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Abstract: During the 60s, there was a revolutionary transformation in North-American society that was born of a counter-culture that reacted against the fictitious happiness of the "booming" 50s, during which the economy of the country doubled, unemployment rates fell, and wages were high. However, the panorama for black people was not so successful. They were still a marginalized community under white male supremacy. Many people also protested against the war hegemony of the country and its participation in injudicious wars. Bob Dylan was one of the spokesman for the anti-war movement and for the new generation claiming for liberty, equality and peace. Dylan is widely acclaimed not only as a protest singer, but a protest poet. Many of his songs have become anthems. This paper explores Dylan's work from this dual perspective of the singer-poet standing for the protests of an entire generation of people in the US and the emergence of popular culture within the literary canon.

Keywords: Bob Dylan, anti-war protest, 1960s, US popular culture, poet-singer

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Socio-critical analysis of Bob Dylan as a protest poet in the 60s

O. Introduction

Bob Dylan (1941) is an American artist, well known for his folk and Rock & Roll music. He started performing at a very young age and met interesting poets from the Beat Generation such as Allen Ginsberg -who became one of his best friends. Dylan was greatly influenced by at least one of the poems titled "Mexico City Blues" written by Jack Kerouac, one of the most famous beats. Many music critics consider him the best songwriter in history. However, to others, Dylan is not a poet despite the fact that he considers himself 'first a poet, and then a musician', having claimed that "it ain't the melodies that're important..., it's the words"(cited in Ricks 12).

This paper attempts to prove that Dylan is not just a composer, but also one of the most influential poets in the 20th Century. On the other hand, some selected songs by Dylan will be examined in order to give an accurate approach to some of the facts of the 60's in the United States of America. This will give the reader an overall understanding of some singularities of the times, its consequences, Mr. Dylan's critical point of view and why did he chose such topics to elaborate his work around them.

Sometimes we seem to forget that literature and music are strongly related, and that Homer's poems and Scandinavian epics were chanted. Frequently, artists cultivate various aesthetic areas in order to explore the various ways of exploiting their imagination and talent. A consequence of the development of print culture was the separation of poetry from its singing and performed qualities. Poetry came to be seen, somewhat paradoxically, as a sort of silent performance, to be read in solitude, while music has remained in the context of rhythm, melody and instrumentation. This sharp contrast between the two arts is not accurate, even if they can be used as basic explanations of both terms. Besides, when teaching literature, contemporary educators usually follow a canon that rarely includes lyrics by songwriters. This obviously restrains the student capability to recognize the relationship between music and literature, and among the arts as a whole. Therefore, my aspiration to present Bob Dylan as both a poet and a singer, and to explore his poetic work as a political art is in itself a subversive action within the canonical literature. Allow me to start with some comparisons in order to give some support to my aims. English songwriters such as Leonard Cohen or Townes Van Zandt and non-English ones such as Joaquín Sabina or Luis Eduardo Aute, both from Spain, are considered poets by both audiences and experts. A comparison between some of them and Bob Dylan will help to reinforce my statement.

Dylan was not born a poet for no reason. The historical context that surrounded him when he first began to compose, inspired him to write those lyrics. Some of these particulars ought to be explained in relation to Dylan's lyrics, which will also give the reader a strong argument to understand why he stopped writing protest poetry in the middle 60s. A selected bibliography written by experts on Dylan's life and work will also be scrutinized and put into a context within some of the historical facts from those years.

1. Bob Dylan as a poet

1.1. Brief biographical data

Bob Dylan was born Robert Allan Zimmerman in Duluth, Minnesota. He began his music career at the age of 20, in 1961. He firstly performed folk, shifting to Rock and Roll music in 1965, when he published "Bringing All Back Home". He is well known for songs such as "Blowin' in the wind", "Like a Rolling Stones" or "Knockin' on Heaven's Doors". He began his

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career imitating Marlon Brando or James Dean's physical appearance, the beats style of life and Woody Guthrie's music.

1.2. Bob Dylan's influences

Woody Guthrie is Dylan's hugest influence. "Song to Woody" is a song, from his first album, which is an explicit tribute to a genius who performed folk songs during the first half of the 20th Century, denouncing (among others) the crudity of the 30s Dust Bowl farmers, who were forced to move to the standoffish California. Guthrie's guitar had a phrase written in it: "This machine kills fascists", his rebellious attitude convinced Dylan to drive all the way to New York when he knew that Guthrie was very sick to be able to meet his hero before the end.

Dylan read a lot of poems as a teenager, but as Ginsberg pointed out, Kerouac's poem "*Mexico City Blues*", which he read in 1959, was a main inspiration for him, as it was the first poem that actually talked his own American language. He never met Kerouac, but he was surrounded by other Beat poets, such as Ferlinghetti, Corso or Ginsberg. In fact, some of the titles of his songs hold a clear beat connotation: Kerouac's novels "*The Subterraneans*" and "*On the Road*" turned into Dylan's songs "On the Road Again" and "Subterranean Homesick Blues", "*Visions of Gerard*" is redirected in "Visions of Johanna", and "*Desolation Row*" is a reference to Desolation Angels. (Gray 377)

1.3. Similarities with 'real' poets.

Christopher Ricks is the most recent literary scholar (not an expert in music) who writes about Dylan's lyrics considering them poems in his book "*Dylan's visions of sin*", and he is not the only one. This is possible because Ricks takes Dylan as an artist, rather than a performer, as most of rock and roll stars. (Dettmar 117). The same Dylan in an interview claimed that when writing his lyrics, he usually imagined them being recited without any melody or beat (Boucher 8). When a poet as Larkin placed a full stop at the end of the poem, it means that the story is over, that nothing else was going to be said, he did not do it before the end, same as Dylan's lyrics. (Ricks 24). In fact, as Ricks pointed out, Dylan's poetry/songs are not easy to read or understand, one of the characteristics of Dylan is that he "can sketch a patriotic posturing simply by thrusting forth the jaw of a rhyme with a challenge" (Ricks 35)

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
 A true American will pronounce the proud word, juttingly, American." (cited in Ricks 35)

Simon Armitage has argued that the influence Dylan had in his persona, was the one of a poet. He detects the high lyrical value in the strengths of humour and narrative, but at the same time he recognizes something poetic in Dylan's character, style and manner, and praises his unique attitude towards resilience and survival. (Corcoran 11). He also points out that Dylan's lyrics are incredibly complex and that it is required a close attention to interpret them properly. (Corcoran 12)

After Suze Rotolo, his girlfriend, broke up with him in 1964, Dylan, who already had a good knowledge of French poet Rimbaud, began to use as many drugs as he could in order to imitate him: "The poet makes himself a seer by a long, prodigious and rational disordering of the senses, [...] he ends up by losing the understanding of his visions" (Heylin 151). "Mr. Tambourine Man" is one of his most famous songs from that period. A letter called 'Je est un autre', which means literally 'I is someone else', made perfect sense for Dylan and he began

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to use more ambiguous words and phrases in his songs, writing also in second person: "Hey ! Mr Tambourine Man, play a song for me I'm not sleepy and there is no place I'm going to."

Indeed, Rimbaud was a rebel who wrote to reach as many readers as he could and questioned all kinds of authority, including the state or church. Playing with the words of the movie *A Rebel without a cause*, starring James Dean, an actor Dylan really admired, it could be said that Dylan –in contrast to Rimbaud- was 'a rebel with a cause', writes David Boucher (2004: 73). It is telling that the simple past is used when referring to Dylan's attitude towards writing protest songs.

As Joan Baez pointed out during a tour in 1965, Dylan lost the faith in changing the world and transformed his optimistic point of view into resignation, as he realized he could not amend the degradation around him. There are other reasons that led Dylan to stop writing lyrics of dissent. After the assassination of JFK in Dallas in 1963, public figures feared being murdered by some enemy or a random lunatic Robert Kennedy, Martin Luther King were also murdered. Andy Warhol almost died after a serious attempt on his life during the late 60s. These events were behind Dylan's decision not to write any more protest songs.

1.4. Other songwriters considered poets

Poet Kenneth Rexroth argued that the most recent important event in the poetry of the 1960s was Dylan. He claimed that Dylan shared his use of urban imagery and the expression of urban disenchantment with T.S. Eliot. (Boucher 152). Leonard Cohen himself has always lived under the large shadow of Dylan and had to deal with the comparison of his works to those of Dylan's despite the fact that Cohen was a published poet prior being a singer. In Cohen's own words "Dylan was always what I had meant by the poet –someone about whom the word was never used." (cited in Boucher 77). In his "Tower of song", it is clear that the rhyme and rhythm of the song stands by itself and can be read aloud, that is why he is also consider a poet of rock and roll.

"Well my friends are gone and my hair is gray
 I ache in the places where I used to play
 And I'm crazy for love but I'm not coming on
 I'm just paying my rent every day in the tower of song
 I said to Hank Williams, "How lonely does it get?"
 Hank Williams hasn't answered yet
 But I hear him coughing all night long
 Oh, a hundred floors above me in the tower of song"

Joaquín Sabina is one of the most famous Spanish artists. His poetry is also performed and, as Dylan, he has been criticized for the nasal sound of his voice while singing. In a fragment from his song "*Amor se llama el juego*", it is clear that it does not need the instrumental music around it to have musicality on its own: the rhyme, rhythm and the complexity of the lyrics elevate Sabina to the position of poet-singer.

"El agua apaga al fuego
 y el ardor los años
 Amor se llama el juego
 en el que un par de ciegos
 juegan a hacerse daño"

Luis Eduardo Aute – a well-known Spanish singer, poet, painter- during his visit to Universidad Complutense in March 2015, stated that his main influence to start writing poetry which could be performed as a song, was Dylan's theme "A Hard Rain's a-Gonna fall". Aute admitted that he first wrote his songs without any interest in singing them, but it was because of Bob Dylan that he realized that it was possible to do so. Aute said that Dylan was

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able to perform -with only four basic chords- a long poem, and that his voice was awful, and still, his lyrics were touching. This fragment from his song "Aleluya nº1" –which was released in 1967- shows that Dylan not only influenced musicians or poets in the later years, but he did influenced from his beginnings, gaining an international fame.

"Unos pasos sin destino
 por cuarenta mil caminos,
 un acorde disonante,
 nueve infiernos sin el Dante,
 una eterna carcajada
 de cenizas, polvo y nada,
 aleluya."

2. Analysis of Dylan's work

Bob Dylan began writing protest songs influenced by the artistic atmosphere of New York City and the thriving of the Greenwich Village scene. Likewise, his girlfriend at the time, Suzanne Rotolo, helped him to do so. Listening to Woody Guthrie gave him a broad vision of the political situation, but it was Rotolo who convinced him to go on the road and perform his non-conformist lyrics in order to become an icon of their generation and change the circumstances that the emerging cohort despised and detested. Three of his albums ("The Freewheelin'", "Another side of Bob Dylan", "The times they are A-changin'") share the spirit of analysing the problems of society, its diseases, rarely giving any solutions to those glitches. Dylan did not only write about what contaminates society, he created songs such as "My back pages", in which it could be perceived some tones of dissatisfaction " 'Equality', I spoke the word/ As if a wedding vow/ Ah, but I was so much older then/ I'm younger than that now." However, overall, many of them did not finger pointed the difficulties, but offered a much more inner feeling of Dylan's personal dilemmas. His album "Desire" (1976) contained two songs –"Joey" and "Hurricane"-, which also presented two familiar personalities of the 60s in America, the first being related with the New York Mafia and the other one being a huge protest against racism.

2.1. Album 'The Freewheelin' (1963)

2.1.1. *Blowin' in the wind*

"Peter Narrows had no doubt he was hearing poetry the first time Albert Grossman played him 'Blowin' in the wind'" (Sounes 168). Dylan himself invited people to define what the answer to the lyrics was, stepping aside, not giving any clue or interpretation. For the audience, it is one of the most famous songs by Dylan. It is also one of the greatest protest anthems ever written. It played a major role for people who wanted the Vietnam War to end, and for the Black Movement, that desired to have equal rights. In "Blowin' in the wind", Dylan does not give an answer to these questions – he rarely did so in his songs-, he simply asks how long will it take to be in peace, when will someone find these solutions. It seems to urge the people to pay attention to those issues and find solutions together (Roberts 42). In fact, the song was taken from a previous anti-slavery folk song called "*No more Auction Block*".

2.1.2. *Masters of War*

This song is a malicious attack against the US Government, and was directly influenced by the Cold War. He used hard language, distancing himself from those idealists who produce folk music when pointing out injustices. In the last part of the song, Dylan even adventured to claim that he would stand in front of the graves of the ones who cause war until they are completely buried, so he can be sure they are completely dead. At the time the song was written, Dylan did not profess the Christian religion, he was born again a Christian in the late 70s, as he confessed in his autobiography "Chronicles". However, Dylan used Biblical

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allegories to be harsh to those who, in his point of view, deserve it. Firstly, he mentioned Judas: "Like Judas of old/ You lie and deceive/ A world war can be won/ You want me to believe." The statement is a clear reference to the characteristics of the US Government, they are liars and traitors, same as the Military enterprises. Dylan did not stop there, but goes one step further claiming that not even the person who has exonerated Judas for betrayal would forgive their acts, meaning that they are worse than Judas himself: "But there's one thing I know/ Though I'm younger than you/ That even Jesus would never/ Forgive what you do." When Dylan alleged at the end that he will contemplate their graves, he is also talking about the episode where Lazarus resurrected or Jesus himself who resurrected after three days, he wanted to make sure that it does not happen to them.

2.1.3 *A Hard Rain's a-Gonna fall*

The fear of nuclear war predisposed Dylan to elaborate this song, as he was afraid that the world would end soon if the governments continue destroying one another. It is a conversation between a mother and her child, in the line "I met a white man who walked a black dog", there is a clear reference to the dominance of whites and the discrimination against black people, who are portrayed as dogs. It is a vision of hell, Mother Earth asking why is it that humans are putting an end to all lives.

Oh, what did you see, my blue eyed son?
 And 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

Khrushchev and Kennedy almost ended with the whole world. Clinton Heylin, one of the main experts on Dylan's work reasoned that at the moment Dylan wrote this song he became officially a poet.

Nothing in Dylan's canon leads up to this example of wild mercury poetry. It is so unexpected that it takes the author another eighteen months before he mines the same rich vein of poetry again. The main question arising is, where had Dylan been hiding all this erudition? With 'Hard Rain' he abandoned any pretence that he was just a worried man with a worried mind and grabbed hold of a word that has haunted him ever since – 'poet' (Haylin 2009)

"*Talking World War III blues*" is the antidote to this song, and is a comic paranoia about how lonely will he feel when the rest of the people have died because of the nuclear weapons.

2.1.4 *Oxford Town*

Mr. Dylan denounced explicitly the exclusion of James Meredith, a black student, from the University of Mississippi in 1962. He was denied twice to enter that University, which at the time was entirely filled with white people. At the end, Robert Kennedy persuaded the Governor of the University to let Meredith in, being Meredith able to obtain a degree from there, even though he was harassed and bullied by other classmates.

Oxford Town around the bend
 He come in to the door, he couldn't get in
 All because of the color of his skin
 What do you think about that, my frien'?

Dylan, being a master in using the journalistic style –at least the tone and message given- when writing and, at the same time, asking for the readers/auditors opinion to make them being more involved with the song, was able to play with language disassociating

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himself from the story, he was a mere spectator. It is interesting that at no point did Dylan mention Meredith's name, allowing the black readers/listeners identify themselves with Meredith and letting the white audience who were not in favour of Meredith's admission doubting whether it was fair or not.

2.2. Album "The Times they are A-changing" (1964)

2.2.1. *The times they are A-changing*

In this song, Dylan talks to the parents of his generation, telling them that the world is changing and they have two options: help them to change it, or take a step away so that the new generation can do it. In the 60s the differences between one generation and the previous were extreme, it seemed like they had nothing to do with each other. Black people and women were taking jobs they have always been denied to. The television was in almost every family's home and the clothes totally transformed, old people were not in favour of these alterations. "For the wheel's still in spin/ And there's no tellin' who/ That it's namin'/ For the loser now/ Will be later to win/ For the times they are a-changin'."

In fact, Dylan is kind of a prophet, claiming that the ones who are poor or in disgrace will be the ones who lead the change and will end with injustice. The last one will be first, "And the first one now will later be last". It contains also biblical allusions as the line "Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth", which belongs to the New Testament, it is part of Jesus' Sermon on the Mount. (Roberts 49).

2.2.2. *Ballad of Hollis Brown*

This is a dingy narrative about a poor farmer from South Dakota who was not able to feed his wife and five children, and in an act of desperation killed the whole family and committed suicide after doing so. Even though, Hollis Brown is not real in name, Dylan had probably read similar news on a local paper as it was common on those times, and he probably adapted the story. He did not condemn Brown actions neither approved them, it was not up to him, he only wanted to show what evidences could possibly lead to particulars as murdering a whole family. Despite the fact the song is in the same album as "The times they are A-changing", it is completely opposite to that one. In "Ballad of Hollis Brown", Dylan suggested that nothing really changes at all; families struggle to survive in the world and the last line of the lyrics "There's seven new people born" indicated that it will all happen again.

2.2.3. *With God on our side*

It is not a poem about religion, but about the Americans political and historical thinking that allowed them to go to war or to destroy, being America divine and the rest of the countries mere mortals. Dylan criticizes the historical American fights: first they killed the Native Indians for the reason that were seem as savages; later on McCarthy implanted the fear that every communist was the devil and the right thing to do was to combat them. In recent times this same song could be used to examine George W. Bush's description of the Arabic countries such as Irak or Iran as an "axis of evil". (Rogovoy 62)

When the Second World War
 Came to an end
 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.

Dylan questions the behaviour of the US Government after the Second World War pointing out the hypocrisy and how differences were the attitudes towards the ally in the

war, Russia, and America's main enemy: Germany. Dylan showed that what matters is power and the world's control. Another similar song from the same album, "When the ship comes in", ends with two biblical allusions, being the first one an image of release characterized by a reference to David and Goliath; the last one is the episode of the Jewish liberation –it is not casual that Dylan himself was born a Jewish-, when the seas split causing the death of many Egyptians, including the Pharaoh "And like Pharaoh's tribe, / They'll be drowned in the tide, / And like Goliath, they'll be conquered". These last verses showed one of the main characteristics when analysing Dylan's work: the connexion with the weak ones, or at least, his predisposition to sympathizes with the underdogs.

2.2.4. *North Country Blues*

This song is very much influenced by Woody Guthrie and it is based in a mining camp near his hometown, in Minnesota, probably the Mesabi Range. The narrator is a woman whose mother was sick after living under such conditions and died. Same happened with the father, as well as the brother, both miners. She married another miner, but it can be understood that the lyrics are critical towards capitalism, not only a mere story of a random woman; Dylan usually uses unknown/common characters to portray some of the problems of society. The husband of the narrator cannot continue working in the excavations, as the suppliers are contracting people from the South because they work almost for free. Therefore, he decided to commit suicide, being unable to continue with the struggle and having not received any education.

2.2.5. *Only a Pawn in their game*

It was sang during Martin Luther King's March in Washington, 1963. Medgar Evers was killed earlier on during the year. He was an activist for the Human Rights. The song is not actually bent around Evers, but rather Dylan empathizes with the assassin, proposing that it was not the fault of the anonymous slayer, although he pulled the trigger. Moreover, the one to blame is the culture which teaches poor white guys that they need to hate black people as they are part of the white supremacy. Dylan also suggests in the song that everyone have responsibility to work towards a real equality and if they do not cooperate they are as guilty as Evers' murderer for his death. In the first lines of the song using words as 'back', 'behind' or 'dark', Dylan accentuated the idea that the murderer was unscrupulous and ruthless, the murderer did not even have the courage to look at the victims' face.

2.2.6. *The Lonesome Death of Hattie Carroll*

William Zanzinger was a landowner who murdered his black maid, Hattie Carroll, mother of eleven children, apparently after she was not quick enough while serving in a ball. He was in jail for only six months. It occurred in Maryland in 1963, months before Dylan decided to put this case into words and show injustice to the world. It is not casual that Dylan chose 'lonesome' as part of the title of the song, he wanted to contrast the solitude of death and the living packed hotel in Baltimore. It can be also found an opposition between the anger expressed by Zanzinger and the temperance shown by Dylan when writing about the story, so he did not devaluate himself to such degree. Actually, Hattie Carroll might be perceived as doomed at the beginning, but later on the reader realizes that it is Zanzinger who is doomed, after killing her with his cane. (Ricks, 229). A clever argument that Ricks pointed out is that

The song never says she's black, and it's the best civil rights song because it never says she is black. Everybody knows she is black and it has nothing to do with knowing the newspaper story. You just know she must have been black. It's a terrible thing that you know this from the story, and from the perfunctory prison sentence, even while the song never says so. It's white upon black, it's man upon woman, it's rich upon poor, it's young upon old [...] Hattie Carroll is a supreme

understanding of the difference between writing a political song and writing a song politically". (231)

2.3. Album "Another Side of Bob Dylan" (1964)

2.3.1. *Chimes of freedom*

"The refrain 'strikin' for the gentle/ striking for the kind/ striking for the cripple ones/ an striking for the blinds' had obviously been haunting him." (Heylin 147). The tone of these lyrics, in distinction with previous ones such as "*A Hard Rain's A-Gonna Fall*" the language used is less cataclysmic, and more ecstatic. It was pivotal in Dylan's writing, as it marked the change in composition, from the earlier protest songs to the more condensed way of writing in favour of the powerless, it is an honest cry for humankind. Dylan uses "the literary device of catalogue verse in order to give them identity, and through that, substance." (Boucher 118)

The third verse tells the reader/listener that "Through the mad mystic hammering of the wild ripping hail/ The sky cracked its poems in naked wonder/."The last verse ratifies the epiphanic otherworldliness of the experience, being described as "Starry-eyed an' laughing as I recall when we were caught/ Trapped by no track of hours for they hanged suspended."The second part of each verse enumerates the different conglomerations of people for whom the chimes of freedom are flashing. The chimes call for the pariah sweltering repetitively at the stake, the disable ones (blind, deaf or mute), for the solitary mother who is seem as a prostitute, for those innocents who are in jail –it is a recurrent theme, as it inspired him to write "*Hurricane*"-, for those who have been miserable in love. Seth Rogovoy (2009) has asserted in a more spiritual way that

Wrapped up in this song is all that has come before: the civil rights symbolism of 'Blowin' in the wind', the apocalyptic surrealism of 'A Hard Rain's a-Gonna Fall', the tolling of a new day in 'The Times They Are a-Changin'.' But in 'Chime of Freedom', it's all refracted in shimmering poetry, in a heightened state of synesthesia, where sensory perception is jumbled so that those with tears see, and those with eyes hear.

2.3.2. *Motorpsycho nightmare*

Dylan put together two important facts of the 60s in lyrics: it is a tribute to Alfred Hitchcock's movie "*Psycho*" from 1960 and as in other songs, he censored the Cold War. The last ironic lines of the lyrics clearly showed Dylan's opinion of the suppression of free speech: "Without freedom of speech/ I might be in the swamp."

2. 4. Album "Desire" (1976)

2.4.1. *Hurricane*

Even though, *Hurricane* was released in 1975, it deals with a racial injustice which with triple homicide. The case was clearly manipulated and he was in jail for many years, Dylan's song contributed to re-examine the case once again and in 1985 "*Hurricane*" Carter was released from prison. However, as Dylan's song argued, Carter could have been *the Champion of the World*, but he spend his prime as a boxer in jail.

"Rubin Carter was falsely tried.
 The crime was murder "one," guess who testified?
 Bello and Bradley and they both baldly lied
 And the newspapers, they all went along for the ride.
 How can the life of such a man
 Be in the palm of some fool's hand?
 To see him obviously framed

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Couldn't help but make me feel ashamed to live in a land
 Where justice is a game."

Howard Sounes argues that the song was "an excellent piece of journalism, condensing a complex case -involving several characters and conflicting testimony- into eight minutes" (Sounes 337)

2.4.2. *Joey*

Jaques Levy, collaborated with Dylan in composing a few songs. He knew Joey Gallo, a gangster from the New York Mafia. Dylan thought of Joey more as Billy the Kid, a hero, rather than a common gangster (Heylin399). Gallo was one of the key figures in New York during the 60s, being involved in one of the most atrocious Mafia war. He was educated and was murdered in a restaurant while having dinner with his family. Dylan was not objective at all when talking about Joey Gallo, who was an assassin and cruel character, he was very much influenced by the stories that Levy and Gallo's friends had described. Dylan, as he did before in songs such as "The Ballad of Hollis Brown" or "The Lonesome Death of Hattie Carroll" used a mixture of journalistic style -when narrating the facts- with poetry, having all the lines rhyme and rhythm by themselves.

One day they blew him down in a clam bar in New York
 He could see it coming through the doors as he lifted up his fork
 He pushed the table over to protect his family
 Then he staggered out into the streets of Little Italy.

3. Bob Dylan influence on 20th Century poets and songwriters.

Many of his contemporary poets, not only singers, have been/are greatly influenced by Dylan's work, this should be taking into account when analysing his entire dimension within both the industry of music and the literary sphere. Many of them did a tribute to him including him in some of their works. Poet Tony Hoagland wrote about "A Hard Rain's A-Gonna fall" in his poem titled "A hard rain" imitating Dylan's style.

"After I heard It's a hard Rain's A-gonna Fall
 played softly by an accordion quartet
 though the ceiling speakers at the Springdale Shopping Mall,
 I understood there's nothing
 we can't pluck the stinger from,
 nothing we can't turn into a soft drink flavor or a t-shirt." (cited in Bowen 24)

His friend Allan Ginsberg wrote "*Blue Gossip*", in which he makes assumptions of why did Dylan stop writing protest lyrics and the many reasons he could have to do so. He was a good friend of Dylan until he died in 1997 and many times argued that Dylan's personality was so great and unique that he feared sometimes he could be trapped into Dylan's circle without knowing it: "I guess he got sick of having to get up and get scared of being shot down"(cited in Bowen 50)

Welsh poet Douglas Houston wrote "The last Waltz", the title is a clear reference to the concert given in 1976, in which the song 'I shall be released' was performed by Dylan and The Band. "Then just to prove is all about salvation,He tunes his voice for 'I shall be Released'," (cited in Bowen 69)With no doubt, the poem written by Linda France, 'Dylanelle', is one of the poems which 'breathes Dylan' in every line. It is a collage of many of the songs written by Dylan turn into verses, as a tribute to one of the most important influences in poetry in the second half of the 20th Century.

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"Blood on the tracks, good as I been to you,
 Most likely you'll go your way, I'll go mine,
 Mr tambourine man, if not for you.
 Looks like is all over now, baby blue" (Bowen 84)

4. Conclusions

It can be asserted that even though Dylan disassociated himself from politics and did not consider himself left or right wing, he was a prophet of his generation. He did not only defended Human Rights. He was somehow able to write lyrics different from his predecessors going even one step further. His message reached both blacks and Southern poor whites, since he did not distinguished between them. He stood up for the underprivileged and censured injustice. Bob Dylan was not only a protest poet, but his lyrics/poetry are actually very difficult to analyse. A closer and more careful examination would be needed in order not to miss the real meaning he wanted to convey. Many of the songs examined in the paper can be extrapolated to today's society in many parts of the world. This paper has sought to raise awareness to Dylan's achievements as a poet, and acknowledge his protest songs as important monuments of North-American popular memory in the 1960s. The paper has also argued for a renewed understand of the close relationship between music and poetry, and for the impact of popular culture upon the Western canon.

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