This one-line reference to the *Anthology* – six years after its release – stands in stark contrast to the effusive outpouring of reviews appearing upon its reissue in 1997.<sup>2</sup> *Sing Out!* did not publish a full article concerning this release or its creator until 1969, when it printed an edited transcript of an interview John Cohen conducted with Smith at the Chelsea Hotel about the *Anthology* and such other works as his acclaimed experimental films and a then-unreleased album of Kiowa Indian music. According to Cohen (2000, p. 39), 'Although there had been various printed conversations with Harry, . . . The Chelsea Hotel interview was the only one he did that focused on the music of the *Anthology*'.

Reviews and articles in scholarly and folkloric circles that mention the *Anthology* are also infrequent between 1952 and 1997. When they do occur, the coverage is brief, and their point is to reference the *Anthology* as one among many important releases or to use the *Anthology* as a point of comparison for other releases. For example, Miller (1995, p. 543) calls the *Anthology* 'monumental', but only devotes one paragraph of a three-page article to it. McNeil (1977, p. 178) situates the *Anthology* as 'one of the most influential folk music sets ever assembled', but does so in one sentence of a nine-page overview of Southern folk music recordings available through 'indie' labels.<sup>3</sup> After prefacing his eleven-page 'tutorial discussion' in *Journal of American Folklore* by telling his readers that his review of recent albums falls outside of the boundaries of the academic 'folk canon', Norm Cohen (1987, p. 208) prophesies in one paragraph that 'When a history of the folksong revival of the 1960s is written, tribute will be paid to Harry Smith's . . . *Anthology*'.

Similarly brief homage is paid to the *Anthology* in articles and reviews that use it as a comparison point for other releases. For example, when reviewing Alan Lomax' *Southern Folk Heritage* (1961), Shelton compares the value of the collection to that of the *Anthology*, and Russell uses the *Anthology* in 1982 as a measuring stick against which to judge the new fifteen-volume set from the Library of Congress, *Folk Music in America*.

These articles demonstrate that by the late 1970s and early 1980s, some already considered this collection to be a critical text of Southern folk music recordings, and were intent on sharing knowledge of it. However, the scarcity of articles that mention the *Anthology* suggests that prior to its reissue, most journalists and critics did not consider the *Anthology* to be the major conduit for the folk revival of the 1950s and 1960s.

Striking are the various articles written about Folkways between 1952 and 1997 that fail to mention the *Anthology*. Among them, the two-article series 'Conversation with Mr. Folkways' traces the history of Folkways Records. Notably, in answering a question concerning which Folkways releases were his best sellers, Asch responded, 'I guess that would be Woody Guthrie's *Songs to Grow On* and Pete Seeger's *Birds, Beasts, Bugs and Little Fishes*' (Capaldi 1978, p. 2). Likewise, the 33 *Guide's* folk view section traced the history and significance of Folkways Records in 1961. Within this article, Charters (1961, p. 42) speaks to the value of Folkways collections for the 'more serious student' of American music. The eleven-volume jazz anthology, compiled by Frederic Ramsey, Jr, is considered a 'standard', and the 'two great documentations of Southern music' are listed as Harold Courlander's six-volume series, *Negro Folk Music of Alabama* (1951) and Ramsey's *Music from the South* series (1955–1960). There is no mention, however, of the *Anthology* within this article.

Even the *Little Sandy Review*, which Pankake (1997, p. 27) referred to as 'devoted to discussing the difference between the "folk music" on the *Anthology* and the "folk music" represented by the artists and albums of the recording industry', rarely mentions the *Anthology*. Instead, the thirty-volume series published over four years seems most dedicated to Pankake and Nelson's former dorm-mate Bobby Zimmerman, better known as Bob Dylan.

Just as Hurston's novel went from obscurity to exemplar, apparently so too did the *Anthology*. Prior to 1997, most scholarly books and articles did not mention the *Anthology*, much less focus on it as an inspiration of the urban folk revival.<sup>4</sup> The striking difference in the critical reception of the *Anthology* at the time of its 1952 release and after its 1997 reissue demonstrates that the public knowledge of it underwent a dramatic change. Determining the *Anthology's* position in the urban folk revival – including how many copies were pressed and sold, how much it cost, and where it was available – helps to clarify how it rose to canonical status.

### 'Fifty Miles of Elbow Room': production and distribution

The materials at the Smithsonian Folkways Archives include Moses Asch's hand-written accounts of Folkways album sales, charted by release number and separated into six-month intervals. From these ledger books, Asch calculated the royalties owed to labels and artists. As Asch used nearly twenty different companies to press records, and conducted pressings when necessary rather than at specific times of the year, these ledger books are the only accessible records of Folkways' sales.

Within these archival holdings, Asch's ledger books begin with January of 1959. However, there is an alternate record of the sales between 1952 and 1956. On 27 November 1953, Asch's lawyer, Abraham M. Lowenthal, sent a letter to the Law Department of Radio Corporation of America (RCA). In this letter, addressed to Mr. John K. Sloan, Lowenthal writes:

I refer to our correspondence . . . relating to publication [by Folkways] . . . of albums of American folk music which contained reproductions of recordings of your company and its predecessor. You will recall that . . . Folkways represented that it had on hand approximately 100 copies of the album and undertook to discontinue the sale thereof no later than December 31, 1953.<sup>5</sup>

It seems that pirated material contained within this Folkways release quickly caught the attention of RCA, the label that owned the rights to much of this music. This comes as little surprise – Asch had a reputation for releasing copyrighted songs without going through the proper legal channels. What does come as a surprise is that through his lawyer, Asch reported having only 100 copies of the *Anthology*. The remainder of the letter reveals that during 1953, Asch only accomplished the sale of fifty albums, and that forty-seven of these were sold to libraries and colleges at conventions.

Folkways withdrew the *Anthology* from the market soon after the 1953 letter, as evidenced by Folkways catalogues from Fall 1955 until Spring 1956 which state 'These 3 Albums Are Out of Print'.<sup>6</sup> This offers one explanation for the lack of reviews on the *Anthology* in the first few years following its release. Quite likely, Asch had no desire to draw public attention to this release until the matters of legality and royalty payments had been resolved with RCA.

Folkways' catalogues also reveal much about how this three-volume set was presented to its potential buyers. Each volume was sold separately. At its introduction in the fall of 1952, each two-disc volume cost the buyer \$11.90. In 1965, the price for the scholastic market was revised to \$8.50 per volume, then rose to \$13.96 in 1974. By 1980, the cost of each volume was \$17.98, and in 1982, each volume sold for \$19.96. These prices likely restricted the sales of the *Anthology*, especially the entire three-volume set, to the moderately affluent buyer or aficionados. Not surprisingly, the *Anthology* never appeared in the 'Best Selling Records' section of Folkways catalogues.

According to sales numbers in Asch's ledgers, the *Anthology* sold very few copies throughout its lifespan with Folkways. An average of thirty-seven sets were sold to the domestic market within each six-month period between 1959 and 1978. As the market expanded in 1965 to include foreign sales, an average of approximately seventy-five sets sold to the combined foreign and domestic markets every six months. In 1975, sales reached what appears to be their peak, with 251 sets sold. Evidence concerning sales to libraries makes it reasonable to conclude that very few of these *Anthology* volumes were sold to the general public.

Place (2002), who worked on the 1997 reissue, told NPR *Morning Edition* host Bob Edwards that 'in its earlier years', the *Anthology* moved into public view more 'like a tortoise as opposed to a hare. It kind of snuck out there'. Place notes that 'certain in-group people got it', and these individuals slowly spread the word to others who were interested in Southern commercial recordings from the 1920s and 1930s.

Similarly, Bob Dylan (quoted in Gilmore 2001, p. 66) revealed that 'those records were around – that Harry Smith anthology – but that's not what everybody was listening to'. Instead, Dylan insisted, 'mostly you heard other performers . . . you could hear the actual people singing those ballads'. He reports that he and most of his

Greenwich Village peers lived 'kind of a transient existence', and that most did not own record players or records. Dylan also cites a few important channels for the dissemination of folk songs through texts, performances and recordings, including Izzy Young's Folklore Center in New York City and Chicago's Old Town School of Folk Music. Dylan's comments here do not negate his earlier comment, 'That's where the wealth of folk music was'. Rather, they qualify that statement. Without question, Dylan listened to and learned from the *Anthology* – as is especially evident on Dylan's self-titled debut and on the now infamous basement tapes. However, this LP collection was not what everyone listened to – nor was it the only influence on Dylan's own music (see Harvey 2001).

Although Joan Baez has recorded several of the songs that appear on the *Anthology*, including 'House Carpenter', 'Little Moses' and 'John Hardy', she never mentions the *Anthology* in her autobiography. When I spoke with Joan Baez in April of 2000 about this release and its role in the music scene of the 1950s and 1960s, she related that, while she could not speak for others, she was certainly immersed in that scene and did not recall coming across Smith's compilation. She remembered learning to play, not from records, but from other musicians.<sup>7</sup> Baez' memories resonate with Dylan's comments in 2001. Alternative channels inevitably helped to spread the songs of the *Anthology*, even to some of the most prominent recording artists of the urban folk revival.<sup>8</sup>

The *Anthology* did not likely rise to its current status through wide circulation during the 1950s and 1960s. Sales figures, legal documents and accounts from key musicians of the urban folk revival suggest that the *Anthology* was owned by few people, and that many other channels disseminated the same songs that are contained on this release. There were myriad influences for the urban folk revival, including commercially available text-based and recorded collections; library collections; sites such as cafés, folklore centres, summer camps and labor colleges; and events associated with the left. Each of these provided routes for songs – including those contained on the *Anthology* – to travel from person to person, and from group to group. If not its sales and circulation, what factors made this release stand out as a work of such acclaim and social significance?

One explanation for the *Anthology's* historical value, as suggested by such journalists and scholars as Cantwell, Marcus and Neil V. Rosenberg, is that the *Anthology* numbered among the first releases to challenge the racial boundaries of the recording industry. Another is that this release uniquely gathered these particular musicians and recordings from the 1920s and 1930s, and that the *Anthology* was the primary source that made these recordings available during the urban folk revival. To evaluate these possibilities, I turn to historical information concerning the recording industry between the 1920s and the 1950s.

### **'The Lone Star Trail': the recording industry context**

According to Cantwell (1996, p. 194), the *Anthology* constituted 'the complete breakdown of the old cultural geography'. At the time of the *Anthology's* release, this 'cultural geography' still segregated the older works of black and white 'folk' musicians into two main categories: 'hillbilly' and 'race' recordings. Constructed by such commercial scouts or Artist and Repertoire (A&R) men as Ralph Peer, Frank Walker and Eli Oberstein, these categories intended to distinguish clearly between the musics of black and white folk artists for commercial distribution and sales (Green 1965).



These designations also served to separate recordings of rural, working-class musicians from the recordings issued by these labels for nationwide commercial sales.

During the 1920s and 1930s, A&R men recorded thousands of small-town artists on 'hillbilly', 'race' and 'ethnic' records for commercial sale in regional markets, mainly in the Southern and Eastern United States (Filene 2000). Such designations continued to function as 'picturesque conceptions' in the 1950s, 'supposing that music observes racial, occupational, regional and other social boundaries' (Cantwell 1996, p. 193). 'Race' encompassed the music of black musicians, while 'hillbilly' marked that of rural white mountaineers. 'Ethnic' incorporated music by all of the 'other' artists, including Jewish American, Mexican American/Conjunto, Cajun/Black Creole and Native American musicians. Like popular recordings of the early 1950s – including Rhythm and Blues and Country and Western – these 'race', 'hillbilly' and 'ethnic' releases seldom reached broad audiences.<sup>9</sup>

If and when a record did cross the race line in the 1920s and 1930s, the label usually took care to identify the musicians' race for consumers. As Ward (1998, p. 28) notes, '[w]henver artists of either race challenged these aural and, by extension, social conventions, special arrangements were made to alert the public'. This was accomplished by printing a unique alphanumeric designation on the 78 r.p.m. record itself alongside the song title and musician's name. Record companies would use these designations to categorise records into distinct sets that served to relay the race of the musician – not only to the public, but also to the distributor and seller. 'In time', writes Peterson (1997, p. 195), 'everyone in the trade industry came to identify song styles and artists by the series in which their records appeared'. Often, larger companies formed such subsidiary labels as Mercury's Wing and 8000 series, Columbia's Okeh label and RCA's Groove series which they used specifically for 'race' recordings of the 1920s and 1930s, and later, for rhythm and blues recordings of the 1950s (see Dowd 2003).

Smith disrupted this classification system by integrating black, rural white and Cajun/Black Creole musicians throughout the *Anthology*. Organised as three volumes: 'Ballads', 'Social Music' and 'Songs', Smith's categories describe the sound and content of the music, drawing listeners' attention to aural similarities rather than imagined distinctions between musics of people from different times, ethnicities, classes and regions. The *Anthology* articulates the strains of similitude rather than the dissonance of difference. Throughout the albums, fiddling converges with banjo frailing, panpipes meet jug bands and Cajun accordions share fellowship with foot-stomping gospel singers. Even today, attempts to identify the racial backgrounds of the *Anthology* artists without prior knowledge would prove difficult. Smith's configuration of American folk tunes continues to challenge its listeners to recognise the cross germination of American musical genres illustrated by the grouping of these songs by diverse musicians.

In the *Anthology*, Smith effectively colour-blinded his audience and challenged the racial categories of the recording industry. In 1968, he stated:

Before the *Anthology* there had been a tendency in which records were lumped into blues catalogs or hillbilly catalogs . . . and everybody was having blindfold tests to prove they could tell which was which. That's why there's no such indications of that sort [colour/racial] in the albums. I wanted to see how well certain jazz critics did on the blindfold test. They all did horribly. It took years before anybody discovered that Mississippi John Hurt wasn't a hillbilly. (quoted in Cohen 1999, p. 83)

Smith and Asch violated the racial system with full volition with the *Anthology* and seemingly intended for their audience to recognise it. Within Smith's liner notes, the reader finds eight small reprints of record envelopes and Smith's comment: 'The advertising on these envelopes gives a good idea of the companies [*sic*] attitude toward their artists'. Each of the eight record envelopes reprinted in the liner notes segregates its musicians by race. Three prominently display the words 'Race Records' beneath the label names, *Brunswick* and *Vocalion*. Another envelope simply states 'Vocalion Record' above a picture of a white man playing a fiddle, clarifying the message: either a record is simply a record, or it is a 'race' record.

These advertisements and Smith's caption tell a significant story, one that informs listeners that this is more than an *Anthology* – it is a small but intentional kink in the racially stratified environment of both the music industry and American society. Smith did not intend for the *Anthology* to fit into segregated categories of the popular music industry, and so he purposefully integrated the works of 'folk' artists of different racial groups. 'I felt social changes would result from it', Smith told John Cohen (quoted in Cohen 1999, p. 83) in 1968. 'I'd been reading from Plato's *Republic*. He's jabbering on about music, how you have to be careful about changing the music because it might upset or destroy the government . . . Of course, I thought it would do that'.

While it seems unlikely that a collection of folk music from the 1920s and 1930s could have 'upset or destroy[ed] the government' during the 1950s, it could have inspired some confusion in the American music industry of the McCarthy era. Indeed, both Cantwell and Marcus frame their considerations of the 1952 *Anthology* release within the political context of the Red Scare. Marcus (1997, p. 92) tells his readers, '[i]t was no accident that the *Anthology* was issued in 1952, at the height of the McCarthyist witch hunt'. Cantwell (1996, p. 181) first introduces the *Anthology* as proof that even in the McCarthy era, 'political repression could not entirely crush a cultural movement that went deeper than politics'.<sup>10</sup>

At the time of the *Anthology's* release, many commercially successful 'folk' singers were called to testify before the Senate Subcommittee on Internal Security. Many more were affected by blacklisting during the 1950s. According to Goldsmith (1998, p. 301), Asch took 'great care in the fifties to ensure that he would not be susceptible to governmental and quasi-governmental forces of right-wing censure'. Still, Asch was well known as an 'Old Lefty' and identified himself as a 'goddamn anarchist', and Folkways Records as 'an artifact of left-wing culture' (Goldsmith 1998, pp. 4, 8). During the Red Scare, the FBI kept an eye – and often an open file – on Folkways Records (see Goldsmith 1998).

Woody Guthrie's biographer, Joe Klein (1999, p. 347), claims that during this time, '[a]nyone who'd ever joined a committee against racism . . . who could be called a "premature anti-fascist", . . . was suspect'. By this standard, both Smith and the *Anthology* violated unspoken guidelines of the post-war anti-communist crusade regarding racial separation. However, there is no evidence that the FBI noticed the *Anthology* – and if it had, the *Anthology's* songs probably would have appeared innocuous. These recordings were twenty years old, and most of their players were either dead or invisible to the recording industry by 1952. The *Anthology's* low profile and sales numbers inevitably helped it to go unnoticed. But at the time of its release, the *Anthology* also did not pose a unique challenge to prevailing racial categories. Other recordings had already disrupted the system of racial categorisation prior to its 1952 release. While admittedly rare, some musicians, including those involved in

Benny Goodman's bands, were recording in integrated sessions by the mid-1930s (Lopes 2002). Prior to the release of LP technology in 1948, such recordings as *Listen To Our Story: A Panorama of American Ballads* (1947), from the Lomax collection, 'American Folk Music Series' integrated the songs of black and white musicians.

The cover of the Lomax *Panorama* release contains an illustration of three white musicians on a red, white and blue background. However, the cover is misleading – *Panorama* contains eight songs by seven musicians, two of whom were black. Songs of these two black musicians, Furry Lewis and Reverend Edward Clayburn, play alongside such white musicians as Buell Kazee and Dock Boggs. Like the *Anthology*, Lomax's *Panorama* does not segregate these artists; nor does Lomax mention the races of any of these artists. Perhaps even more important, this Lomax *Panorama* collection demonstrates that the *Anthology* was not the only source through which the public could hear this particular set of singers. Five of the *Panorama* musicians also appear on the *Anthology*. While individual selections within these two collections differ, the Lomax collection reintroduced the works of Buell Kazee, Furry Lewis, Bascom Lamar Lunsford, Dock Boggs and Uncle Dave Macon to the marketplace two years before the *Anthology* appeared. Smith himself was aware of the 'American Folk Music Series', the collection within which *Panorama* and *Smokey Mountain Ballads* appeared.

As Smith began to amass his collection of old recordings, he turned to existing sources. When Cohen (1999, p. 72) asked Smith where he first heard about the Carter Family, featured on the *Anthology*, he remembered first seeing their names on 'that mimeographed list that the Library of Congress issued around 1937, *American Folksongs on Commercially Available Records*'. Smith continued, 'Shortly after that, two Carter Family records, "Worried Man Blues" and "East Virginia Blues" were re-issued on the album *Smokey Mountain Ballads*. That album would come to stores that wouldn't ordinarily have Carter Family records'. Smith located artists and recordings such as the Carter Family through collections, both literary and recorded, that predated the *Anthology*.

While Smith's *Anthology* numbered among the first LP collections to cross the racial barrier, it was not even the first Folkways release to do so. Folkways' *Music of the World's Peoples* (1951) release includes a 'Tennessee Mountaineer' who sings 'Pretty Polly', as well as a 'Blues' number and a 'Cajun' song from Louisiana. It also features an introduction and careful documentation by ethnomusicologist and composer Henry Cowell, who explicitly states, '[i]t might be possible to organize the material by races, by styles, by history, or by geography; no such types of organization are attempted here'. This comment may be viewed as a predecessor to Smith's 'blindfold test' statement during his 1968 interview with John Cohen. Much like Folkways' earlier *Music* release, the *Anthology* intended to challenge the classification systems used by the recording industry. This was not, however, an unprecedented move.

It seems plausible that, like Smith, folk revivalists and scholars may have heard material found in the *Anthology* through alternate sources that recognised and promoted some of these same, now canonical, musicians and recordings. There is no way to calculate the number of people who discovered and listened to the *Anthology* through public and university library holdings, nor to account for the number who borrowed a copy of the *Anthology* or created their own copies through dubbing tapes. It is also difficult to trace the dissemination of these songs through the recordings made by early *Anthology* aficionados, or the influence of live performances by Dock Boggs and Clarence 'Tom' Ashley and other musicians featured on the *Anthology* that resulted from Cohen's and Rinzler's successful efforts to bring them to the urban folk

revival stages. However, it is certain that all of these pathways existed simultaneously, and that each played a part in keeping these songs alive. Smith's *Anthology* may have strengthened a tendency that was already developing toward these particular recordings and musicians. How, then, did the *Anthology* become the 'touchstone' that was credited with teaching and inspiring the urban folk revivalists? Consider the reputations of Asch, Smith, and Folkways.

### 'Shine on Me': legitimating the *Anthology*

In 1948, Moses Asch founded Folkways Records to document 'the folkways of the world on records'. Over its forty-year history, Folkways assembled a catalogue containing more than 2,000 recordings from around the world. Among these are the poetry of Allen Ginsberg and Langston Hughes; albums of musical traditions in India, Japan and Africa; and the works of such artists as Woody Guthrie, Jean Ritchie, John Cage and Bernice Johnson Reagon. Underlying and uniting the diverse array of Folkways releases was Asch's desire to promote 'international, interracial, or inter-ethnic understanding' through recorded sounds (Goldsmith 1998, p. 6).

Folkways releases rarely appealed to record retailers or the standard commercial market. Asch composed the marketing strategy for Folkways in April of 1952. He broke his chief clientele into three groups: librarians, teachers and museums. Asch knew that by concentrating on such conventions as the American Library Association and the Music Library Association, he could sell the eclectic Folkways recordings to a viable market. Educators could be expected to support his often obscure and esoteric work. As Asch commented, 'Librarians are the best evaluators of folk music . . . [they] must be responsible for the maintenance and accumulation of recordings of the best and most typical music of the world's many peoples' (quoted in Goldsmith 1998, p. 250).

From Folkways' beginning, Asch tended to release a large number of recordings, but had very few copies of each record pressed. Folkways recordings were not often distributed to stores, but rather were made available through libraries and through mail-order catalogues that targeted a small, dependable market of folk-music aficionados. Asch deliberately sought to create recordings of historical, rather than commercial, significance.

When Folkways began issuing albums in the late 1940s and early 1950s, many major-label studio and field recordings of blues and folk musicians from the 1920s and 1930s were entirely out of print. Some of the labels that originally recorded and released these works had chosen to destroy the original masters of these recordings as the US emerged from the Depression because it was no longer considered profitable to market these older recordings to regional areas. Asch believed that the public had the right to obtain these historically significant recordings under a clause of the US Constitution regarding the public's right to information. Using this reasoning, Asch justified his decision to produce professional 'bootlegs' of songs originating from other labels on his Folkways label (Goldsmith 1998).

'I was called a pirate', Asch told Young (1977, p. 25). 'I was called a Jolly Roger even by *Sing Out!*'. Copyright infringement and royalty battles raged between Asch and the heads of major labels throughout the history of Folkways. However, Asch's releases were almost always deliberately non-commercial and not intended to sell in large quantities. 'The more obscure a recording', notes Goldsmith (1998, p. 234), 'the

happier Asch was about releasing it – at least he could not be accused of pandering to mass-market tastes'.

Asch was a much-admired figure within the urban folk revival. His recording label was not a large enterprise, but it held a prominent position in the urban folk revival environment of the 1950s and 1960s. Most accounts of the Greenwich Village scene, both contemporary and retrospective, refer to Asch and to Folkways. Further, Asch's concentration upon libraries as a primary market for his label's releases ensured that many of his discs were placed in cultural repositories. Asch's Folkways label itself functions as one authenticating agent for the *Anthology*, providing it with the legitimacy of origin that helped this release to attain canonical status.

The reputation earned by the *Anthology*'s creator, Harry Smith, helps to authenticate the *Anthology* in different ways. Smith long interacted with and influenced certain artistic circles (including the time he spent living at the now infamous Chelsea Hotel in New York, at the Naropa Institute and with his close friend, Allen Ginsberg) and grew notorious as an iconoclast through his works as a collector, artist and filmmaker. By the 1980s, due in large part to the work of such figures as Ginsberg and Rani Singh, Smith's own artwork had been hung in the Anthology Film Archives Museum in New York and his films had been included in their 'Essential Cinema' series. Singh also established the Harry Smith Archives in New York City, edited a collection of Smith's interviews and worked with Revenant to produce the never-published fourth volume of the *Anthology* by 2000. In 1991, Smith received a Lifetime Achievement Award at the 1991 Grammy Awards in New York for his work with 'folk' musics, including his work on the *Anthology*. By the time that the *Anthology* reissue appeared in 1997, Smith's reputation, vied for by friends and fans, clearly complimented the *Anthology*'s growing notoriety and reputation as a 'touchstone' for urban folk revivalists.

Surely, too, the process of the *Anthology*'s creation makes for a great historical 'folk' tale. According to Goldsmith, Harry Smith first approached Asch and Folkways with his personal collection of several hundred vintage records in 1950. Smith had collected these records on the West Coast over a period of several years, mainly during the 1940s shellac shortage of World War II which resulted from the aircraft industry's need for a high volume of shellac for airplane construction. The US shellac industry began to concentrate on supporting the war effort, and shellac production for the recording industry came to a temporary halt. As a result, large record companies began paying dealers eighteen or twenty cents for old records, which they melted for their shellac content. 'During the war', Smith recalled in the 1968 interview with Cohen (1999, pp. 67–8), 'people collected records because you could sell them for scrap. There were big piles . . . enormous groaning masses of them'. His diligence in collecting these records was partially inspired by the fear that these small releases would be forever lost.

Smith's astute work – that of a cataloguer, collector, artist and connoisseur – provides a further sense of legitimacy to the compilation. Smith meticulously researched every *Anthology* selection and presented his findings to its audience through a twenty-six page booklet of annotations titled 'American Folk Music'. Within these annotations, Smith briefly detailed each song's history, meaning and origin; where, when and by whom it was recorded; and its original issue and master numbers. 'American Folk Music' also provided extensive cross-referenced discographies of most songs and a bibliography of Smith's sources. Esoteric images (e.g. faded photographs, reprints of old advertisements) were interspersed between these notes. The

*Anthology* intended to be a canon of American folk music, as evidenced by its very name. However, this did not guarantee that it would be accepted as a canon, much less be canonised in its own right as a cornerstone of American music.

The eventual acquisition of Folkways Records, and with it, the Harry Smith *Anthology*, by the Smithsonian Institution in 1986 added to the collection's aura of historical significance upon its reissue. Both the Smithsonian name and the Smithsonian seal appear prominently on the exterior label of the reissued box set. The reissue came, not from Folkways, but from Smithsonian Folkways – a name that lends the *Anthology* a sense of legitimacy as a historical document that few other organisations could offer.

But the *Anthology* is not alone in its possession of any of these legitimising features. Other works of similar breadth and documentation, constructed by major figures, and produced by leading cultural institutions, include the fifteen-disc Library of Congress Archive of American Folksong collection, *Folk Music in America*. Yet the *Anthology* is privileged above this and many other comparable releases. In order to account more fully for the *Anthology's* elevated status, we must look to the social context of its reissue – especially the rise of a new field of music, loosely termed 'Americana', during the 1990s. This field has helped to alter both conceptions of and evaluative criteria for 'folk' and 'roots' music in ways that may relate to the elevated status of the *Anthology*.

### 'Present Joys': transformations of evaluative criteria

The shift in the status of the *Anthology* suggests that new evaluative criteria emerged before the 1997 reissue, and that the repositioning of the *Anthology* may have resulted in part from these new criteria. One important factor that has affected this repositioning is the set of changes found in the structuration and valuation of the field of 'folk' music in America. At the time of the *Anthology's* 1952 release, the commercial music contained on this compilation was not held in high esteem. Although 'folk' music had become an acclaimed genre by this time, academic conceptions of folk music were still mainly informed by a preservationist instinct. The canon was largely comprised by literary collections and transcribed materials published by such figures as Francis J. Child and Cecil Sharp, and by the field recordings contained in a cultural repository formed at the Library of Congress in 1928, the Archive of American Folk-Song. Intellectuals and most fieldworkers approached 'folk' or 'traditional' American music with documentary zeal for collecting the oldest, most isolated forms, and eschewed most materials that had been touched by commercial interests. The intellectual approach to folk music also disdained, and sometimes attacked, the left-wing interest in using folksong as a weapon (see Cantwell 1996; Goldsmith 1998; Filene 2000; Reuss and Reuss 2000).

During the late 1950s and early 1960s, urban folk revivalists posed one of several significant challenges to the continued academic emphasis on collecting, documenting and studying 'threatened' folk cultures. Revivalists collected music, too, but not as an antiquarian pursuit. Their musical studies resulted in new performances of older music that sought to retain the aesthetic qualities of the original performance. The music hungrily collected by revivalists also differed from the musicologists' and folklorists' canon, as it included many early commercial recordings, including the 'hillbilly', 'race' and 'ethnic' recordings of the 1920s and 1930s. While some key people in positions of cultural influence, including Alan Lomax, Pete Seeger and

Ralph Rinzler, felt (and encouraged) the influence of the urban folk revival while it was occurring, most aesthetes and intellectuals seem to have continued to disregard the commercial recordings that were treasured by the revivalists until a decade or more later.<sup>11</sup>

The shift in academic and elite aesthetic definitions of 'folk' music took place haltingly between the urban folk revival and the 1990s. Documenting these changes is not possible here, but the work of key figures such as Ralph Rinzler, John Cohen, Alan Lomax and Pete Seeger was integral to this process. Further, growing academic interest in popular music styles that was largely pioneered by the British Cultural Studies movement assisted in the expansion of the 'folk canon'. As scholars and critics increasingly sought to create a taxonomy of the roots of popular musical forms, they simultaneously embarked on a quest for an authoritative past that could help to legitimate the productions of popular culture (e.g. Lopes 2000).

The preservation instinct (best personified by Richard M. Dorson) of 'folk', then, met with the force of a burgeoning interest in the 'roots' of popular music styles – including the songs of Bob Dylan, Jerry Garcia, Bruce Springsteen and other musicians in the 'Americana' genre. By the 1990s, a plethora of scholarly books, biographies and journalistic writings had detailed the ways that these musicians had affected American music. Also by this time, university settings and cultural institutions generally accepted commercial recordings from the 1920s and 1930s in an expanded definition of 'folk' or 'roots' music, especially as these materials related to the development of different 'streams' or routes of American music (Ennis 1992; Filene 2000; Garman 2000).

The timing of the *Anthology's* reissue functioned in important ways for its re-evaluation. The emergence and institutionalisation of a new genre or field of music, 'Americana', in the 1990s provided a category that gives the *Anthology* a new context. During the 1990s, a new 'revival' of early recordings infused the work of such popular musicians as Beck, Moby, Nick Cave, Gillian Welch and Alison Krauss. The *Anthology's* 1997 reissue date coincided with the rise in both popularity and estimation of these musicians and with a resurgence of interest in the early commercial recordings from which they draw. The *Anthology* numbered among the first reissued box sets of these recordings, and this timing helped to position it to stand in for a much larger body of music. Further, the reissue was a generation removed from the original, and two generations removed from its original content. As Judith McCulloh of the University of Illinois Press wrote to Ralph and Kate Rinzler in 1994 when she heard that the *Anthology* was to be reissued on CD, 'the time is right for it to seem fresh again'.<sup>12</sup>

In the end, no single factor was responsible for the *Anthology's* elevated status – including the reputations of Asch and Smith, the form and content of the release, the cultural legitimacy offered by its Smithsonian tag or the rise of the new genre of 'Americana' music. Instead, the convergence of a constellation of factors (and their unintended side effects) led to the *Anthology's* current status as a kind of double canon – first, as a canon of 'American Folk Music' from the 1920s and 1930s, and second, as a canonised item of the 1950s in its own right.

### 'This Song of Love': conclusion

'The *Anthology of American Folk Music*', according to this Smithsonian Folkways' release's back cover, 'is perhaps the most influential set of records in the history of

recorded sound'. Journalists, scholars and musicians have largely agreed with this sentiment since its reissue, promoting the *Anthology* as a 'central part of the modern American folk music canon' (Rosenberg 1997, p. 35). Claiming that the *Anthology* sits at the centre of the revival is a reductive move, one that occludes the multifarious influences that affected the musicians and audiences involved in this revival and that confuses our understanding of the *Anthology* itself.

It is difficult to determine how many of the recordings that appeared on the *Anthology* were already remembered and circulated through other sources. The political left, summer camps, and literary and recorded folk music collections all preserved many of these same songs. Musicians learned them through radio shows, 'hoots', festivals and People's Songs and People's Artists' performances. They also learned these songs through the Highlander Folk School and Commonwealth Labor College, within various left-wing political rallies and events and through activities with the Civil Rights Movement. These songs appeared in the pages of *Sing Out!* and *Broadside* magazines – both before and after the *Anthology's* release – and were recorded by a wide variety of musicians who may themselves have learned these songs from the *Anthology* or from other sources. Rather than serving as an inspiration for the revival's inception, the *Anthology* seems to serve as shorthand for a complicated historical context and as an authenticating agent for many of the revivals' performers.

The *Anthology's* low sales numbers prior to 1997 indicate that the *Anthology* did not come into its current fame via commercial success. Instead, it created a niche in the public memory by influencing a small number of especially significant individuals over the last half-century. Its importance in the careers of these individuals – from John Cohen and Ralph Rinzler to Dave Van Ronk and Bob Dylan – created ripples of influence. Due to these individuals' successes and their published memories of the *Anthology*, others were drawn to the *Anthology* at various times and places. Through this process, with all of its twists and turns, the *Anthology* has come to function as a badge of authenticity and symbol of belonging for a wide range of journalists, scholars and musicians affiliated with the folk music revival of the 1950s and 1960s.

This article offers an account of the transformation in the *Anthology's* status. I begin with the premise that the *Anthology* is not a static cultural object, that its form and content are not the only meaning-makers for this release. Perceptions of this release and its historical importance have changed significantly over time, and there are reasons – identifiable ones – for those changes. In this case, canonisation did not depend on early sales figures or a broad listening public, but instead, on positioning and the increasing importance of the people who listened to this release and advocated for its elevation. It also relied on the growth of a new field, that of 'Americana' music, and its focus on exposing the 'roots' of American music. These factors are interwoven and interdependent – none can easily be extricated from the puzzle that has resulted in the *Anthology's* elevation.

I do not put the *Anthology's* elevation in status forward as a 'typical' case in canonisation. Rather, I examine it to demonstrate that there are similar forces that work to elevate particular cultural items at particular times (e.g. Corse and Griffin 1997). By closely evaluating the complicated and interwoven factors that led to the *Anthology's* current valuation, we can see the forces found in its sociohistorical context, the hard work of key people and the organisational structures that are implicated in the process of canonisation.



## Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Timothy J. Dowd and Allen Tullos for their insightful feedback.

## Endnotes

1. See, for example, Eyerman and Jamison (1998), Alterman (1999), Filene (2000), Garman (2000) and Hadju (2001).
2. This nationally distributed folksong magazine would be among the most likely publications to cover the *Anthology* at this time. It also had close ties to Moses Asch and Folkways Records (see Silber 1995; Goldsmith 1998).
3. In the same issue, Cohen writes about the Southern field expeditions he took with Ralph Rinzler in the 1960s to search for the still-living musicians of the *Anthology*, remembering, 'there were only three or four of us looking for music at the community level – people like Mike Seeger and Ralph Rinzler who were doing the initial collecting' (Cohen 1977, pp. 115–18).
4. For examples, see Brand (1967), DeTurk and Poulin Jr (1967), Klein (1980), Woliver (1986), Baez (1988) and Pratt (1990), none of which mentions the *Anthology*.
5. Smithsonian Folkways Archives, Moses Asch correspondence file.
6. The information concerning Folkways' withdrawal of the *Anthology* during this time contradicts many of the books and articles written about Folkways Records which insist that no Folkways release has ever been out of print. (Smithsonian Folkways Archives, Folkways Catalogues file).
7. Conversation with the author, April 2000.
8. Similarly, Cohen (1995, p. 39) remembers that the New Lost City Ramblers never considered their 'audience as listeners, but rather as musicians looking for material and ways to play'. Although the circulation of this bands' music was small, their stylistic mimicry of older commercial recordings, including those contained on the *Anthology* was highly influential within the urban folk revival.
9. Although in the early 1950s, a few rhythm and blues and pop songs by African-American and white musicians attained crossover successes through jukeboxes, radio broadcasts and recorded cover versions, crossover hits did not become common until the emergence of rock 'n' roll in the late 1950s (Ward 1998, pp. 27–8).
10. For more information on the political nature of this release and how the *Anthology* functioned as a memory piece for a select group of people, see Street (2000).
11. There were, of course, exceptions. Professor Dan Patterson at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill assigned many of the *Anthology's* songs to his graduate students during the 1970s (Conversation with the author, December 1999). Similarly, blues historian Paul Oliver wrote extensively about commercial blues recordings during the 1950s and 1960s. However, most folklorists had not yet engaged with early hillbilly, race and ethnic recordings at this time.
12. Smithsonian Folkways Archive, folder 2951.

## References

- Allen, M.P., and Lincoln, A.E. 2004. 'Critical discourse and the cultural consecration of American films', *Social Forces*, 82/3, pp. 871–93
- Alterman, E. 1998. 'The Smithsonian blues', *The Nation*, 266/23, p. 10
1999. *It Ain't No Sin To Be Glad You're Alive* (Boston, Little, Brown and Company)
- Baez, J. 1988. *And A Voice To Sing With* (New York, Plume)
- Baumann, S. 2001. 'Intellectualization and art world development', *American Sociological Review*, 66, pp. 404–26
- Becker, H.S. 1982. *Art Worlds* (Berkeley, University of California Press)
- Binder, A. 1993. 'Constructing racial rhetoric', *American Sociological Review*, 58, pp. 753–67
- Bourdieu, P. 1984. *Distinction*, translated by Richard Nice. (Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press)
- Brand, O. 1967. *The Ballad Mongers* (Toronto, Minerva Press)
- Cantwell, R. 1996. *When We Were Good* (Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press)
- Capaldi, J. 1978. 'Conversation with Mr. Folkways', *Folkscene*, 6/4, pp. 2–4
- Charters, S. 1961. 'Moses Asch', 33 *Guide*, June, p. 43
- Cohen, J. 1977. 'A visitor's recollections', in *Long Journey Home*, ed. A. Tullos (Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press), pp. 115–8
1999. 'John Cohen – Chelsea Hotel, NYC', in *Think of the Self Speaking*, ed. R. Singh (Seattle, Elbow/Cityful Press), pp. 66–100
2000. *The Harry Smith Anthology Volume Four* (Revenant 2000), liner notes, pp. 32–42
1995. 'John Cohen', in *Wasn't that a Time*, ed. R. Cohen (New Jersey, The Scarecrow Press, Inc.), pp. 25–56
- Cohn, L. 1997. Quoted in *A Booklet of Essays, Appreciations, and Annotations Pertaining to the Anthology of American Folk Music* (Washington, D.C., Smithsonian Folkways Recordings) (hereafter, 'Booklet'), p. 28

- Corse, S.M., and Griffin, M.D. 1997. 'Cultural valorization and African American literary history', *Sociological Forum*, 12/2, pp. 173–203
- Danaher, W.F., and Roscigno, V.J. 2004. 'Cultural production, media, and meaning', *Poetics*, 32, pp. 51–71
- De Turk, D.A., and Poulin Jr., A. (eds.) 1967. *The American Folk Scene* (New York, Dell Publishing Company)
- DeNora, T. 2002. 'Music into action, 1790–1810', *Poetics*, 30, pp. 19–33
- DiMaggio, P. 1982. 'Cultural entrepreneurship in nineteenth-century Boston, Parts I and II', *Media, Culture and Society*, 4, pp. 33–50, 303–20
1987. 'Classification in art', *American Sociological Review*, 52, pp. 440–55
- Dowd, T.J. 2003. 'Structural power and the construction of markets', *Comparative Social Research*, 21, pp. 147–201
- Dowd, T.J., and Blyler, M. 2002. 'Charting race', *Poetics*, 30, pp. 87–110
- Dowd, T.J., Liddle, K., Lupo, K., and Borden, A. 2002. 'Organizing the musical canon', *Poetics*, 30, pp. 35–61
- Dunson, J. 1980 [1965]. *Freedom in the Air* (New York, International Publishers)
- Ennis, P.H. 1992. *The Seventh Stream* (New Hampshire, Wesleyan University Press)
- Eyerman, R., and Jamison, A. 1998. *Music and Social Movements* (New York, Cambridge University Press)
- Fahey, J. 1997. Quoted in *Booklet*, pp. 8–12
- Filene, B. 2000. *Romancing the Folk* (Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press)
- Fricke, D. 1997. 'America's greatest hits', *Rolling Stone*, 769, pp. 101–2
- Garman, B.K. 2000. *A Race of Singers* (Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press)
- Gilmore, M. 2001. 'Bob Dylan', *Rolling Stone*, 882, pp. 56–8, 61, 63–4, 66, 67–8
- Goldsmith, P. 1998. *Making People's Music* (Washington, D.C., Smithsonian Institution Press)
- Green, A. 1965. 'Hillbilly Music', *Journal of American Folklore*, 78, p. 204–28
- Greenberg, M. 1997. 'The Harry Smith Anthology', *Sing Out!*, 42/3, pp. 128–9
- Hadju, D. 2001. *Positively 4th Street* (New York, Farrar, Straus and Giroux)
- Harvey, T. 2001. *The Formative Dylan* (Maryland, Scarecrow Press)
- Kaganski, S. 1998. 'Dylan speaks', *Mojo*, 51, p. 64
- Klein, J. 1999 [1980]. *Woody Guthrie* (New York, Dell Publishing)
- Levine, L. 1988. *Highbrow/Lowbrow* (Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press)
- Lipsitz, G. 1994. *Rainbow at Midnight* (Chicago, University of Illinois Press)
- Lopes, P. 2002. *The Rise of a Jazz Art World* (New York, Cambridge University Press)
- Marcus, G. 1997. *Invisible Republic* (New York, Henry Holt and Company).
- McNeil, W.K. 1997. 'Southern folk music on records', in *Long Journey Home*, ed. A. Tullos (Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press), pp. 178–86
- Miller, P.L. 1995. 'Recorded Americana', *Notes*, 2nd Ser., 9/4, pp. 541–3
- Morris, C. 1997. 'Smithsonian to reissue its classic folk anthology set', *Billboard*, 109/25, pp. 8, 89
- Pankake, J. 1995. 'Jon Pankake', in *Wasn't that a Time*, ed. R.D. Cohen (New Jersey, The Scarecrow Press), pp. 105–14
1997. 'The Brotherhood of the Anthology', in *Booklet*, pp. 26–8
- Peterson, R.A. 1997. *Creating Country Music* (Chicago, University of Chicago Press)
- Piazza, T. 1997. 'A folk album that awakened a generation', *The New York Times*, 24 August, pp. H32, 34
- Place, J. 2002. Interview with Bob Edwards, *Morning Edition*, 'America's folk music', 17 July, <<http://www.npr.org/programs/morning/features/2002/jul/anthology/>>, 30 July 2002
- Pratt, R. 1994 [1990]. *Rhythm and Resistance* (Washington D.C., Smithsonian Institution Press)
- Reuss, R.A., and Reuss, J.C. 2000. *American Folk Music and Left Wing Politics, 1927–1957* (Maryland, Scarecrow Press)
- Roscigno, V.J., and Danaher, W.F. 2001. 'Media and mobilization', *American Sociological Review*, 66, pp. 21–48
- Rosenburg, N.V. 1997. *Booklet*, pp. 35–6
- Russell, T. 1982. 'Folk music in America', *PopularMusic*, 2, pp. 259–68
- Sante, L. 1997. Quoted in *Booklet*, pp. 30–1
- Santoro, M. 2002. 'What is a "cantautore"?'', *Poetics*, 30, pp. 111–32
- Seeger, A., and Horowitz, A. 1997. 'Introduction', in *Booklet*, p. 3
- Shelton, R. 1961. 'Guide to the Southern folk-song maze', *New York Times*, 4 June, p. X11
- Silber, I. 1995. 'Irwin Silber', in *Wasn't that a Time*, ed. R.D. Cohen (New Jersey, Scarecrow Press), pp. 89–104
- Singh, R. (ed.) 1998. *Think of the Self Speaking* (Seattle, Elbow/Cityful Press)
- Stampfel, P. 1997. Quoted in *Booklet*, pp. 21–5
- Street, J. 2000. 'Invisible republics and secret histories', *Cultural Values*, 4/3, pp. 298–313
- Ward, B. 1998. *Just My Soul Responding* (Berkeley and LA, University of California Press)
- Woliver, R. 1986. *Hoot!* (New York, St. Martin's Press)
- Young, I. 1958. 'The Cuckoo', *Sing Out!*, 8/1, p. 22–3
1977. 'Moses Asch', *Sing Out!*, 26/2, pp. 25–6, 28–9

## Discography

Smith, H.E. 1952. *Anthology of American Folk Music*. Folkways Records. FA 2951–FA 2953