

# “Natural Innocent Love Salvaged from a World Gone Wrong”: Bob Dylan’s Early Songs (1962-64)

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## Abstract

The article attempts to look at the early stage of Bob Dylan’s lyrics (1962-64), before his iconic defiance of the tradition of folk music in the Newport Folk Festival of 1965, and to study the possibility of a cohesive argument connecting the phase with the changing tides of pan-American ethos. His songs over the first three years remain distinctive amongst his entire oeuvre with a prophet-like eloquence, where the image of a democratic poet emerges with a dream of salvaging “a world gone wrong.” With righteous indignation over reactionary politics, social injustice, inequality in the eyes of law, Dylanesque poetry creates a beaded tapestry of synecdochic fragments of a changing nation. Images of “crooked highways” connecting the disparate demography, where the artistic soul “crawls” away to defy stagnation, the unredemptive scaling of the skyscrapers of class binaries, the open spaces of hope and the “hard rain” of apocalyptic cleansing; add up to the disquiet of a Jeremiad narrative. The older-than-his-time oracle calls for answers from senators and politicians, writers and critics, parents and offspring that can only be found “blowing in the wind” with a dire prophecy that “...he that gets hurt will be he who stalls...” This First Phase of Dylan depicts a firm refusal of inherited ethos and strives to question the construction of the essence of the *terra nova*, as a unified, abstract, 'democratic' space. There is an attempt to trace out an America of his perception with streets and highways, muggy lights of New York and Wild West, with tired trumpets playing the swan song of the old order.

**Keywords:** Beat generation singers, Bob Dylan, folk imagery, folk-rock, Jeremiad tradition, rock poetry, Ginsberg

## 1.0 Introduction

Bob Dylan has always been considered older than his times. While his contemporaries were traversing through the social and political *mundus inversus* of the time, Dylan synchronized with the protest movement around 1960s through a series scathing and pithy 'finger-pointing songs,' which were often hastily drafted in reaction to specific events, like the death of Medgar Evers in “Only a Pawn in the Game,” or the riots ensuing from James Meredith's admission into the University of Mississippi in “Oxford Town”; or the general changing façade of American democratic polity in “Hurricane”, “The Times They are a Changin” and “Blowing in the Wind.” Boldly frowning down the image of an aged rock star, a washed out and bloated caricature of himself, Dylan took to the position of veneration in his youth as well as his maturer self, where any contrast between the duo defies conventional nostalgia for the past or pity for the present. Todd Gitlin points out in his “Grizzled Minstrels of Angst: Leonard Cohen and Bob Dylan, Forever Old”, how lyrical darkness and deadpan surrealism wear well in the collective minds of the audience:

It turns out that Dylan can perform "A Hard Rain's A-Gonna Fall" at Madison Square Garden thirty-nine years after he wrote it (during the Cuban Missile Crisis) and pound it freshly into the minds of New Yorkers his grandchildren's age whose first collective memory is the World Trade Center massacre nine weeks earlier. It turns out that he can sing his way painlessly, not self-pityingly, through and past the line "The girls all say, 'You're a worn out star'" ("Summer Days," from *Love and Theft*), surrendering nothing. (Gitlin: 2002, p 96)

That Dylan (Gitlin also included Cohen in his list of 'venerable' old rock stars) debuted broodingly old in their twenties, longing for a majestic yet chronicling failure as his ultimate achievement. He was of the generation when angst was a display of curses and dark prophecies at a world where success is an elusive hoax, failure an honor and joy a hypocritical marketing tool of a bourgeoisie life (p 97).

Critics of the time from Betsy Bowden to the later day David Hajdu, Kevin Dettmar, David Yaffe, Robert Polito and Lee Marshall believe that Dylan came up with his best known individual songs when he was openly displaying his devotion to the ailing Woody Guthrie and the tradition of folk music in the early days of his career. However, his streak of political moralistic outrage did not last long. It has also been noted that despite him visiting Woody Guthrie regularly at the Brooklyn State Hospital, Dylan has voiced his:

...increasing dissatisfaction with the politics-on-the-sleeve modus operandi of the protest music movement, and weary too of the internal battles between the folk purists, the folk-music equivalent of "original instrument" devotees in the classical music world, and those who believed that the animating spirit of folk music endorsed its appropriation for contemporary political struggle. (Dettmar: 2009, p 5)

However, in the second phase, there has also been a notable gradual detachment from the Ginsbergian<sup>i</sup> voice of social decay and loss of a known world order as Dylan sought refuge to the songs of personal love and loss: "You're Gonna Make Me Lonesome when You Go," "Don't think Twice" or "Lay Lady Lay." At the centre of Dylan's poetics<sup>ii</sup> rests a flawed character who expresses a global frustration on a "world gone wrong." There is also a third phase of Dylan's works with an intersection of the personal and the political with certain veiled identity and gender related ambivalence. Some have considered this phase Dylan's misogynistic outpourings, and others have safely codified it up as the *terra tremula* of Dylanesque world, when the maturing singer revisits old crisis, repressions and prejudices.

This article, however, will contrive to delve only into the first phase of Dylan's lyrics and attempt to study the possibility of a cohesive argument connecting the phase with the changing tides of pan-American ethos.

## 2.0 The First Phase (1962-64)

The early "folk-posturing period" of his work (1962-64) was rather short<sup>iii</sup>. The protest songs of the time attempt to trace the fault lines of a crumbling nation in transition. The lyrics in these early songs are fraught with topographic references from sea to shining sea serving both as symbolic territorial markers, and as a means of placing songs within a wider context of the United States as a unified, abstract, 'democratic' space (Sutton: 2009, p 17). There is an attempt to trace out an

America of his perception with streets and highways, muggy lights of New York and Wild West, with tired trumpets playing the swan song of the old order. Eminently Whitmanesque<sup>iv</sup> in its tone, Dylan unwounds his voice in the land which has achieved the freedom yearned for by the poet/singer of his early songs, as in ‘the clouds unbound by law.’ The timeless, classless and amorphous idiom of folk music transcends the boundaries of geography through the nomenclative use of natural symbolism and places. Dylan sketches out a new geography of the changing America with vast distances, epitomized into a unified proximity characteristically as a fragment of “one nation under God, indivisible.” Dylan presented himself as a part of the oral tradition including the populace through the supposed “democratic litany” of the folk music in place of the perceived elegance and inaccessibility of poetic literature. His carefully cultured image of the time was of a sober/pragmatic son of the soil (a hillbilly or a small town boy or a frustrated youth of the underbelly of the decaying city) with his dreams and politics on his sleeve. The cover of his first album *Bob Dylan* (1962) had a close-up of Dylan in a Lenin cap, a statement taken up later by several of his contemporaries including John Lennon and Donovan. Donovan posed for the cover of his first album *Catch the Wind* (1965) in a garb curiously similar to Dylan’s in his Lenin cap. His much lauded “Song to Woody”<sup>v</sup> being two of the original songs of the album speaks volumes of Dylan’s political underpinnings during that time.

### **2.1 Highways and Skyscrapers: the Movement Up and Across**

In this early phase of Dylan’s songs, the image of the highway has been a recurrent trope. An artist in the ever liminal space of ‘on the road’ remains the reiterant connection of Dylan’s early oeuvre with the traditional folk tradition of wandering minstrels or troubadour, albeit in a modern setting. The singer in “Highway 51 Blues” relates to the empty highway as an extension of his own psyche; as familiar as his palm, yet representing the transition of the nation -- neither here nor there-- forever in transit:

Yes, I know that highway like I know the back of my hand  
Running from up Wisconsin  
Way down to no man’s land... (“Highway 51 Blues”, *Bob Dylan*: 1962)

Dylan’s landscape, during this phase, is always in a state of flux. He refuses to stay put in one corner of the nation, and familiarizes the audience with the amorphous quality of the space between spaces, without codifying the space or the time in a defining envelope. His consciousness, defies corporeality and adheres to the fluid linearity of the Highway. Mark Ford in his “Trust Yourself: Emerson and Dylan” discusses the way in which “Dylan’s development and personae might be seen as exemplifying a variety of American ideals... [which] were first and most persuasively codified by Emerson ...who wrote in “Circles” that ‘there are no fixtures in nature. The universe is fluid and volatile. Permanence is a word of degrees...’ (qtd. in Sutton: 2009, p 18). The destination of this Highway 51 is not the real life New Orleans, but an unaccounted for no man’s land-- belonging to no one and a site of peril.

However, Dylan’s being “on the road” might not be an escape of an existentialist from the mundanity of everyday sloth. Rather, this might reflect the mysterious pull of the unknown, which draws an individual away from the certainty of predictable life to the thrill of the motion:

Well, your streets are gettin’ empty,  
Lord, your highway’s gettin’ filled. (“Down the Highway,” *The Freewheelin Bob Dylan*: 1963)

“Down the Highway” presents the nation in a constant motion. The eternal flux, where “...he that gets hurt will be he who stalls...” (“The Times They Are A Changin’”: 1964-65). The inertia of the song is curiously similar to the dynamism of the 1960s protest movements, where the inhabitants of a space have *en masse* elected to ride down in search of a *freewheelin* topsy turvy world, rather than remaining fixed into the fast decaying world. This inertia, for Dylan, represents the true spirit of democratic America, where “travelers” move ahead in a diachronic tempo.

In Dylan’s early works, people are inextricably linked with the space they occupy or reject. While his imagery of the highway remains a representation of dynamic activism and a way out, the image of the skyscrapers and that of the movement up and down forever remains glued to the urbane setting of ambition and failure. The drab commerciality of the urban space, where the cramped apses only allows a vertical movement across class and hierarchy:

It's a mighty long ways from the Golden Gate  
To Rockefeller Plaza n' the Empire State.  
Mister Rockefeller sets up as high as a bird  
Old Mister Empire never says a word.  
And it 's hard times, from the country,  
Living down in New York Town (“Hard Times in New York Town,” *The Bootleg Series*, Vol. 1: 1962)<sup>vi</sup>

The vertical distance proves to be far more inaccessible than the distance across. While the highway might represent a disconcerting rootlessness, it might also be a liberating scope to traverse the figurative connectors of the nation in understanding its synecdochic whole. On the other hand, the skyscrapers are forever illusive as they can seldom be scaled up, and one can always tumble down to nothingness:

Thought I'd seen some ups and down,  
'Til I come into New York town.  
People goin' down to the ground,  
Buildings goin' up... (“Talkin’ New York,” *Bob Dylan*: 1962)

A shift up and down as well as across creates a sense of the space in an individual.

## **2.2 The Image of the Open Space**

There is often a catalogue of places listed in Dylan’s early songs. Dylan is, as if, conscious of the time of upheaval where the old order changes into a new one for the generation he represents. It needs a sense of experiencing the essence of the space creating the sense of an individual:

Go out in your country where the land meets the sun  
See the craters and the canyons where the waterfalls run  
Nevada, New Mexico, Arizona, Idaho  
Let every state in this union seep deep down in you... (“Let me Die in my Footsteps,” *The Bootleg Series*, Vol. 1: 1963)

Strangely evocative of Whitman’s “Song of Myself,” the song demands a sacrifice of the comfort

zone and experiencing the nation as a holistic idea, which, however, needs to be perceived in parts. There is a mystical transcendence of the folk music which liberates the protagonist from the cramped up urban space and makes one set out to experience America anew. Unsung and unhonored the experience is a gift unto itself, as an individual senses the beauty of the space which cannot be codified under state boundaries or Highway numbers:

I stood unwound beneath the skies  
 And clouds unbound by laws.  
 The cry in rain like a trumpet sang  
 And asked for no applause...  
 The branches bare like a banjo played  
 To the winds that listened best. (“Lay Down Your Weary Tune,” *Biograph*: 1964)

A classic borrowing of imagery from the guitar and banjo playing freewheelers around the campfire, Dylan’s verses have been a deviation from the early ‘voice of the generation’ trope as it attempts as it envisions a nation of change with charming naivete. His early songs portray an America of polar extremes: between the highway and the no man’s land, the rich and the poor, the black and the white suspended between a space of distance and experience. The boundaries are erased and the American nation stands alone in a *tabula rasa* with endless possibility of experiences. The democratic poet recognizes the synecdochic parts as well as the highways that connect them into a coherent whole, inviting a cleansing and inevitable impending change. Dylanologists believe that his lyrics take stock of the social and political landscape of the 1960s, as Dylan perceived the religious temperament of everyday Americans and the role it played in creating the pan-American ethos. Dylan, immersed in the idioms of Jewish prophecy and exile, always perceives himself slightly apart from the rest of the world, and envisions a new America, cleansed and just, where he will stand together with his brethren. Early Dylan is littered with references of prophets, saints, sinners, thieves, faith healers, Madonna and the always in the margin Messiah, a Christ like stranger.

### 3.0 Biblical Imagery and the Allusion to the Jeremiads

Dylan’s allusions to evangelical Christianity have never been a comfortable episode for Dylanologists. R Clifton Spargo and Anne K Ream consider early Dylan Biblical allusions as one of the two episodes of controversial ideological shift in the singer’s career, the latter being the 1965 rejection of folk movement (Spargo & Ream: 2009: p 87). Now most Dylanologists consider his “Christian phase” as one of Dylan’s multiple eccentricities. A few of the songs of this time have distinctive biblical imagery utilized to signify the need for social change in a taxing new world of prejudices. The prophetic vein of the lyrics are more pronounced here than his later songs. Though not many, these numbers transfer personal experiences of social prejudice and discrimination into calls for a societal overhaul in a post-apocalyptic world.

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,

Say in' we'll meet all your demands,  
 But we'll shout from the bow your days are numbered.  
 And like Pharaoh's tribe,  
 They'll be drowned in the tide,  
 And like Goliath, they'll be conquered. ("When the Ships Come In": 1963)<sup>vii</sup>

Beside the obvious allusion from the Exodus, Dylan also represents himself as an inheritor of his Jewish heritage come to redeem his land and rights. The lyrics do not brook any clemency or negotiation, but continues in a vitriolic cry for retribution. There are further Biblical allusions in the song, where Dylan dreams of a new morning when the sea parts and a new land of promise and possibilities appear in the horizon:

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 waves will pound  
 And the morning will be breaking. ("When the Ships Come In": 1963)

In the antiwar litany of "God on Our Side," Dylan gives himself a timeless/ spaceless persona of a nobody from the "Midwest" merging the Midwesterner into an amorphous and unidentifiable member of the American populace. He is everyman with an unfixed social and political identity with the religious self-belief that permeated the pan-American Puritanism of the time. As a child, the midwesterner of the song has been taught of two things: "the laws to abide" and that they have "God on its side." Through the recurrent refrain of "God on Our Side," the Midwesterner condemns the myopic worldview that self righteously justifies the historical justifications of every historical transgression:

...As the song catalogues every major American conflict, bonding them with the 'God on our side' refrain, Dylan telescopes history into a singular progression from the Puritan establishment of the American experiment through the nation's history, past one great reconstruction after the Civil War on to the contemporary position of change and upheaval. (Sutton: 2009, p 26)

There is a powerful rhetoric against the reductive binarism of "self" and the "other", in the American ethos which culturally conditions the citizens into believing contrived dichotomies where people are taught the Cold-War ideology to hate Russians all through their lives, without any objective political insight and Germans are friends and foes depending on the politics of the day:

We forgave the Germans  
 And then we were friends  
 Though they murdered six million  
 In the ovens they fried  
 The Germans now, too  
 Have God on their side. ("With God on Our Side," *The Times They are A-Changin'*: 1964)

The song ends with the midwesterner wondering whether Judas Iscariot had God in his side when he betrayed Jesus with a kiss and fervently praying that, if indeed God is in their side, he will stop

the next war. There is clearly a parallel with the tradition of Jeremiad<sup>viii</sup>, though liberally utilized in a secularist agenda. It is more apparent in “The Times They are a Changin’” where the call for action also portrays a deep foreboding of what may happen otherwise:

At this point in his career, Dylan’s use of Biblical imagery was redemptive only in the time-honored prophetic sense of uttering threats against the powerful and the wayward people who follow them... His Biblical characters, like mythical stand-ins for the singer’s own alienation, are also outliers; and the Abe who is mystified by a deity who could call so callously for blood on America’s highways finds himself answerable, we deduce, not so much to the biblical God of Judaisms as to a newly Americanized God, suited to the needs of the people of this strange land. (Spargo & Ream: 2009, pp 89-93)

In “Masters of War” (1963), the jeremiad tradition of Dylan continues as the Old Testament prophet direly denounces Kennedy’s war tactics and prophesizes death and lack of redemption:

And I hope that you die  
And your death’ll come soon  
I will follow your casket  
By 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. (“Masters of War,” *The Freewheelin’ Bob Dylan*: 1963)

The Puritan oracle voicing his Jeremiad augury as the warmongers fasten triggers in the hands of others as they hide behind walls and desks believing world war can ever be won.

#### 4.0 The Litany of Protest

Dylan’s archetypical songs of protest, however, stand mostly in his singles. “The Times They are a Changin’”, “Blowing in the Wind” and “A Hard Rain’s A Gonna Fall” call for active intervention from the citizens to avoid a cataclysmic future for the nation. Dylan stands out as the proverbial Liberty calling Congressmen and Parents and Writers and Critics alike to war because, stalling and refusing to swim will only cause in an untimely drowning. There is a prophecy for a *mundus inversus*, as the existing social order is inverted to a newer form where the kings might be beggars and the fools end up being kings:

The line it is drawn  
The curse it is cast  
The slowest now  
Will later be fast  
As the present now  
Will later be past  
The order is rapidly fading  
And the first one now will later be last... (“The Times They Are A Changin’”: 1964-65)

On the other hand, “A Hard Rain’s A Gonna Fall” is the return of the prodigal sons with tales of all the places he has been visiting in the diverse landscape of America. Each stanza of the song

depicts a feature of the nation as he has perceived. The dreamer son, takes up the role of the pilgrim who has walked and crawled across “six crooked highways” stumbling every step to fight the stagnation from seeping in his bones. The landscape is neither perfect nor liberating as the highways are crooked, the forests are sad and the dozen oceans are dead as he crawls “ten thousand miles in the mouth of a graveyard.” There are descriptions of “black branch with blood that kept dripping” and “room full of men with their hammers a-bleeding” with racial and legal discrimination against the minorities and underprivileged. The pilgrim heard “one person starve,” and “many people laughin:, and can distantly hear the tidal wave that will overpower this darkness. The protagonist of this song chooses to face the injustices of this land and to back away before the hard rain comes to give the nation a lapsarian cleaning:

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 colour, where none is the number. (“A Hard Rain’s A Gonna Fall”:  
 1964)

The song is strangely evocative of a prophetic rancor, where the pilgrim can witness the injustices as well as can predict the fall of such a system. Dylan’s compact phrases and the gradually sharpening notes portray the pent up frustration of a Jeremiad prophet.

In “The Lonesome Death of Hattie Carroll,” written in response to the gruesome murder of a maid by a drunken socialite and the ensuing legal travesty where the socialite was given a sentence of only six months, satirizes the supposed empathy of the Judge as his capacity to oversee “penalty and repentance.” Dylan speaks of the death of fifty-one year old Hattie Carroll who was killed on a drunken whim representing the death of all that is gentle and all that are supposed to be genteel:

Got killed by a blow, lay slain by a cane  
 That sailed through the air and came down through the room  
 Doomed and determined to destroy all the gentle  
 And she never done nothing to William Zanzinger  
 And you who philosophize disgrace and criticize all fears  
 Take the rag away from your face  
 Now ain't the time for your tears... (“The Lonesome Death of Hattie Carroll,” *The Times They are A Changin'*: 1964).

The well born has forfeited their claim for gentility and noblesse oblige, and the Judge and the law are but puppets in the hands of the privileged and gentleness and grace are dead in the form of the lonesome Hattie Carroll.

## 5.0 Conclusion

Dylan has presided over the world of folk-rock with the iconic status of a prophet. Before the maturing performer insisted on defying the tradition that he was initially associated with, and

before the amorphous experience of ambivalent identity took over, Dylan’s poetics was an attempt to redraw the democratic cartography of America-- the continuous flux that deconstructed the essence of the nation and the endless possibility of a new nation. Dylan constructed the blank slate of America where in the manner of the Puritan forefathers, the idea of a nation slowly crystallizes. His highways connect the fragments of a whole nation into a beaded tapestry of shared experiences and an empathetic outrage over inequality and injustice. They are the way out of crisis as well as from the deadening stagnation of reactionary politics. The highways gradually disintegrate into shadowlands as the dream for justice evaporates into despairing nothingness. As the dream of an apocalyptic cleansing appears over the horizon, the democratic youth dissolves into the aging performer uprooting himself from the tradition of his choice earlier.

Dylan is the image of his own artistry. His studied unkempt look, his political nonchalance, his morality, his religion, his outrage have all been a product of an iconography that he had long recognized his future to be:

How do you grow old in public? Ironically. You can't pretend your way into starting all over again. But the problem is not new. Thirty-five years ago, Dylan already knew that he had become - had propelled himself into becoming - "Dylan," the self-packaged, branded, electrified prince of our disorder. (Gitlin: 2002, p 99)

His later works are often cited to be derivations of himself. And, yet, the derivative Dylan does not fade away in the aged image of the “Forever Young” rock star. He revives himself in an image of graceful continuity.

## Notes

<sup>i</sup> Though not exactly contemporaries, Ginsberg has often been clubbed in the same umbrella with the early Dylan. Some critics of the Beat generation called them the “Jewish father and son duo” heralding the gradual death of the Beats. Mel Howard commented on the burgeoning friendship of the duo; “Allen saw Dylan rightly connected to the whole tradition of the Beat movement, and through that to earlier poets.” Ginsberg and Dylan later collaborated on albums later released as *First Blues* in 1983. He shared the stage with Dylan during the iconic Rolling Thunder Revue in 1975. Ginsberg famously wrote about Dylan in *Deliberate Prose: Selected Essays 1952-1995*:

His image was undercurrent, underground, unconscious in people ... something a little more mysterious, poetic, a little more Dada, more where people’s hearts and heads actually were rather than where they ‘should be’ according to some ideological angry theory. (San Francisco, 1965) (Ginsberg: 2001, pp 52-53)

<sup>ii</sup> Dylan, incidentally, never considered himself a poet. Though his fascination with Dylan Thomas is clear in his choice of name which he changed into from Robert Allen Zimmerman, he was, in his opinion a performer. In the context of the “rock poets” like Leonard Cohen, Joni Mitchell, Patti Smith, Paul Simon and Lou Reed, Dylan vehemently denied himself the label of a poet: “Wordsworth’s a poet, Shelley’s a poet, Allen Ginsberg’s a poet...” (qtd. in Dettmar: 2009, p 2). However, his lyrics have always enjoyed a certain cult status for being poetry, in spite of being opposed by musicologists. Robert Christgau reminded people in his compilation “Rock Lyrics,” that “Dylan is a songwriter, not a poet... ‘My Black Pages’ is a bad poem. But it is a good song...” (p 63).

<sup>iii</sup> In July, 1965, Dylan publicly denounced the folk movement on stage in the Newport Folk Festival and was booed out of the stage by the enraged audience, who believed it to be a betrayal of sort and a revolution of his personal consciousness. The statement was more iconic as just the previous year, Dylan had performed

“Blowing in the Wind” in the same stage which remains canonized as the ultimate folk rock by audiences and critics for over five decades.

<sup>iv</sup> There have been consistent comparisons of Dylan with literary behemoths like Joyce and Whitman. Critics and Musicologists have often dubbed Joyce and Dylan together as the God’s gifts to the old and the new English Departments. However, Walt Whitman’s shadow fall large in the first phase of Dylan’s musical journey. Eminently attached to the land and the people of the essence of America, both Dylan and Whitman curiously remain attached to the sensory spectacle of everyday life drawing out the boundaries of the known world to attempt understanding the unknown or the impending. Whitman, moreover, considered poetic art as a performative domain where readers are invited to partake of the sound and rhythm of his work together with the words of his poetry. Likewise Dylan ends up creating an increased dynamism and emotional depth in his poetics through each individual, unique performance.

<sup>v</sup> The song is an adaptation of Woody Guthrie’s iconic number “1913 Massacre” on the Italian Hall incident in 1913 where protesting miners and their children were killed in an induced stampede on Christmas Eve. The exact number of casualty has never been determined. Woody Guthrie remained a faithful follower of several Communist parties of America till his last day. It was rumored that Dylan shared his political beliefs.

<sup>vi</sup> A similar refrain can be found in Dylan’s receiving the Tom Paine Award from the National Liberties Commission in 1963: 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. (qtd. in Sutton: 2009, p 19).

<sup>vii</sup> In 1963, Bob Dylan was denied entrance and accommodation in a city hotel, due to his unkempt appearance and choice of dressing. Later, however, the already popular Joan Baez intervened and Dylan was given a room. This prompted him to write “When the Ship Comes In” with a moral outrage and a call for the death of the old social order in a timeless biblical prophecy.

<sup>viii</sup> Secvan Bercovitch defined Jeremiad as the early Puritanical tradition in America to use traditional and religious metaphors to signify shifting socio-religious polity. In the Jeremiad tradition, optimism may also have a deep sense of disquiet.

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