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Bob Dylan in the Context of American Protest Song

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Abstrakt

Tradice amerického protest songu má kořeny již v koloniálním období. Mezi nejoblíbenější hudební uskupení 19. století patřili The Hutchinson Family Singers, kteří se stali průkopníky protestu v populární hudbě. Jejich písně se mimo jiné snažily bojovat proti nadměrné konzumaci alkoholu a otroctví. Černoši toužili po svobodě a plnohodnotném začlenění do americké společnosti. Spirituály jim sloužily jako skrytá forma protestu proti jejich podřadnému statusu. Zároveň jim dodávaly sílu vytrvat ve své snaze o emancipaci. Ze spirituálů vycházely také písně hnutí za občanská práva v 50. a 60. letech 20. století. Práce se dále zabývá americkým folkovým hnutím, za jehož zakladatele je považován Woody Guthrie, autor slavné písně „This Land is Your Land." Hnutí na svých křídlech vyneslo ke slávě i Boba Dylana, jehož protestní písně se tato práce pokusí analyzovat a interpretovat v rámci širšího politického a společenského kontextu 60. let. Jak je možné, že tyto nadčasové písně neztrácejí ani o půl století později nic ze své naléhavosti? Čím je Dylan tak výjimečný, že i ve 21. století dokáže oslovit nové generace posluchačů a vyprodat ty největší koncertní haly?

Abstract

The tradition of protest songs in the United States is a continuum, which began in colonial times with the British Broadside Ballads, was nurtured in the 19th century through the Negro spirituals, and throughout the 20th century by performers such as Joe Hill, Woody Guthrie, Pete Seeger, and Bob Dylan. Out of necessity, blacks developed

strategies of veiled protests to a fine art during the 19th century. The perennial cause of the black protest was the status forced on them by white supremacists. The spirituals encouraged them to persevere in their efforts to free themselves from the shackles of slavery. Many of the spirituals were modified in the 1950s to accommodate the needs of the Civil Rights Movement. This appropriation of the Southern rural folk music tradition was the genesis of a phenomenon which has become known as the American folk music revival. The foremost figure of the movement was Woody Guthrie, the author of "This land is Your Land." Guthrie is cited as major influence on his disciple Bob Dylan, who was pronounced the folk messiah of the folk circles. This paper seeks to determine whether Dylan was, in contrast to his assertions, a topical songwriter writing about particular events or whether he was in fact an apolitical artist, whose personal insight and feelings simply happened to fit the era´s frame of mind. What is it about Dylan´s music that is still has the ability to speak to new generations in the 21st century?

Klíčová slova

Bob Dylan, Woody Guthrie, popularita folkové hudby, americké protestsongy, americká kultura 60. let 20. století

Keywords

Bob Dylan, Woody Guthrie, folk music revival, American protest songs, American culture in 1960s

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V Praze dne Mariana Procházková

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Obsah

Introduction

According to the American social scientist William Isaac Thomas, "all basic human wishes can be subsumed under four general categories: the desire for new experience, the desire for security, the desire for recognition, and the desire for response."[1] Although Thompson links these words to the black protest, but this statement is a universal truth, something with which most people identify. Music has been reflecting these desires and struggles of different time periods, leaving vivid testimonies for future generations.[2]

The tradition of protest songs in the United States is a continuum, which began in colonial times with the British Broadside Ballads, was nurtured in the 19th century through the Negro spirituals, and throughout the 20th century by performers such as Joe Hill, Woody Guthrie, Pete Seeger, and Bob Dylan.[3] Protest songs, usually inspired by a general or individual feeling or a particular event, are based on an assumption about their persuasive power.[4]

Out of necessity, blacks developed strategies of veiled protests to a fine art during the 19th century. The perennial cause of the black protest was the status forced on them by white supremacists.[5] According to Lawrence-McIntyre,

> Spirituals are an affirmation of hope for freedom on earth and in heaven. They give evidence with Blacks´ obsession with freedom and justice, and they include strategic plans by which these desires could be achieved.[6]

Through spirituals, slaves communicated coded messages and perfected strategies for gaining freedom. The tradition of spirituals laid the foundations of the

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[1] William Isaac Thomas cited by Daniel C. Thompson, "The Rise of the Negro Protest," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 357 (January 1965): 20.

[2] Glenn Appell and David Hemphill, *American Popular Music: A Multicultural History* (Belmont, CA: Schirmer, Cengage Learning, 2006), p. 335.

[3] Narrative song or poem printed on one side of a single sheet of paper – a broadside, usually topical in nature as it commented on or commemorate current events, recent crimes, executions, or disasters. The tradition was diffused on the American continent by the British colonists (http://academic.eb.com.vlib.interchange.at/EBchecked/topic/80583/broadside-ballad, accessed 9.2.2015).

[4] Daniel Kingman, *American Music: A Panorama* (New York: Schirmer Books, 1979), p. 107.

[5] Thompson, p. 25-26.

phenomenon of freedom songs, which were vital to the Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s and 1960s.[7] The words of the original spirituals were modified to accommodate the needs of the Civil Rights Movement. "We Shall Overcome," a traditional black spiritual, became its anthem.[8]

American industrial workers in the early 20th century believed music to be a powerful weapon in the class struggle. Strengthening the feeling of solidarity, calling workers to progressive action, the radical leaders deemed singing instrumental in unionizing the workforce in the United States. Prior to the late 1930s, the staple of the Communist Party USA was the "Internationale," and other Bolshevik Revolutionary Songs. Members of the Industrial Workers of the World, the "Wobblies," contributed to the songbooks of the period significantly.[9] However, very few songs of persuasion at that time were based on folk tunes.[10]

The efforts of the labor organizers were mostly in vain as the social impact of the songs of persuasion yielded in the pre-McCarthy period was very limited. The soviet material did not go over with the proletariat in the United States and the areas in which these tunes were performed were too isolated to reach broader audiences. "[These] songs did little more than reinforce existing attitudes."[11] In the latter half of the 1930s, communist leaders made an attempt to Americanize their political image through appropriation of the American folk tradition. Folk music adopted for the union members and other urban adherents of the left-wing politics was declared to be the People´s Music. They went great lengths to elaborate an ethos arguing that the *folk* actually equates with the *proletariat*, that the folk tradition is also their tradition. However, "[…] most urban dwellers had never heard of the genre the Communists had labeled 'people´s music.'"[12]

This appropriation of the Southern rural folk music tradition was the genesis of a phenomenon which has become known as the American folk music revival. Historian Norm Cohen defined the folk revival as "the 'discovery' by sophisticated, culture-

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[6] Charshee Charlotte Lawrence-McIntyre, "The double Meanings of the Spirituals," *Journal of Black Studies* 17 (June 1987), p. 385.
[7] R. Serge Denisoff, "Those on the Top Forty and Those of the Streets," *American Quarterly* 22 (Winter 1970): 821.
[8] Thompson, p. 27.
[9] The organization was founded in 1905.
[10] R. Serge Denisoff, "Folk Music and the American Left: A Generational-Ideological Comparison," *The British Journal of Sociology* 20 (December 1969): 430.
[11] Denisoff (1970), p. 808.
[12] Denisoff (1969), p. 430.

conscious urban artists, of traditional, generally American folk music, and its presentation by those artists to audiences of similar background."[13] As Kingman puts it, "Its beginning was, in a sense, a transplantation of the rural South to Greenwich Village."[14] The model for this process was Woody Guthrie, the "Dust Bowl Troubadour," who fused American folk music with protests against union busting, war mongers and corporate greed. Guthrie was drawn into the early revival along with other traditional performers including Huddie William Ledbetter, known as "Leadbelly," who was discovered in a Louisiana prison by John Lomax and his son Alan. They spearheaded a campaign for his release and pleaded with the Louisiana governor Oskar K. Allen to secure his parole. Legend has it that Allen furthered Leadbelly´s release after listening to his signature song "Goodnight Irene." Both Leadbelly, and especially Guthrie are cited as major influence on Bob Dylan and other musicians of 1960s.[15]

Other significant performers of the 1940s and 1950s were Pete Seeger and Lee Hays, and groups centered around them, The Almanac Singers and the Weavers. The collective ethos of this period diminished the importance of musical style and technique and focused predominantly on the content. In the wake of the McCarthy period, the radical ideas were a thorn in the side of the vigilante groups and Congressional committees. Groups like the Weavers were banned from the mass media for the next decade.[16]

By the end of the 1950s, the second phase of the folk music revival was well underway. It was triggered by the Kingston Trio version of "Tom Dooley," which topped the country´s music charts in 1958. Unlike the older generation of folk artists, the young revivalists were profoundly interested in style and technique. Their new enthusiasm for the traditional music was partly a reaction to the bland popular music of the time. They searched for an apt cultural form to express personal disdain for the disturbing events of the early 1960s. According to Sandberg and Weissman, folk music was the answer:

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[13] Norm Cohen cited by Appell and Hemphill, p. 335.
[14] Kingman, p. 100.
[15] Britannica Academic. Leadbelly (http://academic.eb.com.vlib.interchange.at/EBchecked/topic/333659/Leadbelly, accessed May 2, 2015).
[16] Denisoff (1970), p. 808.

> […] it was acceptable to the intellectuals if only for romantic reasons. The sound of traditional music hit the campuses like a chinook wind coming down off the mountains; at its best, it offered fresh enthusiasm as opposed to tired professionalism, an honest expression of individual and social feelings as opposed to show-biz theatrics, an elegant simplicity as opposed to gimmickry. Above all, it was relatively easy to understand and to play, and it carried with it associations, often romanticized, of a more honest and more personable culture.[17]

One of the dissenters on the folk scene was Bob Dylan, who came to New York City from Hibbing, Minnesota when he was only nineteen years old. He launched his career in one of the Greenwich Village coffeehouses. His natural endowment for using poetic imagery and metaphor, a refined sense of irony and his idiosyncratic style of performance catapulted Dylan to stardom. He was quickly established in the vanguard of the rising Civil Rights and antiwar movements, articulating the thoughts of millions of people.[18] Yet only a few years later, he dissociated himself from the folk movement, claiming he only wrote the topical songs because it was the easiest way to get published.[19] Since, Dylan has repeated, in many interviews that he is "not a topical songwriter."[20] Dylan´s shift from the protest folk poet to a popular rock star was directed as follows:

> Dylan had chosen drums, electric Fender guitars and amplifiers over Guthrie´s inscription to convey his thought. The end product of this transition was that a proponent of social dissent became a force in popular music.[21]

The intent of this thesis is to assess the role of Bob Dylan in the American protest song tradition. In order to do so, a broader context must be provided. He absorbed many musical influences. His early work is most notably linked to the American folk music tradition, however, as Kingman notes, "his debt to the Negro blues is readily apparent."[22] Perhaps less striking is Dylan´s relationship to the Anglo-

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[17] Larry Sandberg and Dick Wiessman, *The Folk Music Sourcebook* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1989), p. 109.
[18] Larry Starr and Christopher Waterman, *American popular music : the rock years* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 140.
[19] Clinton Heylin. *Revolution in the Air : The Songs of Bob Dylan 1957-1973* (Chicago: Chicago Review Press, 2009), p. 146.
[20] Bob Dylan presented by Martin Scorsese. *No Direction Home: Bob Dylan*. DVD. Directed by Martin Scorsese. Los Angeles: Paramount Pictures, 2005.
[21] Denisoff (1970), p. 809.
[22] Kingman, p. 106.

American ballad tradition, but songs like "Masters of War" or "A Hard Rain´s A-Gonna Fall" are basically adaptations of British perennial ballads.[23]

Particularly important is Dylan´s role in the folk music revival. Was the decline of folk music as a significant instrument of persuasion merely coincidental with Dylan´s adoption of electric sounds at the Newport Folk Festival in 1965? Or was it Dylan who destroyed the folk movement which elevated him to prominence? The popularity of folk rock, the new subspecies of rock seems to have soared substantially following Dylan´s breakaway with the folk movement. Rock or folk-rock became a form of protest, although more in terms of style than of content. The words, once absolutely essential for the performers and the devotees of folk music, were suddenly seen as secondary. In the realm of rock, "[…] it often did not seem to matter much whether the words were intelligible or not."[24]

This paper seeks to determine whether Dylan was, in contrast to his assertions, a topical songwriter writing about particular events or whether he was in fact an apolitical artist, whose personal insight and feelings simply happened to fit the era´s frame of mind. Was he in fact the folk messiah, the voice crying in the wilderness, the conscience of a generation? These are only a few examples of the roles the public attributed to him, after his classic protest songs such as "Blowin' in the Wind," or "The Times They Are A-Changin."[25] The research hypothesis suggests that some of Dylan´s early songs contain obvious social and political satire and protest. Five Bob Dylan songs will be analyzed. They were selected for their perceptible emotional charge and because they provide a powerful commentary on the tumultuous events of the early 1960s.

Dylan confounds the public, at one moment a revered prophet attacking materialism and war, and the next an eccentric millionaire doing tacky commercials for Victoria's Secret and Chrysler. His music is equally inscrutable, at times so insightful it resonates on the deepest level of humanity, other times leaving his audience bewildered. Dylan's persona and the music he has written over the past five decades therefore provide fascinating material for endless interpretations. In order to understand the motives for Dylan´s actions and to gain a better understanding of his work, it is instrumental to trace the early key influences, which shaped his way of thinking.

[23] Ibid., p. 106.
[24] Kingman, p. 107.
[25] David Dalton. *Kdo je ten chlap? Hledání Boba Dylana* (Praha: 65. Pole, 2012) p. 75.

Methodology and Literature

The research has been acquired through a variety of primary and secondary sources. Different biographies of Woody Guthrie and Bob Dylan provided important background information about their lives and influences which shaped their work. Number of interviews with musicians and singer-songwriters in the protest music genre who experienced the 1960s were used. Their testimonies helped clarify certain ambiguities and debunk some of the deep-rooted myths about Bob Dylan. Articles from academic journals were used to interpret the American protest song tradition. Audio recordings of the black spirituals, work songs and the folk tunes of the 1950s and 1960s were absolutely vital to the undertaken research. Dylan´s complete discography was acquired for the purposes of this study. Online archives of *Broadside* and *Sing Out!* magazines were used as a unique source of texts, often accompanied by expressive illustrations provided by Suze Rotolo and other artists. These two publications were usually the first to print Dylan´s and Seeger´s topical songs. The book publications and various primary sources were supplemented with relevant newspaper and magazine publications, and websites.

The first part of this paper looks at the protest song tradition in the United States in the 19th and early 20th century. While this paper primarily seeks to expand our understanding of Bob Dylan´s topical songwriting, an outline of the historical development of the employment of protest song by different groups of people, in the service of different causes is an important asset. The Hutchinson Family Singers openly promoted temperance, abolitionism and women´s rights, often stirring controversy, yet their popularity was soaring in the 1840s. They entrenched the notion of topical song in the mainstream of American popular music.[26] The sources elaborating on the Hutchinsons are rather scarce. Scott Gac´s *Singing for Freedom: The Hutchinson Family Singers and the Nineteenth-Century Culture of Reform* is perhaps the most comprehensive book on the theme, closely discussing their role in the process of the commercialization of protest song, while portraying the historical and cultural context of the antebellum United States.

[26] The Library of Congress. Popular Songs of the Day (http://www.loc.gov/collections/songs-of-america/articles-and-essays/musical-styles/popular-songs-of-the-day/, accessed May 11, 2015).

Sociologist R. Serge Denisoff was an eminent scholar of the protest music realm. As Dylan and other topical songwriters who emerged from the acoustic folk genre, Denisoff came to maturity in the early 1960s. His fascination with protest music produced number of studies mainly focusing on folk music in the service of the 20th century labor movement. He understood the concept of protest songs rather narrowly, i. e. he focused primarily on the texts and examined their function as a form of persuasion. Two of his articles were used for the purposes of this paper.

The paper then discusses the phenomenon of the Folk music revival. Relevant chapters from various books were used to provide a theoretical framework. Perhaps the most comprehensive publication reflecting the uniquely diverse character of American music available was Daniel Kingman´s *American Music: A Panorama*. Sandberg and Weissman provide an overview of different stages of the movement in their *Folk Music Sourcebook*, evaluating the importance of the movement´s foremost performers for each of the chronological stages.

This thesis is primarily focused on assessing Bob Dylan´s songwriting. It aims to underline the influences that shaped his life and translated into his work. Such events and figures will be touched upon briefly to provide necessary context. This however will not be the case of Woody Guthrie as he was Dylan´s role model and influenced his early artistic career significantly. Therefore, an entire chapter is dedicated to Guthrie´s persona. *Woody Guthrie : Writing America's Songs*, a fairly recent publication by Ronald D. Cohen, along with Robert Santelli´s *This Land Is Your Land: Woody Guthrie and the Journey of an American Folk Song* was used as the key source of knowledge about Guthrie. Santelli aptly illustrates the political climate of the of the McCarthy era.

One of the most elaborate books on Bob Dylan, titled *Down the highway: the life of Bob Dylan*, was written by Howard Sounes. It is his most comprehensive biography. Sounes, as an unbiased observer, provides the reader with as much accurate information as possible, which he acquired through an extensive new research. Martin Scorsese´s documentary *No Direction Home: Bob Dylan* contains interviews with most people of significance in Dylan´s life. Pete Seeger, Allen Ginsberg, Suze Rotolo, Joan Baez, Dave van Ronk and many others share great amount of revealing information which sheds light on different aspect of Dylan´s life and the folk movement of the 1960s.

David Dalton, the founding editor of *Rolling Stone*, has been conducting research on Bob Dylan for a considerable amount of time. He covers different periods of Dylan´s life disproportionately according to what he deemed important for a better

understanding of the elusive man Dylan has remained for decades. His book is populated by the Greenwich Village legendary characters and his spot-on retrospective audit of Dylan´s early years was crucial for this paper.

Central for this paper is the analysis of Bob Dylan´s early topical songwriting. The final section of this paper undertakes a careful reading of Dylan's lyrics and puts them in historical and cultural perspective. A qualitative approach was chosen to evaluate some of the Dylan´s early lyrics. Content analysis enables to get beneath the surface (denotative) meanings and examine more implicit (connotative) social meanings. This approach views cultural movements as narratives or story-telling processes in which particular texts consciously or unconsciously link themselves to larger stories at play in the society. These texts create subject positions (identities) for those who use them, therefore making Bob Dylan a topical songwriter, whether he intended so or not.

It is beyond the scope of this paper to include virtually anything that happened after 1965 as the topic is already fairly broad. Dylan´s work is an inexhaustible source of fodder for endless analysis and interpretations. A synthesis of Dylan´s legacy and some of my personal comments and perspectives are presented in the "Author´s Afterword."

To my knowledge, the theme of Bob Dylan and his topical songwriting has not yet been explored in the Czech academic environment. There are several theses dealing with the translations of Dylan´s lyrics into Czech or with tracking the Jewish and Christian subjects in his songs.[27] Writings about Bob Dylan available in the Czech Republic are scarce. The few publications which can be found in the bookstores are translations of American Authors with the sole exception of the essay by Jakub Guziur, *Mýtus Boba Dylana*, published in December 2014. He is the first Czech author to address Bob Dylan, focusing on the mysterious and allegorical "Desolation Row."[28]

[27] See VOJTKOVÁ, Jitka. Židovské a křesťanské motivy v textech Boba Dylana. Pardubice, 2010. 87 s. Diplomová práce (Mgr.) Univerzita Pardubice, Fakulta filozofická. Katedra religionistiky a filosofie. Vedoucí diplomové práce Mgr. Vít Machálek, Ph.D.; HRABÍKOVÁ, Alena. České překlady textů Boba Dylana. České Budějovice, 2014. 55 s. Bakalářská práce (Bc.) Jihočeská univerzita v Českých Budějovicích, Fakulta filozofická. Katedra bohemistiky. Vedoucí bakalářské práce prof. PaedDr. Vladimír Papoušek, CSc.

[28] LIDOVKY.CZ. Stále záhadný Bob Dylan. Vycházejí dvě knihy o legendárním hudebníkovi (http://www.lidovky.cz/stale-zahadny-bob-dylan-vychazeji-dve-knihy-o-legendarnim-hudebnikovi-1k6-/kultura.aspx?c=A141212_122207_ln_kultura_hep, accessed May 12, 2015).

David Dalton´s "Who Is That Man?: In Search of the Real Bob Dylan" as was published around the same time, with the well-crafted translation by Ladislav Šenkyřík.[29]

Considering the niche in the scholarly research, I decided to undertake this study elaborating on Dylan´s topical songwriting in the context of the American folk music tradition. I originally envisaged writing the thesis in Czech to make the work available for Czech readers. I finally abandoned this intention with respect to the use of primary sources, which are all in English. Dylan´s work holds a great potential for analysis. A half-century later, it seems as though his songs do not get old. As all sorts of social problems persevere, Dylan´s legacy still speaks to people in the 21st century. Finally, I am personally a big fan of his music, which first reached me thanks to my parent´s record player long time ago.

1. Nineteenth century: On the Road to Protest Song

Until the mid-19th century, the popular music of the United States largely equaled with that of Great Britain. First distinctly American popular song styles emerged in the 1840s. Around this time, minstrel shows prevailed. Minstrels were originally white performers, who painted their faces to look as southern black slaves. Soon, black musicians took up the practice. Their repertoire was a blend of music they attributed to slaves and humorous arrangements of popular and classical pieces. The importance of minstrels to the development of American popular music is indisputable. Unfortunately, they reinforced some of the worst stereotypes of the black population. Protest music of the era sought to disprove these stereotypes. It basically revolved around three themes. Aside from slavery, temperance, and women's rights were considered as the most relevant and pressing issues.[30]

1.1 The Hutchinson Family Singers Pave the Way for Protest Song

The most popular protest voices at the time were The Hutchinson Family Singers, formed in 1840 by three brothers—Judson, John, and Asa, and their youngest

[29] The title was translated as „Kdo je ten chlap? Hledání Bob Dylana"
[30] Library of Congress. Popular Songs of the Day (http://www.loc.gov/collections/songs-of-america/articles-and-essays/musical-styles/popular-songs-of-the-day/, accessed May 11, 2015).

sister Abby. Their focus on various causes drew support from individuals and groups. Initially, their art stressed the temperance movement and women's rights, creating new lyrics, while using traditional music of hymns and folk tunes. Soon they were approached by the representatives of the antislavery movement seeking such songs to support abolitionism.[31] Together with Frederick Douglass´ popular autobiography, published in 1845, they contributed to the commercialization of the movement to end slavery. The abolitionist movement became more diverse and less controllable but, at the same time, much more capable of achieving its goals.[32] The Hutchinsons not only contributed artistically but they also made use of their widespread popularity, donating their profits to various reform organizations.[33] In 1844, the siblings performed probably their most famous song "Get Off the Track" for the first time. It was sung to the tune of Old Dan Tucker, a popular American folk song at the time:

> Ho! the Car Emancipation
> Rides majestic thro' our nation
> Bearing on its train the story,
> Liberty! a Nation's Glory.
> Roll it along, Roll it along.
> Roll it along, Thro' the nation
> Freedom's Car Emancipation.
>
> First of all the train, and greater,
> Speeds the dauntless *Liberator*
> Onward cheered amid hosannas,
> And the waving of Free Banners.
> Roll it along, Roll it along,
> Roll it along, Spread your Banners,
> While the people shout hosannas.
>
> Men of various predilections,
> Frightened, run in all directions,
> Merchants, Editors, Physicians,
> Lawyers, Priests, and Politicians.
> Get out of the Way! Get Out of the Way!
> Get out of the Way! every station,
> Clear the track of 'mancipation.

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[31] Britannica Academic. The Hutchinson Family (http://academic.eb.com.vlib.interchange.at/EBchecked/topic/277675/The-Hutchinson-Family, accessed March 2, 2015).

[32] Scott Gac, *Singing for Freedom: The Hutchinson Family Singers and the Nineteenth-Century Culture of Reform* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2007), p. 4-5.

[33] *Ibid.*, p. 9.

Let the Ministers and Churches
Leave behind sectarian lurches;
Jump on board the Car of Freedom
Ere it be too late to need them.
Sound the Alarm! Sound the Alarm!
Sound the Alarm! Pulpit´s thunder!
Ere too late, you see your blunder.[34]

The Hutchinsons succeeded not only with determined reformers, but their music reached wider audiences – from the Lowell mill girls to prominent political leaders, reverberating across the country.[35] However, the emotional power of their music did not always lead to a positive reception. The majority of people in the South loathed abolitionism, while in the North, the issue was still being hotly debated. The group was often subject to harsh criticism and insults from the stalwart supporters of slavery who came to disrupt desegregated performances, yet they continued to perform for almost five decades. The concerted efforts of the abolitionists finally came to fruition in 1865 with the ratification of the Thirteen Amendment, but the price was high. War swept across the country and left approximately 600.000 soldiers dead. Rampant corruption and violent repression of the newly emancipated black population then engulfed the country.[36]

The significance of the Hutchinsons does not lie solely in their socially conscious tunes. As Gac points out, New York´s Governor Bradford ordered any ballads attacking the government to be burned as early as 1640.[37] The backwoods church-trained musicians from the small town of Milford, New Hampshire, successfully created America's first protest band at a time when some questioned the value of such entertainment. They were also instrumental in the development of native popular music tradition in the United States. The legacy of the Hutchinson Family Singers rests on their ability to combine inspiring lyrics, targeting certain social ills and quality music, while enjoying immense popularity.[38] These are precisely the qualities that translate music into political action. As concluded, "The New Hampshire singers

[34] *Ibid*., p. 249-251.
[35] *Ibid*., p. 14.
[36] *Ibid*., p. 22.
[37] *Ibid*., p. 14
[38] *Ibid*.

were the voice of a reform generation, evocative in the 1840s in a way that Bob Dylan, Phil Ochs, and Peter, Paul and Mary were of the 1960s."[39]

1.2 The Spirituals as a Veiled Protest

The 19th century United States was rigidly divided into a mostly white upper class and a larger lower class, which included most blacks. At no time however did the enslaved black population resort to fatalism and resignation. From the outset, blacks expressed their indignation with the inherently unequal and despicable institution of slavery and the social status assigned to them by white supremacists. It is beyond the scope of this work to elaborate on the racial situation of the era, or the vast cultural legacy that had been forged, but it will touch upon some of the unique characteristics of the "Negro protest movement" and explain its veiled yet powerful expressions of protest.[40]

The life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness of slaves rested entirely in the hands of their masters. The black minority was subjected to corporal and legal deprivations contrary to the prevalent moral and religious values in the United States. Black protest leaders however did not seek to undermine these values or to overthrow the republican form of government or its constitutional laws. On the contrary, they actually embraced the United States and its ideology as their own. Daniel C. Thomson explains in his work:

> The Negro protest [was] not simply against widespread deprivation per se but rather against 'relative deprivations,' or barriers designed to prevent them from enjoying certain rights and privileges that are regarded as ethically, morally, and socially legitimate for other Americans.[41]

Blacks lacked organized social power and any effective leverage to ameliorate their living conditions and social status. To express their discontent and frustration and to support their spirits, they employed various techniques of protest. As they were constantly under the threat of white backlash, they often translated the desire for acceptance and respect into an art abounding with subtle symbolism. Albeit prohibited by the Black Codes, the slaves found ways to meet, usually within secret religious

[39] *Ibid*., p. 15.
[40] Thompson, p. 19.

gatherings which came to be known as the "invisible church." The preachers went to considerable lengths not to attack slavery or the slave masters too directly. The enslaved community, however, could decipher them easily. Spirituals like "I´m gonna tell God all my troubles," "Go Down Moses…tell ole Pharaoh to let my people go" or "I got shoes" expressed the yearning of the black population, and so these meetings served as a breeding ground for resistance.[42]

Some of the slaveholders could sense the defiance permeating the Negro spirituals, and thus allowed them to be sung solely under supervision or forbade them entirely. Most of them however chose to believe the spirituals to be projections of a life to come in heaven, as that was their only acceptable idea of freedom for slaves.[43] While blacks were afraid of a vindictive backlash, whites feared slave insurrection. Some owners came to the conclusion that the slaves who sang spirituals worked more efficiently and behaved more obediently. The stories from the Bible were supposed teach them a doctrine of subservience to their masters. As mentioned earlier, quite the opposite was happening. While masters aimed to strengthen bondage and suppress militant spirits, the slaves, who were forced to abandon their traditional African religions, saw the Christian God as one of themselves, striving for freedom.[44]

The use of spirituals to express desires for freedom consisted in the ingenious employment of multiple meanings. Some were sung purposely to deliver a clear-cut message through metonymic metaphors[45]. One of the songs indicated that a "conductor" was coming to lead the slaves off the plantations. Harriet Tubman became known as the "Black Moses" for her unrelenting efforts to help slaves to escape to the north, used "Wade in the Water" to communicate her presence. The song was chosen deliberately, as a metaphor - wade into the water actually meant avoid being seen. It was often used as a map song, i.e. the directions were coded into the lyrics. Other times, spirituals were sung to transcend the horrifying conditions, to alleviate frustrations and feelings of alienation and to provide a sense of hope. Some inspired slaves to act, as for Frederick

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[41] Ibid., p. 19.
[42] Thompson, p. 26.
[43] Lawrence-McIntyre, p. 389.
[44] Ibid, p. 383-384.
[45] Among the most obvious metaphors were: bondage=slavery; Satan=slavemaster; King Jesus=slave benefactor; Babylon= winter; hell=farther south; Jordan=first step to freedom; Israelites=enslaved Blacks; Egyptians=slaveholders; Canaan=land of freedom; heaven=Canada (north); home=Africa (Ibid., p. 389).

Douglass who mentioned a specific tune which encouraged him to escape from slavery:[46]

> "O Canaan, sweet Canaan,
> I am bound for the land of Canaan,"
> "I thought I heard them say,
> There were lions in the way,
> I don't expect to stay
> Much longer here.
> Run to Jesus – shun the danger –
> I don't expect to stay
> Much longer here"[47]

Spirituals have always been significant. Not only did the spirituals sustain the slaves through hardships, enhancing a sense of racial unity and pride, but they also helped convince some of the white population of the rightness of the Black´s cause.[48] In the late 1860´s and throughout the 1870´s, thousands of the newly freed slaves became migrants, seeking family members, opportunities for work and a new life. And as they wandered throughout the South, they soon learned that their struggle for freedom and civil rights was not over. They sang to banish feelings of disenchantment and loneliness. The slave music laid the foundations of future protest, which gained greater momentum in the 1950s. About 40 years earlier, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People adopted the spiritual Lift Every Voice and Sing as the "The Negro National Anthem."[49] It was based on a poem by African-American poet James Weldon Johnson (1871-1928) and it became immensely popular due to the powerful lyrics:

> Lift every voice and sing,
> Till earth and heaven ring,
> Ring with the harmonies of Liberty;
> Let our rejoicing rise
> High as the list'ning skies,
> Let it resound loud as the rolling sea.
> Sing a song full of the faith that the dark past has taught us,
> Sing a song full of the hope that the present has brought us;
> Facing the rising sun of our new day begun,

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[46] Ibid., p. 390-391.
[47] Frederick Douglass. *Life and Times of Frederick Douglass* (Radford, VA: Wilder Publications LLC, 2008), p. 90.
[48] Thompson, p. 29.
[49] The History Of Black Music, Part I
directed by George Voras, fl. 2003; produced by Kathy Kidd, fl. 2003, in Tony Brown's Journal (New York, NY: Tony Brown Productions Inc., 2003), 25:24 mins

Let us march on till victory is won.[50]

The Civil Rights activists of the 20th century were aware of the extensive use of spirituals by the abolitionist movement of the 19th century that resulted in political action. They too sought this success in the 20th century through modified versions of the original tunes, to meet the goals of the 20th century civil rights movement. The lyrics of some spirituals were revived as follows, with the modifications as shown in the brackets: Woke up this morning with my mind stayed on Jesus (on freedom), Go tell it on the mountain that Jesus Christ was born (to let my people go), Keep your hand on the plow, hold on (Keep your eyes on the prize, hold on), Over my head, I see Jesus in the air (I see freedom in the air).[51]

The relevance of the spirituals is truly enduring. Today, they serve as an extremely valuable source of knowledge. Listening to them is like leafing through a living history book full of symbolism, which can be easily decoded by avid readers. Through unveiling such secret messages, the slave experience and daily lives are communicated in the most genuine way.[52] The spirituals also influenced countless numbers of musicians in their artistic careers, Bob Dylan included. He admitted that "Blowin' in the Wind," probably his best-known song had black roots: "'Blowin' in the Wind' has always been a spiritual. I took it off a song called 'No More Auction Block'—that's a spiritual, and 'Blowin' in the Wind' sorta follows the same feeling."[53]

1.3 Folk Music in the Service of the Early 20th Century Labor Movement

The use of folk music as a vehicle of persuasion is far from being a new phenomenon; this time-proven method follows a pattern – "adapting an already known and accepted song so as to transform it into an instrument of persuasion."[54] Such is the case of an African American spiritual "We shall not be moved", which was recorded in the late 1920s for the first time, and became popular with reform movements for its

[50] National Association for the Advancement of the Colorad people. NAACP HISTORY: LIFT EV' RY VOICE AND SING (http://www.naacp.org/pages/naacp-history-lift-evry-voice-and-sing, accessed March 3, 2015).
[51] The Spirituals Project. Sweet Chariot: The story of the Spirituals (http://www.spiritualsproject.org/sweetchariot/Freedom/civil.php, accessed March 3, 2015).
[52] Lawrence-McIntyre, p. 385, 399.
[53] Bob Dylan cited by Colleen J. Sheehy and Thomas Swiss. *Highway 61 Revisited : Bob Dylan's Road from Minnesota to the World* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2009), p.46.
[54] Kingman, p. 97.

simplicity and the flexibility to add verses. Ralph Chaplin, the author of the new, militant lyrics to "Battle Hymn of the Republic," changed it to "Solidarity Forever" in 1915, since considered to be the official anthem of the American labor movement.[55] Protest songs focused on the struggle for fair wages and working hours for the working class, aiming to unionize the workforce in the United States. Immigrants, textile workers, and most notably the members of the Industrial Workers of the World, so called "Wobblies," produced a number of these songs.[56]

One of the most renowned "Wobblies," active in early 20th century, was Joe Hill. The American songwriter and labor organizer was born in Sweden in 1879 as Joel Emmanuel Hägglund. He arrived in the United States in 1902 and drifted around the country, hopping from job to job until he joined the local of the Industrial Workers of the World based in San Pedro, California. He quickly became its secretary and, a year later, perhaps his most famous song, "The Preacher and the Slave," where he coined the well-known phrase "pie in the sky,"[57] was published in the IWW's *Little Red Song Book*. It is sung to the melody of "In the Sweet Bye and Bye."

> You will eat, bye and bye
> In that glorious land above the sky;
> Work and pray, live on hay,
> You'll get pie in the sky when you die. [58]

He was strongly influenced by sacred hymns, the musical vernacular of his youth. In the 19th century, hymns were almost omnipresent. They were, of course, sung in church, but also in the streets by missionaries, in the soup kitchens, by miners, lumberjacks and other laborers. He realized that when it came to reaching the broadest groups of people, songs, particularly hymns were by far the best tool. He once wrote "A

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[55] Denisoff (1969), p. 427.

[56] Britannica Academic. Work song (http://academic.eb.com.vlib.interchange.at/EBchecked/topic/648059/work-song, accessed March 7, 2015).

[57] The phrase wasn't taken up until the Second World War, when it began to be used figuratively to refer to any prospect of future happiness which was unlikely ever to be realized
1. Fig. a future reward after death, considered as a replacement for a reward not received on earth. Don't hold out for pie in the sky. Get realistic. If he didn't hope for some heavenly pie in the sky, he would probably be a real crook.
2. Fig. having to do with a hope for a special reward. (This is hyphenated before a nominal.) Get rid of your pie-in-the-sky ideas! What these pie-in-the-sky people really want is money.
(http://idioms.thefreedictionary.com/pie+in+the+sky, accessed March 10, 2015).

[58] Britannica Academic. Joe Hill (http://academic.eb.com.vlib.interchange.at/EBchecked/topic/265802/Joe-Hill, accessed March 11, 2015).

pamphlet, no matter how good, is never read more than once, but a song is learned by heart and repeated over and over." Hill´s music to his critical lyrics closely resembled the cadence and tone of sacred hymns:

> Workers of the world, awaken!
>
> Break your chains, demand your rights.
>
> All the wealth you make is taken
> By exploiting parasites.
> Shall you kneel in deep submission
> From your cradles to your graves?
> Is the height of your ambition
> To be good and willing slaves? [59]

Hill turned folk music into an incendiary art, traveled widely, and organized workers at a time when supporting labor unions or women´s rights was a risky business.[60] The themes of his songs dealt with the plight of the migratory workers, immigrants working in sweatshops, and railway employees. They were generally tinged with humor and Marxist ideology.

In January 1914, while staying in Salt Lake City, Utah Hill was arrested and charged with the murder of two people. Evidence in the following trial was obscure, yet he was found guilty by the jury. Despite mass demonstrations and a personal appeal from President Woodrow Wilson, Hill was sentenced to death. On the last night before the execution, he telegraphed Bill Haywood, the leader of the "Wobblies": "Goodbye Bill. I die like a true rebel. Don't waste time in mourning. Organize." Hill battled capitalism fervently and most likely arrived in Salt Lake City with an agenda. The Utah authorities were fearful of the radical IWW members, and as Joe Hill was a personification of the labor union, both were on trial.[61]

The provocative audacity of his music and his symbolic execution by a firing squad left a lasting legacy. His figure gained a mythical status among union workers, and a poet, Alfred Hayes, immortalized him in his poem "I Dreamed I Saw Joe Hill Last Night." The poem was set to music and popularized by Paul Robeson; it moved Woody Guthrie so deeply that he wrote a letter to Robeson and included this song and some

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[59] Mark Pedelty. *Ecomusicology: Rock, Folk, and the Environment* (Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 2011), p. 58-59.
[60] *Ibid*., p. 59.

more of Hill´s work in his repertoire, as did later his protégé Pete Seeger, as well as Joan Baez, Bob Dylan, Bruce Springsteen, the Dubliners, and many others, showing allegiance to the musical tradition of the early 20th century. Other musicians, i.e. Phil Ochs and Rage Against the Machine wrote songs about Joe Hill.[62]

2. American Folk Music Revival

Tin Pan Alley, the new song publishing industry, was established in Manhattan in the mid-1880s. This strictly profit-oriented songwriting and publishing venture "comprised the commercial music of songwriters of ballads, dance music, and vaudeville, and eventually became synonymous with American popular music in general."[63] About that time, American folk music was recorded for the first time and its popularity in rural areas increased.[64]

In the 1920s, radio broadcasting became widespread. This new phenomenon, along with the development of more sophisticated means of recording, coalesced into an unprecedented exchange of musical influences between urban and rural milieus. While the "folk" were discovering the urban popular music, both white and black rural music was being collected to make commercial recordings.[65] It is perhaps ironic that the *Anthology of American Folk Music*, the cornerstone of the collections documenting the folk music tradition in the United States, is made up entirely of these early commercial recordings.[66]

The recording industry suffered a heavy blow during the Depression, which rendered most people, especially country people, too poor to buy records. However, the Depression had yet another effect on the American cultural scene. The dire economic situation spurred an increased mobility of the rural people, leaving the country to seek occupation in the industrialized cities. This migration brought an end to the existence of any secluded or isolated locations and regions of the country and changed many people´s perspective of folk music. As Daniel Kingman notes:

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[61] Britannica Academic. Joe Hill (http://academic.eb.com.vlib.interchange.at/EBchecked/topic/265802/Joe-Hill, accessed March 11, 2015).
[62] Pedelty, p. 59-60.
[63] Britannica Academic. Tin Pan Alley (http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/596493/Tin-Pan-Alley, accessed March 20, 2015).
[64] Howard Sounes. *Down the Highway: The Life of Bob Dylan* (New York: Grove Press, 2001), p. 44 – 45.
[65] The term "folk" originally meant the rural people
[66] Kingman, p. 96.

> The distinctly "non-folk" intellectual consciousness of folk music-as the expression of a vaguely defined spirit of a people, as a "cry for justice," as "art," or as artifact, to be collected and studied or else to be pressed into service for some specific purpose-began to replace the folk "unconsciousness" of it as something wholly integrated into daily life itself, and no more to be abstracted from it than the making of clothes or the building of fences."[67]

Kingman created three levels of American involvement with folk music, underway since the 1930s:

(1) The use of urbanized and adapted folk music for political propaganda

(2) Folk music as an object of scholarly interest – amateurs and professionals have tried to preserve the traditional folk songs

(3) The use of popularized folk music for entertainment and profit, beyond the confines of any definable "folk community"[68]

2.1 The Use of Urbanized and Adapted Folk Music for Political Propaganda

The "American folk music revival" can be divided chronologically into two stages. The first began approximately in the late 1930s and is associated with left-wing politics and propaganda songs.[69] There has been a lively history of propaganda songs and the adoption of traditional folk tunes for social or political causes in the United States. In the 1930s however, the entire folk tradition was meant to be appropriated to serve political purposes, equating the folk with the proletariat and imposing the rural song tradition upon urban workers. Organizers from the Communist Party of the United States were inspired by the Bolshevik Revolution in 1917, where Russian indigenous folk music was used as propaganda. The American labor organizers therefore decided to adopt the American folk singing tradition, which was still thriving in the South, providing encouragement not only to the rural workers, but also to the local mine and textile-mill workers.[70]

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[67] *Ibid*., p. 97.
[68] *Ibid*.
[69] Larry Sandberg and Dick Wiessman. *The Folk Music Sourcebook* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1989), p. 108.
[70] Kingman, p. 98-99.

Denisoff identified the ideological incentives behind the use of folk music outside of the rural milieu. Marxists considered art to be class-oriented and a "tool of the bourgeoisie." They denounced popular music as an "obscurantist ploy of Tin Pan Alley," while classical music was allegedly a means of maintaining the status quo. Therefore the choice of folk music, as the Communists labeled it "the people´s music," was based on an ideological preference. As one of the Almanac singers explained: "We are trying to give back to the people the songs of workers. Their songs have been stolen from them by the bourgeoisie."[71]

Most important was the ideological stance of the performer, not the artistic quality or originality of the music itself. Sometimes the words of protest were translated into song form by the politically-militant but classically-trained composers so unnaturally and forcibly that the songs turned out to be practically unsingable. There was also a media censorship, which prevented these songs from being recorded or played on the radio. Therefore most of them have never become part of "mass culture." This changed in the early 1960s, when every recording company in the United States produced some folk and protest music, contributing to the rise of artists like Dylan and Joan Baez, both aware of style and technique. Their songs of persuasion were more artistically aspiring. Their content was rhetorical and individual-event-oriented, pointing to certain social issues, while not suggesting any ideological or practical solution. "The essence of this type of song is a statement of individualistic discontent as juxtaposed to a 'cry for justice'." Typical example from Dylan´s repertoire is "Blowin´ in the Wind" or "Masters of War." Dylan and his contemporary Phil Ochs disdained the participation of the audience in their concerts. The structure of their songs itself excluded any active interaction as they were mostly lyrical, longer, and sort of rambling. The pattern was often non-repetitive, in fact many of Dylan´s songs drag on for more than ten verses without a chorus, like "With God on Our Side." Dylan commented on this account in the 2012 Rolling Stone interview:

> My songs are personal music; they're not communal. I wouldn't want people singing along with me. It would sound funny. I'm not playing campfire meetings. I don't remember anyone singing along with Elvis,

[71] Denisoff, p. 429.

> or Carl Perkins, or Little Richard. The thing you have to do is make people feel their own emotions.[72]

The proletarian songs used by the groups centered around Pete Seeger and Lee Hays and other "people´s artists," such as Woody Guthrie or Aunt Molly Jackson, were adjusted for mass singing and face to face transmission. Audience participation was highly desirable. Songbooks were distributed at meetings, so that everyone could follow the words and sing along. The performers emphasized collective unity and the idea of "we are" and "join the movement" ethos: "They came out of the unshakeable and immense feeling that the singer had discovered some truth, a plan that was going to make the world one of 'bread and roses'."[73] Such collective ethos downplayed the significance of the individual performer, who was rarely given credit for his or her songwriting. The Almanac Singers were sort of amorphous, loosely functioning aggregate. A contrast to this concept was the Kingston Trio, associated with the onset of the commercial revival in the late 1950s, they were the true celebrities of their time. There were, however, few figures that stood out artistically and emerged from the isolated subculture of proletarian renaissance into the mass media such as Burl Ives, Josh White, and the Weavers, to be discussed further in the next chapter.[74]

2.2 Folk Music as an Object of Scholarly Interest

The revivalist movement was characterized by a blend of somewhat contradictory tendencies. While the main themes of "urban folk" revolved around populist and noncommercial values, the revival was driven by younger performers, born in cities into well-off families, often from intellectual backgrounds. Nevertheless, their nostalgia for the fast-disappearing folk tradition and their enthusiasm for the folk legends seemed to be real as some of them even undertook a journey to meet their folk icons.[75] Their attitudes sometimes resembled those of an anthropologist conducting a field study. A number of actual scholars went to considerable lengths to collect and record field rural folk music to deliver it to the responsive and eager urban audiences,

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[72] Mikal Gilmore, "Bob Dylan Unleashed: A Wild Ride on His New LP and Striking Back at Critics," *The Rolling Stone* (http://www.rollingstone.com/music/news/bob-dylan-unleashed-a-wild-ride-on-his-new-lp-and-striking-back-at-critics-20120927#ixzz2PVSdzgNk, accessed March 19, 2015).
[73] Denisoff, p. 437-439.
[74] Ibid., p. 431-432.
[75] Sandberg and Weissman, p. 107.

and to make it available for remakes. Harvard professor Francis James Child laid the foundation for the study of the field at the turn of the century, but the Lomaxes are most renowned for these efforts.[76]

The Lomax family cooperated directly with the Library of Congress since 1933, to establish a number of folksong gathering expedition under the library´s auspices. First, John A. Lomax, Sr. was accompanied by his eighteen-year-old son Alan. They visited farms, prisons, and rural communities in Texas to record work songs, field cries, reels, ballads, and blues. In 1928, the Archive of American Folk Song was created and John became the "The Honorary Consultant and Curator," while his son continued to make field trips all over the Deep South and to submit valuable recordings to the Library until 1942. Other family members participated in some of these field trips to make their own contribution to the archive. Its collection consists mainly of field recordings but it also boasts of recordings of such legendary musicians as Huddie William Ledbetter, known as "Leadbelly", Vera Ward Hall, Muddy Waters, Aunt Molly Jackson, Ferdinand "Jelly Roll" Morton, and Woody Guthrie, who were brought to recording studios by the Lomaxes, and therein introduced to broader audiences.[77]

Lomax also collected traditional music from many parts of world. He spent most of the 1950s in Europe, collecting hundreds of folk songs in Great Britain, Italy, and Spain.[78] In 1959, Alan Lomax obtained generous funding from Atlantic Records for another venture into the South, this time however with the latest stereo field recording technology. His hard paid off and two years later, a four-CD set titled *Sounds of the South* was released by Atlantic. The sound quality is outstanding and the performances are uncompromisingly raw and vibrant--everything the urban folk movement attempted to be is encapsulated on these valuable recordings.[79]

Carla Rotolo, the sister of Suze Rotolo, worked for Alan Lomax in the early 1960s as his personal assistant. At a show in Greenwich Village, Carla introduced Dylan to Suze, and the two eventually developed a passionate and mutually inspirational relationship. Dylan seized the opportunity and spent hours trawling

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[76] Kingman, p. 111.
[77] The Library of Congress. Lomax Family at the American Folklife Center: About the Lomax Family Collections (http://www.loc.gov/folklife/lomax/, accessed April 2, 2015).
[78] Britannica Academic. Alan Lomax (http://academic.eb.com.vlib.interchange.at/EBchecked/topic/346668/Alan-Lomax, accessed April 2, 2015).
[79] The Library of Congress. Lomax Family at the American Folklife Center: About the Lomax Family Collections (http://www.loc.gov/folklife/lomax/, accessed April 2, 2015).

through Lomax´s extensive archive, locating folk melodies and themes, some of which he later used as a basis for his own songs.[80]

2.3 The Use of Popularized Folk Music for Entertainment and Profit beyond the Confines of the "Folk Community"

Several factors contributed to the transition of the folk music revival to its second phase. If you turned on the radio in the early or mid-1950s, you were most likely to hear the voice of Doris Day warbling the notorious "Que Sera Sera" or Patti Page´s "(How Much Is) That Doggie in the Window?" The young generation grew weary of the bland music and shallow lyrics.[81] These songs were not even remotely capturing the bleak reality of the era. Many people feared that a deadly nuclear explosion could come anytime. The common nuclear drills instructed students to duck down, hide under their desks and cover their ears. People at home or at work were supposed to close the curtains and go hide in the basement or in a fallout shelter. What may sound amusing today actually created a real sense of paranoia back then.[82]

There was a desire to find something beyond the urban consumer culture. Classical music was not an apt means of expression for intellectual youth. Rock and roll did not fit either, although many, including Dylan, had an early fascination for genre pioneers like Buddy Holly, Chuck Berry, Little Richard and obviously Elvis Presley, whose career started later, in 1954. Brimming with vitality, such music appealed to middle class youngsters. College students, however, have never become too absorbed in the craze.[83]

The sound of folk music came as a breath of fresh air for the industry and captured the progressive frame of mind of the student population. As Sandberg and Weismann explain:"… it offered fresh enthusiasm as opposed to tired professionalism, an honest expression of individual and social feelings as opposed to show-biz theatrics, an elegant simplicity as opposed to gimmickry."[84] Unlike classical music or jazz, it was easily approachable, both to comprehend and to play. At the same time, people believed it had something important to say. Joan Baez said that people of her generation did not

[80] Heylin, p. 56.
[81] Sandberg and Wiessman, p. 109.
[82] Martin Scorsese. *No Direction Home: Bob Dylan*. DVD. Directed by Martin Scorsese. Los Angeles: Paramount Pictures, 2005.
[83] Sandberg and Wiessman, p. 109
[84] *Ibid*., p. 109-110.

care whether someone was rich or good-looking, but they would ask: "Does he have anything to say?"[85] When it was revealed that music promoters paid the radio stations to play their labels' songs – an affair which became known as the payola scandal of 1960, it only boosted folk music, which seemed untainted and more authentic.[86]

The Weavers, an urban folk group most often associated with the great popular revival of the folk music, were the pioneers of a new pattern of commercial success. The group was founded in 1948 by the two former members of the Almanac Singers, the ever-present Pete Seeger, and Lee Hays along with Ronnie Gilbert and Fred Hellerman. They tried to eschew political stigmas by using traditional material and singing new folk songs. In 1950, the Weavers were the first urban folk group to score a number one hit with Leadbelly's single "Goodnight, Irene."[87] In 1952 they reached number six with the notorious Wimoweh (The Lion Sleeps Tonight). It is important to note however, that these were not folk records in any strict sense. They moved folk music to concert halls, performed on radio and television and, by 1952, managed to sell over 4 million records. During the McCarthy era, they were accused of championing radical left-wing ideas and subsequently blacklisted. Their recording contract was terminated and they soon disbanded.[88] Their previous achievements nevertheless helped to pave the way for other "folk entrepreneurs" who struggled to make commercial breakthroughs.[89] The recording companies began signing contracts with folk artists, including some of those, who were previously blacklisted, such as Pete Seeger, who was signed on Columbia.[90]

As folk music flourished on campuses across the country, three clean-shaven nice-looking California students decided to capitalize on the trend. In 1957, they formed a group named The Kingston Trio, and within a year they had a number one hit with their version of the traditional song, Tom Dooley. One may think it a bit bizarre and wonder how a song narrating a murder of a woman, sang light-heartily by three business-major students could have been such a great success. With the catchy tune, they captured the taste of the younger audience. Their musical production may be seen as a transition from the sugary tunes by The Teddy Bears or The Chipmunks to the more

[85] Joan Baez cited by Martin Scorsese. *No Direction Home: Bob Dylan*. DVD. Directed by Martin Scorsese. Los Angeles: Paramount Pictures, 2005.
[86] Sounes, p. 45.
[87] Glenn Appell and David Hemphill. p. 339.
[88] The group was later reformed and active in the period 1955-1963 (Kingman, p. 109).
[89] Kingman, p. 109.
[90] Denisoff (1969), p. 433.

coarse style of the traditional folk artists such as Woody Guthrie or Leadbelly. The latter, unlike The Kingston Trio, were praised by the folk "purists". As in the case of the Weavers however, the success of the trio was immense and served as a catalyst for other folk interpreters.[91] Dalton specifically mentions The Kingston Trio as the initial incentive for Dylan´s interest in folk music and for Albert Grossman´s[92] stroke of a genius to form a similarly polished and commercially successful trio called Peter, Paul and Mary.[93] It should be noted however that the success of The Kingston Trio not only paved the way for talented and original artists like Dylan, Joan Baez and Phil Ochs, but also allowed for the production of mediocre to low-quality music recordings. Many of the young, newly emerging artists were talented and innovative, yet not strong and confident enough to resist the pressures of commercialism. Their talents were submerged by the commercial mediocrity before they could be fully developed.[94]

3. Woody Guthrie: The Dust Bowl Troubadour and Dylan´s Idol

> Remember, it's just maybe, someday, sometime, somebody will pick you up and look at your picture and read your message, and carry you in his pocket, and lay you down on his shelf, and burn you in his stove. But he'll have your message in his head and he'll take it and it'll get around. I'm blowing, and just as wild and whirling as you are, and lots of times I've been picked up, thrown down, and picked up; but my eyes has been my camera taking pictures of the world and my songs has been messages that I tried to scatter across the back sides and along the steps of the fire escapes and on the window sills and through the dark halls.[95]

Dylan´s story is intertwined with many prominent figures of the American music scene. Yet none of them compares to Woody Guthrie when it comes to influencing

[91] Sounes, p. 45.

[92] Dylan´s manager, a true show-business heavyweight, who became infamous for his cold-eyed assesment of artists´potential to make money. He signed Bob Gibson, soon followed Odetta, a major star in her own right, and created the immensely popular trio Peter, Paul and Mary. Grossman´s sharp business sense ran contrary to the idealism of the folk revival, and so many performers disliked him. When he signed Dylan in 1962, it was the best deal of his life. This business relationship was mutually beneficial for a long time, some even claim that Dylan would never have become an international star, had there not been for Grossman. Their partnership ended in a bitter legal dispute over royalties (Sounes, p. 102-103, 115, 346).

[93] Dalton, p. 43.

[94] Sandberg and Wiessman, p. 109.

Dylan and his work. They both rose into prominence when entering the Greenwich Village scene, their backgrounds however were of a wholly different nature. They were born and raised in a different era, roughly one generation apart. While Dylan´s ordinary and relatively uneventful childhood and his early years in Minnesota were purposely blurred by fabricating colorful anecdotes about his past life, Guthrie did not have to reinvent himself.[96] Dylan chose the vagabond style of life he was leading in his teenage years deliberately, while Guthrie´s hardships were far from self-imposed. Later in his life however, Guthrie found himself in a strange position. Although Guthrie came from a modest background, he was far from being the "simple man of the soil" people believed him to be. He was in fact a man of shrewd intelligence, an avid reader and a painter, yet he was expected to conceal his true identity to fulfill the role of the simplistic universal folk poet. He complained: "I never really set my head on being a public figure […] Most of the time success ain´t much fun. Lots of times it takes a lot of posing and pretending." His work nevertheless remained authentic, and it is disputable as to what extent he actually assumed the role he was attributed or whether he was aware of such a thing as style at all. Dylan on the other hand, emerging at a later, more self-conscious period, set his mind on becoming a star from the beginning and was very much aware of his cool style and looks, posing nonchalantly for the cameras. This does not mean he was any less talented or astute than Woody. On the contrary, Dylan turned out to be an original and distinctive composer, while Guthrie was mostly "an appropriator and an adaptor" of already existing tunes. Dylan´s music, except for his early career, was a result of a deliberate creative effort, whereas Guthrie´s was often a product of an unconscious process. It is undisputable they were both extremely talented, with extraordinary songwriting skills. While Guthrie was a balladeer, writing about common people and events of the daily life, Dylan mostly wrote lyrical songs about relationships, full of imagery and often mythical references. His most memorable ballads of protest are from the early 1960s, yet they account for only a minor part of his work.[97]

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[95] Woody Guthrie, cited in Dorian Lynskey. *33 Revolutions per minute: A history of protest songs, from Billy Holiday to Green Day* (New York: HarperCollins) p. 6.

[96] In one of his extraordinary tales, he claimed that he was of a Native American origin, while his real descendants were in fact from Eastern Europe (Sounes, p. 85).

[97] Kingman, p. 102-106.

3.1 Guthrie´s Youth: Pictures from Life's Other Side

Woodrow Wilson Guthrie was born July 14, 1912, in Okemah, Oklahoma into a working-class family. His father was a stalwart Democrat, and so when his son was born, just weeks after Woodrow Wilson was nominated to be the Democratic candidate for president in 1912, he and his wife Nora decided to name their son after the future president. Albeit of a modest background, the Guthries were fond of music, teaching Woody the folk songs of the era. Unfortunately, the family suffered several tragedies when Woody was still a child, presenting him with a bleak perspective on life. His sister Clara died at the age of just 14 from extensive burns she suffered when her dress caught on fire. His mother suffered from severe depression. Due to her ill mental health, Nora´s behavior was often unpredictable and even dangerous to her close ones. Once, she poured kerosene on her husband while he was asleep, and set him on fire. Charley survived, but was shaken badly by the incident. She was sent to an insane asylum and never returned home. Today, it is believed she suffered from Huntington´s chorea, a hereditary disease, which later afflicted Woody Guthrie himself.[98] He was left on his own when he was only sixteen years old, and three years later moved to Texas to join his father, where he married his first wife Mary Jennings.[99]

Like the characters from *The Grapes of Wrath*, Woody, Mary and their three children felt the wrath of the Great Depression when the drought-stricken Great Plains turned into the infamous Dust Bowl. In 1935, their dire situation forced Woody to leave his family and join the "Okies", the refugees migrating West in search of jobs. Absorption of his own heritage and his hardscrabble experience in California formed a keen social conscience that was so integral to his compositions, in which he captured the spirit of the grassroot United States so well. John Steinbeck once said about Woody Guthrie:

> "He sings the songs of a people, and I suspect, that he is, in a way, the people […], there is nothing sweet about Woody, and there is nothing sweet about the songs he sings. But there is something more important for those who will listen. There is the will of the people to endure and

[98] Robert Santelli. *This Land Is Your Land: Woody Guthrie and the Journey of an American Folk Song* (Philadelphia, PA: Running Press, 2012) p. 124.
[99] Mark Allan Jackson. *Prophet Singer: The Voice and Vision of Woody Guthrie* (Jackson, MS: University Press of Mississippi, 2007), p. 4.

> fight against oppression. I think we can call this the American spirit."[100]

3.2 From California to the New York Island

Despite the hardships, Guthrie developed a taste for the road which in 1939 led him to New York City, where he was embraced by the folk revivalist community which included Pete Seeger, Alan Lomax, and Leadbelly. As Guthrie's political outlook became increasingly left-wing, he became the "folk poet" and a musical spokesman of the working class, embraced by leftist intellectuals and courted by the members of the Communist Party. On and off for a time, he was a member and one of the songwriters for the Almanac Singers, a loosely organized group of protest singers—including Leadbelly, Pete Seeger, Sonny Terry, Brownie McGhee, and Cisco Houston, who attacked fascism and aimed to "transform industrial workers into singing militants by giving them a ready-made body of protest songs in folk style." Their success was limited as the Greenwich Village intellectuals failed to capture the taste of the leaders or the members of the labor unions. The Almanacs finally suffered the consequences of their dogmatic attachment to a political party line and the group disintegrated before the war was over. As Kingman concluded correctly, "Their failure was an illustration of the pitfalls of trying to cloak a particular party line in the mantle of folk."[101]

Through immersing himself into the New York City artistic and social environment, Guthrie eventually outgrew his local roots and parted with the traditions of his youth. He separated from his earlier folk milieu to become part of the broader folk community. As Kingman explains, the Dust Bowl Ballads, recorded in New York in 1940, "show an increasing trend away from the specific and the individual – being applicable to many, they are about no one, and sung for no one group."[102] The migrant workers were not familiar with these songs as they lost their concreteness and became broadly inclusive. There is an interesting parallel with Dylan, who also separated himself from a definable community to create a more universal music with a lasting value. Extremely musically prolific from an early age, Guthrie composed his most celebrated and powerful songs in the 1940s, songs which still speak to us today.[103] Diana Jones captured this aptly: "When you write music that is really true to your time,

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[100] John Steinbeck cited by Appell and Hemphill, p. 338.
[101] Kingman, p. 103-105.
[102] *Ibid.,* p. 101.

those kinds of political and economic things that happen, you know they´re cyclical, so if the music strikes the cord of the time, it´s going to do so again and again."[104]

3.3 This Machine Kills Facists

During World War II, Guthrie joined the Merchant Marine and began writing more songs with a strident antifascist message. He even wrote "This Machine Kills Fascists" on his guitar. Around this time, he met his second wife Marjorie Greenblatt Mazia. After the war, they made their home in Coney Island, New York. They had four children together: Cathy, Arlo, Joady and Nora. During this happier period of his life, Guthrie wrote a number of remarkable children's songs from the perspective of childhood, with playful lyrics, using nonsense words. Among these are classics such as, "Don't You Push Me Down," "Ship In The Sky" and "Howdi Doo."[105]

As the political tide in the country became more conservative in the 1950s, Guthrie and his friends from the folksinger community in New York kept alive the flame of protest music writing politically charged songs, many of which inspired the American folk revival of the 1960s. Guthrie´s former colleagues in the Almanac Singers, with Pete Seeger in a leading role, providing guidance, founded a topical song publication named *Broadside: A Handful of Songs about Our Times*. [106] As explained earlier, topical songs were hardly a new phenomenon – the "event songs" of the earlier times narrated or commented on current occurrences and affairs like train wrecks, natural disasters, or personal tragedies, but the *Broadside* songs had a real political bite. Dylan and the other activist singer-songwriters, who submitted their work to the *Broadside* editors, aimed to be Guthrie´s successors. Even though their inspiration was bolstered by Seeger as the most visible and present figure, Guthrie was often the ultimate source. He once said "The worst thing that can happen is to cut yourself loose from the people, and the best thing is to sort of vaccinate yourself right into the big streams and blood of the people."[107] This motto resonated with the younger generation of folksingers, who felt that basically all folksongs were protest songs in their nature, in

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[103] *Ibid*., p. 101.
[104] A&E Television Networks. Woody Guthrie Biography (http://www.biography.com/people/woody-guthrie-9323949#synopsis, accessed March 21, 2015).
[105] Ibid., accessed March 22, 2015.
[106] Seeger and Guthrie had first met in the 1940, and remained close until Guthrie´s death in 1967
[107] Woody Guthrie cited by Ronald D. Cohen. *Woody Guthrie: Writing America's Songs* (New York: Routledge, 2012), p. 60.

which their creators imprinted their plight against the social conditions and demanded amelioration.[108]

3.4 Woody Guthrie Junior

Before Dylan was recognized as a distinctive artistic personality, Guthrie´s vivid memoir *Bound for Glory* helped flesh out the character he chose as his model. He first came across a copy of *Bound for Glory* when living in Dinkytown, and instantly became absorbed in reading it.[109] The autobiographical novel about Guthrie´s journey through the depressed United States is often considered the precursor to Jack Kerouac's *On the Road*. The writing was spare yet vivid and Dylan recognized some of the places and images depicted in the book. Later, he used lines from the memoir in some of his songs, like ". . . stealers, dealers, sidewalk spielers . . ." in "Subterranean Homesick Blues." He also mimicked the language and speech patterns of hobo characters from the book, most notably the double negatives and cutting the words short as if they had no time to articulate them correctly. Typical examples are "Don´t ask me nothin´ about nothin´ (a line from "Outlaw Blues", 1965), or "You Ain´t Goin´ Nowhere" (A song title from 1967), and it is hardly a coincidence that "blowin´" as in "Blowin´ in the Wind" appears in *Bound for Glory* too.[110]

By the 1950s, symptoms of Huntington´s chorea, a hereditary disease, which afflicted Guthrie´s mother and most likely his grandfather, during a time, when the disease was rarely diagnosed correctly, attacked Guthrie. Seven years prior to his death, he was a trembling frail figure, who could no longer play music, write or speak coherently. Whether his state of health was known to Dylan or not, it did not stop him from calling the hospital to announce a visit. In January 1961, shortly after his arrival in New York, Dylan finally got to meet his hero. After the visit, Dylan wrote a postcard to his friends saying "I know him and met him and saw him and sang to him. I know Woody-Goddamn."[111]

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[108] *Ibid*., p. 60-61.
[109] A bohemian neighborhood in downtown Minneapolis adjacent to the campus of the University of Minnesota at the junction of 4th street SE and 14th Avenue SE. With stores like the Melvin McCosh radical bookshop, the Dirty Grocery and most importantly, the Ten O´Clock Scholar coffeehouse. This was a breeding ground for the campus subculture. According to Sounes "To Bob, Dinkytown seemed a magical place; as he once said, every day there was like Sunday." (Sounes, p. 43-44).
[110] *Ibid*., p. 63-65.
[111] *Ibid*., p. 78-79.

Dylan was truly smitten with Guthrie, who became his first hero and for a time was his musical and physical incarnation. Some of the people around Dylan thought he was joking, but he was serious enough to go to extremes. He taught himself to use a southern accent, and his former girlfriend Bonnie Beecher even claimed that he wouldn´t answer unless he was called Woody. Ramblin´ Jack Elliot, Guthrie´s friend and disciple, had a fateful encounter with Dylan at Guthrie´s bedside at Greystone Park Hospital in Morris Plains, New Jersey, where Guthrie was a long-term patient. Their meeting resulted in a lasting relationship. Elliot later told Robert Shelton:[112]

> Bobby was sort of hung back in the shadows, just watching everything, just listening. Bob was shy then, you know. But, right off, I could see that Bob was very much influenced by everything about Woody.[113]

Elliot and later Dylan also copied the harmonica rack Guthrie was using to be able to play the harmonica and the guitar at the same time.[114] Dylan prided himself on talking to Guthrie, claiming he said that Dylan was a true folk singer-songwriter, unlike Seeger and Elliot who were mere interprets of folk songs etc.[115] The truth is however, that at that point, Guthrie was no longer able to communicate verbally. This does not play down the effect Guthrie had on Dylan. He was a unique source of artistic inspiration to Dylan. He also showed him how to apply original lyrics to existing folk melodies. Dylan mastered this skill, which helped him develop his career before he started composing more tunes of his own.[116] Dylan praised Guthrie´s music in Martin Scorsese´s "No Direction Home," and recalled what his songs meant to him:

> Woody Guthrie had a particular sound and besides that, he said something to go along with his sound. That was highly unusual to my ears. He was a radical, his songs had a radical slant, I thought, that´s what I want to sing. You could listen to his songs and actually learn how to live. These songs sounded archaic to most people. I don´t know why they didn´t sound archaic to me. They sounded like these songs were happening at the moment, to me.[117]

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[112] music critic and the author of the 1986 Dylan biography, called *No Direction Home, The Life and Music of Bob Dylan*

[113] Jack Elliot, cited by Ronald D. Cohen. *Woody Guthrie: Writing America's Songs* (New York: Routledge, 2012), p. 60.

[114] Sounes, p. 65-66.

[115] Sounes, p. 78.

[116] Dalton, p. 56-57.

[117] Bob Dylan presented by Martin Scorsese. *No Direction Home: Bob Dylan*. DVD. Directed by Martin Scorsese. Los Angeles: Paramount Pictures, 2005.

Dylan and Ramblin´ Jack Elliot were hardly the only ones enthralled by Woody´s sincere and gritty folk expressions. Among the folksingers, who performed and recorded Woody´s songs were Joan Baez, Harry Belafonte, Judy Collins, Cisco Houston, the Kingston Trio, Odetta, Tom Paxton, Peter, Paul & Mary, Pete Seeger, Dave van Ronk, the Weavers, and many others. He was a major influence on country music performers too, including Johnny Cash. And the rock and pop scene would definitely not be the same without Woody Guthrie. Besides Dylan, his songs were interpreted by a wide range of rock and pop artists like Paul Anka, the Byrds, Donovan, Van Morrison, Bruce Springsteen and Guthrie´s son Arlo.[118] Diana Jones, a contemporary American singer-songwriter, and a distinct voice in Americana music, said at the Woody Guthrie Centennial Birthday Festival at City Winery, NYC in 2012, that "It´s an important birthday, because, I mean, there just wouldn´t be American music without Woody Guthrie, there wouldn´t be Americana[119] surely."[120]

3.5 This Land Is Your Land

The most precious piece of Woody´s legacy remains the iconic "This Land Is Your Land", and even though most of the experts on Guthrie´s work would agree that it is not his best song, it is surely his most popular and influential one. Robert Santelli sees the song as an autobiographical journal in which Woody jotted down what he witnessed and heard, like the old troubadours, who delivered the news from town to town. He compares the underlying idea that "this land is your land" to the lines from Lincoln's Gettysburg Address about government "of the people, by the people, and for the people," saying they have a similar effect.[121]

"This Land Is Your Land" was written in 1940 but it wasn't until the 1950s that it became widely popular. Around this time, the song was placed in a songbook for school music teachers, who realized the chorus was easy for small children to sing, and so it happened that by 1960s, it was known to every school girl and boy in the United

[118] William Ruhlman, "Woody Guthrie Biography." *AllMusic* (http://www.allmusic.com/artist/woody-guthrie-mn0000577531/biography, accessed March 30, 2015).
[119] Americana is "an amalgam of roots music fused by the confluence of the shared and varied traditions that categorically make up the American musical ethos; specifically those sounds that are merged from folk, country, rhythm & blues, rock & roll and other external influential styles."
[120] A&E Television Networks. Woody Guthrie Biography (http://www.biography.com/people/woody-guthrie-9323949#synopsis, accessed March 21, 2015).
[121] Santelli, p. 8.

States.[122] Diana Jones, who was born in the mid-1960s, confirms: "I can´t remember time, when I didn´t know a Woody Guthrie song, I don´t know that I knew it was Woody, you know, but the songs were part of what you learned in first grade."[123]

"This Land Is Your Land" truly embodies love for the country. It became one of the greatest anthems of the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s, and, thanks to its unique qualities and the widespread familiarity with the song, there have been voices advocating the replacement of "The Star Spangled Banner" with "This Land Is Your Land," to be the new national anthem of the United States. This however is highly unlikely to happen as the original lyrics to "This Land Is Your Land," apart from the commonly known verses, are too controversial for a song to become a representative anthem of the United States. [124] For a long time, the two verses about trespassing were cut out of the original version or substituted with alternate verses, as Guthrie was obviously making left-wing political statements, expressing his contempt for private property, privatization and religious hypocrisy: "The American landscape in Guthrie's song is under threat from the people who exploit and disenfranchise American farmers and laborers."[125] Below you may read the full lyrics of the rare original version.

This Land Is Your Land

This land is your land, this land is my land
From California to the New York Island
From the red wood forest to the Gulf Stream waters
This land was made for you and me

As I was walking that ribbon of highway
I saw above me an endless skyway
I saw below me a golden valley
This land was made for you and me

I've roamed and rambled and I followed my footsteps
To the sparkling sands of her diamond deserts
And all around me a voice was sounding
This land was made for you and me

The sun comes shining as I was strolling
The wheat fields waving and the dust clouds rolling
The fog was lifting a voice was chanting

[122] Ibid., p. 7.
[123] A&E Television Networks. Woody Guthrie Biography (http://www.biography.com/people/woody-guthrie-9323949#synopsis, accessed March 21, 2015).
[124] Santelli, p. 19-20.
[125] Pedelty, p. 54.

This land was made for you and me

As I went walkin´ - I saw a sign there
And on the sign it said - No Trespassing´
But on the other side - it didn't say nothing!
Now that side was made for you and me!

In the squares of the city – In the shadow of the steeple
Near the relief office – I see my people
And some are grumblin´ and some are wonderin´
If this land´s still made for you and me.[126]

Bob Dylan performed "This land is your land" in his first official concert in 1961 at the Carnegie Chapter Hall. Only 53 people came to see Dylan that evening and his debut could hardly be called a success. Woody's daughter Nora remembers he borrowed Guthrie's jacket. He has resurrected the song many times in his later career. In 1975, he often used the song to close shows at the Rolling Thunder Revue, which must have seemed out of place, perhaps improper. The format of the show was unusual, a blend of vaudeville, carnival, and plain bizarreness, performed by a bunch of musicians, most of them doing drugs. Dylan, the master of folk rock, with his face painted white, had by the mid-1970s gone a long way from his Guthrie infatuation. The presence of Ramblin' Jack Elliott, who had never lost his love for Guthrie´s music, at the Rolling Thunder Review may have been seen as perhaps the only reminiscence of Dylan's relationship to Guthrie. "Elliott and "This Land Is Your Land" were the only two things that now linked two of the greatest songwriters America had produced in the twentieth century."[127]

Woody Guthrie as a balladeer drew inspiration from everything he came across. He was extremely prolific, so naturally, some of what he wrote was not great. Among the more than 1,000 of his songs however were the most lasting and influential songs of the American music tradition: "So Long (It's Been Good to Know Yuh)," "Hard Traveling," "Blowing Down This Old Dusty Road," "Union Maid," or "Pastures of Plenty," inspired by John Steinbeck's masterpiece *The Grapes of Wrath*.[128] Despite the fact that Guthrie had already earned his status as a legendary folk figure while he was still alive, he remained very modest about his accomplishments. He was known for

[126] Woody Guthrie, cited by Santelli, p. 254.
[127] *Ibid*., p. 231-232.

playing down his own creative genius by describing himself as a mere observer who passes the message on through his songs. He said at a performance in 1949, "I like to write about wherever I happen to be. I just happened to be in the Dust Bowl, and because I was there and the dust was there, I thought, well, I'll write a song about it."[129]

4. Bob Dylan

Urban folk music flourished throughout the 1950s and well into the 1960s. For a long time, it followed an independent path as the folk performers with their acoustic guitars remained aloof from the new musical styles and looked down at rock´ n´ roll not seen to be serious music. As mentioned earlier, the revival was deeply rooted in college campuses. The baby boom children were entering colleges and becoming politically aware. They were hungry for both the traditional folk standards and newly composed topical songs dealing with the issues of the day.[130] Pete Seeger and the Weavers re-emerged from the blacklisting era of the 1950s, when attacks on the left-leaning composers and songwriters culminated due to the anti-alien and anti-radical legislation passed in Congress during the past twenty years.[131] The baby boomers were increasingly critical of materialism and the conventional style of life of their parents. In 1963, Pete Seeger scored a hit with Little Boxes, a protest song written and originally sung by Malvina Reynolds. The younger generation might know Little Boxes as the theme song for the Showtime television series Weeds. The song was so popular that the term "Ticky-tacky", used as an expression for the low-quality material the houses were built of, became a catchphrase in the 1960s:[132]

> Little boxes on the hillside,
> Little boxes made of ticky tacky,
> Little boxes on the hillside,
> Little boxes all the same.
> There's a green one and a pink one
> And a blue one and a yellow one,

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[128] Britannica Academic. Woody Guthrie (http://academic.eb.com.vlib.interchange.at/EBchecked/topic/249931/Woody-Guthrie, accessed March 26, 2015).
[129] The Official Woody Guthrie Website. The Live Wire, Woody Guthrie in Performance 1949 Transcript (http://www.woodyguthrie.org/woodylivewire.pdf, accessed March 22, 2015).
[130] Larry Star and Christopher Waterman. *American popular music: the rock years* (New York: Oxford University Press: 2006), p. 139-140.
[131] Jackson, p. 30.
[132] Showtime. Weeds (http://www.sho.com/sho/weeds/home, accessed April 11, 2015).

And they're all made out of ticky tacky
And they all look just the same.

And the people in the houses
All went to the university,
Where they were put in boxes
And they came out all the same,
And there's doctors and lawyers,
And business executives,
And they're all made out of ticky tacky
And they all look just the same.

And they all play on the golf course
And drink their martinis dry,
And they all have pretty children
And the children go to school,
And the children go to summer camp
And then to the university,
Where they are put in boxes
And they come out all the same.

And the boys go into business
And marry and raise a family
In boxes made of ticky tacky
And they all look just the same.
There's a green one and a pink one
And a blue one and a yellow one,
And they're all made out of ticky tacky
And they all look just the same.[133]

A year earlier, in 1962, even the immensely popular Kingston Trio, who usually restricted their music to traditional folk material, plucked up their courage to record "Where have all the flowers gone," a poignant pacifist song by Pete Seeger. It was well-received and helped to pave the way for perhaps the most important song of the decade, which has become a timeless classic – Bob Dylan´s "Blowin´ in the Wind."

4.1 Bob Dylan: The Early Influences

> The Fifties were a simpler time, at least for me and the situation I was in. I didn't really experience what a lot of the other people my age experienced, from the more mainstream towns and cities. Where I grew up was as far from the cultural center as you could get. It was way out of the beaten path. You had the whole town to roam around in, though, and there didn't seem to be any sadness or fear or

[133] Western Kentucky University. Malvina Reynolds: Song Lyrics and Poems (http://people.wku.edu/charles.smith/MALVINA/mr094.htm, accessed April 11, 2015).

> insecurity. It was just woods and sky and rivers and streams, winter and summer, spring, autumn. The changing of the seasons. The culture was mainly circuses and carnivals, preachers and barnstorming pilots, hillbilly shows and comedians, big bands and whatnot. Powerful radio shows and powerful radio music. This was before supermarkets and malls and multiplexes and Home Depot and all the rest. You know, it was a lot simpler. And when you grow up that way, it stays in you. Then I left, which was, I guess, toward the end of the Fifties, but I saw and felt a lot of things in the Fifties, which generates me to this day. It's sort of who I am.[134]

He was born in Duluth, Minnesota in 1941, son of Abe and Beatty Zimmerman. Abe´s parents were immigrants, who fled the Russian empire at the dawn of the 20th century as anti-Semitic hysteria engulfed the country.[135] He grew up in Hibbing, a rural town surrounded by farmland or land completely scavenged by the mining companies. In fact, it was the site of the biggest man-made hole in the world, very hot in the summer and extremely cold in the winter. Most of the people worked in the mines, and industrial unrest irrupted only on rare occasions. As Dylan captured it: "You couldn´t be a rebel. It was so cold you couldn´t be bad. The weather equalizes everything very quickly. There really wasn´t any philosophy, any idiom, any ideology to really go against."[136]

When he was about ten years old, he found a large mahogany radio in the house and when he opened it up, he found a country record with the song "Drifting Too Far From the Shore" by Hank Williams. He said: "The sound of the record made me feel like I was somebody else and that, you know, I was not even born to the right parents, or something."[137] Such remarks about the alienation from his family were repeated in many of the later interviews. From what is known however, it seems he grew up in a stable home, where he had plenty of opportunities to enjoy his youth. He played the guitar and the piano, he read extensively from a young age and composed short poems when still a young child. As he was growing up, these artistic tendencies started took control of his life. He was often found alone, compulsive, scribbling something secretively. "For a misplaced kid, this was a form of disappearing into an imaginary

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[134] Mikal Gilmore, "Bob Dylan Unleashed: A Wild Ride on His New LP and Striking Back at Critics," *The Rolling Stone* (http://www.rollingstone.com/music/news/bob-dylan-unleashed-a-wild-ride-on-his-new-lp-and-striking-back-at-critics-20120927#ixzz2PVSdzgNk, accessed March 19, 2015).
[135] Sounes, p. 12.
[136] Bob Dylan presented by Martin Scorsese. *No Direction Home: Bob Dylan*. DVD. Directed by Martin Scorsese. Los Angeles: Paramount Pictures, 2005.
[137] Ibid.

realm," says Dalton.[138] His mother worried about him, hoping it was just a passing phase. Bob however didn´t change much – usually completely absorbed in writing or playing music, he retained these antisocial, mercurial tendencies throughout his life.[139]

In 1953, his idol Hank Williams died of a drug and alcohol overdose. The news of his decease hit the twelve-year old Bobby hard.[140] Not long after his death, He started to take songwriting seriously. Hank Williams was sort of a "chronicler of American myth" and Dylan eventually chose a similar role. Another icon of Dylan´s teenage years was James Dean. Too young to die, he was killed in a car crash in 1955 at the age of 24. For Dylan and his peers, Dean and his alter ego Jim Stark from *Rebel Without a Cause* were the personification of the romanticized teen fatality. Cars, fame, speed and death were part of the James Dean cult, which strongly appealed to Dylan. Stark, just as Dylan, was alienated from his father. When Stark sought advice and encouragement from his father, he snubbed him, saying "Don´t I buy you everything you want?" or "In ten years, you´ll see things differently." Dylan´s father might have said something of the sort. "Ten years? I want an answer now," retorted Stark in the famous line, which became a popular catch-phrase for Dylan and his friend John Bucklen. They were watching *The Wild One*, starring Marlon Brando as the leader of an outlaw motorbike gang. In the movie, Brando coined one of his most quoted lines. When asked what he was rebelling against, his character named Johnny replied "Whaddya got?"[141] Dylan also rode a motorcycle, posing for photographs on the train tracks as Brando did, he re-created some of the images from the movie. Marlon Brando became another antihero model of the era, who influenced Dylan thereafter. It seems as though Dylan has never abandoned anything from his past completely, while re-inventing himself constantly. His enchantment with outsiders and outlaws from the early 1960s was later transformed into fascination with various figures of the underworld. Bob understood that it is the ability of the author to empathize both with the victim and the perpetrator of a crime that makes writing powerful. His indulgence for the outcast gave rise to brilliant songs such as "Outlaw Blues" or later "Hurricane", but also led to one of his biggest public

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[138] Dalton p. 27.
[139] Ibid., p. 27.
[140] Since his death, Williams' stardom and impact has only grown, with artists as Perry Como, Dinah Washington, Norah Jones and Bob Dylan all covering his work and carrying on his legacy (http://www.biography.com/people/hank-williams-9532414#troubled-times, accessed April 14, 2015).
[141] Britannica Academic. Marlon Brando, Jr. (http://academic.eb.com.vlib.interchange.at/EBchecked/topic/77704/Marlon-Brando-Jr, accessed April 14, 2015).

blunders, when in 1963, just a few weeks after the assassination of President Kennedy, he said of Harvey Lee Oswald "I saw some of myself in him."[142]

Dylan´s earliest firsthand experience of people cooperating seeking justice was in the early 1950s, when the miners of Hibbing and elsewhere in the northern states repeatedly went on strike for pensions and insurance rights. The strikes hit the town hard as the prosperity of the shopkeepers and other small entrepreneurs depended on the prosperity of the miners. Therefore, the whole community pulled together and supported the miners, whose goals were finally achieved. Hibbing blossomed after the strikes were won, and its mines produced a large portion of the iron ore necessary to build skyscrapers, automobiles and various domestic appliances. It was the dawn of a new consumer age and the Zimmermans were among the families enjoying the benefits of the economic boom.[143]

His father Abe and his brothers owned a store which sold electrical appliances in Hibbing, and Dylan´s first job was to sweep the floor there to learn the discipline of hard work and the merits of employment. These efforts however were in vain. Abe envisioned Bob taking over the family business, which never happened. Later, when he led a hand-to-mouth existence at the University of Minnesota, after he was ousted from the Jewish fraternity Sigma Alpha Mu, he never considered getting a regular job. With the help of his girlfriend Bonnie Beecher, he managed to get a gig at the Ten O´Clock Scholar, and some other places. He played for sandwiches or a few dollars, often sleeping on someone´s floor.[144] The relationship with his father therefore became more complicated. David Dalton even claims that Bob feared his authoritarian father. When he was little, he respected him and tried hard to please him, but Abe seemed disdainful, perhaps resembling Dylan´s future manager Albert Grossman. After he died in 1968, Dylan reportedly said "I never knew my father."[145]

When Dylan was a freshman in high school and the rock´n´roll craze hit, he was most drawn to the wild Little Richard. He imitated him, singing songs like Good Golly Miss Molly, and even wore his hair as Little Richard, sort of piled up on his head. With his friends, they put together a series of wild, short live bands such as "The Golden Chords" and "Elston Gunn" that shocked high school assemblies and local talent shows.

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[142] Bob Dylan cited by Daniel Mark Epstein, *The Ballad of Bob Dylan: A portrait* (London: Souvenir Press, 2011), p. 76.
[143] Sounes, p. 19.
[144] *Ibid*., p. 51-52.
[145] Dalton, p. 24.

Unfortunately there are no existing recordings of any these shows.[146] In 1958, the principal at the Hibbing High organized the annual convocation, a ceremony, where the homecoming queen and king were crowned and the talented students performed a musical number. To the principal´s distaste, the performance of the Golden Chords was an extravaganza. Dylan was shouting out the lyrics of "Rock and Roll is here to stay," bouncing up and down at the piano until he broke the pedal. While the audience was having a great time, the principal was appalled, cutting Bob´s microphone and pulling the curtain.[147]

4.2 Robert Zimmerman Becomes Bob Dylan

Later that year, he started to shed his family name and created the identity the world would soon come to know. The underlying motives for Dylan´s actions are always elusive and may be ascribed to different motivations. The change of identity did not happen overnight and sources give different accounts on this matter. As he was about to leave Hibbing to start a new chapter of his life, he probably felt the urge to draw a line under his prior life, which felt to him dull and suffocating. Dalton and Epstein both suggest that the process started a lot earlier. They claim Bob was an avid fan of Matt Dillon, a fictional character from the television series *Gunsmoke*, which first aired in 1955 - approximately around the time it first occurred to Bob he no longer wanted to be Robert Zimmerman. He was also telling his friends that "Dillon" was his mother's maiden name. This was however one of the many Dylan´s fabrications as Beatty´s last name was in fact Stone. Epstein asserts that the spelling shifted to "Dylan" later, when Bob went to university and began to plumb the depths of world literature, including the writings of Welsh poet Dylan Thomas.[148] Bob later claimed that he had never heard of Dylan Thomas, his childhood friend Larry Kegan however clearly remembers that he saw Bobby carrying a Dylan Thomas book around when still at high school.[149] Bob´s best friend at the time, John Bucklen remembers how Bobby Zimmerman became Bob Dylan:

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[146] John Bucklen presented by A&E Television Networks. Bob Dylan Biography (http://www.biography.com/people/bob-dylan-9283052#folk-singing, accessed April 14, 2015).
[147] Sounes, p. 35.
[148] Epstein, p. 54.
[149] Dalton, p. 33.

> People have different stories about how Bob Dylan came to be, but what he told me is that "I am no longer Bob Zimmerman, I am Bob Dylan D-Y-L-A-N." I said "Dilon?" No, he said "Dylan, D-Y-L-A-N." I asked "How did you come across that?" "Well, I was reading something by Dylan Thomas, this poet author and he really impressed me."[150]

It is nevertheless plausible that Bob originally chose his last name to be "Dillon" and later changed it to "Dylan." He might have found inspiration in Dylan Thomas, or he might have gone for "y" merely for aesthetical reasons. Even at such young age, Dylan had a refined natural sense about the importance of image for an entertainer and Robert Allen Zimmerman just could not equal with the snappy names like Chuck Berry or Buddy Holly.[151] In "No Direction Home" however, Dylan denies all these surmises:

> Why it became that particular name, I really can´t say. The name just popped into my head one day, but it really didn´t happen any of the ways that I´ve read about it. I mean, I just don´t feel like I had had a past and, you know, I couldn´t relate to anything other than what I was doing at the present time . . .[152]

In 2004, when he gave his first TV interview in nineteen years, the question of his name came up inevitably. Dylan, tired of the incessant queries, said that some people are simply born with the wrong names to the wrong parents. And then he added drily, "You call yourself what you want to call yourself. This is the land of the free."

4.2 Bob Dylan Bound for Glory

In 1959, he enrolled in the University of Minnesota in the Twin Cities, his parents hoping against hope that at the university, Dylan would turn from the rock´n´roll greaser into a clean-cut young man. As he was leaving at the end of the summer, soon to become one of the greatest lyricist in the country, his mother allegedly pleaded with him: "Don´t keep writing poetry, please don´t. Go to school and do something constructive . . . get a degree."[153] He joined a Jewish fraternity and occasionally went to class, but his real education took place in Dinkytown, the Bohemian district of Minneapolis. One of the most prominent Dinkytown figures was the poet and folk

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[150] A&E Television Networks. Bob Dylan Biography (http://www.biography.com/people/bob-dylan-9283052/videos/bob-dylan-early-influences-2087069806, accessed April 14, 2015).
[151] Dalton, p. 33-34.
[152] Bob Dylan presented by Martin Scorsese. *No Direction Home: Bob Dylan*. DVD. Directed by Martin Scorsese. Los Angeles: Paramount Pictures, 2005.
[153] Sounes, p. 42.

musician Dave Morton, who prided himself on being the only one of the Dinkytown clique to have been to a Leadbelly concert. Morton used the melodies of the old folk tunes, adding his own politically acute lyrics, in the manner of Woody Guthrie. Although a friend of Dylan´s, he was also critical of him and his artistic efforts. While the other members of the clique enjoyed discussing politics and often immersed themselves in intellectual chatter, Dylan listened, but rarely contributed to the discussions. Morton was busy writing topical songs about the struggle for desegregation in the South, which was gaining momentum in the 1960s. Dylan on the other hand showed little interest and remained mostly apathetic about politics and the social injustices permeating the United States. It made Morton wonder; with the benefit of hindsight, it seems as though he was almost prophetic. He summed it up quite aptly, though, as we see later, there is more to the story:

> "Is he nice? I don´t think so. Is he gracious? I don´t think so…He´s kind of an introvert in a way, even though he pushes out…He was focused and he did what he wanted to do, and he did it pretty good. He wanted to be rich and famous."[154]

In the winter of 1960s, Odetta came to Twin Cities to perform. She was a civil rights activist and a major star of the urban folk scene. She was acquainted with some of the Dinkytown musicians, who were friends of Dylan´s. They decided to see whether Odetta would approve of Dylan. She believed he could be a professional musician. Dylan, encouraged by Odetta´s words, went home to Hibbing to tell his parents about his intentions to leave the university to pursue his dream of being a musician. He was eager to go to New York, where all the major recording companies were based.[155] Leaving before the Christmas holidays, he packed a suitcase and his guitar and walked to the highway to hitch a ride. The winter was particularly harsh that year, but he could not wait:

> I´d spend so much time thinking about it I couldn´t think about it any more. Snow or no snow, it was time for me to go. When I arrived to Minneapolis it had seemed like a big city or a big town. When I left it was like some rural outpost you see once from a passing train."[156]

[154] Dave Morton cited by Sounes, p. 51.
[155] Sounes, p. 67-68.
[156] Dylan cited by Sounes, p. 69.

4.3 The Greenwich Village

Bob was only nineteen when he reached New York City in January 1961. He sought out Woody Guthrie in his New Jersey hospital room almost immediately upon his arrival and became a regular visitor. By that time, Joan Baez was already a major star in the United States. Allen Ginsberg and other Beat poets, or the folk singer Dave van Ronk had been living in the Greenwich Village for about a decade. It was a very laid-back place, with different ethnic groups and lots of so-called Bohemians and artistic people, who were re-inventing themselves, free of the shackles of family and tradition. A wonderful creative climate permeated the neighborhood which, in 1960s, was the center of an art world. For a young, aspiring artist like Dylan, it was the place to be. Even though there weren´t as many concerts then as later, people gathered in the Washington Square to play their music, or in coffeehouses on MacDougal Street, allowing them plentiful opportunity to share their music. In the coffeehouses, they played in return for a meal, or for contributions dropped in a basket passed around during performances.[157]

When Dylan emerged on the music scene in 1961, the folk music revival was already underway. He started playing in Greenwich Village coffeehouses such as the Gaslight Club or the Cafe Wha?, both situated on MacDougal Street, famed for its artistic life and literary history. Dylan often joined the audience, listening attentively. According to Liam Clancy from the Clancy Brothers, he was like a sponge, absorbing the performances of artists who took their music as seriously as he did. He was seeing the essence of what they were doing, learning constantly. From the outset, he was different from the majority of the Village´s artistic scene. Even though he was still mostly playing Woody Guthrie´s songs, Dylan eventually managed to find his own distinctive style, and then began to replace Guthrie´s songs with his own music.[158] Pete Seeger never saw Dylan as a mere Guthrie copyist, noting: "[Dylan] was *influenced* by him. But he was influenced by a lot of people. He was his own man, always."[159] As a symbolic closure to this chapter of his life and to honor his idol, he wrote "Song to Woody" to the melody of Guthrie´s "1913 Massacre." It was both a tribute and an

[157] Martin Scorsese. *No Direction Home: Bob Dylan*. DVD. Directed by Martin Scorsese. Los Angeles: Paramount Pictures, 2005.
[158] Ibid.
[159] Pete Seeger cited in Sounes, p. 111.

expression of his gratitude to Woody. According to Guthrie´s daughter Nora, the song might have contributed substantially to the lasting interest in Woody Guthrie´s work.[160]

4.3.1 Humor as a Key to Success

"Song to Woody" was nevertheless rare among the songs Dylan wrote in 1961. The majority of his early writings were light, satirical material such as "Talking Bear Mountain Picnic Massacre Blues," or "Talking New York," a humorous portrayal of Dylan´s early days in the city.[161] In the Greenwich Village singer-songwriter milieu, humor was a fundamental way of getting attention and winning the approval of the audience. It was not only Dylan's witty lyrics, but also his humorous and engaging stage improvisations, somewhat resembling those of the comedian of the 1930s Charlie Chaplin, that helped him to gain favor with audiences. He was a very kinetic performer, always moving, with idiosyncratic nervous mannerisms and gestures, playing with a harmonica rack. There were always a lot of word play jokes, one-liners, and some muttering and mumbling. With his uncanny sense of timing, he could make the audience break out in laughter easily, oftentimes before he even started to sing.[162] A couple of years later, when Dylan was on a tour in England, he coined one of his most famous lines. After being told there was a man outside of the building declaring he was going to shoot him, Dylan, quick-witted as ever, uttered: "I don't mind being shot man, but I don't dig being told about it."[163]

Later, at press conferences, when Dylan was a recognized singer-songwriter and performer, this light-hearted humor of his turned into a mordant one. Dylan, once open and charming, generally tolerant of fans and journalists, become increasingly irritated with the press. He often responded straight-faced and deadpan. Such behavior was usually in response to the general confusion, obtuseness, and ignorance of the questions, which irritated Dylan, well-known for his exceptionally sharp intellect.

Interviewer: Why are you putting us, and the rest of the world on so?

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[160] Sounes, p. 82.
[161] *Ibid*., p. 94.
[162] John Hughes, *Invisible Now : Bob Dylan in the 1960s* (Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate Publishing Ltd, 2013), p. 10-11.
[163] Martin Scorsese. *No Direction Home: Bob Dylan*. DVD. Directed by Martin Scorsese. Los Angeles: Paramount Pictures, 2005.

> Dylan: I'm not, I'm just trying to answer your questions – you know – as good as you can ask them.[164]

Hughes notes that "The aim of this teasing play [was] always a purposeful inaccessibility, a refusal to be identified or pinned down, to play the game of access, of comprehensibility:"[165] He was nevertheless becoming tired of the incessant attempts to categorize Dylan as a protest song-writer and to determine the underlying meaning of his lyrics. At the Los Angeles press conference of 16 December 1965, he could not resist ridiculing the pedantic interviewer, insisting on his witless questions:

> Interviewer: … I wonder if you could tell me, that among folk singers, or if you are properly characterised as a folk singer, how many, would you say, could be characterised as protest singers today?
>
> Dylan: Hmmm … I don't understand. Could you ask the question again?
> Interviewer 1 (pedantically): Yeah. How many people who labour in the same musical vineyard in which you toil, how many are protest singers? (patronisingly) That is, people who use their music, use the songs, to protest the social state in which we live today – the matter of war, or the matter of crime, or whatever it might be.
> Dylan: How many?
> Interviewer 1: Yes, are there many?
>
> Dylan : Yeah, I think there's about a hundred and thirty six. [Laughter]
>
> Interviewer 1: You mean exactly a hundred and thirty six? Dylan : Uhhh – either a hundred thirty six or a hundred and forty two. […][166]

4.3.2 The Breakthrough

According to Bruce Langhorne, Dylan possessed "the quality of determination, and the will that some people have, where when they´re doing something, they´re really doing it and you know that you have to pay attention to them."[167] Pete Seeger noted, that although Bob had a great sense of humor and irony, he also had "[…] an innate seriousness that was deeper in his character than the flip jokiness he used with most of

[164] Bob Dylan cited by Hughes, p. 9.
[165] Hughes, p. 7.
[166] Bob Dylan cited by Hughes, p. 7-8.
[167] Bruce Langhorne presented by Martin Scorsese. *No Direction Home: Bob Dylan*. DVD. Directed by Martin Scorsese. Los Angeles: Paramount Pictures, 2005.

his friends."[168] This "quality of determination" and the "innate seriousness" along with his innate sensitivity brought forth a large number of brilliant and timeless tunes.

After his arrival in New York, Dylan set his mind on making his own record, but he wasn´t sure how to do so. There were talent scouts in the clubs, but they did not show real interest in him or his work for some time. He began to doubt himself, but a breakthrough was coming soon. In April 1961, John Hammond, one of the most distinguished record producers of the time, read a favorable review of Bob´s concert at Gerde´s club, published in the New York Times, and quickly contacted him. Hammond was delighted when he saw Dylan perform. Confident of Dylan´s talent, he offered him the opportunity to record for Columbia Records, the biggest record label in the United States. Dylan could not believe his ears:

> I thought it was almost unreal. I mean, no one would think that this kind of folk music would be recorded on Columbia Records. They recorded the popular hits of the day, of people usually with beautiful tones of voices and great arrangements […] I didn´t tell anybody for a bit, because I wasn´t even sure it was happening myself.[169]

This was not entirely true as Hammond was signing other folk-revival artists to Columbia, but Dylan was previously turned down both by Folkways Records and Vanguard Records, both more inclined to sign artists like him. Contract with Columbia was therefore almost unimaginable to him. The management of Columbia was skeptical but had confidence in Hammond´s judgment. Once called "Hammond´s folly," Dylan turned out to be such an outstanding artist, that many regarded Hammond as prescient.[170]

In the summer of 1961, Dylan was introduced to the 17-year-old Suzan "Suze" Rotolo, an antinuclear activist participating in the Woolworth sit-ins, who was instrumental in raising Dylan´s awareness of the labor and civil rights movements.[171] Until then, Bob had shown little interest in political and social causes, but Suze attracted

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[168] Pete Seeger cited by Sounes, p. 111.
[169] Martin Scorsese. *No Direction Home: Bob Dylan*. DVD. Directed by Martin Scorsese. Los Angeles: Paramount Pictures, 2005.
[170] Britannica Academic. John Hammond (http://academic.eb.com.vlib.interchange.at/EBchecked/topic/253673/John-Hammond, accessed April 16, 2015).
[171] Peter Dreier, *The 100 Greatest Americans of the 20th Century: A Social Justice Hall of Fame* (New York: Nation Books, 2012), p. 407.

him, and he performed at a benefit concert for the Congress for Racial Equality. It was one of the rare times in his career when he actively participated in a political event.[172]

He released his eponymous first album the next year, but the debut went mostly unheeded. Today, *Bob Dylan* represents a testimony of where Dylan was at the time – hanging out in the Greenwich Village cafés, still channeling Woody Guthrie. Besides the songs released on the album, Dylan wrote an original folk ballad "The Death of Emmett Till," which was perhaps his first protest song, i. e. a song decrying injustice. It narrated a story of a fourteen-year-old African-American, who was brutally murdered in Mississippi after he allegedly behaved inappropriately in the presence of a white girl. The men responsible for the crime were subsequently acquitted, which led to a wave of public protest.[173] It was, however, 1963, which proved to be a groundbreaker for Dylan. He spread his artistic wings while writing original tunes and brilliant lyrics seemingly with ease and without obvious effort, in a way which no one else could match. In a 2004 interview, Dylan was asked whether it is true that he wrote "Blowin´ in the Wind" in ten minutes. Dylan nodded and replied "probably." When asked when it came from, he replied vaguely that it came from "the wellspring of creativity."

Dylan: I don´t know how I got to write those songs.
The interviewer: What do you mean you don´t know how?
Dylan: All those early song were like almost magically written.[174]

The second studio album named *The Freewheelin' Bob Dylan*, was released in May, 1963. Both critically acclaimed and well-received by the public, it set his career on fire. Songs such as "Blowin´ in the Wind," "Masters of War," or "A Hard Rain´s A-Gonna Fall" each contributed to the zeitgeist of the urban folk revival. Later that year, Bob sang some of the "Freewheelin´" tunes at the Newport Folk Festival, where he also joined Pete Seeger, Peter, Paul and Mary, and Joan Baez in a sing-along of "We Shall Overcome."[175] In addition to these artists, the folk scene included other talented singer-songwriters such as Phil Ochs and Tom Paxton. Dylan stood out early for two reasons. According to Starr and Waterman,

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[172] Sounes, p. 112.
[173] *Ibid*., p. 109.
[174] CBS News. 60 Minutes: Dylan Breaks His Silence (http://www.cbsnews.com/news/dylan-looks-back/, accessed April 17, 2015).
[175] Appell and Hemphill, p. 341.

> [It] was the remarkable quality of his original songs, which reflected from the beginning a strong gift for poetic imagery and metaphor and a frequently searing intensity o feeling, sometimes moderated by quirky sense of irony. […] Dylan´s own style of performance, which eschewed the deliberate and straightforward homeliness of the Weavers, the smooth and pop-friendly approach of the Kingston Trio and Peter, Paul, and Mary, and the lyrical beauty of Joan Baez and Judy Collins […][176]

From the outset, he also transcended the topical themes by writing intimate songs about relationships, which spoke to many. Dylan´s idiosyncratic style of performance prevented him from being truly pop-marketable in the early years, and so his songs were often known to the public through the sweeter versions recorded by Peter, Paul and Mary, which lacked the distinctive intensity of his voice and phrasing.

4.4 Dylan Becomes "The Voice of a Generation"

Dylan was by no means a central figure in the Civil Rights Movement, but his critical vision of the American society reflected in his lyrics made for a perfect fit for the movement. *The Freewheelin' Bob Dylan* includes a song named "Oxford Town," about the home town of the University of Mississippi, where federal troops were called to accompany James Meredith to enroll at the segregated institution. In the song, Dylan urges "Somebody better investigate soon," echoing years of similar pleas to the federal government voiced by the freedom fighters.[177]

> Oxford Town, Oxford Town
> Ev'rybody's got their heads bowed down
> The sun don't shine above the ground
> Ain't a-goin' down to Oxford Town
>
> He went down to Oxford Town
> Guns and clubs followed him down
> All because his face was brown
> Better get away from Oxford Town[178]

Next to the narratives or "finger-pointing songs," as Dylan often called them, such as "The Death of Emmett Till," written in 1962 or "Only a Pawn in Their Game"

[176] Starr and Waterman, p. 140.
[177] Sheehy and Swiss, p. 45-46.

and "The Lonesome Death of Hattie Carroll," released on his third album *The Times They Are A-Changin´* in 1964, he also composed more abstract songs, which were seen as metaphors for the struggle for social change, and often became rallying cries for the civil rights cause.[179] Good example of such song is "When the Ship comes in." Written in 1963, it was inspired by the times. The lyric however is a blend of Bible references and childlike imagination, revealing that Dylan, albeit having sympathy for the social issues of the day, was mostly absorbed in the folk music tradition, symbolist literature abounding with imagery, and biblical stories. Many of Dylan´s songs follow a similar pattern, and it is precisely for this reason that his songs, unlike the ones written by Phil Ochs or Pete Seeger, sound apposite to the current social concerns as they did to those of the early 1960s.[180]

> Oh the time will come up
> When the winds will stop
> And the breeze will cease to be breathin'
> Like the stillness in the wind
> 'Fore the hurricane begins
> The hour when the ship comes in
>
> Oh the seas will split
> And the ship will hit
> And the sands on the shoreline will be shaking
> Then the tide will sound
> And the wind will pound
> And the morning will be breaking
>
> Oh the fishes will laugh
> As they swim out of the path
> And the seagulls they'll be smiling
> And the rocks on the sand
> Will proudly stand
> The hour that the ship comes in
>
> And the words that are used
> For to get the ship confused
> Will not be understood as they're spoken
> For the chains of the sea
> Will have busted in the night
> And will be buried at the bottom of the ocean

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[178] Bob Dylan Official Site. Oxford Town by Bob Dylan (http://www.bobdylan.com/us/songs/oxford-town, accessed April 27, 2015).
[179] Sheehy and Swiss, p. 45-46.
[180] Sounes, p. 140.

A song will lift
As the mainsail shifts
And the boat drifts on to the shoreline
And the sun will respect
Every face on the deck
The hour that the ship comes in

Then the sands will roll
Out a carpet of gold
For your weary toes to be a-touchin'
And the ship's wise men
Will remind you once again
That the whole wide world is watchin'

Oh the foes will rise
With the sleep still in their eyes
And they'll jerk from their beds and think they're dreamin'
But they'll pinch themselves and squeal
And know that it's for real
The hour when the ship comes in

Then they'll raise their hands
Sayin' we'll meet all your demands
But we'll shout from the bow your days are numbered
And like Pharoah's tribe
They'll be drownded in the tide
And like Goliath, they'll be conquered[181]

The lyrics of "Blowin' in the Wind" are similarly vague and rhetorical, addressing certain issues in the form of poignantly asked questions. According to Sheehy and Swiss, "[it] made a great impact on his black musical contemporaries, who received the song as both a powerful artistic call and a surprising source of inspiration."[182] Soon after its release, it was clear the song would be forever linked to the struggle for reform in the United States. It seems therefore a little ironic, that at that time, Dylan did not have any firsthand experience of segregation. In fact, he had never visited the South. Soon however, an opportunity came his way when the folk singer Theodore Biker bought Dylan a plane ticket to join him, Pete Seeger, Len Chandler, and the SNCC Freedom Singers at a voter registration rally in Greenwood, Mississippi. In front of some three hundred black farmers, who assembled there at dusk, Dylan performed some of his newest material, including "Only a Pawn in Their Game," the song about the Medgar Evers, who was killed in Jackson only a month earlier, and

[181] Bob Dylan Official Site. When The Ship Comes In by Bob Dylan (http://www.bobdylan.com/us/songs/when-ship-comes, accessed April 27, 2015).

"With God on Our Side." He was warmly received by the audience although he never smiled for the television cameras as he realized this was a serious matter which required a serious demeanor. The Student Non-violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC, pronounced "Snick") activists were pleased with the performance. Gloria Clark, a member of the Mississippi branch of SNCC in Holly Springs noted that "It was very compatible with what we were doing at the time."[183]

The March on Washington was another of the few occasions, when Dylan made an overtly political appearance. On August 28, 1963, a delegation of the Greenwich Village folk singers including Joan Baez, Odetta, Josh White, Peter, Paul and Mary opened the event. Dylan, who was to sing last, played "When the Ship Comes In" and "Only a Pawn in Their Game." After Martin Luther King Jr. delivered his famous "I Have a Dream" speech, other speakers took the stage, including the SNCC leader John Lewis. His radical comments were censored by the organizers of the event who feared the fragile alliance between the movement and the Kennedy administration, which led to a draft of a comprehensive civil rights bill, could be disrupted. Lewis and several others however blamed the politicians for failing to sufficiently support activists bleeding for their rights, and Dylan himself expressed skepticism. "Think they're listening?" he asked someone before answering his own question. "No, they ain't listening at all." Most sources agree he was referring to the disconnected politicians as he was reportedly nodding towards the Capitol.[184]

Although participating in such civil rights events Dylan was absent at the march from Selma to Montgomery, Alabama, in March 1965. The event was a culmination of the Civil Rights Movement endeavors, where black and white protesters and musicians rallied. There, a crowd of more than 5,000 people sang Dylan's "The Times They Are A-Changin." By that time, Dylan had abandoned the campaign for civil rights entirely and moved beyond political activism, proclaiming "[…] I'm never going to have anything to do with any political organization again in my life."[185]

4.5 Dylan´s farewell to folk protest

Dylan´s transition from the folk poet to a rock star did not happen overnight. As early as 1962, Izzy Young, the proprietor of the Folklore Center jotted down Dylan´s

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[182] Sheehy and Swiss, p. 46.
[183] Gloria Clark cited by Sheehy and Swiss, p. 46.
[184] Sheehy and Swiss, p. 50-51.

words after a discussion about music. He was taken aback when Dylan remarked: "I´m sort of disconnecting myself from the folk music scene." He added that he was becoming weary of playing in the Greenwich Village coffeehouses for tourists who were coming there to look for "freaks."[186]

4.5.1 The Burden of Being a Folk Mesiah

Shortly after the United States had been traumatized by the assassination of John F. Kennedy by Lee Harvey Oswald in November 1963, Dylan, already experiencing certain disillusion with the left and the ongoing political movements, was invited to Hotel Americana by the Emergency Civil Liberties Committee (ECLC) to accept the Tom Paine Award for his work in the civil rights campaign. The ensuing story is notorious, mentioned inevitably in every Dylan-related paper or book. What is perhaps surprising is the context of the events preceding Dylan´s disastrous speech where he claimed he could somehow identify with Oswald.[187]

First, Dylan was sincerely grieving for Kennedy as was the rest of the nation. Having a reputation of being sarcastic, sometimes harsh with people, he had a keen awareness of the world and an inner sensitivity, which, among other things, enabled him to write such profound songs. At the same time, many people including Dylan and Suze Rotolo were fretting over the conflicts with Cuba and the ongoing travel ban to the country. They both believed the ban was a violation of civil liberties, as did Lee Harvey Oswald, who was distributing pamphlets for the Fair Play for Cuba Committee. Epstein sees a connection between these events noting that "Some people believed that if your government had not created the Bay of Pigs disaster, Oswald might not have shot the president."[188] This statement may seem a bit bold, but something of the kind nevertheless occurred to Dylan, when he was about to receive the award. He opened his thank you speech saying "[…] I want to thank you for the Tom Paine Award on behalf of everybody who went down to Cuba."[189]

Dylan also suspected that he was being used by the ECLC to promote their cause. He had already earned the reputation of being the voice of a generation and was currently in the spotlight. After he realized he had gotten himself into a bind, he

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[185] Bob Dylan cited by Sheehy and Swiss, p. 51.
[186] Sounes, p. 109.
[187] Epstein, p. 76.
[188] Ibid., p. 77.

probably decided he wasn't going to play along. Worn-out and drunk, Dylan went on to attack the elderly audience:

> It is not an old peoples' world. It has nothing to do with old people. Old people, when their hair grows out, they should go out. And I look down to see the people that are governing me and making my rules—and they haven't got any hair on their head—I get very uptight about it.[190]

The people in the ballroom laughed uneasily, and at this point he could have saved his face without too much damage. Unfortunately he rambled on about how old people have no understanding of race, which finally led to the infamous comparison to Oswald:

> I look down to see the people that are governing me and making my rules—and they haven't got any hair on their head—I get very uptight about it…. And they talk about Negroes, and they talk about black and white…. There's no black and white, left and right to me anymore; there's only up and down and down is very close to the ground. And I'm trying to go up without thinking of anything trivial such as politics…. I got to admit that the man who shot President Kennedy, Lee Oswald, I don't know exactly where—what he thought he was doing, but I got to admit honestly that I, too—I saw some of myself in him…. I saw things that he felt in me—not to go that far and shoot. [Boos and hisses] You can boo, but booing's got nothing to do with it. It's a—I just, ah—I've got to tell you, man, it's Bill of Rights is free speech….[191]

Dylan's drunken tirade reflected the same idea which he had outlined earlier in "Only a Pawn in Their Game." He believed that all people are victims of those in control of the system and that even the African-American leadership had compromised to gain access to political power.[192] In mid-1964, he told critic Nat Hentoff "I don't want to write for people anymore. You know—be a spokesman. From now on, I want to write from inside me."[193]

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[189] Bob Dylan cited by Epstein, p. 77.
[190] Bob Dylan cited by David Remnick, "Bob Dylan, Extending the Line." *The New Yorker* (http://www.newyorker.com/culture/cultural-comment/bob-dylan-extending-line, accessed April 27, 2015).
[191] Epstein, p. 78.
[192] *Ibid.*, p. 79.
[193] Bob Dylan cited by Heylin, p. 176.

Dylan partly articulated this transition on *Another Side of Bob Dylan*, which was recorded in a single six-hour session and released in the summer of 1964. Most of the songs deal with relationships as though Dylan, after his painful break-up with Suze Rotolo, could reconcile himself through writing. The relationship with Rotolo brought out the most important songs of the album "It Ain´t Me, Babe" and "Ballad in Plain D." Howard Sounes noted on this matter:

> There was nothing on the album that could be considered a protest song and the album title, *Another Side of Bob Dylan*, seemed a turning away from the past, although the truth was that Bob had never seen himself simply as a protest singer.[194]

Dylan himself was in fact unhappy about the title and he denied it was a negation of the past. The critics however understood it as a clear rejection of his earlier topical work. He played new introspective songs at the 1964 Newport Folk Festival, but his reception was mixed as his themes seemed too self-indulgent. He also introduced "Mr. Tambourine Man," which was generally warmly received, but the "watchdogs of the folk purity," as Dalton called them, accused him of desertion despite the fact that no electric instruments were used yet.[195] "I saw at Newport how you had somehow lost contact with people," editor of *Sing Out!*, Irwin Silber wrote in an open letter to Dylan, suggesting that fame was going in his head.[196]

Dylan said his final farewell to the folk purists in 1965. In this pivotal year, he transcended his role as the most important singer-songwriter of the urban folk movement to become "an epochal influence on the entirety of American popular culture."[197] On the musical front, Dylan abandoned the acoustic folk sound to become a rock star. The release of his fifth album, *Bringing It All Back Home*, contributed significantly to this extraordinary shift in Dylan´s work. His familiar style now blended with the sounds of electric guitars and drums and the lyrics abounded with surreal poetic imagery. The Byrds, a rock band based in California recorded "Mr. Tambourine Man." Their version, shortened in order to comply with the customary time allotted for radio, skyrocketed to number one in June 1965 and became the "first landmark folk-

[194] Sounes, p. 159.
[195] Dalton, p. 137.
[196] Irwin Silber cited by Sounes, p. 160.
[197] Starr and Waterman, p. 144.

rock hit." Dylan´s own breakthrough single came soon as the advent of folk-rock, a mix of folk and the "British Invasion" sounds subdued the American popular culture and marked the waning of the folk revival.[198]

4.5.2 Dylan Goes Electric

The 1965 Newport Folk Festival incident, when Dylan was supposedly booed for performing on an electric guitar for the first time, is enshrined in pop-music history as a defining moment. Dylan deliberately nurtured the myth as he understood the importance attached to it. Whether it is correct to dismiss the booing at Newport in 1965 as a myth is still somewhat unclear as there were boos. There has been a lively debate over the years as to who exactly was responsible for the booing and whether the target of their indignation was actually Dylan himself. With the benefit of hindsight however, the fuss about "Dylan going electric" fades as the two styles of music were inevitably bound to influence each other or even to fuse, thereby downgrading Dylan´s endorsement of rock and the decline of folk music to mere coincidence.[199]

Dalton tackles the incident and claims, that Dylan in fact wasn't booed for going electric, but because he played only about 15 minutes and because the poor sound system installation made the performance almost intolerable. The infamous outcry most likely originated with few of the old-line folk protesters. The majority of people however came to see Dylan, because he was going to play with an electric band. A few days earlier, Dylan released a six-minute long watershed pop single "Like a Rolling Stone," which rose in the charts all the way to number two. Although the composition is not entirely detached from Dylan´s antecedent acoustic folk style, "Like a Rolling Stone" announced the dawn of a whole new rock future through the dominance of two keyboard instruments, accompanied by electric guitars, bass and drums. College youth took to the song immediately, and many of them embraced the festival as an opportunity to drink while enjoying Dylan playing rock´ n´ roll.[200]

After playing "Maggie´s Farm," "Like a Rolling Stone" and "Phantom Engineer," an early version of "It takes a Lot to Laugh, It Takes a Train to Cry," Dylan and the Butterfield Blues Band, which accompanied him during the performance, left the stage. Unfortunately, there is no existing video record of the event, but people are

[198] *Ibid.,* p. 144.
[199] *Ibid.*

heard booing and clapping on the recording. Dylan then returned to stage to do an acoustic set of "Mr. Tambourine Man" and "It's All Over Now, Baby Blue." The choice of the latter was not coincidental, as in fact, it was an epitome of Dylan´s symbolic breakaway from the folk movement. The audience exploded with applause when he finished, calling for more. Dylan left without returning back and did not visit the Newport festival for a long 37 years.[201]

The myth includes rumors that Pete Seeger was so upset about the performance that he tried to pull the plug on Dylan's electrified set, or even to cut it with an axe. In an interview for Democracy Now, Pete Seeger recalled his reactions to "Dylan going electric" at Newport Folk Festival, 1965. He denied the rumors saying:

> It´s true I don´t play electrified instruments, because I don´t know how to. On the other hand I´ve played with people who play it beautifully and I admire some of them. Howlin' Wolf was using electrified instruments in Newport just the day before Bob did, but I was furious that the sound was so distorted you could not understand a word that he was singing. He was singing a great song – Maggie´s Farm, a great song, but you couldn´t understand it. I ran over to the sound man and said "fix the sound so you can understand it" and they howled back "this is the way the way it." I don´t know who they was, but I was so mad that I said "If I had an axe, I'd chop the microphone cable right now." I really was that mad, but I wasn´t against Bob going electric, matter of fact some of Bob´s songs are still my favorites.[202]

After Dylan declared his right to sing any song he pleased, and in any fashion he deemed suitable at the festival, the big craze of folk music seemed to fade away. As discussed earlier, Dylan´s share in the decline of folk music as a significant vehicle of persuasion and his role in dismantling the great resistance movement, which he helped create, is disputable, perhaps merely a symbol. The indignant adherents of the folk movement accused Dylan of being lured into the realm of pop music and giving up on his ideals to gain money. This notion was rather misleading as, by 1965, Dylan had already become a millionaire, and he made most of his fortune on writing protest songs. Greenwich Village had lost most of its charm. It had become a sleazy theme park of the

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[200] Dalton, p. 137.
[201] Dalton, p. 138.
[202] Democracy Now!. "We Shall Overcome": Remembering Folk Icon, Activist Pete Seeger in His Own Words & Songs (http://www.democracynow.org/2014/1/28/we_shall_overcome_remembering_folk_icon, accessed April 27, 2015).

beat and folk era as tourists and wealthy residents flooded the neighborhood.[203] The folk revival nevertheless was an immense cultural and ideological force driven by crowds of young people with tremendous fervor. Their visions did not vanish as they were carried into the hippie movement.[204]

4.6 The Lyrical Genius of Bob Dylan – Selected Songs

Bob Dylan once said "I've never written anything hard to understand, not in my head anyway."[205] The topical songs which follow people may find difficult to understand. So the context of the song´s composition will pinpoint some of the linkages to the real-life events.

As mentioned earlier, most of Dylan´s songs of a topical gender were published in *Broadside Magazine*, a small mimeographed zine founded in 1962 by Agnes "Sis" Cunningham and Gil Turner. *Broadside´*s goal was to encourage the folk circles to stir up the same political ferment as they experienced in the 1940s through running controversial content. At the time, it was a goal Bob Dylan appeared to share. With the waning of the revival however, the readership base dwindled drastically and by the end of the 1970s, its publication essentially ceased.[206]

Other works of Dylan´s were printed in *Sing Out!*, a primary publication of folk music that has been published quarterly since May 1950. It grew of out the legacy of a group of urban singer-songwriters and folk enthusiasts including Pete Seeger, Woody Guthrie, Alan Lomax, Lee Hays, Irwin Silber and many others, who sought to merge political activism and music as had been done in the 1940s. They banded together as People's Songs, Inc. to distinguish themselves from scholarly folk societies and started a monthly bulletin, which printed songs usually not available via other media. The red-baiting of the McCarthy era unfortunately took its toll and the office closed down after a three-year run. However, the ideas persisted and despite a hostile political climate, the same group of devotees successfully published the first issue of *Sing Out!* in 1950. It

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[203] Edward Helmore, "Why Inside Llewyn Davis doesn't get inside the Village." *The Guardian* (http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/jan/25/greenwich-village-inside-llewyn-davis-coen-brothers, accessed April 27, 2015).

[204] Britannica Academic. Rock: Folk rock, the hippie movement, and "the rock paradox" (http://academic.eb.com.vlib.interchange.at/EBchecked/topic/506004/rock/93493/Folk-rock-the-hippie-movement-and-the-rock-paradox, accessed April 29, 2015).

[205] Bob Dylan cited by David King Dunaway and Molly Beer. *Singing Out : An Oral History of America's Folk Music Revivals* (New York: Oxford University Press, Inc., 2010), p. 152.

was none other than the long-time editor of Sing Out! Irwin Silber, who berated Dylan in 1964 for going astray in an article called "Open Letter to Bob Dylan." The journal is still published today with an estimated circulation of 12,000; the staff also created a great website, where all the issues of both *Sing Out!* and *Broadside* are available.[207]

4.6.1 The Death of Emmett Till

First publication of lyrics: Broadside #16
First known studio recording: Studio A, New York, April 24, 1962
First known performance: Cynthia Gooding's Folksingers Choice, New York, February 11, 1962.[208]

> 'Twas down in Mississippi not so long ago
> When a young boy from Chicago town stepped through a Southern door
> This boy's dreadful tragedy I can still remember well
> The color of his skin was black and his name was Emmett Till
>
> Some men they dragged him to a barn and there they beat him up
> They said they had a reason, but I can't remember what
> They tortured him and did some things too evil to repeat
> There were screaming sounds inside the barn, there was laughing sounds out on the street
>
> Then they rolled his body down a gulf amidst a bloody red rain
> And they threw him in the waters wide to cease his screaming pain
> The reason that they killed him there, and I'm sure it ain't no lie
> Was just for the fun of killin' him and to watch him slowly die
>
> And then to stop the United States of yelling for a trial
> Two brothers they confessed that they had killed poor Emmett Till
> But on the jury there were men who helped the brothers commit this awful crime
> And so this trial was a mockery, but nobody seemed to mind
>
> I saw the morning papers but I could not bear to see
> The smiling brothers walkin' down the courthouse stairs
> For the jury found them innocent and the brothers they went free
> While Emmett's body floats the foam of a Jim Crow southern sea
>
> If you can't speak out against this kind of thing, a crime that's so unjust
> Your eyes are filled with dead men's dirt, your mind is filled with dust
> Your arms and legs they must be in shackles and chains, and your blood it must refuse to flow

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[206] Heylin, p. 70-71.
[207] Sing Out!. "If I Had a Song ..." A Thumbnail History of Sing Out! 1950-2000 ... Sharing Songs for 50 Years! (http://www.singout.org/sohistry.html, accessed April 29, 2015).
[208] Heylin, p. 71.

> For you let this human race fall down so God-awful low!
>
> This song is just a reminder to remind your fellow man
> That this kind of thing still lives today in that ghost-robed Ku Klux Klan
> But if all of us folks that thinks alike, if we gave all we could give
> We could make this great land of ours a greater place to live[209]

"The Death of Emmett Till" was first published by *Broadside* in Issue 16. The single however did not appear on any studio album until 2010, when it was released on *The Bootleg Series, Vol 9: The Witmark Demos: 1962-1964.* As mentioned earlier, the polemic about a fourteen-year-old African-American boy murdered in Mississippi was first song of its kind written by Dylan´s protest pen. Dylan confessed he stole the melody from Len Chandler, in the manner of Woody Guthrie and other folk artists, but he was proud of the original lyrics. At the time Dylan wrote his account of the outrageous incident, he attached great importance to it, telling Izzy Young "I think it's the best thing I've ever written."[210]

Two years later, in a drastic turnabout from his original stance, Dylan called it "a bullshit song." He questioned his motivation for writing it and distanced himself from the other broadside ballads, saying he never wanted to write topical songs in the first place, but *Broadside* gave him a start:

> I used to write bullshit songs. I went through a phase of writing bullshit songs about two and a half years ago. . . . I made this second record, then people wanted me to sing songs I wrote. I used to write songs, like I'd say, "Yeah, what's bad, pick out something bad, like segregation, O.K., here we go" and I'd pick one of the thousand million little points I can pick and explode it, some of them which I didn't know about. I wrote a song about Emmett Till, which in all honesty was a bullshit song . . . but when I wrote it, it wasn't a bullshit song to me. But I realize now that my reasons and motives behind it were phony, I didn't have to write it; I was bothered by many other things that I pretended I wasn't bothered by, in order to write this song about Emmett Till, a person I never even knew. . . . It was quick at hand, and knowing that people knew who Emmett Till was, I wrote the song.[211]

These reflections are distortion of Dylan´s true position as writing for Broadside was never a mere opportunism. At the time, he was deeply in love with Suze Rotolo,

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[209] Bob Dylan Official Site. The Death Of Emmett Till by Bob Dylan (http://www.bobdylan.com/us/songs/death-emmett-till, accessed April 29, 2015).
[210] Bob Dylan cited by Heylin, p. 72.
[211] Bob Dylan cited by Heylin, p. 72.

who was a political activist. She had a great influence on Dylan, as Heylin notes, "it was her stamp of approval he sought night and day."[212] Dylan later mitigated his harsh statements, admitting that the songs pouring out of him after he wrote the "The Death of Emmett Till" actually provided him with a new sense of purpose.

> "I started writing because things were changing all the time and a certain song needed to be written. I started writing them because I wanted to sing them. . . . I stumbled into it, really."[213]

When the single premiered on the radio, Dylan told Cynthia Gooding, "I don't claim to call [my songs] folk songs. I just call them contemporary songs." Such designation, at least in the case of this ballad, is rather misleading as the events portrayed took place in August 1955, that is almost seven years before the song was written. To be fair though, in the first stanza he mentions that it happened "not so long ago" and that he can still remember the tragedy well, which proves he had some notion of time. It seems the details were not as important as to capture the essence and the seriousness of the atrocity which went unpunished.[214]

The story is narrated quite tellingly in the ballad. Emmet Till was "a young boy from Chicago," who was sent to Mississippi to spend the summer there with his relatives. His mother warned him about the prevailing animosity toward blacks, exacerbated by the verdict in *Brown v. Board of Education*, which was returned by the United States Supreme Court only a year earlier in 1954. On August 24, Till with his cousins and several other children went to a local grocery store. Accounts of what happened afterwards vary. Witnesses stated that Till smiled at the white cashier Carolyn Bryant. Four days later, the cashier's husband, and his half-brother dragged Emmett out of his house, beat him severely, gouging out one of his eyes, and then shot him by the Tallahatchie River.[215] Heylin criticizes Dylan for completely disregarding the possible motivations for the crime. "They said that they had a reason / I disremember what," says Dylan in the sixth line. He probably did not deem it necessary or even appropriate to examine what a 14-year-old from Chicago had done in Mississippi. There was clearly no reason for committing such abominable act.[216]

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[212] Heylin, p. 71.
[213] Bob Dylan cited by Heylin, p. 73.
[214] Heylin, p. 73.
[215] Britannica Academic. Emmett Till (http://academic.eb.com.vlib.interchange.at/EBchecked/topic/1005043/Emmett-Till, accessed April 29, 2015).
[216] Heylin, p. 73.

In line 13 and 14, Dylan sings "And then to stop the United States of yelling for a trial . . . Two brothers they confessed that they had killed poor Emmett Till." The truth is the killers were acquitted of all charges by an all-white, all-male jury as blacks and women could not serve on a jury in Mississippi. They then confessed to killing and mutilating the boy after being assured they were protected from further prosecution by double jeopardy rule. They were actually paid for sharing the story in *Life* magazine.[217] It therefore appears Dylan had the facts of the case a little mixed-up. "The Death of Emmett Till" is not an isolated case where he unintentionally distorted reality as similar inaccuracies are to be found in two other of Dylan´s murder ballads from the South: "Only a Pawn in Their Game" and "The Lonesome Death of Hattie Carroll."[218]

4.6.2 Talkin´ John Birch Paranoid Blues

First publication of lyrics: Broadside #1
First known studio recording: Studio A, New York, April 24, 1962
First known performance: Carnegie Hall Hootenanny, New York, September 22, 1962.[219]

> Well, I was feelin' sad and feelin' blue
> I didn't know what in the world I wus gonna do
> Them Communists they wus comin' around
> They wus in the air
> They wus on the ground
> They wouldn't gimme no peace . . .
>
> So I run down most hurriedly
> And joined up with the John Birch Society
> I got me a secret membership card
> And started off a-walkin' down the road
> Yee-hoo, I'm a real John Bircher now!
> Look out you Commies!
>
> Now we all agree with Hitler's views
> Although he killed six million Jews
> It don't matter too much that he was a Fascist
> At least you can't say he was a Communist!
> That's to say like if you got a cold you take a shot of malaria

[217] Britannica Academic. Emmett Till (http://academic.eb.com.vlib.interchange.at/EBchecked/topic/1005043/Emmett-Till, accessed April 29, 2015).
[218] Heylin, p. 73.
[219] Heylin, p. 70.

Well, I wus lookin' everywhere for them gol-darned Reds
I got up in the mornin' 'n' looked under my bed
Looked in the sink, behind the door
Looked in the glove compartment of my car
Couldn't find 'em . . .

I wus lookin' high an' low for them Reds everywhere
I wus lookin' in the sink an' underneath the chair
I looked way up my chimney hole
I even looked deep down inside my toilet bowl
They got away . . .

Well, I wus sittin' home alone an' started to sweat
Figured they wus in my T.V. set
Peeked behind the picture frame
Got a shock from my feet, hittin' right up in the brain
Them Reds caused it!
I know they did . . . them hard-core ones

Well, I quit my job so I could work all alone
Then I changed my name to Sherlock Holmes
Followed some clues from my detective bag
And discovered they wus red stripes on the American flag!
That ol' Betsy Ross . . .

Well, I investigated all the books in the library
Ninety percent of 'em gotta be burned away
I investigated all the people that I knowed
Ninety-eight percent of them gotta go
The other two percent are fellow Birchers . . . just like me

Now Eisenhower, he's a Russian spy
Lincoln, Jefferson and that Roosevelt guy
To my knowledge there's just one man
That's really a true American: George Lincoln Rockwell
I know for a fact he hates Commies cus he picketed the movie Exodus

Well, I fin'ly started thinkin' straight
When I run outa things to investigate
Couldn't imagine doin' anything else
So now I'm sittin' home investigatin' myself!
Hope I don't find out anything . . . hmm, great God![220]

"Talkin´ John Birch Paranoid Blues" appeared in the debut issue of Broadside in February 1962. The target of Dylan´s biting criticism was the John Birch Society, a right-wing organization founded in 1958 by Robert H.W. Welch, Jr. When the wealthy

[220] Bob Dylan Official Site. Talkin' John Birch Paranoid Blues by Bob Dylan (http://www.bobdylan.com/us/songs/talkin-john-birch-paranoid-blues, accessed April 29, 2015).

Boston candy manufacturer retired, he decided to combat communism. The organization still operates today, promoting various ultraconservative causes such as dismantling the Federal Reserve System. Initially, it concentrated its efforts on fighting the communist menace, fueling McCarthy's modern-day witch hunt. The name was derived from John Birch, a Baptist missionary and a U.S. Army intelligence officer who was killed in China by the supporters of the Communist Party of China in August 1945. His unfortunate death made him a victim of the Cold War, resulting in a society that bears his name.[221]

The society members were an easy target and Dylan did not spare them one bit, when he wrote in line 13 and 14 "Now we all agree with Hitler's views / Although he killed six million Jews." Due this couplet, the song could not be released on his second studio album *The Freewheelin' Bob Dylan* as originally intended. Fifteen months later, these two lines, and perhaps the nature of the uproarious lyric in general were also the reason the song fell into disgrace in the Ed Sullivan Show.[222]

Sullivan was known for his aversion to songs about politics, drugs or sex. Dylan, at that time still an aspiring musician, managed to secure an invitation to perform on The Ed Sullivan Show, one of America´s most popular entertainment programs. Every musician would leap at such a chance, but Dylan insisted on performing "Talkin' John Birch Society Blues." Sullivan´s management did not budge as the song was potentially libelous to the far-right-wing groups, and suggested he played something more neutral. The twenty-two-year-old Dylan told them, "No, this is what I want to do. If I can't play my song, I'd rather not appear on the show."[223]

In 1965, the embittered members of the folk circles called Dylan a sell-out and a traitor. However, Dylan has taken many principled stands on various issues during his life, and walking off The Ed Sullivan Show was one of them. Even at such young age, he was proud and resolute. No one could tell Dylan what he could or could not do.

After "Talkin' John Birch Society Blues" was censored on TV, it became celebrated in the folk milieu. As Heylin notes, they understood the affair as a

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[221] Britannica Academic. John Birch Society (http://academic.eb.com.vlib.interchange.at/EBchecked/topic/304942/John-Birch-Society, accessed April 29, 2015).
[222] Heylin, p. 70.
[223] Charles Shaar Murray, "Why Bob Dylan didn´t make a fuss in China." *The Guardian* (http://www.theguardian.com/music/2011/apr/10/bob-dylan-china-censorship, accessed April 29, 2015).

confirmation of the "capricious nature of corporate America."[224] In the song, a member of the John Birch Society desperately looks for "Commies" under his bed, in the glove compartment, in his chimney hole and in the toilet bowl. When he fails to find any, he investigates himself, hoping he won´t find anything. Through ridiculing the red-baiting and rising paranoia about the communist infiltration, Dylan was articulating thoughts of millions of Americans.[225]

4.6.3 Masters of War

First publication of lyrics: Broadside #20
First known studio recording: Columbia Studio A, NY, April 23, 1963
First known performance: Gil Turner's home, New York, January 21, 1963[226]

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

You that never done nothin'
But build to destroy
You play with my world
Like it's your little toy
You put a gun in my hand
And you hide from my eyes
And you turn and run farther
When the fast bullets fly

Like Judas of old
You lie and deceive
A world war can be won
You want me to believe
But I see through your eyes
And I see through your brain
Like I see through the water
That runs down my drain

You fasten the triggers
For the others to fire
Then you set back and watch

[224] Heylin, p. 70.
[225] Sounes 111-112.
[226] Heylin, p. 115-116.

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

You've thrown the worst fear
That can ever be hurled
Fear to bring children
Into the world
For threatening my baby
Unborn and unnamed
You ain't worth the blood
That runs in your veins

How much do I know
To talk out of turn
You might say that I'm young
You might say I'm unlearned
But there's one thing I know
Though I'm younger than you
Even Jesus would never
Forgive what you do

Let me ask you one question
Is your money that good
Will it buy you forgiveness
Do you think that it could
I think you will find
When your death takes its toll
All the money you made
Will never buy back your soul

And I hope that you die
And your death'll come soon
I will follow your casket
In the pale afternoon
And I'll watch while you're lowered
Down to your deathbed
And I'll stand o'er your grave
'Til I'm sure that you're dead [227]

"Masters of War" appeared on Dylan´s second studio album *The Freewheelin' Bob Dylan*. The accompanying illustrations for the version published in Broadside in February 1963 were supplied by Suze Rotolo.[228] The tune was

[227] Bob Dylan Official Site. Masters Of War by Bob Dylan (http://www.bobdylan.com/us/songs/masters-war, accessed April 29, 2015).
[228] Dalton, p. 73.

appropriated from "Nottamun Town," a traditional English folk song. It was recorded by Cecil Sharp, the English field collector, during his travels across the Appalachian Mountains in 1917 and later became one of the standards of the folk revival. It is Dylan´s hardest, most unrelenting protest song. Dylan blamed the military and the politicians, the "masters of war" for the Cold War arms race. The language is rather fierce for an anti-war song, compared with the immensely popular "Where Have All the Flowers Gone" by Pete Seeger or his own "Blowin´ in the Wind." In the last verses, Dylan not only whishes a swift death for the warmongers, he wants to stand by their grave to see that they're dead.[229]

Dalton linked the song specifically to the Bay of Pigs Invasion.[230] Nat Hentoff identified the Cold War arms buildup in general as the main inspiration to the song.[231] Dylan claimed the inspiration for the pointed lyric was the Eisenhower's farewell address to the nation, in which he warned Americans about the potential danger of the military-industrial complex.[232] In fact, there are no direct references to any specific events of the era. Dylan purposely avoids mentioning any names of politicians. He probably realized such references would date the lyrics, whereas this way, it transcended the time of its origin. It rang true during the Vietnam War, the Gulf War in the 1990s, and recently during the 2003 Invasion of Iraq.[233]

Joan Baez was appalled when Bob told her he wrote "Masters of War" simply because he assumed it would sell.[234] The truth is Dylan was being intentionally provocative to irritate the saintly Baez, the queen of the folk circles. Behind the sneering lyric was a genuine impulse to write songs stemming from social concerns. He was too profound to write an antiwar song only because it was in vogue. Five years later, when Dylan talked about "Masters of War," it was the same old story: "[Masters of War] was an easy thing to do. There were thousands and thousands of people just wanting that song, so I wrote it up. . . ." In 1984, he added". . . . The old records I used to make, by the time they came out I wouldn't even want them released because I was already so far beyond them."[235]

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[229] Heylin, p. 116.
[230] Dalton, p. 75.
[231] Sounes, p. 131.
[232] Dalton, p. 351.
[233] Sounes, p. 131.
[234] Sounes, p. 140-141
[235] Bob Dylan cited by Heylin, p. 118.

In October 1990, Bob played "Masters of War" at a surreal performance at West Point. In the 1960s, it would be unthinkable to imagine Dylan play at the United States Military Academy. This shift is an indicator that The United States has come a long way since Dylan first sang protest songs. The opinions diverge as to what were the reactions of the cadets in the first rows when Dylan, wearing Middle Eastern clothing, sang "Masters of War" or "Gotta Serve Somebody," but at the end, he got a standing ovation. Perhaps, the young audience did not ascribe such importance to the words as their parents once did, and simply enjoyed Dylan´s music. Dylan stood his ground, when he walked off the Ed Sullivan Show. Almost 30 years later, he proved once again he would not budge to accommodate anyone, and it seems he succeeded.[236]

4.6.4 A Hard Rain's A-Gonna Fall

First publication of lyrics: Sing Out! December 1962
First known studio recording: Studio A, New York, December 6, 1962
First known performance: Carnegie Hall, New York, September 22, 1962[237]

Oh, where have you been, my blue-eyed son?
Oh, where have you been, my darling young one?
I've stumbled on the side of twelve misty mountains
I've walked and I've crawled on six crooked highways
I've stepped in the middle of seven sad forests
I've been out in front of a dozen dead oceans
I've been ten thousand miles in the mouth of a graveyard
And it's a hard, and it's a hard, it's a hard, and it's a hard
And it's a hard rain's a-gonna fall

Oh, what did you see, my blue-eyed son?
Oh, what did you see, my darling young one?
I saw a newborn baby with wild wolves all around it
I saw a highway of diamonds with nobody on it
I saw a black branch with blood that kept drippin'
I saw a room full of men with their hammers a-bleedin'
I saw a white ladder all covered with water
I saw ten thousand talkers whose tongues were all broken
I saw guns and sharp swords in the hands of young children
And it's a hard, and it's a hard, it's a hard, it's a hard
And it's a hard rain's a-gonna fall

[236] Alan Light, "Bob Dylan Plays West Point." *The Rolling Stone* (http://www.rollingstone.com/music/news/bob-dylan-plays-west-point-19901129, accessed April 29, 2015).
[237] Heylin, p. 93.

And what did you hear, my blue-eyed son?
And what did you hear, my darling young one?
I heard the sound of a thunder, it roared out a warnin'
Heard the roar of a wave that could drown the whole world
Heard one hundred drummers whose hands were a-blazin'
Heard ten thousand whisperin' and nobody listenin'
Heard one person starve, I heard many people laughin'
Heard the song of a poet who died in the gutter
Heard the sound of a clown who cried in the alley
And it's a hard, and it's a hard, it's a hard, it's a hard
And it's a hard rain's a-gonna fall

Oh, who did you meet, my blue-eyed son?
Who did you meet, my darling young one?
I met a young child beside a dead pony
I met a white man who walked a black dog
I met a young woman whose body was burning
I met a young girl, she gave me a rainbow
I met one man who was wounded in love
I met another man who was wounded with hatred
And it's a hard, it's a hard, it's a hard, it's a hard
It's a hard rain's a-gonna fall

Oh, what'll you do now, my blue-eyed son?
Oh, what'll you do now, my darling young one?
I'm a-goin' back out 'fore the rain starts a-fallin'
I'll walk to the depths of the deepest black forest
Where the people are many and their hands are all empty
Where the pellets of poison are flooding their waters
Where the home in the valley meets the damp dirty prison
Where the executioner's face is always well hidden
Where hunger is ugly, where souls are forgotten
Where black is the color, where none is the number
And I'll tell it and think it and speak it and breathe it
And reflect it from the mountain so all souls can see it
Then I'll stand on the ocean until I start sinkin'
But I'll know my song well before I start singin'
And it's a hard, it's a hard, it's a hard, it's a hard
It's a hard rain's a-gonna fall[238]

As "Masters of War" was modeled on "Nottamun Town," "A Hard Rain's A-Gonna Fall" clearly resembles "Lord Randall," an Anglo-Scottish ballad collected by Francis James Child as #12 out of the 305 Child Ballads.[239] Dylan introduces each verse

[238] Bob Dylan Official Site. A Hard Rain's A-Gonna Fall by Bob Dylan (http://www.bobdylan.com/us/songs/hard-rains-gonna-fall, accessed April 29, 2015).
[239] Britannica Academic. Francis J. Child (http://academic.eb.com.vlib.interchange.at/EBchecked/topic/111011/Francis-J-Child, accessed April 29, 2015).

with slightly altered variants of the introductory lines to each verse in "Lord Randall." Following this pattern, Dylan changed the first line "'O where ha you been, Lord Randal, my son?" to "Oh, where have you been, my blue-eyed son?" etc.[240] He later said that he did not think he would have time to finish the song. What may seem an exaggeration today, was real and imminent to people then.

> I wrote it at the time of the Cuban crisis [sic]. I was in Bleecker Street in New York. We just hung around at night— people sat around wondering if it was the end, and so did I. Would one o'clock the next day ever come? . . . It was a song of desperation. What could we do? Could we control men on the verge of wiping us out? The words came fast, very fast. It was a song of terror. Line after line after line, trying to capture the feeling of nothingness.[241]

Once Dylan was done, he pulled the paper out of the typewriter and ran over to the Gaslight to play the new song. It was an immediate success. The song is seven minutes long, but Dylan needed that time to say everything he deemed important to say. When he performed "A Hard Rain's A-Gonna Fall", the audience fixed their eyes on Dylan and clung to every word of the song. That sight assured Dylan that a song did not have to be short to hold people´s attentions.[242]

It later came to light that Dylan actually wrote the song approximately a month before the Cuban Missile Crisis, but the pervasive feeling Dylan talks about was there long before tensions escalated into the crises. Many Americans thought it insane to spend millions of dollars on building fallout shelters and to live their lives in preparation of a nuclear holocaust which would make the entire planet uninhabitable. They recognized that Dylan was writing the truth and identified with it. The eloquence of the song affected audiences deeply. When Studs Terkel interviewed Dylan on WFMT Radio, he suggested the song was about atomic rain. Dylan interrupted him saying "No, it wasn´t atomic rain, no. Somebody else thought that too. It´s just a hard rain." Then he continued to deny the prophetic role people attributed to him: "I am not a topical songwriter. I don´t really even like that word."[243] "In the last verse, when I say 'When the pellets of poison are flooding the waters', I mean all the lies that people get told on

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[240] Poets.org. Lord Randall (http://www.poets.org/poetsorg/poem/lord-randall, accessed April 29, 2015).
[241] Bob Dylan cited by Heylin, p. 93.
[242] Heylin, p. 96.
[243] Martin Scorsese. *No Direction Home: Bob Dylan*. DVD. Directed by Martin Scorsese. Los Angeles: Paramount Pictures, 2005.

their radios and [in] their newspaper," concluded Dylan sarcastically, worn out by the unrelenting interviewer.[244]

Today, Dylan scholars and fans alike still rack their brains over the source of brilliant yet chilling lyric. There is nothing in Dylan's canon which matches this wild stream of poetry which encapsulated Dylan´s anxiety. At the time, such a work was a complete sensation, given that Dylan was only 21 year old. People were asking "Where had Dylan been hiding all this erudition?" Heylin notes,

> With "Hard Rain" he abandoned any pretense that he was just a worried man with a worried mind and grabbed hold of a word that has haunted him ever since—"poet."[245]

Unlike the other songs cited, the lyrics overflow with metaphors. Is it a nightmarish vision of the world destroyed by a nuclear holocaust? Or a Biblical prophecy about the judgment day? A historian, a theologian, and an environmentalist would surely provide different interpretations of each verse.

4.6.5 Only a Pawn in Their Game

First publication of lyrics: Broadside #33
First known studio recording: Studio A, New York, August 6, 1963
First known performance: Greenwood Rally, Mississippi July 6, 1963[246]

A bullet from the back of a bush took Medgar Evers' blood
A finger fired the trigger to his name
A handle hid out in the dark
A hand set the spark
Two eyes took the aim
Behind a man's brain
But he can't be blamed
He's only a pawn in their game

A South politician preaches to the poor white man
"You got more than the blacks, don't complain.
You're better than them, you been born with white skin," they explain.
And the Negro's name
Is used it is plain
For the politician's gain
As he rises to fame
And the poor white remains

[244] Bob Dylan cited by Heylin, p. 98.
[245] Heylin, p. 94.
[246] Heylin, p. 143-144.

On the caboose of the train
But it ain't him to blame
He's only a pawn in their game

The deputy sheriffs, the soldiers, the governors get paid
And the marshals and cops get the same
But the poor white man's used in the hands of them all like a tool
He's taught in his school
From the start by the rule
That the laws are with him
To protect his white skin
To keep up his hate
So he never thinks straight
'Bout the shape that he's in
But it ain't him to blame
He's only a pawn in their game

From the poverty shacks, he looks from the cracks to the tracks
And the hoofbeats pound in his brain
And he's taught how to walk in a pack
Shoot in the back
With his fist in a clinch
To hang and to lynch
To hide 'neath the hood
To kill with no pain
Like a dog on a chain
He ain't got no name
But it ain't him to blame
He's only a pawn in their game.

Today, Medgar Evers was buried from the bullet he caught
They lowered him down as a king
But when the shadowy sun sets on the one
That fired the gun
He'll see by his grave
On the stone that remains
Carved next to his name
His epitaph plain:
Only a pawn in their game[247]

Dylan first performed "Only a Pawn in Their Game" for a few hundred African-American farm workers at a voter-registration rally in Greenwood, Mississippi. The song was released on Dylan´s third studio album The Times They Are a-Changin'

[247] Bob Dylan Official Site. Only A Pawn In Their Game by Bob Dylan (http://www.bobdylan.com/us/songs/only-pawn-their-game, accessed April 29, 2015).

released by Columbia Records in 1964. It tells the story about the assassination of the civil rights activist Medgar Evers and the ensuing events.[248]

After graduating from Alcorn Agricultural and Mechanical College in Mississippi, Evers worked as an insurance salesman, and at the same time, successfully organized local affiliates of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. In 1954, he moved to Jackson where he was offered the job of first field secretary for the NAACP in Mississippi. He was responsible for recruiting new members and organizing voter-registration rallies and economic boycotts across the state. In the summer of 1963, racial tensions in the United States were perhaps at an all-time high. President John F. Kennedy introduced a comprehensive civil rights bill and the civil-rights activities were gaining momentum, while some of the Southern states and local governments went to great lengths to prevent desegregation. In June 1963, Medgar Evers was shot outside his own home in Jackson by white supremacist, Ku Klux Klan member, Byron De La Beckwith, a few hours after Kennedy´s television broadcast to the nation regarding civil rights. The news of the cold-blooded murder received nation-wide attention and made Evers a martyr to the cause of the civil rights movement. Evers was buried with full military honors in Arlington National Cemetery.[249]

"Only a Pawn in Their Game," is a striking examination of race and class relations in the United States where Dylan dared to argue for the relative insignificance of Byron De La Beckwith, suggesting instead that the actual guilt rested with those cunning powerful men who controlled both the blacks and poor whites. This is a recurring theme in Dylan´s work. As in "Masters of War," he does not see the perpetrator of the crime as primarily responsible, but rather as another victim of some grey eminence hiding behind walls and desks – "a pawn in a game of ignorance, prejudice, and hatred." After all, it was this perspective, mixed with his attraction to villains and outlaws prompted him to say on Harvey Lee Oswald "I saw some of myself in him" in a speech he gave after receiving the Tom Paine award.[250]

Dylan drew his inspiration from a quote coined by Roy Wilkins, NAACP executive secretary. In a *New York Times* article, Wilkins wrote that the "Southern

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[248] Sounes, p. 134.
[249] Britannica Academic. Medgar Evers (http://academic.eb.com.vlib.interchange.at/EBchecked/topic/197253/Medgar-Evers, accessed April 30, 2015).
[250] Sounes, p. 134.

political system" that had put the murderer "behind that rifle" was to blame for Medgar Evers´ death. The resemblance of the core theme of the article and the first line of Dylan´s song is apparent:

A bullet from the back of a bush took Medgar Evers' blood
A finger fired the trigger to his name
[…]
But he can't be blamed
He's only a pawn in their game[251]

Dylan also places the blame on the school system, still segregated in most of the Southern states, where racist ideology and white supremacy were ever present. He blames the judiciary for failing to guarantee African-Americans fair trials. While the notion of poverty permeates the lyrics, Heylin notes that

> "[Byron] de la Beckwith— as his name implies— was hardly someone who came 'from the poverty shacks.' In fact he paid the $10,000 bail set in cash. Nor did he feel any need to "hide 'neath the [KKK] hood." A highranking official in the Klu Klux Klan, he made no secret of his views or affiliation.[252]

Therefore it seems as though Dylan had the hard facts confused once again. This does not detract from the quality of the song as it contains truths about the situation in the South, i. e. how the white elites enraged poor whites against the African-Americans to divert them from their own dire economic situation. It is not straightforward, and it stands out from the other songs written on behalf of the African-American cause as Dylan aimed to uncover and communicate what might have been going on in the killer's mind.[253]

4.7 Dylan´s Impact on Popular Music

It may be hard to pin down the actual impact of Dylan´s topical legacy, what is clear, however, is that Dylan had significant impact on the music industry itself. Starr and Waterman noted that "After the huge acceptance of 'Like a Rolling Stone' in 1965 literally nothing was the same again.[254] The watershed recording became Dylan´s first legitimate pop hit. It effectively removed the existing regulations, restricting the length,

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[251] Heylin, p. 144.
[252] Ibid., p. 145.
[253] NPR. Bob Dylan's Tribute To Medgar Evers Took On The Big Picture (http://www.npr.org/2013/06/12/190743651/bob-dylans-tribute-to-medgar-evers-took-on-the-big-picture, accessed May 1, 2015).
[254] Starr and Waterman, p. 146.

subject matter and poetic diction of pop records. The sound itself was revolutionary. The band dominated by two keyboard instruments – organ and piano – along with Dylan´s bold and defiant vocal style defined the future sounds of rock.[255]

4.7.1 Dylan as the Key Figure in the Creation of Folk-rock

Dylan´s influence thus wasn´t limited to the folk scene, his impact was being felt in rock circles as well.[256] Since the early 1960s, he was among the most influential artists and a key figure in the creation of the folk-rock blend. Denisoff noted, that "[Dylan] in rejecting the 'cry for justice' ethic led a considerable number of 'folkniks' into the idiom of folk-rock."[257] Dylan going electric and eventually earning general acknowledgement made it possible for folk artists to incorporate electric sounds in their work. He played a key role in establishing the singer-songwriter tradition in rock music. Tin Pan Alley mostly separated the music production between the writers and the singers. Suddenly however, with the rise of artists like Bob Dylan or Joan Baez, the recording industry agents started to favor performers who could produce original material. This phenomenon compelled artists to write their own music and lyrics, often creating fine and inspiring records.[258] Therefore the artists now could, and were even encouraged to, freely express various emotions and elaborate on social issues while enjoying commercial success. The Beatles followed this trend, citing Dylan as a direct influence. While previously playing songs with mostly shallow and simple lyrics, such as "I love you Yeah, Yeah, Yeah" or the notorious "I wanna hold your hand," after they were introduced to Dylan and his work, they started to write songs that "had the depth and seriousness of Dylan´s songs."[259] As Sandberg and Weissman note, Dylan and some of his contemporaries "helped to create a climate in which commercial acceptance no longer required as high degree of artistic compromise as it formerly had."[260] Alan Light, an American music journalist and rock critic for Rolling Stone highlighted Dylan´s importance in this respect:

> By showing you could tackle significant social issues in a serious way and unify people around songwriting, around pop music, that has absolutely transformed culture around globe […] He brought

[255] Ibid., p. 146-147.
[256] Jimmy Hendrix covered Dylan´s "All Along the Watchtower" (Sounes, 228).
[257] Denisoff, p. 435.
[258] Sandberg and Weissman, p. 110.
[259] Sounes, p. 161.
[260] Sandberg and Weissman, p. 110

> sophistication, and literacy and sense of poetry to popular songwriting that just has no precedent.[261]

Dylan´s folk-rock style of music influenced the Byrds, a band from Los Angeles, which later shaped the sound of the Eagles, Tom Petty, or R.E.M. The Byrds recorded Dylan´s "Mr. Tambourine Man", the quintessential folk-rock hit that solidified the new music style. Simon and Garfunkel initially enjoyed only a small success with their first unimpressive album, recorded in the acoustic 1960s folk style. That was until their producer stepped in, who also happened to produce Dylan, and remixed "The Sound of Silence" by adding electric musical instruments to the original cut. The remix was an immense success, and since, all of their subsequent albums followed the folk-rock line. Their success culminated in 1968 with the recording of the soundtrack to the cult movie *The Graduate*.[262]

Craig Morrison from Concordia University in Montreal claims that "Psychedelic music, as created and played in San Francisco in the 1960s, drew far more heavily from the folk revival that preceded it than has been previously acknowledged."[263] He elaborated on the recordings of the four most important bands on the San Francisco psychedelic scene in its heyday in the 1960s and the 1970s, namely the Grateful Dead, Jefferson Airplane, Big Brother and the Holding Company, and Quicksilver Messenger Service. The influence is palpable in almost all aspects – from its ideology, repertoire, instrumental techniques, to vocals, lyrics critical of politics and society, and its approach to performing. These bands found inspiration in folksong books and field recordings and other records available of the black southern bluesman like Blind Lemon Jefferson, the traditional folk artists such as Woody Guthrie, and of their contemporaries, the folk revivalists like Donovan and Bob Dylan.[264] As mentioned earlier, the "British Invasion" and "Dylan going electric" dealt a heavy blow to the folk revival, and the community was divided into the acoustic and electric camp. Some of the Greenwich Village figures who abandoned acoustic music, moved on to explore electric folk and rock in San Francisco, where they mingled with the founders of

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[261] Alan Light presented by A&E Television Networks. Bob Dylan Biography (http://www.biography.com/people/bob-dylan-9283052, accessed May 2, 2015).
[262] Appell and Hemphill, p. 342-343.
[263] Craig Morrison, "Folk Revival Roots Still Evident in 1990s Recordings of San Francisco Psychedelic Veterans," *The Journal of American Folklore* 114 (Fall 2001), p. 478-479.
[264] Lot of the material was rooted in uncredited songs coming from traditional blues, folk, gospel, country, and bluegrass and the musical tradition of foreign countries, like England.

psychedelic music. Dylan's shift to electric instrumentation was imitated by his numerous followers on the West Coast.[265]

In January 1988, Dylan was inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame at a grand ceremony at the Waldorf-Astoria. Bob must have felt out of place at such lavish event. As Sounes pointed out, "[the event] was the antithesis of the music Bob performed, as well as the music that had influenced him."[266] Arlo Guthrie, who attended the ceremony to collect a posthumous honor for his father also recognized the absurdity of the situation. "I don´t know where Woody Guthrie would be if he were still alive. But I can guarantee you he wouldn´t be here, said Arlo in his speech.[267] Bruce Springsteen gave a heartfelt induction speech, where he accentuated the immense influence Dylan had on other artists:

> Dylan was - he was a revolutionary, man, the way that Elvis freed your body, Bob freed your mind. And he showed us that just because the music was innately physical, it did not mean that it was anti-intellect. He had the vision and the talent to expand a pop song until it contained the whole world. He invented a new way a pop singer could sound. He broke through the limitations of what a recording artist could achieve, and he changed the face of rock and roll forever and ever. Without Bob, the Beatles wouldn't have made Sergeant Pepper, maybe the Beach Boys wouldn't have made Pet Sounds, the Sex Pistols wouldn't have made 'God Save the Queen,' U2 wouldn't have done 'Pride in the Name of Love,' Marvin Gaye wouldn't have done 'What's Goin'On,' Grandmaster Flash might not have done 'The Message,' and the Count Five could not have done 'Psychotic Reaction.' And there never would have been a group named the Electric Prunes, that's for sure.[268]

4.7.2 Bob Dylan and Johnny Cash: An Unlikely Alliance?

Despite each of them came from a different end of the musical spectrum, Johnny Cash and Bob Dylan developed a musical and personal bond which lasted a lifetime. They were on each other´s wavelengths and influenced each other´s work. Johnny Cash´s song Big River sounds more like it was written by Dylan. Over the years, Cash covered a number of Dylan´s songs, the most notorious probably being the duet with his

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[265] Morrison, p. 478-479.
[266] Sounes, p. 383.
[267] *Ibid*.
[268] Bruce Springsteen cited by Rock & Roll Hall of Fame. Bruce Springsteen on Dylan (https://rockhall.com/inductees/bob-dylan/transcript/bruce-springsteen-on-dylan/, accessed May 7, 2015).

wife June Carter "It Ain't Me, Babe." Conversely, Dylan´s political songs influenced Cash´s topical songwriting throughout his career. Later, Bob Dylan noted his relationship to Johnny Cash:

> Johnny Cash was at that time, if not now, the epitomy of country music. He was the ultimate end. I loved all of his gospel songs, too. And meeting him, at that point was the high thrill of a lifetime. His songs meant a lot to me, even that line *"I met her accidentally in St. Paul, Minnesota,"* I mean that would just give me the chills every time I heard it. We'd see each other from time to time, here and there and get together and pound songs out. A lot of it just went by in a blur.[269]

In February 1969, Dylan recorded "Ring of Fire" with Cash for his album *Self Portrait*. The rare record had never made it to the album, in fact, the only record of approximately dozen duets that was released on *Nashville Skyline* was "Girl from the North Country." Nevertheless, their cooperation had a lasting impact. Shortly after the release of *Nashville Skyline*, Cash and Dylan gave a rare performance together on the debut of *The Johnny Cash Show* and the audience was thrilled. At the time, major stars looked down on television production, Dylan however went against the tide as always and he succeeded. Prior to the show, the country music community did not embrace Dylan. Cash helped to show him in a different light that night, while Dylan gave legitimacy to country music that formerly hadn´t have outside of country music fans. Cash tried to play down the significance of the performance: "I didn't feel anything about it, but everybody said it was the most magnetic, powerful thing they ever heard in their life. They were just raving about electricity and magnetism. And all I did was just sit there hitting G chords."[270]

However, one successful joint performance was hardly the sole driving force behind the shifts in the appreciation of country music by the rock camp, and vice versa. It was mainly Dylan recording his country-flavored album in Nashville. He re-connected rock and country, and despite the fact that *Nashville Skyline* received mixed reviews, he managed to translate to larger audience that country music was an actual art form. Critics and some of his fans were baffled about the country record. Dylan was singing in a crystal clear voice, smiling and tipping his hat on the album cover. Despite

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[269] Bob Dylan presented by A&E Television Networks. Johnny Cash - Bond with Bob Dylan (http://www.biography.com/people/bob-dylan-9283052/videos/johnny-cash-bond-with-bob-dylan-3261507848, accessed May 4, 2015).

[270] Dalton, p. 242

these peculiarities, it turned out to be a hit and *Nashville Skyline* has become one of the best-selling country-rock albums of all times. Some argue that Dylan wanted to let the world know he had come a long way from his topical work of the early 1960s, but whatever Dylan´s original intent, country-rock fever of the 1970s was definitively unleashed.[271]

Concluding Thoughts

Throughout his life, Dylan has gone to considerable lengths to resist all exclusive labels. Both fans and critics deconstructed his lyrics, desperately trying to gain a better understanding of Dylan's personal ideology and worldview but he remained as elusive as his lyrics, rarely giving the press any clarity during interviews. He detested the press who called him a prophet or the voice of a generation. He once said "The press isn't the judge, God is the judge."[272] In 1965, at the Newport Folk Festival, Dylan had chosen electric guitars and drums over Guthrie´s acoustic inscription to convey his stance. A proponent of social dissent was about to become an immense force in popular music.

Following these events, *Broadside* magazine asked Phil Ochs, a fellow singer-songwriter from the 1960s who also hitched his career to the wagon of protest, if he thought that Dylan would like his protest songs to be "buried." Ochs answered insightfully: "I don't think he can succeed in burying them. They're too good. And they're out of his hands."[273] Dylan went his own way and so did his songs. Nevertheless, his ability to put into words and music the sentiments of people was truly unique. As Heylin notes,

> "Even when Dylan "abandoned" protest music, his songs continued to reflect the deep questions of freedom, equality, and identity that spoke to similar concerns within SNCC, the movement, and— indeed— America"[274]

In would be unfair to categorize Dylan as being simply a protest singer. Dylan's political commitments vacillated through his career, later becoming practically non-existent. While he wrote many songs which came out of social concerns, he also wrote

[271] *Ibid*., p. 253-258

[273] Dreier, p. 407.
[274] Heylin, p. 71.

many lyrical songs about relationships, full of imagery and mythical references. No one song, even one as powerful as "A Hard Rain's A-Gonna Fall," can define Dylan´s songwriting. Nevertheless, his early activism remains iconic. His personal story is inextricably linked to the rise of the counterculture of the 1960s. Despite his brilliant albums from the latter half of the 1960s or masterpieces such as "Blood on the Tracks,"[275] and after five ensuing decades of inspired songwriting, an indelible legacy of his involvement in the folk movement and the early songs it produced resonate the most. As Dalton notes, "Dylan will be most remembered as the author of 'Blowin´ in the Wind.'"[276]

In his 1970 article, R. Serge Denisoff claimed that "…there is little, if any, concrete or empirical evidence that songs do in fact have an independent impact upon attitudes in the political arena."[277] Denisoff was most likely correct in his assertion. Protest songs may not be an effective leverage to change the minds of politicians. Or at least, their impact won´t be felt immediately. Even Pete Seeger, the "icon of passion and ideals,"[278] admitted the limitations of protest songs. In January 1968 Broadside printed Seeger´s "False from True" on the front page. In the second verse, he expressed disenchantment with the medium´s limitations:

> No song I can sing
> will make Governor Wallace change his mind
> No song I can sing
> will take the gun from a hate-filled man.[279]

It seems as though Dylan was simply ahead of Seeger in this respect. As he once remarked, "Songs can't save the world. I've gone through all that."[280] Some accuse Dylan of merely using the protest movement to advance himself. Perhaps, there is a certain amount of truth to such claims. It is possible he wrote some of his topical songs because that was what people were looking for. But that does not mean he didn´t believe

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[275] "Blood on the Tracks" was released in 1975 and is often deemed Dylan´s finest album (see Sounes, p. 281-285).
[276] Dalton, p. 372.
[277] Denisoff (1970), p. 807.
[278] Paul Brown, "Folk Activist Pete Seeger, Icon Of Passion And Ideals, Dies At 94." *NPR* (http://www.npr.org/blogs/therecord/2014/01/28/267488551/american-folk-singer-pete-seeger-dies-at-94, accessed May 11, 2015).
[279] Pete Seeger, "False from True," Broadside 88 (January 1968): 1. (accessible online at http://singout.org/downloads/broadside/b088.pdf)
[280] Bob Dylan cited by John W. Whitehead, "Who Is That Man? In Search of the Real Bob Dylan: An Interview with David Dalton." *The Rutheford Institute* (https://www.rutherford.org/publications_resources/oldspeak/who_is_that_man_in_search_of_the_real_bob_dylan, accessed May 2, 2015).

what he was saying. Such deep songs must have come out of a genuine impulse. Dylan is a genius, mercurial, always step ahead of the rest. In 1965, he did not sell out, but instead made a gigantic artistic leap forward by inventing folk-rock. While the political impact of the folk revival was rather short-lived, Dylan´s impact on music and individual human lives will be permanent.

Souhrn

První část této práce se zaměřuje na vývoj tradice americké protestní hudby v 19. století. Mezi nejoblíbenější hudební uskupení tehdy patřili The Hutchinson Family Singers, kteří dokázali podat závažná témata jejich doby zábavnou formou. Stali se tak vlastně průkopníky protestních písní v populární hudbě. Terčem jejich kritiky bylo například otroctví nebo démon alkohol. Tato kapitola se dále zabývá černošskými spirituály jako skrytými projevy protestu. Černoši toužili po svobodě a plnohodnotném začlenění do americké společnosti. Spirituály jim dodávaly sílu a odhodlání vytrvat v jejich snahách o emancipaci. Tyto písně měly však také praktické využití. Otroci si jejich prostřednictvím předávali zašifrované zprávy o tzv. „podzemní železnici“ (angl. Underground Railroad), díky které měli otroci z Jihu šanci uniknout do svobodných států na severu. Ze spirituálů vycházely také písně hnutí za občanská práva v 50. a 60. letech 20. století.

Druhá kapitola se zabývá americkým folkovým hnutím, za jehož zakladatele je považován folkový bard Woody Guthrie. Folkové hnutí se začínalo formovat již na konci 30. let 20. století. Písně amerického jihu si vypůjčili vůdci odborových svazů a představitelé Komunistické strany Spojených států amerických, aby tak položili základ lidové hudbě, které měla být kontrastem buržoazních písní, produkovaných nechvalně proslulou Tin Pan Alley. Skutečný boom folkového hnutí nastal v 50. letech 20. století v reakci na poněkud mdlou a povrchní populární hudbu té doby. Američtí studenti hledali způsob kritického vyjádření a ve folkové hudbě našli vhodný nástroj. Stálicí americké folkové hudební scény se stal Pete Seeger, který působil společně s Guthriem ve skupině The Almanac Singers. Joan Baez se stala královnou folkového hnutí, které na svých křídlech vyneslo ke slávě i Boba Dylana. Ten však v roce 1965 protestní hnutí opustil a z folkového mesiáše se stala rocková hvězda. Lidé jej obviňovali, že se zřekl své role kvůli komerci. Ve skutečnosti se Dylan stal milionářem právě díky folkovým protestsongům.

Analýza textů Boba Dylana a jejich interpretace představuje nepodstatnější část této práce. Pět písní ze začátku 60. let bylo zasazeno do širšího politického a společenského kontextu. Jsou odrazem Dylanovy neklidné mysli a bouřlivých 60. let. Ani ve 21. století neztrácí nic ze své naléhavosti. Dylan se celý svůj život zarputile bránil jakémukoli škatulkování. Opakovaně tvrdil, že nikdy nebyl protestním zpěvákem. Během půl století vydal geniální alba jako *Blonde on Blonde* nebo *Blood on the Tracks*, nesmazatelný obraz protestního písničkáře s ním ale zůstává dál.

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Author´s Afterword

Compared to most people, of my generation in particular, I'm honestly smitten with Dylan. If I imagined a five level scale of Bob fandom, I would probably be a three. I own the whole discography, however there are albums I haven´t heard yet or that I have heard, but don´t really listen to. I grew up listening to Dylan, while my mother was driving, and at our country house, where we used to play LPs on an old record player and laughed at the funny translations of the song titles. I've read the essential books about Dylan. But if I lived on MacDougal Street in the late 1960s and early 1970s, I highly doubt I would dig through Dylan´s trash as did the infamous scavenger and "garbologist" A. J. Weberman.[1]

Dylan´s influence is by no means limited solely to the sphere of music. To this day, couples in New York stop on the corner of West 4th and Jones Street to re-create the 1963 image of young Bobby Dylan with his girlfriend Suze Rotolo braced against the chilling wind, posing for the cover of the *Freewheelin' Bob Dylan* album.[2] It is very easy to come across Dylan references and allusions in films and television series. It is beyond the scope of this work to encapsulate all the movies to which he contributed his songs or which refer to Dylan.[3] There are so many of them that I seem to come across one every other day. Just for illustration, I was watching TV last week while eating dinner, and two subsequent episodes of Gilmore Girls were on. Much to my amusement, there was a Dylan reference in each of them. In the first, one of the Gilmore Girls character, named Paris Geller, was upset when people did not bother to respond to an invitation to a soiree in a proper manner, calling them "capitalist scum," and then saying threateningly, "I hate the rich. A hard rain is gonna fall, you know what I'm saying?" In the other episode, Lane invited Rory to their band´s show, saying "Hey, do you wanna be our D.A. Pennebaker?" She wanted Rory to document the show, referring to the pre-eminent chronicler of 1960s counterculture, who also happens to be the author of Don't Look Back, the documentary of Dylan´s 1965 UK tour.[4]

Dylan was all over this year's Oscar-nominated movies. Among the songs on the wide-ranging soundtrack to Richard Linklater's *Boyhood* is "Beyond the Horizon" from Dylan's 2006 *Modern Times* album. When I was about to watch *Selma*, this year´s Oscar-nominated

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[1] David Dalton. *Kdo je ten chlap? Hledání Boba Dylana* (Praha: 65. Pole, 2012), p. 274.
[2] Edward Helmore, "Why Inside Llewyn Davis doesn't get inside the Village." *The Guardian* (http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/jan/25/greenwich-village-inside-llewyn-davis-coen-brothers, accessed April 27, 2015).
[3] There are documentaries which are about Dylan (e.g., Don't Look Back, Eat the Document, I'm Not There), and also movies in which appeared Dylan himself such as Pat Garrett & Billy the Kid, Renaldo and Clara
[4] The Independent. Arts: A marriage made in verite (http://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/arts-a-marriage-made-in-verite-1295862.html, accessed April 25, 2015).

movie about Martin Luther King, I was expecting a Dylan song to come up as several of his earlier songs served as unofficial anthems of the Civil Rights movement. And in fact, one of the key scenes of the movie is accompanied by Odetta's rendition of "Masters of War." Finally, in Bennett Miller's *Foxcatcher*, the nominated movie about the murder of Olympic wrestling coach Dave Schultz, Dylan's cover of Woody Guthrie's "This Land is Your Land" plays in the background. On top of that, an instrumental version of "The Times They Are A-Changin'" plays in the final scene.[5]

Dylan has also appeared in several commercials. His Victoria's Secret advertisement spurred a lot of controversy among his fans after it aired in 2004. They were probably asking "Why would he want to be in such a horrible thing"? As usual, Dylan scholars easily came up with several different explanations. Dalton noted that the motivation might have been quite prosaic as Dylan seemed to have an absolute obsession with money. The rumor has it that every time Dylan puts out a record, he buys a new mansion or an apartment building, and he in fact owns property all over the world. Dylan is very American in this respect as he understands money goes hand in hand with success, and he doesn´t see object it. He made no secret of his ambition to become rich and famous, nurtured from an early age. While the Beat generation and most of the folk revivalists disdained fame and money, Dylan embraces all. This however does not apply solely to money-related issues. It is important to keep in mind that this is a man, who idolized Woody Guthrie, James Dean, Elvis Presley and, strangely enough, Liberace at the same time. Victoria´s secret did not entirely come out of the blue. In 1965, when a reporter at the infamous San Francisco press conference asked Dylan what product he would ever think about endorsing, he responded without hesitation: "women's garments."[6]

Nevertheless, the commercial appearance angered many people, calling him a sell-out and promiscuous. Dylan however, is known for taking pleasure in challenging the Dylanologists, i. e. his overly serious fans and scholars, and it is therefore difficult to believe that Dylan cared about any negative feedback. He dislikes being pigeon-holed, and is willing to go great lengths to debunk the lofty image of himself as a prophet or a spokesman, imposed on him repeatedly from the outset. In 1963, he went to extremes at the Thomas Paine Awards,

[5] The Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences. The 87th Academy Awards (http://www.oscars.org/oscars/ceremonies/2015, accessed April, 14, 2015).
[6] Andy Greene, "Watch Bob Dylan's Super Bowl Commercial for Chrysler" *The Rolling Stone* (http://www.rollingstone.com/music/videos/watch-bob-dylans-super-bowl-commercial-for-chrysler-20140203, accessed April 27, 2015).

where he claimed he could identify with Harvey Lee Oswald. The essence however remains the same.[7]

Until last year, Victoria´s secret was his only appearance in a commercial, with the exception of the 2007 General Motors commercial for the Cadillac Escalade, and the 2010 Google advertisement that recycled clips from the 1965 "Subterranean Homesick Blues" music video. In 2014, Dylan made a Super Bowl Commercial for Chrysler. The ad received mixed reviews. Amy Davidson from The New Yorker wrote a merciless critique of the commercial, saying that

> [she was] not of the school of thought that Dylan simply making an ad is bad because it is commercial […] It is a problem that he is in a poorly made ad, one that proves the truth of a line in its script: "You can´t fake cool."[8]

The ad was a little tacky, but at the same time it was powerful and seductive. As in the case of the Victoria´s ad ten years earlier, the public did not spare Dylan any criticism. It is impressive that after all those years the idea of "the counterculture folk icon selling his soul" still bothers people so much. Some of the reactions on Twitter even suggested it is time Dylan gives away some money to charity.[9] Perhaps such controversy is exactly what the creators of the ad were after. The truth is that regardless of quality, Dylan is Dylan and his mere appearance will likely get people to discuss the spot long after it aired.

Dylan also received criticism for "playing it safe" at his 2011 performance in China. The western media blamed him for submitting his set list to the Chinese authorities, who deemed "Blowin´ in the Wind" and "The Times They Are A-Changin" unacceptable. Maureen Dowd assaulted Dylan in her *New York Times* column. Her writing resembled the tone of the mid 1960s journalists rebuking Dylan for his breakaway with the folk movement: "The idea that the raspy troubadour of '60s freedom anthems would go to a dictatorship and not sing those anthems is a whole new kind of sellout."[10]

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[7] John W. Whitehead, "Who Is That Man? In Search of the Real Bob Dylan: An Interview with David Dalton." *The Rutheford Institute* (https://www.rutherford.org/publications_resources/oldspeak/who_is_that_man_in_search_of_the_real_bob_dylan, accessed May 2, 2015).

[8] Amy Davidson, "Why Bob Dylan Lost the Super Bowl, and Why Coke Won." *The New Yorker* (http://www.newyorker.com/news/amy-davidson/why-bob-dylan-lost-the-super-bowl-and-why-coke-won, accessed May 11, 2015).

[9] Kurt Rex Cooper @KurtRexCooper 2 Feb 2014@nxthompson at age 72, Bob Dylan perhaps feels it's time to raise money off his fame for... perhaps... a foundation? (https://twitter.com/nxthompson/status/430160596089450497, accessed May 11, 2015).

[10] Maureen Dowd, "Blowin´in the Idiot Wind," *The New York Times* (http://www.nytimes.com/2011/04/10/opinion/10dowd.html?_r=0, accessed May 11, 2015).

Dylan denied these false accusations in an unprecedented letter addressed to his fans, saying that they played all the songs they intended to play.[11] It seems unlikely Dylan would let anyone tell him what he could or could not play. After all, he is still the same person who walked off the Ed Sullivan Show, when "Talkin´ John Birch Paranoid Blues" was censored from the playlist. Dalton argues that both "Blowin´ in the Wind" and "The Times They Are A-Changin" are Dylan´s most oblique songs, containing more allusions and imagery than any actual topical specifics. He defends Dylan´s play list, saying that the songs he ended up singing, such as "Gonna Change My Way of Thinking" or "Hard Rain´s A-Gonna Fall" were much more subversive than "Blowin´in the Wind."[12] I mostly identify with John W. Whitehead perspective on this matter:

> […] perhaps Dylan, the activist who once claimed that a hero was "someone who understands the degree of responsibility that comes with his freedom," has simply given up the fight and wants only to be Dylan the musician. As he once remarked, "Songs can't save the world. I've gone through all that." After all, why should Dylan be any different from the rest of his once idealistic generation, many of whom have now become part of the very establishment they once opposed?[13]

I went to see Dylan in concert on July 2, 2014. I was fidgety the whole day, trying to stay in bed as I was still battling a cold. I have discussed Dylan´s performances with our family friends, whom I know to be his fans. Most of them have already been to his concert, and I was trying to figure out, why were they all reluctant to go see him again. They told me basically the usual complaints, that he his shows are like a lottery – you might be getting a series of unrecognizable song with Bob going one way, and the band going another, which may be appreciated only by Dylan´s staunch admirers, or you might get a string of his biggest hits. The latter however is not a guarantee of an uplifting experience either, as Dalton confirms in his book. He has been to a number of Dylan´s concerts, and actually enjoyed the deconstruction of his old songs, which Dylan sometimes treated as a reggae or waltz, and other times sang in a strange Scottish accent. He has been to those shows where people in the audience were turning their heads to each other as if they were trying to assure themselves "is this really the song that I think it is?" He said he had seen Dylan concerts that were just plain

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[11] Bob Dylan Official Site. To my fans and followers (http://www.bobdylan.com/us/news/my-fans-and-followers, accessed May 11, 2015).
[12] Dalton, p. 372.
[13] John W. Whitehead, "Who Is That Man? In Search of the Real Bob Dylan: An Interview with David Dalton." *The Rutheford Institute* (https://www.rutherford.org/publications_resources/oldspeak/who_is_that_man_in_search_of_the_real_bob_dylan, accessed May 12, 2015).

horrible, but in 2004 at Cooperstown where he sang virtually all of his hits, he felt particularly appalled. He screamed out the songs, one after another, in a monotone voice without any modulations. There was neither a single glimpse of the magic nor a flash of brilliance one can sometimes experience at Dylan´s concerts.[14] This time however, the concert was definitely worth it. At least for me it was, some people were probably disappointed as he only played three of his biggest hits, "Tangled Up In Blue," "Simple Twist Of Fate," and "All Along The Watchtower." The rest were mostly new songs from his latest album called *Tempest*. The arrangement of the show was quite unusual, given the fact it took place in the giant O2 arena. There were no screens or special lighting, rows of chairs laid-out for the audience. The show started precisely at 8 as scheduled without any support band or introduction whatsoever. This however did not make Dylan´s performance any less powerful. It was still the same man who spoke to many in the 1960s, and who is still, perhaps astonishingly, speaking anew.

The folk music of the 1960s did not sink into oblivion either. These days, social protest mostly uses new forms of expression. It has moved from street marches and occupations of university buildings, common in the 1960s, to social networks and electronic media. Then, folk singers such as Dylan and Baez, and Peter, Paul and Mary ruled the day. They were considered mainstream popular music, whereas today, protest music is mostly marginal. At times however, the original sentiment of the folk songs comes alive and brings people together, like in January 2009 at The Obama Inaugural Celebration at the Lincoln Memorial called "We Are One." The attendance peaked at 400,000 and the mood was quite festive. While watching the footage of the event, I realized that the inspiring music of the past had now again a powerful effect on the people.

Obama himself often played music at his campaign rallies. In *33 Revolutions per Minute*, a book by Dorian Lynskey, Obama was proclaimed "the first protest-song president." He grew up in the era when the anti-war protest song flourished. During his campaign, Obama was actually asked to identify ten tunes he is most likely to hum along. His top ten included the pacifist "What's Going On" by Marvin Gaye, "Think" by Aretha Franklin or "Gimme Shelter" by the Rolling Stones. Amusingly enough, the list also featured "Yes We Can" by will.i.am, the lyrics of which consist entirely of Obama´s quotations.[15] In his victory speech, he paraphrased the lyrics of "A Change is Gonna Come," and old protest song popularized by

[14] Dalton, p. 380-381.

[15] The video to Yes We Can featured number of celebrities including Scarlett Johansson or John Legend, and, as a matter of interest, it was directed by Jesse Dylan, the son of Bob Dylan (http://www.imdb.com/title/tt1198099/, accessed March 1, 2015).

soul singer Sam Cooke: "It's been a long time coming, but tonight, because of what we did on this day, in this election, at this defining moment, change has come to America."[16]

The Lincoln Memorial concert was wrapped up with "This Land Is Your Land" sung by Pete Seeger, his grandson Tao Rodriguez-Seeger and Bruce Springsteen. Pete was standing there in the cold, bobbing to the beat, playing his banjo and shouting out the lyrics. He was as tall as ever, slightly resembling Albus Dumbledore in his hippie-like knit hat, and grinning from ear to ear the entire time as though the cold could not get to him.[17] Even though I was only watching on YouTube, the whole scene was very moving to me. I kept thinking that I was glad he got to see the enormous crowd, probably the greatest number of people ever singing "This Land I Your Land" at one time. At the age of 89, he was privileged to lead one of the biggest sing-alongs in the American history. As many times before, Seeger performed the original version, discussed earlier in this work, which most Americans never learned in school, with all three of the rare stanzas. His performance invoked both historical roles of the song, as a rallying cry for political activists and as a patriotic anthem for the entire nation.[18]

[16] Dorian Lynskey, *33 Revolutions per Minute: A History of Protest Songs, from Billie Holiday to Green Day*. (London: Faber and Faber Ltd., 2011), p. 9.
[17] YouTube. Pete Seeger & Bruce Springsteen - This Land is Your Land - Obama Inauguration (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wnvCPQqQWds, accessed March 1, 2015).
[18] Mark Pedelty. *Ecomusicology: Rock, Folk, and the Environment* (Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 2011), p. 54.