

**UNIVERSIDAD COMPLUTENSE DE MADRID**  
**FACULTAD DE FILOLOGÍA**  
**DEPARTAMENTO DE FILOLOGÍA INGLESA**  
**(Literatura de los Países de Lengua Inglesa)**



**TESIS DOCTORAL**

**The stone keeps rolling: an exploration of repetition and authenticity in Bob Dylan's songs**

El canto sigue rodando: una exploración de la repetición y la autenticidad en las canciones de Bob Dylan

MEMORIA PARA OPTAR AL GRADO DE DOCTORA

PRESENTADA POR

**Mara González de Ozaeta**

DIRECTORES

**Esther Sánchez-Pardo**  
**Julio Arce Bueno**

Madrid, 2018

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MARA GONZÁLEZ DE OZAETA

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**THE STONE KEEPS ROLLING:  
AN EXPLORATION OF REPETITION AND  
AUTHENTICITY IN BOB DYLAN'S SONGS**

DIRECTORES:

DRA. DÑA. ESTHER SÁNCHEZ-PARDO

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2017



A mis padres



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La presentación de esta tesis doctoral es la culminación de un proceso académico en la institución de la Universidad Complutense, concretamente en la Facultad de Filología, donde he disfrutado de unos años clave para mi desarrollo profesional y personal, así como para el disfrute del conocimiento y la lectura. Las instalaciones de la facultad, los profesores, los compañeros de clase, etc; han colaborado en hacer de estos años de estudios un período esencial y muy significativo. Cabe destacar la labor de profesores como Eusebio de Lorenzo Gómez, Félix Martín Gutiérrez, Asunción López Varela, Margarita Ardanaz Moran o la actual directora de este proyecto, Esther Sánchez-Pardo, entre otros. Todos estimularon mi propensión imaginativa y mi amor por la literatura, cualidades que motivaron en primer lugar la realización de estos maravillosos estudios.

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Ahora que miro hacia atrás para recuperar a las personas y sucesos que han tenido que ver de manera más o menos directa con el resultado de este trabajo, vuelven a mi cabeza numerosos recuerdos que mi mente pone en la raíz de este nuevo logro. Pienso en ellos con el convencimiento de que todos participaron en estas páginas, a su

manera, y esta revelación me hace sonreír al pasado con esa pícara ventaja que da el saber las cosas desde este lugar.

Por otro lado, soy consciente de lo enrevesada que puede llegar a ser la memoria, comportándose siempre como un tablero de juego cuyas piezas están dispuestas frente a nosotros esperando a que les demos un nuevo sentido. Con ellas nuestra mente compone infinidad de interpretaciones para motivar una conclusión, para resolver un problema. Como la literatura, igual que el signo artístico, las piezas de nuestra memoria están siempre al servicio del entendimiento, pero jamás llegan a ser comprendidas del todo. Durante los momentos de reflexión, avivan su presencia, corren a explicarse como niños castigados y se ponen a la cola una a una reclamando más espacio, mi atención, un nombre. Por culpa de esa tendencia que describo, espero no tengáis en cuenta si olvidé mencionaros, o no escribí sobre aquel echo tan clave que sustituí, por el contrario, con algún otro asunto, a vuestro parecer, vagamente importante.

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Muchas gracias por todo.

It is a principle of music  
to repeat the theme. Repeat  
and repeat again  
as the pace mounts.

—William Carlos Williams, *The Orchestra*

The songs that erupt  
Are gist of the poesy,  
Come by themselves, hark,  
Stark as prisoners in a cave  
Let out to sunlight, ragged  
And beautiful when you look close  
And see underneath the beards  
The holy blue eyes and humanity  
And brown.  
(...)

—Jack Kerouac, *195th Chorus*

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# INTRODUCTION

Bob Dylan was praised for being an individual,  
for resisting the cloying show-business approach and for still,  
all these years later, being a rock 'n' roller who made you think.

—Andrew Muir, *One more night: Bob Dylan's never ending tour*

## **Justification:**

This research wants to offer a multidisciplinary analysis of Bob Dylan's songs attending both to his original recordings and to the obtainable reproduction of his performances on stage and their different modes of listening. This will be lead by an important figure in the different languages and systems implied during this artistic phenomena: repetition. The different forms of repeatability provide this study with a structural and a hypothetical conviction, that the exploration of its forms may shed some light over the composition of a new genre meant to delight and persuade its listeners at the same time. Bob Dylan's songs are principally characterized to be unique, and to have used lyricism and music in an innovative as well as established form of artistic contact. Repetition, in both form and content, performance and a worldwide vision, is an action of continuity that has not been exhausted yet. It keeps rolling in this interplay between the disciplines of music and language, constituting the main dynamics to access the artist's most obstinate ideas and obsessions. These ideas, as well as the ritual of his concerts and shows, create a map of connections that this study would like to explore in depth.

Across this exploration, it was made evident that one the themes that connected his long career and that brings the most stable concept of his artistic persona is the idea of authenticity. It was observed that both repetition and authenticity contributed in the creation of the new song. A unique kind of song, that of Bob Dylan, that was able to communicate like no other artistic discourse had done before.

In the past, song's messages didn't infer anything apart from what they were saying, whereas with Bob Dylan's compositions words and music joined together to create a poetic effect. His songs acquired a transcendent lyricism that broke with the conventional entertaining role of popular music. Words and music consolidate the idea of rhythm, which "(...) is a factor of physical nature, given that it has a sensorial fundament, both in external feelings, global and interior kinesthesia" (Berrio & Hernández, 2004: 89)

The title alludes to the music term "rolling" (*ostinato*) that the critic LeRoi Jones (1963) used to describe the cadences of the boogie piano in comparison to the ragtime piano. It is the equivalent to the popular riff and the Italian word "*ostinato*" that give the name to any repeated music phrase. Here it makes a double reference to the music concept, although it is not only studied from the musical point of view, and the title of

his best hit “Like A Rolling Stone” (1965). He also sang in his song “Bye and Bye” (2001),

I’m rollin’ slow –I’m doing all I know  
I’m tellin’ myself I found true happiness  
That I’ve still got a dream that hasn’t be repossessed  
I’m rollin’ slow, goin’ where the wild roses grow

The idea of authenticity, for its part, is derived from the 1960s upsurge of the existentialist philosophy by the counter-cultural and civil rights movements, although Bob Dylan increasingly gave the term its personal and ethical significance (Taylor, 1991)

There is a type of repetition that results from popular music consumption. In that sense, it has been desired and rejected at the same time. Scholars like Theodor Adorno (1948) underestimated repetitive music, but today, in areas like cognitivist science and musicology it has been shown (Leydon, 2002; Middleton, 2006; Margulis, 2014; etc.) as an indispensable way to provide the communicative and attractive potential of songs. In fact, nowadays repetition in music is regarded as a pleasurable source that generates a strong emotive response in the audience.

Repetitiveness actually gives rise to the kind of listening that we think of as musical. It carves out a familiar, rewarding path in our minds, allowing us at once to anticipate and participate in each phrase as we listen. That experience of being played by the music is what creates a sense of shared subjectivity with the sound, and – when we unplug our earbuds, anyway – with each other, a transcendent connection that lasts at least as long as a favorite song  
(Margulis, 2014: para.23)

Bob Dylan takes the art of songs to its most significant potential. Perhaps that explains why he has been analyzed so much. There is something in his songs that transcends the usual scope of music. Something about this enigmatic feel is due to the different forms of repetition and the way it acts in both the poetics, the rhetoric and the aesthetic of the song discourse. It is both in the way he echoes American popular music and in the powerful lyricism of his language. In contemporary music, he is regarded as someone who stays close to traditions and folklore while he also experiments with its signifiers. The virtue of his style is so dynamic it provides the genre of popular music with a share of other powerful artistic disciplines like drama, poetry, storytelling, etc. It separated the lyricism of poetry from the permanency of written texts and made it

revisit an ancestral oral tradition where time's fugacity mediates in the discourse reception.

In the ancient times, music and literature were connected by the preeminent oral tradition as it was the way stories were shared and preserved. With the arrival of writing, literature became increasingly conquered by this medium and its texts – excluding scripts and theatre– were configured to be individually read. Even if McLuhan (1964)<sup>1</sup> announced a new rise of oral literature, these codes were analyzed separately and their formats and expressive outlets regarded as distinct. From the revivalist movements of the fifties and sixties in the U.S to the expansion of songsters like Bob Dylan, the lyric genre has resurged and appeared in its original form.

Pete Seeger said, "All songwriters are links in a chain," yet there are few artists in this evolutionary arc whose influence is as profound as that of Bob Dylan. It's hard to imagine the art of songwriting as we know it without him. Though he insists in this interview that "somebody else would have done it," he was the instigator, the one who knew that songs could do more, that they could take on more. He knew that songs could contain a lyrical richness and mean far beyond the scope of all previous pop songs, and they could possess as much beauty and power as the greatest poetry, and that by being written in rhythm and rhyme and merged with music, they could speak to our souls. (Zollo, 1991<sup>2</sup>)

In view of that fact, the artist has been compared to a Bard, the old figure of a poet that rendered his epic tales in front of a public audience. Wilfrid Mellers, – professor of music and literary critic– observed that the course of words and music as cohabiting genres in English literature were first identified as Pre-Aelfredian poetry, including verse homilies, ballads, lays, etc. Nowadays their cohabitation is exhibited in Dylan's works belonging to an era of proclivity. As Mellers wrote, referring to Dylan's era of birth, "folk culture was intimately and creatively linked with literary culture in the age that has given us an unmatched richness of artistic achievement" (1985) He insisted in the fact that today we have grown unused to talk about these disciplines seriously. Well, the intention of this thesis is to draw attention to the phenomena of songs and to contribute to another approach around Dylan's works.

Moreover, I believe Dylan's songs perpetuate both their importance in the popular music realm as well as other traditional elements. The figure of the songster, like ancient bards, puts the author and the interpreter at the same level, and their directedness helps revive the strong communicative power of music as a performable

thing. He followed the track of all those who wanted to achieve it, but he finally accomplished the greatest aim, to make the perfect match between both disciplines.

Music drove them; they always knew they were near New York when they picked up Symphony Sid on the radio. In San Francisco they declared a Renaissance and read poetry to jazz, trying to make Mallarmé's dream flourish in the soil of America. They failed, as artists generally do, but, in some ways, Dylan has kept their promise. (Hamill, 1974)

The fact that Bob Dylan's works amalgamate such a variety of disciplines make it really hard for critics and scholars to unify and transfer them all to the page. Some authors have used other starting points to connect them and structure them. For example, David Yaffe (2011) used the idea of Dylan's music closeness to Afro-American blues music and Scobie (2004) made an exemplary comparative between his works and the popular myths and archetypes he invoked in his works or resembled. For her part, Betsy Bowden (2001) pioneered the affinity of the literary studies with the performance studies and positioned them as the core subject of analysis. Like some of these elements, repetition functions as an analytical stance while it puts in relation other core subjects as well, especially in his performances.

It was long ago when the disciplines of literature studies and musicology disputed their adequacy to the study of Bob Dylan's works. From the 2000s onwards and with the increasing recognition of the disciplines, Cultural Studies and Popular Culture Studies; some authors started giving a major importance to elements like his performances where there was no fixed text to interpret, but a series of conditions or aspects to count on. Lee Marshall observed that,

Cultural Studies approaches have pluralized the notion of culture and weakened the idea that artistic value could only be found in one particular sphere. One outcome of this new intellectual attitude to culture is the great expansion of the study of popular culture in Universities over the last 30 years or so. (Marshall, 2009: 107)

Stephen Scobie reflected, "his words do not stand alone but make sense only in combination with his music and with the idiosyncrasies of his vocal performance" (2004: 93) He added that perhaps music is the unconscious part of the text. That is why making songs a psychoanalytical exam would prove really hard. What is true is that their unconscious dimension remains hidden in the listener's mind as well, who finds it really difficult to decode the significance of the moment. Maybe, to distinguish a

“performative” repetition along with several other kinds of repetition, which is what this study will explore, could make it easier to analyze and situate his works.

One of the purposes of this research is to summon this recognition of his performances and to show why this is a special and unique condition that Dylan valued too for his artistic purposes, to the extent that he innovated them. However, part of that playing –and Dylan’s no capricious decisions on stage– make us acknowledge “an existential truth: that there’s no such thing as an exact repetition.” (Service, 2016) The only source of exact repetition is the record. Their characteristics and types of repetition will be explored in the following pages.

Similarly, other authors have tried to accomplish a definitive analysis of his works including performances as the big demonstration (Margotin and Guesdon, J. M. 2015). Some of them described as many concerts as possible in order to reach a certain enigma about his music (Paul Williams, 2004; Muir, 2001 and 2013). There exists not only an extended bibliography around the artist but also multiple records, including his shows on stage, outtakes, rare and unreleased, demos, etc.

On the other hand, the center of analysis has always been what he was trying to say through his songs, ignoring what the audience could possibly feel and infer after one of his performances. Of course, only a fieldwork, asking people their feelings or recording their impressions during the show, could give a true sense of this question, but this research includes some expert music critics and recognized authors who were able to decode their perspective as Dylan’s listeners. To put it another way, performances are nothing but the resource of a valid meaning revealed from a given subjectivity (Anderson, 1996) and the only objectively analyzable thing is the concrete element, like this of recurrence and repetition. This is important not because it refers to the theory of reception, but rather because the same people who receive the musical input participate in the meaning of that input too. Like Elizabeth Hellmuth Margulis stated, “part of what it means to listen to something musically, is to participate imaginatively” (2014).

It should be kept in mind that Dylan’s songs embrace multiple meanings. Indeed, some of these meanings or interpretations have not been exhausted still. That makes thousands of possible interpretations across his fifty-six years of constant activity during which his relation with the audience shifted, as much as his career. As David Yaffe noted, “they loved him, they hated him, they went after him, they’d learn to love him again and repeat” (2011: 42)

Bob Dylan's remarkable combination of music and poetic lyricism crosses the barriers of common linguistic expression and signifies more than just common language and so, it could be taken as a literary discourse, as regarded by the Literary theory. (Carreter, 2000). Archibald MacLeish, a famous and revered poet in America during the 1960s and 70s, considered Bob Dylan "a serious poet" and he was convinced his songs would be "a touchstone for generations to come". As he explained, Dylan's lyrics shared something of the "metaphysical from a bygone era" and he told Dylan that he made clear the difference between art and propaganda.<sup>3</sup>

### **Hypothesis:**

The aspect of repetition has not been deeply analyzed yet by other authors and its various intersections in this research have proved to be a great starting point to access Dylan's particular use of songs as a declaration of principles that puts his time in common with the precedent American music tradition. This line of thought is accompanied by different interpretations of his works, avoiding the autobiographic references, that can be valid as complementary data, but never as a conclusive interpretation.

This study parts from the idea that repetition and recurrence help making more salient Dylan's interests in a communicative use of the discipline of a song, as well as the fact that he composed a series of symbolic images and representations that vouched for values like authenticity. His insistent representation of this idea, either through values or models, could be due to a hypothetical quest for his ideal ethics of authenticity and how to become an authentic individual through art.

This study has also established a significant network between the idea of being "authentic" and the effect this has over how his songs are received as reliable discourses. By playing the authentic guy, Bob Dylan restores the rhetorical strength of songs, a fundamental aspect of his music career. Words do not bear all that suggestive power over them, the artist plays a definitive role. Incarnated in his voice, his personality and reliability as an "authentic" narrator, are proposed in this study to be the main communicative booster of his songs. In fact, I absolutely defend that his songs, although widely covered by other artists, would never mean the same, nor have the same rhetorical force, in the voice of other singers. The idea of being authentic is related

to uniqueness, to having to differentiate yourself and your work from others. Bearing this in mind, the paradox around Dylan's music being at the same time in and out of his American tradition makes more sense than ever. In virtue of all these characteristics, his works constitute an important part in the history of popular music because of all his innovative use of American traditional sounds and cultural motifs combined with the poetic depth of his lyrics. As David Dalton states, "Dylan's stroke of inspiration was to write a folk song in a pop music idiom –in other words, to fuse (and, essentially, confuse) the two genres." (2012: 51-2)

On the one hand, authenticity and the existentialist philosophy always played an important role in the revolutionary mindset of a period characterized by so many social and countercultural movements. Donald F. Krill states that "revolution must be considered synonymous with existentialism, for existential philosophy has announced itself as essentially one of revolt." (1966: 289) Being authentic is being coherent or true to one's set of beliefs and image of one's self. A major goal according to existentialism, it also became the kind of individualistic goal that young people valued the most, not just in social issues but in the popular music real where people's fascination with band leaders and singer songwriters took place.

On the other hand, authenticity promotes the communicative viability of songs, as long as it adds some sense of trueness and reliability to the artist's words. Even if for the speech act theory, fictions and literature could not be considered valid statements because they are not regarded as true, the author's commitment to being authentic contravenes this idea. Likewise, authenticity puts in common several musics and theoretical facts around his works: his endowment to tradition, the characters he interprets, his refusal to repeat any performance, etc. An extraordinary web of relations gives coherence to his apparently changing and contradictory career.

This study defends the idea that repetition introduces another type of listening attitude in the audience, appealing to lyric understanding and message interpretation because iterative music patterns provide a comfortable background to focus on the lyric content. In any exhibition, speech or lecture the speaker is driving at persuasion and the description of a set of his beliefs and philosophy to the audience. According to the laws of rhetoric and Aristotle's definition of the term, it is the ability to see what is persuasive in every given case.<sup>4</sup>—I believe Dylan uses songs predicting their strong persuasive abilities, that is why he tries to break linguistic boundaries and communicative exegesis through his music, while also avoiding the fixity of written

compositions. From my point of view, Bob Dylan used so innovatively his words in order to communicate with his audience in a new way, by framing his ideas in their slang and the popular song territory. Like Margulis explained in her study (2014), repetition heartens participation. However, his songs have mainly been taken as a direct entry into his mind, whereas they have rather been confusing pieces that played with signifiers. His most extremist point of view and music innovations were seen as “punk” by some critics (Glover, 1998)

Among the preliminary hypothesis of this research was the idea that by observing and describing repetition perhaps it could describe how Bob Dylan’s songs are “soon encrusted with uses and memories and references” (Frith, 2001: 107) as well as to mention some of its possible effects in the audience. Like Richard Middleton’s question, “why do listeners find interest and pleasure in hearing the same thing over again and what kind of interest and pleasure are they?” (1990: 268), this thesis will approximate other interrogations in the realm of Bob Dylan’s discography and his available live performances, especially since they resulted in a new paradigm of music processing out of entertainment and conventional consumerism. In “The power of repetition: repetitive lyrics in a song increase processing fluency and drive market success” by Nunes, Ordanini, and Valesi it is affirmed that “one benefit derived from having encountered a stimulus previously, or repetitive priming, is an ease of processing referred to processing fluency” (2015: 188)

Regarding repetition or its impossibility to be always identical, as it was stated above, I noticed Bob Dylan’s performances increasingly showed a strategic avoidance of familiar reproduction. Whether it was to enlarge their affective responses beyond their simple recognition, this trend would not facilitate music processing but it certainly made each performance unique, as opposed to the mechanized actions of the modern music industry. Albeit mostly rejected by Bob Dylan, the credit of technology is that it allowed the user to reproduce music as much as he wanted. This kind of mechanical recurrence, today not just related to his studio albums but also to live versions, bootlegs, and multimedia resources, makes it easier to be analyzed, but it also has its negative points. In the era of massive reproduction, people listen to music in multiple situations during the course of the day. What if that phenomenon made their meaning get wasted or become a rumor? (Frith, 2001: 37)

Supported by theorists like Philip Tagg, Elizabeth Margulies, Middleton and Roland Barthes I try to argument to what extent his performances and the indispensable

role of his voice and his use of repetition add to the overall transcendence of the musical act as another speech act (Austin, 1962) Another musicologist, Richard Middleton, claims that Barthes definition of ‘grain’ (1981) –associated with the voice of the singer– “is the surplus in the interplay of signifiers, moving on the level of what Barthes calls significance, and opening to the listener the possibility of “jouissance” (the ‘bliss’ of self-loss as opposed to the confirmation of identity associated with plaisir and effected by signification and culturally inscribed meanings)” (Middleton, 2001: 220)

That is the point of view from where the pragmatics of literature can be possible. Songs connect theories of processing and literary pragmatics. After an abundant quantity of works comparing music and literature, this study overlooks a common point in between, Dylan’s performances, during which “a set of different signs, with different origins and characteristics, are put in service of the semiotic field of action and so, in the realm of communicative acts” (Carreter, 1987)

What matters is Bob’s singing. He’s been the most inventive singer of the last ten years, creating his language of stress, fitting five words into a line of ten and ten into a line of five; showing the words around and opening up spaces for noise and silence that through assault or seduction or the gift of good timing made room for expression and emotion.

(Marcus, 2010: 18)

### **Methodology:**

Firstly, this study makes up the story of singer-songwriters in order to continue with Bob Dylan’s revolutionary suggestions. The influence of –among other things– the folk revival movement, the blues music and negro music revival and New York City’s music scene over Dylan provides the reader with a context and starts giving some clues about what did interest Dylan’s new use of songs in an artistic and cultural way. After this diachronic summary, the study enters into the specific career of Bob Dylan: the different steps and goals he reached in the American popular music scene as well as an overview of his discography and the topics most repeated throughout his career. Prior to the analysis of this songs, what I intended to do through this method is to situate the reader within the scope of his works without having to listen to them at that precise moment.

The observation of repetitive features, emblems, shows, manias, etc; in Dylan's music guided me towards the idea of authenticity and this abstract term, for its part, led the analysis to introduce a brief purpose around the pragmatics of songs. Mostly, these were all concepts that were manifestly related to singer-songwriters since the Folk Revival in the 40s and continued being a constant in Rock music afterward. Again, it would all attempt at justifying that the fact that Dylan chose songs rhetorical as well as a poetic force was perfectly adequate to revolutionize the idea of popular music and the literary language. This time the approach could be especially sustained through the notion of performance and the multiple coincidences it shares with the laws of communication. A musical use of language where the ambivalence between Coleridge's "suspension of disbelief" (1817) and the voice's reliability make a perfect balance.

At the core of my research, I suggest a categorization of the different types repetition that can be found in his music. Of course, I followed other people's categories as much as I could. For instance, according to Philip Tagg (2013) any music analysis – concerning songs, in particular– must first distinguish between musematic and semantic elements. This study brought me songs' double nature, which helped me in order to categorize the different types of repetition that were observed in Bob Dylan's musical works. These types, along with the different level of music reproduction that is distinguished in the chapter about performances, are determinant to the communicative and aesthetic connection. The categorization of the repeated elements of his music helped me achieve a clearer view of his works' canonic themes and obsessions as well. Each new type of repetition was illustrated by his songs. Mostly, the study of his music from the point of view of repeatability offered me the opportunity of sharing a new interpretative analysis, parting from most frequently distinguished elements in his music. Considering that the act of music performance can unite the outstretch categories of music and language, as it was said before, repeated sings of his music additionally point to history, society, music industry, technology and the arts.

The major problem I found was that, albeit trying to include music issues in this research, because I am not an expert in the area, I have tried to use *aesthetic descriptors* to talk about his music elements rather than *poietic descriptors* (Tagg, 2013) of which only expert musicologists make use. This is best seen in the sections about his music and the historical context where I have had to describe some of his music characteristics and their evocative sense.

Ever since Dylan's 1963 "Blowin' In The Wind", his first big hit, songs started to be something different. The artist experimented with poetics of introversion that combined with the forces of their oral and sonic qualities. Sound, which constitutes the macro-structural or immediate layer of perception during the music act, should never be separated from the lyrics as both constitute a bigger unit called song. The sounding quality, among other things, provides the singer and the audience with a common context full of significant units of perception or an atmosphere of "metaphysical rarefaction" as Umberto Eco called it (1965). As Stephen Scobie claims "first and foremost, even before being a songwriter, Bob Dylan is a performer. He exists on stage. He has never given any audience anything close to what they expected" (2004: 8).

I want to clarify as well that this study does not want to make a succinct analysis of every song, rather it has been my aim to describe general aspects followed by a classification of repeated things and repeated resources in Dylan's works. The corpus of songs has been selected in as much as these illustrated something that was being described in the text. They were put in direct relation with the general phenomena of repeatability first and second, with other important aspects such as authenticity or universality, because the description of the different types of repetition in his music can give an understanding of his artistic career as a worldwide phenomenon. For instance, note that regardless of their absolute commitment to American culture, they have succeeded all over the globe, perhaps because music and linguistic repetition are pleasurable to non-English speakers as well. In order to describe all the effects of repetition I include a multimedia corpus of music and performances added to the bibliographic resources, among which I have significantly made use of *Bob Dylan Lyrics 1962- 2001*, most concretely, the bilingual version carried by Miguel Izquierdo and José Moreno with notes by Alessandro Carrera (2011). This book, along with the resources of the official website [bobdylan.com](http://bobdylan.com) by Sony music entertainment have been the most revised along with the studio albums and other music resources by Bob Dylan, found mainly in the music service system of Spotify and the video-sharing platform Youtube.

To conclude, perhaps the musical quality of songs comes determined by repetition (Rahn, 1993) as it serves to reify a passage, "to set it apart from the surrounding context as a thing to bemused on..." (Margulis, 2014: 43) and on and on and on.

## **Structure:**

The first part of this study starts with the history singer-songwriters. This figure constituted a music genre and made a significant influence in Bob Dylan's music. Next, we enter into Dylan's characteristic use of this song's category and its movement, introducing some of his innovations within the folk music scope. It is generally accepted that Dylan revolutionized the genre and that his music is the milestone of the genre. As stated below, every studio album contributed to the configuration of that unique music style, which is especially observable through some of the most iterative aspects of his works. After completing this section, based on what each of his records offered to his audience, there is one chapter devoted to his performances and recordings and on how the artist acts according to his true aim in music playing. In this chapter, I include a subsection with some written extracts by the "scribes of the show" –as I have called them–, the critics and writers who at some point in Dylan's career have found the way to express the complex act of live music processing.

While present in a more direct or indirect way throughout the research, authenticity has is included as a subsection of the chapter about the importance of performance and the role of authenticity where it is exposed as an important sociocultural element that connects Bob Dylan's music to his contemporaries and the American culture in general. The kind of "authenticity" here exposed has several different origins depending on the philosophical approach, but it is mainly connected to the resurgence of existentialist philosophies and Dylan's great love for its literature. In this point, the study of authenticity from a sociological as well as philosophical point of view, (Moore, 2002; Taylor, 1991; Keightley, 2001; Middleton, 2006) has been definitive for sketching the possibility of an inherent aim in Dylan's artistic project, the to configure the principles of an ideal ethics of authenticity that did not show signs of selfish individualism but of a committed relativism and a prevailing individual morality. At this point, and in the section on repeated terms and themes, it is interesting to see how Dylan made use of a certain type of characters (cowboys, misfits, outsiders) and how he sometimes created his own fictitious ones (Mr. Tambourine Man, Jokerman, Señor, Mr. Jones, the Jack of Hearts) in order to play the part of an ideal he was constantly in search of. The introduction of this idea also introduces the preceding topic. It is a linguistic and pragmatic approach to songs, which is based on, among other

things, the quality of “authenticity” to connect the voice of the author with his audience. In fact, his obsession with rock-driven attitudes and authenticity will pledge for a new artistic honesty, one that goes beyond the concept of mimesis.

According to Austin’s “speech act theory” (1962), there are a number of verbs that, when exchanged in any conversational context, act by themselves or are able to change something in the communicative paradigm. They are known as performative verbs and one of their characteristics is that when stated these verbs are able to change the reality of its context. Well, I think there is something in common with song performances and I propose that the old conjectures around the pragmatics of literature, can be reintroduced in the aspects that the song speech shares with common communication. The pre-existing relation between pragmatics and literature formulated that there could not be any interrelation between the two, amongst other reasons, because the author and the readers of his text are always separated physically and temporally from each other, and so, the first law of communication is too diffuse to be analyzed. However, if we considered live performances –Bob Dylan’s performances–, where the author meets part of his audience and establishes a peculiar dialogue between them, would not it be possible to formulate a pragmatics of song?

In the final section of this study, devoted to repetition, I include a summary of the studies that have pointed to the idea of repetition in music theory and cognitive studies and the relation of these results to Dylan’s levels of repeatability and their possible effect on the audience. To organize the ideas around repetition and the different layers of the aesthetics of reception, I use macro structural to microstructural layers of analysis –or a top-down analysis that goes from more superficial elements of influence in music processing to the lyric processing–, very similar to the literary analysis of the external and internal form of written poetry. I also differentiate between exact repetition and conceptual repetition. Both ideas, the top-down<sup>5</sup> analysis and exact vs. conceptual repetition, are based on the theories of communication and sociology and their derived microstructures or superstructures (van Dijk, 1980) where the paradigm of repetition serves as a key connector.

Then there are different types of repetition depending on their objective or if these point to rhetoric, aesthetic or poetic aims, anticipating Dylan’s artistic canon, which according to Kevin J. Denmark’s own words, is “the most important canon all of 20<sup>th</sup> Century American popular music” (2009: 1).

In resume, it could be stated that there are three distinguished elements in this exploration, which are: authenticity, that gives songs' messages a necessary point of departure; repetition, that constitutes the structural element per excellence and performance, with its emblematic and incessant motion as well as its signifying implicatures. I sustain, these elements will all enter into contact in Dylan's artistic manifest.

### **The Characteristics of Songs:**

The art of songs in the U.S. was first borrowed from the European pilgrims that introduced their musical genres: sea chanteys, come-all-ye's, nursery songs, work songs, and balladry. Among the most popular shows including music performance there were minstrel shows copying the music styles of the Afro-American population, talking blues, gospel, blues, country blues, etc. Other typical genres within the American popular music scope are hootenannies, hillbilly, country music, cowboy songs, topic songs –the first protest songs– , and “old-time love songs” that are like ballads and lyric songs (Lomax, A. 1960, Eyerman and Jamison, 1998).

Ever since the appearance of tape recording, the music industry gained more and more force and the commercialization of popular and traditional forms of music started being defined by searching new consuming predictions that would make recording industries earn a lot of money. This is why, in the terms of the singer songwriter the definition of his music work and artistic contribution is so much important and complex, because he , to a certain extent, is the master of his own music style and tries to stay out of the industrial requisites. Moreover, in Dylan's career there have been different complicated situations during which the artist felt he was being governed by the industry (his problems with the media, the protest movement, his relation with the music manager Albert Grossman, etc) but there were other times when he could display all his individual force and impose his personal criteria over anything else.

While music reproduction facilitated the construction of the industry, it was also a new manner for recovering aspects of the past –individual and collective memory–, while these aspects were reinterpreted in the light of the present.

Today songs continue having as much force as ever in our society by way of their outgrowing distribution. Digital downloads, multimedia, streaming, social

networks, are just a small number of the current consuming processes and media. However, apart from technological conditions of distribution and sound effects, their format and philosophy has not changed very much during the course of its history. While in the past, singing was a lyrical subgenre that retold common stories of people who were living in that specific community with certain lyricism, nowadays they still play a fundamental part in any kind of celebration and are totally embedded with traditional rites and a sense of communal identity and belonging.

*The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* (1980) makes three cultural differentiations of songs. Attending to that, we can distinguish between musical songs, in which no words or lyrics are sung, folk songs, which are the ones that refer to a specific cultural identity and its traditional rites, and art songs that are specially written for recitals and piano accompaniment. The latter use includes pre-existing poetry in their lyrics and composes music to fit the words. Simon Frith (2001) agreed to these categories. Dylan, although singing with a lyric quality, would not use pre-existing poetry –other than ancient traditional stories–. He would often arrange other people’s songs and make them his own, or he would rather he write compositions adding some musicality and meaning to it. The truth is his kind of songs do not fit the classification of the most authorized text in musical definitions.

Like speech acts, Dylan’s songs have to be acted to become real, as it is explained in the section of communication. Simon Frith affirmed once that, “songs are more like plays than poems; song words work as speech acts, bearing meaning not just semantically, but also as structures of sound that are direct signs of emotion and marks of character.” (1988: 120)<sup>6</sup> This is most evident in Dylan’s music, as this study will show. Their discourse is synchronic, volatile and none of its parts can function as a separate unit. According to ethnomusicologist theorist George List (1963), the most obvious characteristics between its two leading languages (music and speech) is that both have an oral quality and a linguistic and expressive meaning. I believe that even if a meaningful approach has not been realized yet in the academic world, I believe certain critics and musicologists who studied Bob Dylan’s music, have been able to describe the way some of these meaningful elements can be understood and described. Song and speech, as I introduced above, are dependent on performance and their principal objectives are communication and aesthetic delight. Musical notation or the lyrics of a song cannot produce the same effect in the audience by themselves.

Song's artistry embraces equally music and words to such an extent that music, for its part, assumes linguistic qualities and language shows its musical possibilities too. Even though they are separate discourses, the one cannot be understood without the other and these songs evidence their points in common as well as their individual values and limits. It is impossible to determine whether it is the music that echoes the ideas or if the lyrics give a sizeable idea of what music means to represent. Both qualities interact with each other especially during the materializing act of music performance. Greil Marcus points relevantly, songs "weren't made to live a life outside of music" (2010: 379). In fact, music gives language the projected structure over which it will be displayed and as long as it gives a projected structure for the oral discourse plan, it participates in the rhetorical procedures. Songs make a rhetorical use of music and its abilities to connect and provoke and answer in the audience. The musical frame albeit exterior and different to language constitute a fundamental part of the "intentional" and "extensional" aims of the discourse. These two terms belong to philosophical theories of language. The former refers to anything dealing with the speech while the opposite term alludes to everything transcending the discourse meaning. Well, music is nuclear to both discourse instances, it is no more related to the first nor to the latter and it is the interplay with lyrics that makes it so dynamic. If language adapts the musical register with an aesthetic and emotive aim "extensionality" and it also delivers a certain message to people listening, "intentionality" affects communication as well. There is no such thing as an extra communicative use of the song-discourse or song's special kind of text, in as much as every aesthetic element also guarantees a certain interaction.

In Dylan's case, I found extremely interesting that most likely, songs provided the artist –constantly described by his biographers as someone shy and taciturn– a new mode of interpersonal communication that exceeded qualitatively any other social intercourse. From this standpoint, songs are essentially musical expressions whose communicative strength got reinforced since they started including a complex lyric content. His creations free a great amount of linguistic content, or like Denmark pointed, he "brought the long lyric line back to popular American song" (2009: 1) Dylan reaches his audience both through words and lyrics, that is, better than with any other discursive strategy. Indeed, their resemblance with speech situations is evident in the North American Tradition, where the force of a singing performance accompanies religious rituals, ceremonies, celebrations, reunions and political speeches. Note the importance of the song/anthem "We Shall Overcome" to the Civil Rights movement.

Rather than making a deep musical analysis of his songs, which could correspond to other professionals musicologist or ethnomusicologist, this study maintains that singing needs performing if it wants to be analyzed in terms of how is it perceived. The way the performance is received makes them able to produce many different emotions and different levels of interaction in the listener. This fact, if acknowledged by Bob Dylan, could give him the impulse to make it more and more effective as an artistic source.

Songs can function accounting personal stories plagued with identifiable cultural emblems and icons belonging to their society. Note all those talking blues songs Dylan dedicated to Hattie Carroll, Medgar Evers, George Jackson or Hurricane Carter, whose narrative texts excel in any artistic term. Other important characteristics attached to songs are their cultural portrayal, their aim for embracing various sociological issues and having the ability to create a collective consciousness.

### **Other Questions:**

During this research, there are certain complex terms used with different meanings depending on the perspective or field of knowledge. Ethnomusicologists and musical anthropologists have agreed that there are particular problems of definition between what is meant today by popular music and the boundaries of traditional music (Merriam, 1964, Nettl, 1983, Tagg, 2002, Donaldson 2011). That is why I would like to explain what are the basic meanings of folk music and popular music that this study is making use of, in order to avoid any prior ambiguity or misunderstanding.

For example, the term “popular music” has been treated ambiguously and it depends on many different standpoints nowadays. The leading definition of this term – as used throughout this research– is the one provided by Larry Starr and Christopher Waterman in *American Popular Music*. According to their definition, popular music “indicates music that is mass-reproduced and disseminated via the mass media; that has at various times been listened to by large numbers of Americans and that typically draws upon a variety of preexisting musical traditions.” (2006: 2) The term “traditional music” or “folk” refers, according to the musicological approach of Josep Martí Pérez, from the CSIC (Spanish National Research Council) to any kind of music that was popular in the past. But this is only in part, because, as the professor indicates, not only

time and technology have something to do with their progressive transformation into folk. A certain music can be categorized as folk after folklorists have studied so. Martí (2000, 245-7) explains that people in the past didn't use that term to refer to the music they were listening to and that it is just an anachronism used by the specialist in order to classify music. "Folk" is a term predetermined by folklorists' vision of the cultural tradition and it doesn't belong to us to use the term arbitrarily. Also, folk music revivalists of the 1950s had their own description of the term,

Among political revivalists, folk music was the genre of choice because it came from the "people," the downtrodden of society, and thus could be used in people's struggles for political and economic reform. The music was often simple: easy to sing and easy to play. With just a guitar and a few singers, a political activist could get a crowd of picketers singing and thus raise morale during protests. The relatively simple structure of folk songs also enabled musical activists to insert new lines that addressed contemporary concerns in what became known as "zipper songs."  
(Donaldson, 2011: 21)

I would add here that Bob Dylan's use of songs initiated a new category in arts that provided a different aesthetics added to their expressive employment. In the words of music producer Phil Spector<sup>7</sup>, "It's very easy to talk a poem, but very difficult to sing a poem" and Dylan goes beyond any expectations unifying the concepts of "popular" and "avant-garde" (Simon Frith, 1988) These two ideas become equally epitomized in Bob Dylan's music (Maxwell, 2014). Consequently, the study of his songs remarries speech and song (Shelton, 2011), which are the two main forms of human sound communication (List, 1963), and puts them in contrast with such disciplines as performance, literature, composition, sociology, industry, communication, etc. Among these definitions, I would also include Sean Godlovitch's term of "performance", one that is included in *Music as Performance* (1998). He explains that "music is a performing art" (1998: 11) and separates it from recordings, which are not traces or records of performances. He states, "performances are deliberate, intentionally caused sound sequences. They are never involuntary like sneezes, nor accidental or inadvertent. (...) The intention to perform and beliefs about the immediate context are integral to performance" (1998: 16-7) I particularly regarded this definition as a useful starting point for this thesis in which the interpreter's decisions around repeating this or that structure or not repeating it at all in the scene makes so much significance. I am referring to the moment when Dylan increasingly acquired the habit of avoiding the effect of the repetitious reproduction during his live performances –specially after the

start of the Never Ending Tour (NET)<sup>8</sup>. Dylan decided to give a second life to his famous discography and escape logical interpretations, meaning or true versions. Everything was a production for Dylan and his authenticity was produced over and over again, describing that sense of rolling this study referred to in the title.

The polarity between songs and poems is not the only inherent dichotomy in his works. Responsible for many different opposing terms and paradoxes, one of his leading dialectics is established around the theoretic idea of pure convention and pure variable (Frye, 2000) where the pure convention defines those aspects that meet the traditional values of its culture and the pure variable represents the vanguard, those experimental terms that turned his songs into an art that goes beyond the scope of music or even literature. The pure convention refers to inherited forms and meanings and they are related to a more nostalgic and romantic mood. I thought that repeatability could bring some light into these poles of attraction permanently present during his performances.

**WHO IS THAT MAN? THE HISTORY AND WORKS OF A  
SINGER-SONGWRITER**

But the song it was long

And I'd only begun

—Bob Dylan, *Eternal Circle*

## 1.1. Introduction

This section will try to answer –like many other authors before me– the unending question of who is Bob Dylan, the artist<sup>9</sup>–. Conscious of this question’s depth of significance, the idea is not to discover any private secrets in his songs’ lyrics, but rather to situate his works and performances as an extension of an individual standpoint and artistic philosophy. Fundamentally, this section sets out various possible readings around his major aspirations in the world of music and interpersonal communication as there is no better sample of his identity than his songs. These are inscribed within a wider artistic panorama: the singer songwriters scene. This is the most conclusive label of Dylan’s works. His career confirms his membership and his landmark performances make part of the history of this American popular music genre. This tradition had always imbricated with greater force than any other the disciplines of music and language, but the term "singer-songwriter" was not recorded in written texts until 1975 according to Google Ngram Viewer<sup>10</sup>– and as such, this music style was never so popular and definite in the American popular scene before Dylan arrived.

The old name used to define this kind of interpreters was "songster", which is registered back in 1700<sup>11</sup>–. While this older term refers to a traditional kind of wandering musician, especially prominent in north America when the negro slaves and vagrants were hunting for better living conditions, there is a progressive development of its figure alongside the appearance of similar figures, like minstrels, troubadours, balladeers and folkie singers. The amalgam of songs that the young Minnesotan singer cultivated after he reached New York in December 1961 can give us an idea of the different music styles these songsters cultivated for centuries.

However, Bob Dylan devoted himself to other artistic disciplines too, he wrote a book of memories titled *Chronicles Volume 1* (2005) –the only volume he has released to date–, various poems that could be found in his albums’ liner notes and a book of chaotic and the stream-of-consciousness lyric prose that was he *Tarantula* (2004). He has also immersed himself into painting –the *Drawn Blank Series*–, although all these supplementary works will not be explored here.

The first chapter goes into the origins of the singer-songwriter, a genre of music that Dylan represents and which redefined the history of American popular music. The idea is to recover the evolution of that kind of artist and see how American music styles merged all through the XXth Century into the figure of the singer-songwriter, whose

worldwide success changed music history and who added –among other things– an extra value to Dylan's statement. The following chapter will be focused in Dylan's development as an artist and creator of his personal and distinct style. Like the New Historicism premise, it will be explored how the works of the artist are more or less derived from a complex textual network that ranges from literature, music, cinema, etc. From the definition of the singer songwriters' category, to the last chapter of this section where a succinct understanding of all his official recording albums tries to offer an answer to the question "who is that man?", Bob Dylan, the artist himself –as borrowed from his song "The Ballad of a Thin Man" (1965). Contrary to the popular believe that “with each new album there has been a new Dylan” (Dalton, 2012: 117), I describe various consistent themes and recurrent topics all along his career.

Further in this thesis, the important term of his identity is discussed, specially since its vagueness and hermetic quality is due to his multiplicity of character when interpreting all the characters living in his music.

Sometimes the “you” in my songs is me talking to me. Other times I can be talking to somebody else... It's up to you to figure out who's who. A lot of times it's “you” talking “you”. The “I”, like in “I and I”, also changes. It could be I or it could be the “I” who created me. And also, it could be another person who's saying “I”. When I say “I” right now, I don't know what I'm talking about.  
(Dylan, 1985)<sup>12</sup>

## 1.2. The Pioneer Songsters

The following diachronic description belongs to the history of American popular music, even if the figure of singer songwriters has been represented in many other countries. The history preceding the development of the singer song-writer as a major artistic figure goes back to the XIXth Century and it is still an important developed music style nowadays. Although it is true that the use they made of song artistry was as old as the foundation of the US nation, songsters increasingly developed the poetic and lyrical content of their music style, a merit that only a few of them warranted. They carefully searched for quality lyrics and profound messages that would tell us, listeners, something else about the world while these songs explored complex aspects of their contemporary society. Although these singers sang about their own lives, what they were doing indeed, was to portray other people's lives and emotions.

As any music performances, songsters' playing was synchronic, although paradoxically the best way it can be observed is diachronically, that is, understanding the tradition from where they come. As achieved by a discreet recounting of Bob Dylan's prehistoric singing idiom, full of references to his antecedents and his society, this chapter aims at looking back at precedent music genres that were responsible to the proclamation of the most lasting music figure in the western history of music: the singer-songwriter. For instance, his predecessor blues singers and folk music figures, like Woody Guthrie, accompany him throughout his performing career. Like him, they are pioneer singer-songwriters whose talent gave the genre its modern distinction. Their kind of songs were much more instilled with a poetic quality concerning the expression of sociocultural and individual issues. Even though Bob Dylan is always related to this old and well-established collectivity of creators, he also created his own musical genre and, in a way, he yielded a new concept of the singer-songwriter.

I was tellin' somebody that thing about when you go to see a folk singer now, you hear somebody singin' his own songs. And the person says, "Yeah, well, *you* started that." And in a sense, it's true. But I never would have written a song if I didn't play all them old folk songs first. I would never have *thought* to write a song, you know? There's no *dedication* to folk music now, no *appreciation* of the art form.  
(Dylan, 1984)

Among other virtues, songsters changed the concept of the interpreter or singer, by becoming someone with a unique and individual perception of the world that had the

ability to connect with his audience in a mystical way. This was due in part to their capacity for creating new stories from old legends, popular archetypes that defined the honour, honesty and authenticity of the American hero and also because the figure of the songwriter created the most intimate connection between the composer and author of the song and the public it was created for. That is why every listener acknowledges that the lyric and music component belong to the voice that is interpreting them while this created a tighter interpersonal bond. On such an account, this type of songs became both product, channel, and code of expression. Some scholars (Fabbri, 2005: 145) have presented a set of characteristics for identifying the real singer-songwriter impersonator. The author distinguished a set of stylistic conditions to be met,

[1] the voice is no-one else's and does not appear to conform to norms established through formal training or audio technology; [2] the words are intelligent or enigmatic, thoughtful or provocative, poetic or witty and usually audible: the artist's is up front in the centre of the stage; [3] the song, recorded or performed live, should not bear obvious traces of intricate arrangement, orchestration or audio signal processing even if it may well have been subjected to such types of treatment.  
(Fabbri, 1982: 145)

Singer-songwriters have a direct mood towards performance as it makes real and more significant its interpersonal dimension. This style also implicates a different structure, regardless of its particular way of reception, and his performing abilities. As it shares a common past with the disciplines of lyre, music, and oral literature provided they were all spread orally they all have a refrain or a chorus that summarizes the main ideas of the song and it is structured in a varying number of verses and a certain amount of repeated figures, rhyme, anaphora, parallelisms, etc; that would make them easier to be processed and remembered. All of them were consolidated by word of mouth, shared generation after generation. Like other literary arts, singing constituted an effective and simple way of telling stories and recounting individual experiences and events that had occurred in other places of the vast territory around which artists had been traveling. That which constitutes the shared identity of a whole nation configures the particular and individual personality of each and every member of the community because the music we hear during our lifetime constitutes part of our individual landscape. Not only Dylan but all the following names were part of the American landscape and they all tried to raise their individual voices as members of that community. Their compositions would finally become the reason for the constitution of the charismatic artist, that

virtuoso who represents the voice of common peoples, outsiders, minorities, etc. and whose authenticity couldn't be debased by any commercialism or record production. Robert Shelton stated, "he has entered classic American folklore, pop lore and mythology, (I use "myth" here not as "false belief," but for those archetypal symbols and stories that express a culture's dreams, attitudes, and values)" (2011: 32).

The history of singer-songwriters goes very parallel to that of the urban folk revival and the emergence of blues forms all across the territory of the United States. Both genres were configured also from earlier music traditions. In folk music, the influences were multiple. There were pioneering ballads and chanteys borrowed directly from the first British explorers and later there were several types of songs that constructed the identity derived from the U.S independence, like cowboy songs, ballads, topic songs, talking blues, country music, and bluegrass. These music genres grew out of social events like minstrel shows, vaudevilles, recitals or celebrations. Some less known genres were cohabiting with the lives of particular communities that music anthropologists (Harry Smith, Alan Lomax, etc.) explored at the beginning of the twentieth century.

In the past, success or social recognition were seldom guaranteed for songsters. Their lives were based on drifting routes and isolation. But, who were those that threw out their social status in favor of expressing their own experiences and own beliefs through a song and why should this figure be acknowledged? In the Reconstruction period, referring to the transformation of the Southern United States, as it was explained by Robert Palmer (1981: 41) all those traveling musicians of the South, who were basically wandering in search for better job opportunities, "were called songsters, musicianers or musical physicianers by their people. (The songsters were wandering balladeers, while musicianers and physicianers were particularly adept as instrumentalists)" Their role was important because this genre was responsible for representing cultural as well as social issues and demonstrating another way of being committed to the modern world. It also heartened the art of lyric composition to a poetic extreme by elevating singers' authorship, vocal and interpreting skills. They also furthered the popularity of traditional forms of music, providing new singers with an excellent source for their future innovations.

At the same time, the Afro-American presence in the states, albeit forced into submission, proved to be determinant for cultural and social issues. In their ballads and songs they retold their ethnic identity, the history of their community and their incidents

in the USA. Songs were their musical expression par excellence. This genre started being successful by the 1920s as it had reached large numbers of admirers and started being recorded. Although it was permanently labelled as "racial music", blues became the next record success and the referent for the diverse scope of music singer songwriters represented. As both expressions, folklorist's and slaves' music, were growing separately all along the first half of the XXth century, while a growing interest in looking for the epitome of American music among anthropologists and folklorists. They wanted to redeem this style from its anonymity or limited influence and as such, anthropologists valued first their naturalist vision of the world and their social compromise. As Alan Lomax said once, "an ideal folk song study could be a history of popular feeling" (1960: 21). Only guided by their interest in music and their culture's profound roots, folklorists helped making evident the richness of the American music panorama.

### **1.2.1. Before the XXth Century**

Ever since the last years of the nineteenth century, local musicians and traditionalists started publishing old songs and their own compositions fruit to an increasing market demand. Sometimes songwriters gave their work to other singers, but mostly the talent of the creator and the interpreter were released as one by more recent music publishers. The phonograph was about to be discovered and its use extended all across the country, and still the main circulating music format were songs sheets. Song sheets were songs put on paper format. These included musical notation along with the transcription of the lyrics. These sheets helped to keep ballads and songs revitalized. These songs had belonged first to pioneers who had been either borrowed from the colonizers, or to ethnic and native inhabitants and the sheets constituted the only way to capture the ephemeral experience of every music reproduction and the first method of commercialization. During the 1950s these song sheets were recovered as an element of the folk revival, in order to revitalize traditional music formats while they played a pedagogic function. These provided young performers with an easy approach to the American vernacular music. Music sheets proved to be the most effective form of music dissemination during the eighteenth and nineteenth century. Alongside this written distribution, the movements of migration helped to make music genres known even in

the most distant regions. The largest migratory community within the U.S borders was the Afro-American, who experienced a long diaspora that took them to all parts of the territory until the second half of the XXth century.

For example, Tin Pan Alley writers and composers found the mode to popularize their music through sheet music and it facilitated their remarkable success during the last years of the nineteenth century and the first decades of the twentieth century. Tin Pan Alley was the name of an area of New York City where the first industry of popular music was settled. Producers and music creators formed a famous community that witnessed the increasing power of the national music industry and its popularization before the advent of rock 'n' roll music in the 1950s. After copyright laws had favored the original creators of melodies and lyrics, musical producers started to settle their industries in the urban centers of the country, in cities like Chicago, New Orleans, Boston, etc. Every singer, vaudeville or theatrical shows that needed authors for their new hits went to Tin Pan Alley's to find them.

At the turn of the century the long and dramatic migration of black communities from southern to northern states began and due to that diaspora they went through a recognition of their social and individual identity. Their ventures in those travels provided them with different new themes that they portrayed in their songs. In some of them, it is made evident how much they were longing to get back home and also trying to adapt to the radically different living in the cities. It was there that the earliest forms of blues, "classic blues" according to LeRoi Jones (1963), started to become commercial successes. After, the first southern-based style to be recorded was "country blues" and it became a key sell-out product in the south. Before the 1920s these African-American styles had been just orally shared, but after that moment they gave form to a new understanding of music in which the physical encounter of performer and listener was no longer necessary and everywhere in the states people could hear their records.

Blues started to be defined as a genre and its characteristics made distinct from other music traditions and popular styles by the circulation of records and public performances, "the blues was conceived by the freed men and ex-slaves –of not as the result of a personal and intellectual experience, at least as an emotional confirmation of, and reaction to the way in which most negroes were still forced to exist in the United States" (LeRoi Jones, 1963: 152). However, blues, like other types of singing had a double consideration. It was popular and traditional at the same time and that is due, in

part, to the fact that these boundaries started to become diffuse and not so easily recognizable. Lornell summarizes this point as follows:

One key to understanding this process is cultural integration, which points out that “folk groups” retain their unique character while remaining part of the larger popular culture. This relationship has resulted in an ongoing dialogue: an interchange in which ideas and innovations move back and forth between folk and popular culture. The result is an integration or coexistence of the two. This is a natural synthesis in a world united by instant communication and easy interregional movement.  
(2012: 48)

The aspect of cultural integration will be used later to understand Dylan's style because the same happened to his music. He used synchronicity and immediacy to communicate through his songs, like the oral tradition in the country, but at the same time, his music was getting in the hands of people from all over the world and into American popular status. Every different music styles in the U.S territory got influenced depending on the types of expression with which they got into contact. Blues musicians, for example, composed their music basing it on the increasingly standardized format of twelve bar blues and *aab* rhymes, but depending on whom they got in contact with these would develop other music forms. At that point the idea of singer songwriters like someone who emerged out of their own traditional styles like a true innovator in its genre, started to permeate in American popular music. Like, Tampa Reed, who "showed a distinct fondness for sentimental ballads" (Lornell, 2012: 50) even if he belonged to the 'first wave' of blues musicians.

The earliest forms of song writing that reached popular music repercussion were derived from the show discipline, from vaudeville, minstrelsy and theatrical shows, usually with comical and romantic themes. According to Michael Randel, editor of The Harvard Dictionary of Music, America and England's importance “to the history of song, lies primarily in popular song (e. g., American minstrel songs and British music hall songs)”. He continues explaining: “In quantity, popular song completely overshadowed art song in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and the best music in its many branches (e.g., folk, jazz, show tunes, rock ‘n’ roll) possesses undeniable beauty genius and expressiveness.” (2003: 805) In the Harvard Dictionary, there is a notable period, marked as the golden era of popular music during the interwar years, especially in on-stage performances.

Minstrelsy consisted of traveling companies of entertainment whose main

feature was to represent musical shows lead by a popular protagonist, a white man who was disguised as a black man by the painting technique of “blackening” his face. They were hyperbolic representations that parodied the role of slaves and black citizens and their music expressions in a white-dominated America. Their success was due to their use of stereotyping and formulaic stories that had proved being popularly accepted. They usually portrayed Afro-Americans daily living in the south but they really ignored the cruel reality of their real protagonists. They had their origin in New York, but during the second half of the nineteenth century, they were spread all over the U.S territory, to be later exported to other parts of the world. They were apparently propagating Afro-American music, but these were only white interpretations of their still undervalued culture. Indeed minstrelsy was very ironic, because even if black music was getting more and more popularized among white population since the 1920s, the NY-based music where Bob Dylan reached his fame 30 years afterwards was “underestimated – and often seemed embarrassed– by the popularity of popular styles based on the southern folk music” (Starr and Waterman, 2006: 48) who rejected any African-American involvement. The truth is, despite of their repudiation, black music forms had already reached an unpredictable success in theatres before the civil war (1865) and many of those shows tried to appropriate them. Among such imitations, lots of songs became popularized, which made black music well known to everybody. “The highly rhythmic and often lightly syncopated minstrel songs clearly prepared audiences across the country for the ragtime, blues, and jazz styles that began emerging in the early 1890s” (Lornell, 2012: 45) LeRoi Jones, a.k.a Amiri Baraka, gives some details about this type of performances in his book *Blues People* (1963: 83), “The negro theatre did not, of course, come into being until after the Civil War, but the minstrel show is traceable back to the beginning of the XIXth Century” He continues saying it “appeared in America around 1800, usually in solo performances”

The "blackening up" habit, typical of minstrel shows was a term that came up from the actors' make up requirement and still persisted until the turn of the century. In fact, the blackened white actor and its appearance on stage “became a staple vernacular entertainment, appearing later in medicine shows and the twentieth-century vaudeville stage” (Lornell, 2012: 44). Vaudeville shows, for example, started gaining more and more popularity and were responsible for the creation of the Broadway theatre until the development of Tin Pan Alley music industry that became the most big success of the popular song venue. All of them were tent shows that travelled all over the territory,

also to the south, transmitting the different folklore songs from their country.

Radios and phonographs at the beginning of the XXth century propagated the western music style whose swing got to be very popular. Along with the success of radio shows, record companies started to be interested in regional and traditional types of music. Country music, gospel, hillbilly and bluegrass artists became the protagonists of this new era in the American music, while the industry continued to differentiate among white and black musicians. “All of the selections by African American artists were issued as part of the ‘race’ catalog, while the white artists were labeled as ‘old-time’, ‘hillbilly’, or ‘country.’”

(Lornell, 2012: 51)

### 1.2.2. Ballads

Among the many genres available, it was remarkable for American popular music history and the creative tools of emergent songsters, the presence of the ballad, the lyric songs, broadsides, in people’s consciousness. Probably their structural characteristics helped them becoming the standard style for emergent singer-songwriters.

The ballad was a genre that was completely borrowed from the British emigrants’ traditional music. These kind of songs brought with them diverse music expressions and they would later begin to be developed by its natives. In the varied styles of U.S native music, the role of ballads is much more remarkable than any other kind of music genre. Kip Lornell, in one of his late studies *Exploring American Folk Music: Ethnic, Grassroots and regional traditions in the United States* (2012: 84), gives the following definition of ballad,

(...) ballads tell a story, but they also contain other characteristics that make them different from other forms of narrative songs. Ballads are impersonal in tone and compress their action to focus on the story's highlights, usually the ones with plenty of drama, romance, and melodrama. They are usually told without commenting upon the event itself.

He differences them from lyric songs in that ballads deal with death, love, work and tragedy. They could be the correspondent influence to posterior rock, blues, and most country tunes, although there were different kind of expressions within the balladry tradition. For example, there were ballads more concentrated on the topical events of the community, these were generally known as broadsides<sup>13</sup> on which apparently the non-poetic style of Woody Guthrie got inspired.<sup>14</sup> In Randal’s

Dictionary of Music, the term “ballad” is related to a certain meter. It is “a 4 line strophe with alternating lines of 8 and 6 syllables (...) with 4 and 3 stresses, respectively.” (Randel, 2003: 72-3) The reference book says that in the British and American tradition of the late 19th and early 20th Century, “ballad” was the name given to a type of songs with sentimental contents that were played slower than other genres and a form between 6 and 16-bar strophes followed by an 8-bar refrain. Dylan wrote about this kind of ballads in his *Chronicles* and said, “I loved all these ballads right away. They were romantic as hell and high above all the popular love songs I’d ever heard. You could exhaust all the combinations of your vocabulary. Lyrically they worked on some kind of supernatural level and they made their own sense.” (2004: 240-1)

From the beginning of the century, this balladry tradition was being created by yet anonymous songwriters based on the imported structure, but introducing references from several communities within the American population: laborers, social classes, African American people, etc; and with topics that were “distinctly American in their origin” (Lornell, 2012: 90) Lornell speaks in his book about a distinct feature of these native ballads and that is their introductory greeting call for the audience’s attention prior to recounting the topical or broadside-like events. He puts the example of the ballad “The Murder of Pearl Bryant”, “that appeared on country music recordings of the 1920s” (Lornell, 2012: 90). The first line says: “Young ladies if you’ll listen, a story I’ll relate”. No wonder Dylan sang years later, “Come gather ’round people/ Wherever you roam” at the start of “The Times They Are A-Changin’” (1963- 1964). This way, Dylan “offers parents, writers, critics, and even politicians a chance to join the changing tide: “Please heed the call”; “Please get out of the new [road]/If you can’t lend your hand.” (Shelton, 2011: 475)

Let’s see another greeting example in the cowboy ballad type. The song is “Western Pioneer” (1870) as reproduced in Lornell’s *Exploring American Folk Music* (2012) and it follows, “Come, give me your attention and see the right and the wrong.” These native ballads’ tradition usually included a moral, giving a learning conclusions about the story hat has just been told. Morals were frequently found in Dylan’s first albums –copying or extracting them from existent folk songs– and scarcely during the following periods of his career. For example, in 1971, followed by another unjust murder case, Bob Dylan released a song titled “George Jackson” where he introduced the following moral,

Now all young girls take warning, for all men are unjust.  
It may be your truest lover; you know not whom to trust.  
Pearl Bryant died away from home on a dark and lonely spot.  
My God, believe me girls, don't let this be your lot.  
(“The Murder of Pearl Bryant”, 1920s)

Sometimes I think this whole world  
Is one big prison yard  
Some of us are prisoners  
The rest of us are guards  
(“George Jackson”, 1971)

Most of these ballads were initially transmitted orally, but after the first phonograph recordings, they started to make part of the general consciousness.

Let me make a short digression to explain the subject of recording technology as it largely affected the subsequent musical events. Music recordings allowed not only more access to music for everyone and an easier capacity to remember and collect music. Recordings made the music business operable and made music experience intimate and particular. Every technology innovation, like the amplification systems or the long play records, procured a new step for popular music forms and genres. Koji Matsudo, from the University of New York, made an interesting study around Bob Dylan's music style during one of his later periods titled '*Time Out of Mind' as Distant Past Beyond Memory: Bob Dylan and His "Late Style"*' (2011). At a certain point in this study, the author declares

It is no exaggeration to claim that the history of modern popular music largely parallels the history of recorded music. With the recent developments of recording technology, it became substantially more flexible and inexpensive for all musicians to engrave the sonic image they have in their mind into recordings.  
(2011: 9)

### **1.2.3. Talking Blues**

Getting back to music styles of the between-wars era, when hillbilly singers explored the genre of blues, albeit it had many yet undistinguished topics and formulas, one of their preferred formulas was the talking blues, whose origin was imprecise albeit it

maintained preacher songs and gospel music structure. Talking blues gave topic songs venue a distinct humorous style accentuated by its use of satire, irony, and surrealism.

These songs can be traced back to the 1920s and 1930s hillbilly recordings and their ultimate derivation is "negro music" (Lomax, 1960). In fact, these songs use blues chords and they make reference to "talking" because the rhythm is marked by a peculiar mode of saying and singing that follows negro preaching. The name is also attributed to the fact that in earlier records an American singer "talks a story over" (Lomax, 1960: 426). "The talking is done in a monotonous, somewhat lackadaisical tone of voice, but it has upbeats and offbeats<sup>15</sup>, just as if it had a tune." (Lomax, 1960: 432) Some of the most famous exponents of the talkin' blues genre were Lead Belly, Woody Guthrie and Pete Seeger. Several emblematic songs by Bob Dylan belong to this kind of music too. Their steady monotonous background, while being targeted at lyric processing, might have been one of their most important characteristics, in terms of repetition and music processing. For example, in Dylan's "Talking New York" (1962), derived from Guthrie's "Talking Subway" (1961), the singer reproduces the mocking tone, the casual talkin' style of the singing and the cadence of guitar's musical phrases. The use of vernacular language is also very representative, as these songs were usually addressed to common people. These rhetorical strategies are characteristic of talkin' blues songs (Frye, 1957) where the voice of the interpreter comes as natural as if the song was more spoken than sung.

Robert Shelton, the music journalist claims (2011: 286) the foremost songwriter, the "father(s) of talkin blues", was a South Carolina singer called Chris Bouchillon who recorded "Original Talking Blues" in the 1920s. But it was not so precise who represented it first. He also mentions Robert Lunn, a country singer who titled himself "the original talking-blues man" and Gordon Friesen (1963), in his introductory notes to *Broadsides* –the LP anthology of Folkways Records– says the first native practitioner was Ben Franklin. "(...) As late as the 1930's and early '40's we had an especially heavy outpouring of topical song, ballads about FDR, The Great Depression and the New Deal, union struggles, war, and peace, etc." (Friesen, 1963: 1)

Critics agreed that Woody Guthrie's song lyrics brought the folk genre to the masses. His rhythmic speaking technique narrated significant events with an uncommon sincerity and a plain style that experienced a relative success for an alternative music genre.

However changing and evolving these song genres were, the different styles of

song that composed the American popular music realm were getting more and more established around the first half of the XXth Century. The radio broadcasts had been making efforts, since the beginning of the century, to place the radio stations close to southern communities or strategic musical locations, becoming one of the leading agents that popularized folk music. In general terms, radio was an unprecedented agent of music distribution, discerning what was good from what was bad. Lornell explains that “what began as a big-city phenomenon spread to small cities and towns, which proudly boasted of their own radio stations. This meant that even more talent was needed to fill the demand created by the spread of local radio.” (2012: 54) Even today, radio still plays an important role in the distribution of the type of music discourses that must be considered part of the popular music realm. The Media treated “music as a form of social communication” (Frith, 2003: 6) and attended to the user’s demand which, along with radio’s criteria, contributed to the popularization of music. Radio stations certainly evolved at the pace of the general appeasement, while folk music was being revitalized by minor communities. When these music styles started receiving the attention of the major record labels, –RCA Victor, Columbia Records were the most popular– and the media, folk music intermingled with popular music. However, from that moment these folklore expressions occupied a legendary place in American music and therefore, folk music and songwriters got consecrated as a particular artistic discipline of unprecedented artistry and poetic expression.

According to the NOAD (New Oxford American Dictionary), popular music started being distinguished as a specific musical category after some distinctive features had been marked. One of such characteristics was its format and its structure, that allowed the human voice to be the leading instrument. That meant much more songs were composed around the era of industrialization in the XIXth Century with the definition of a kind of music that was aimed at the middle-class consumer society and the industry of entertainment. Mercantilism, looking for more economic benefits, shaped this music to the general appeasement and that is why popular music sometimes caused that more singular and local musical practices were ignored or alienated from the mainstream. It also overlooked the particular rituals that negro music or local hootenannies meant to the musical experience and how different these styles were depending on their original region. The regional aspect was really determinant. Note for example, how country blues singers errant life favored that this style was completely diffused and dependable on the variants "singer" and "territory". Afterward, this kind of

styles, which are so dependent on spontaneity, lost part of their freshness and other features with the music market.

Besides negro music styles in the south, cowboy singing was really connected to people's daily labor and work. The major work about its important legacy was written by Lomax (1911) and it was titled *Cowboy Songs*. The folklorist explorer used songs as a means to know the people who lived in America. "He asserted that truly authentic folk music existed only in communities isolated from mainstream society" (Donaldson, 2011: 25) These kind of songs, so remote from the industry, were published in different formats before the beginning of the XXth Century, either in newspapers, recorded or as poems in magazines and broadsides (Lornell, 2012).

#### **1.2.4. Blues Music**

The African American talents of the twentieth century who gave origin to such essential genres as blues, ragtime, jazz, etc; were the invisible –blind– voices of the country for a long time. Their identities still were undercover at the beginning of the XXth century. However, their voices, styles and the things they sang about, became a successful influence to other artists. Blues music and its latest form, rhythm 'n' blues, marked also the development of rock 'n' roll in the 50s. Singers like Little Richard, who became Dylan's earliest rock influence, became the model for pioneer rock 'n' rollers such as Jerry Lee Lewis and Elvis Presley, who "appreciated not only his music but also his unpredictable and rebellious spirit", according to Rip Lornell (2012: 334) Dylan stated that he loved rural blues pioneering singers and he liked it because "it was older than Muddy and Wolf. (...) I always felt I like I'd started on it, always had been on it and could go anywhere from it, even down into the deep Delta country." (2004: 240-1) Afterward, Elvis, Buddy Holly, Eddie Cochran, Bill Haley and the Comets and Wanda Jackson, among others, became the highest exponents of rockabilly rhythms, derived from blues structure, although they used frenzied vocals over a duple meter that gave it a faster tempo than rock. It sort of "complements the sound achieved by Chicago blues artists such as Muddy Waters and Howlin' Wolf" (Lornell, 2012: 336) There was some gospel influence in blues style too. This added a dramatic and expressive tone to their already exaggerated vocal techniques and performances. In his study "Folk-Song and Folk-Poetry: As Found in the Secular Songs of the Southern Negroes" (1911) its author,

Howard Washington Odum, brings forward the modern point of discussion in Dylan's music.

If all these genres were derived from blues, where did blues evolved from? It all started with the work song, which accompanied field hollers daily laboring activities, and continued with other blues styles derivations that gave a communal dimension to the performing ritual. Blues was so akin to its performing dimensions that these acquired a sense of ritual leading to mythical narratives like Legba, a Yoruba trickster, described by Robert Palmer (1981: 60), whose story was initially associated with Stagolee and the devil. Stagolee or Stagga Lee is a figure of folklore based on a historic American murderer, Lee Shelton. His legend said he made a deal with the devil at the crossroads. The devil accepted giving him indestructible powers and he won his soul. This legend was later appropriated by other music figures, like the bluesman Robert Johnson. That story about the liminality, the point where the supernatural powers meet not possible logical explanation, is the point where the trickster lives. According to Henry Louis Gates Jr. (1988) the trickster was present at the rituals of black music performances and could be encoded not understood by the white critics laws of interpretations, but through a special figure of interpretation that looked for "signifyin(g)" responses in a changeable environment and that delighted in chaos and confusion. All this is described in the reference book of Performance and Literary Studies, *The Signifying Monkey : A Theory of African-American Literary Criticism*, (1988). During such kind of rituals, members of the community used to sing over simple repetitive cadences in unison making everybody participate in the event. It was meant to unburden all those feelings of anguish and solidarity.

Though only circumstantial evidence backs this up, work songs tended to be short and repetitive. This permitted almost anyone to join in their singing. A work song might consist of half-dozen words improvised by the leader and a (usually repetitive) response by fellow workers. The musical phrases were brief, usually no more than four or five measures. But the key to avoiding true repetition was slight melodic and textual variations  
(Lornell, 2012: 173)

No wonder the musical experience, as shared by their communities all around the U. S territory, made each Afro-American individual conscious of the situation of the community. This large mass raged against any kind of social injustice to win their rights in the U.S around the 1950s.

Either they were working or doing other things, but music stressed their timing while their untrained voices declared the hardships of everyday living. The formula of work songs was similar to that of prison songs, which were the consequence of the inclusion of Afro-American population in the American society and their successive incarcerations –whether legitimately or not. Some of these performances got recorded by explorers of folk sounds who went into the Southern prisons, like Pete Seeger. These historical recordings are available at the Library of Congress or at the Smithsonian Folkways Centre. Both were important cataloguing institutions that today offer an online catalogue with free access to a long list of interesting music data belonging to the Library's American Folk life Center division. It includes Lomax's field recordings, the John and Ruby Lomax southern states recording trips, ragtime recordings, collectors music, Indian music and various national anthologies that celebrate their glorious music background.<sup>16</sup>

Ragtime is other of such Afro-American music genres that in the XXth Century became popularized and determinant for other singer-songwriters music styles. This style wasn't lead by the human voice, as in blues, but by piano players whose peculiar syncopated tunes were later named "rags". I mention it here because it gave a means for jazzy improvisation in other folk styles. Songwriters like Irving Bell (1888-1989) – father of Tin Pan Alley– and George M. Cohan (1878- 1942) were highly influenced by this music style. Also, Dylan's performing rituals always relied on its kind of improvisatory technique. In fact, ragtime blues disappeared in favor of jazz music, which reached theaters and recordings before blues.

Blues, for its part, combined all the other traditions and reflected the tribulations of the Afro-American population since they got free of their slavery owners. They were living in a segregated society that forced them to wander around the country searching for good opportunities and running away from racist organizations, like the Ku Klux Klan.

Blues always relied on the guitar and the voice of its interpreter. Guitars were portable and their techniques (knives and bottlenecks) made its sound evolve to an extraordinary polyphony that principally was seeking to resemble and combine with the human voice. “Interaction between a guitarist and his voice as well as between the singer and audience have become important ingredients of the blues tradition.” (Lornell, 2012: 189). Yet the twelve-bar structure of their songs was not settled until 1912 when the first sheets were published. Still, the most stable characteristic of blues consisted of

“a series of rhymed couplets that speak the “truth” about life, one of the principal reasons why this new music appealed to its listeners.” (Lornell, 2012: 190). In addition to that, blues also made evident the different regional variables in folk music.

Firstly, blues was a direct effect of field hollers music, who sang about their worries while working in the southern fields of the regions of Piedmont, Texas, and the Delta Starting. Secondly, it spread around the mid-south and Delta regions transforming into country blues. Later, when bluesmen went to live in the cities, it changed again, becoming better known as urban blues and appropriating from electrification and amplification techniques for the first time. Thirdly, blues originated various other music genres like jazz and rhythm & blues, but especially since jazz wasn't so remarkable for the observation of the figure of the singer-songwriter as it was usually composed and interpreted by two different persons. Whereas the Delta bluesman utilized a whole spectrum of western popular music –like Bob Dylan– and their individual oddity, “being able to hear and execute vocally and instrumentally” (Palmer, 1981: 18-9) Alan Lomax referred once to blues music like “America’s cante hondo”. He stated, “(blues) uncoils its subtle, sensual melancholy in the ear of all the states, then all the world” (1960: 15) Albeit different, commercialism started changing each kind of blues by making them a unique standard that depended on popular tastes around the 1940s.

The fact that truth and reliability are blues main philosophies connects a preceding current towards individualism that, according to my hypothesis, Bob Dylan took up again years later. Its values served him both to consecrate his authenticity and to communicate differently with his listeners. As professor Kip Lornell confirms later, “blues promoted a dialogue between the musician and audience” (2012: 190). Call and response and "hocketing" are forms of musical conversation inherited from the Bantu and the pygmies. Robert Palmer, expert musicologist and blues producer, explains the term "hocketing" as involving the building of a multitude of individual one-or-two-note parts into a dense polyphony" (1981: 28). Polyphonic techniques can be encountered in Dylan's music in the form of false conversations where there can be more than two participants at once.

Some blues secret masters were finally discovered before the economic crisis in 1929, like Blind Lemon Jefferson (“See that My Grave is Kept Clean”, 1962) but died later in the anonymity. It happened the same to Charlie Patton (1891- 1934) and Rabbit Brown (1880- 1937) a guitarist of whom there are no accounts since 1930, and who died in 1937. Charlie Patton followed Henry Sloan’s early blues style and with only 19

years old, he recorded his first song “Pony Blues”. He became a prolific entertainer and his singing qualities became an influence for other blues singers, like Howlin’ Wolf.

Another of their contemporaries was Blind Lemon Jefferson whose style was beyond compare as it developed a highly personal blues style. He, instead, reached a high success and was considered the father of country blues because his songs had a distinct sound, due to his guitar technique and to his irregular and improvisatory singing, a quality derived from the work songs’ tradition.<sup>17</sup>

The economic crisis, along with the menace of the second World War, forced the record market and the industry to close down. While others, supported by the aspiring determination of Moe Asch’s Folkways Records, like Blind Willie McTell, Robert Johnson and Bukka White, never suffered the terrible costs of the Depression era nor the consequences of the second World War and had the opportunity to witness the spectacular interest that his music style endured during the 60s and the recent interest in folklore music. Bob Dylan would honour Blind Willie McTell with the recovered studio version titled like the name of the artist which plainly declared “no one sings the blues like Blind Willie McTell” (1990). There is a thorough investigation about McTell by Sean Wilentz (2010) where the bluesman is endowed with a modernist point of view that might have been a revelation to Dylan. He says McTell represents the pure songster as he was “working in a tradition indebted to minstrelsy, that dated back to the vagabond musicians of the Reconstruction years” who “mastered all kinds of popular forms, from spirituals to the latest hits from Tin Pan Alley.” (2010: 125) Another decisive influence, Muddy Waters, used to master bottlenecked-guitar technique while picking the chords, moaning and singing “a song that constituted of two lines, a repeat, two more lines, a repeat, and so on, his voice sliding easily from note to note in the crabbed chantlike melody.” (Palmer, 1981: 4)

Afro-American musicians cultivated the genre of ballad since the early twentieth century as well. According to professor Kip Lornell: “the African-American ballad tradition is distinguished from its Anglo-American neighbor by a lack of narrative coherence and linear narrative, its subjectivity, and a tendency to glorify events” (2012: 181) This particular use would be related to the moment when Dylan decided to abandon all linear narratives to write more surreal lyrics that owed much to this Afro-American versification. Lornell explains they have come to be known as *canonical* because they borrow thematic influences from various sources. Like their precursor, the topic song or broadside ballads, these songs,

(...) told about and often gave forthright opinions on every conceivable subject -- wars and revolutions, battles on land and sea, murders and executions, outlaws and saints, politicians and gentlemen, hard times and harder times, disasters on earth and fearsome apparitions in the sky (earlier visits by flying saucers?) Their effect on the people was recognized, respected -- and feared.

(Friesen, 1963: 1)

A well-known exponent of this tradition was Leadbelly (Huddie Ledbetter, 1888-1949), that was also a guitar virtuoso. He came from Texas, a cultural and musical settlement whose culture he heralded. He lived through many difficult situations, the worst of them when he became a famous criminal. In fact, he was in jail when Alan Lomax visited him for recording his first songs for the Library of Congress. These first songs acquitted him after being shown to the governor of Louisiana. Lead Belly represented all those itinerant musicians, especially black folk musicians, that traveled all through the country in search for the next labor opportunity. “Geographers call such movement, *relocation diffusion*, referring to the spread of a new idea or innovation through the migration of an individual or a folk group.” (Lornell, 2012: 186) Not being notated in song sheets, black folk music became the largest oral tradition of the states, only dependent on their extensive live shows and performances around the national territory.

Lead Belly went to New York after getting out of jail and started recording more songs and playing them live. There, in New York, he allied with other folk musicians who constituted two societies, The Almanac Singers, and People's Songs. He and his instrumental technique introduced a concept to musical accompaniment, "walking bass". This technique used no syncopated notes for each melodic step in a 4/4 time. They were used to stress the harmonic structure of the song. Lead Belly popularized songs like "Goodnight Irene", "Take This Hammer", "Black Betty" –around which Dylan composed one poem included in *Tarantula* (1965)– or “The Midnight Special”.

Folk blues performances with voice and guitar had developed to larger ensembles that consisted of “a bass, drums (or washboard), guitar, piano, harmonica, or horns” (Lornell, 2012: 193) The most famous enclave for popular blues music was Chicago, where most southerners had migrated to. There, electric sound systems gave blues its most characteristic sound. Some of its most remarkable players were Muddy Waters (1913-1983), Howlin’ Wolf (1910-1976), Elmore James (1918-1963) and Walter Horton (1917- 1981), all of them arrived from the recognized style of

Mississippi Delta pioneered by Charlie Patton (1891-1934), Son House (1902-1988), Willie Brown (1900-1952), Will Shade (1898-1966) and Robert Johnson (1911-1938) (Lornell, 2012).

This blues sub-style consisted on “highly dramatic lead voices of amplified guitars and harmonicas supported by the basic rhythm section of bass guitar, piano, and drums”, according to Lornell’s *Exploring American Folk Music: Ethnic, Grassroots and Regional Traditions in the United States* (2012: 195). This style continued being very popular during the decade of the 1950s and 1960s thanks to the European interest that blues aroused, especially in Britain but also to Muddy Waters. The singer was Chess Record’s first big hit. The historic record company headed by two brothers who documented the development of the Chicago Blues scene supported folk blues development. Waters began in his teens, playing Delta blues singers like Robert Johnson and Son House. He later moved to Chicago before reaching central Mississippi. The researcher Alan Lomax recorded him as part of a project in the region of Coahoma County, Mississippi. A year later he was recording again, just before moving to Chicago definitely. By the late 1940s, he had formed a band with Little Walter and the famous harp player and pianist Otis Spann. Waters gave blues a more noisy and powerful than it used to have. He would start shouting while sliding his guitar. He made popular the songs "Hootchie Cootchie Man", "Mannish Boy", "Rolling Stone" and "Long Distance Call" –to which Dylan made a direct reference.

### 1.3. The Folk Revival

The revival movement served as a nexus between the first decades of the XXth century and the growing interest in traditional voices of the American landscape that surged among the two most prominent cultural groups of that era, the southern musicians and the young fraction of nostalgic voices that met both on the East coast and in New York's Greenwich Village context (Lornell, 2012). The New York scene is treated with more detail in a separate subsection as it is the context where Dylan made his first most determinant apparition. The most important difference between the two is that southern musicians, who had been wandering around for opportunities, ended up creating their own expressive language while the other group would rather interpret folk and oral tradition before giving rise to their new musical products. In other words, these musicians would carefully recognize their musical tradition for they started reinterpreting and rearranging all these old folk songs. Imitations and performances constituted the way these artists paid their personal tribute and contributed reviving past music styles. They took past legendary sounds and their oral history and gave them a second opportunity. This act of reproduction, of revival, meant another kind of repetitive representation in music, functioning like a kind of echo, while it became a key term for understanding Bob Dylan's appearance.

These singers "began their careers by singing their own interpretations of folk songs but who have evolved into highly respected singers/songwriters. Such musicians play folk music or folk-based music, rather than being folk musicians themselves, which is an important distinction" (Lornell, 2012: 284) This new wave aimed at revitalizing their folklore but also gave a sense of place to all those new songwriters that emerged and gave their status to popular music. This wave was accompanied by a growing scholar and political interest in these issues, especially since the decade of the 1930s and the results of the Great Depression. Acting as a different kind of music researchers they had different standpoints, although the great majority would recognize that one of the most important events for the revival movement was the release of the *Anthology* from where they would borrow not just the music sound, but also their own sense of what was to be considered typically American by their generation, Dylan's generation.

The music from the *Anthology* and other recordings from the 1920s and 1930s were a far cry from the popular singers of the 1950s like Rosemary Clooney, Perry Como, and Patti Page. The progressive politics that became associated with the music was also absent from much of the national political landscape. It was to this small audience of young, educated folk music enthusiasts that the revivalists' message of Americanism resonated the loudest.

(Donaldson, 2011: 194)

In 1952 the record label Folkway Records –today Smithsonian Records, still devoted to the study and categorization of the music traditions in America– , which was founded in 1948 by Moses Asch (1905- 1986), released "Harry Smith's ground breaking, essential 6-LP anthology of pre-war black and white recordings" It was titled *American Folk Music* and "it provided crucial source material for the whole revivalist scene that was to thrive in Greenwich Village and Boston by the end of the decade" (Gray, 2006: 12). It was an important collection of many other artists, including Bob Dylan, as he would later recognize. It provided them with a source of creativity constituting first their recital and after, their direct compositional source. Most of the artists that listened to the *Anthology* became song smiths themselves, following the steps of The Carter Family, Blind Lemon Jefferson or Frank Hutchinson, among others. In the words of music critic Greil Marcus, the *Anthology* must have been the "the founding document of the American Folk Revival."<sup>18</sup>

While the amount of scholarship that has addressed the folk music revival is too great to list in its entirety, no study to date fully explores the relationship between the revival and concepts of Americanism. Yet, influencing the ways in which Americans understood the values, the culture, and the people of their nation was the crux of the revival.

(Donaldson, 2011)

Like Eyerman and Jamison (1998), I also think that the folk revivalists used the folk music canon to conceal their own idea about what was typically American. The construction of the idea of Americanism, a "true Americanism" (Donaldson, 2011) was also important for Dylan all over his music career and it infused his lyrics with democratic, diverse and civic ideals around his society. Other explorers like John and Alan Lomax investigated the different forms of folk music and recorded many blues artists like Blind Willie McTell, whom Dylan praised in his song, like Muddy Waters, Leadbelly, etc. They did it in order to understand more things about Americanism grounded on a regionalist movement that was led by literary figures like Carl

Sandburg, whom Dylan admired very much and who wrote *The American Songbag* (1927), another epic anthology for the folk revivalist movement.

For all this the popular chase after the redefinition of their culture generated a strong sense of community among their people and music became a nexus between them. The more revitalized these old modes of expression were, the more rock 'n' roll, as it had been understood before being given an official name, took a more innocuous stance (Lornell, 2012: 339). It would not be until the British Invasion that rock started to be boosted again.

Regardless of their varied points of view about life and music, the term "folk" wasn't understood equally by all its members. Indeed, the ethnomusicologist Erik Lornell defined folk revival as "the interest of singers and musicians from outside of a regional, racial, or ethnic group in perpetuating its traditional music" (2012: 281), but, at the same time, there were others that, according to Rachel Clare Donaldson's Ph.D. dissertation –"Music for the People: The Folk Music Revival and American Identity 1930- 1970" (2011)– regarded folk's recovery as coming closer to social movements. Donaldson looked at three different communities in the development of revival movement: the "traditionalists", the "functional folklorists" and "left-wing" folk revivalists, although all of them revitalized the epic genealogies of the American singing tradition (2011). The first philanthropic group "emphasized the preservation of songs as artifacts of deceased cultures"<sup>19</sup> Among them, she counts with Gertrude Knott and John Lomax.

I would like to describe more about the former figure, Sarah Gertrude Knott, as she was not quite reported worldwide and because she also put the basis for the what was understood as authentic back in those days. She wanted to present the folk culture in a theatrical way, that is why she staged her favorite artists in music festivals that reconstituted the spirits of the audience in these critical times. Michael Ann Williams, the biographer of Knott, contended that this kind of producer created the idea of what authenticity was for the credo of folk purism. Knott wanted to generate an idea of genuinely played music helping people develop a good music taste. She, along with other producers, tried to search for remarkable talents in the realm of hillbilly music. The term authenticity was given by this time a general preoccupation but as Zachary Lechner observed "because scholars use it so frequently, it risks becoming devoid of meaning, and so a definition is needed" (2007). A reason why she later pointed to the

study *Blue Chicago: The Search for Authenticity in Urban Blues Clubs*, by sociologist David Grazian, where the author offers a “cogent, two-fold definition of "authenticity."

"First," he writes, "it can refer to the ability of a place or event to conform to an idealized representation of reality: that is, to a set of expectations regarding how such a thing ought to look, sound, and feel. At the same time, authenticity can refer to the credibility or sincerity of a performance and its ability to come off as natural and effortless." [1] According to Grazian, the search for authenticity will never succeed in recovering the idealized representation. (2007)

Clare Donaldson (2011) distinguished the second group of folk revivalists, the "functional folklorists". They were those who "maintained that songs only retain relevance when utilized by those cultures which retain the traditions which birthed those songs". Among the third group, there are the "left-wing" revivalists, Charles Seeger and Lawrence Gellert among others, who emphasized the political and raging power of music.

One of the major folk-driven tasks was conveniently carried out by the Seeger Family, whose legacy was critical to the Library of Congress and to the definition of the Left wing folklore movement that was established, among others, by the Almanac Singers, Moses Asch, Woody Guthrie, the Weavers, etc. Starting with Charles Seeger<sup>20</sup>, American musicologist, composer and teacher, and continuing with his sons –the folk singer Pete Seeger, Peggy Seeger and Mike Seeger– their family was all determinant for the initiation of the left wing protest folklore movement, to the extent that, albeit their professionalism and belongingness to the intellectual part of the American society, they were jailed and some of their songs were eventually censored. Just before Dylan's arrival, between 1940 and 1961, the highly politicized movement of the Popular Front was created within the Folk Revival context. In their songs, communist and pro-communist themes were put forward. They had simple melodies, guitar playing, and its main company was the human voice. Its simple cadences and its monophonic texture gave more reliability to these groups' messages and socialist manifestoes. Woody Guthrie's songs "Vigilante Man", "Pastures of Plenty" and "This Land is Our Land" are good examples of this movement and bring forward the themes that the songwriter explored from the 1930s onwards. Lornell points that "for this collective of performers, the terms "worker," "folk," and "people" meant much the same thing." (2012: 287) Thus, for this collective, ballads were a means to make their protest messages enter every home, according to Alan Lomax's introduction to *Folk Songs of America in the*

*English Language,*

(...) a note of social protest rang through native American balladry and the lives and problems of the common people became its main concern. What in Britain had been a tendency to heroize the sailor lad and the kitchen-maid, became the dominant theme of the American ballad maker (1960: 16)

The Vietnam war and the civil rights movement had led to a crescent discomfort among the American society, and that also lead folk revivalists to make it a perfect excuse for a series of protests and demonstrations. In addition to that, the 50s became a black period that developed two different ideological sides and reinforced the suspicion of one over the other. Senator Joseph McCarthy neglected people's freedom of choice and planned a persecution of communist ideas and pronouncements during the McCarthy era. They called it the "red fever" and it meant the wreck of many workers and impresarios. It had harder consequences in the cultural sector, where ideas were streaming constantly. In fact, rapidly, a censorship system was developed and many feared their fame was put at risk. The "red fever" also implied that many corporations turned to be as conservative as the government required and so, singers on the left side had many difficulties in signing a contract. Bob Dylan tried to make a contract with the label per excellence of the movement, Folkways Records, but they rejected him. He finally signed with Columbia Records, a fact that also had an effect on his reliability and his consideration as an artist at first. The truth is he had to submit too many disapprovals about his lyrics within the company. One of this disapprovals referred to his song "Talkin' John Birch Paranoid Blues" that was rejected from the final album and published in the 90s included in *The Bootleg Series 1-3: Rare and Unreleased 1961-1991*.

I was lookin' high an' low for them Reds everywhere  
I was 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 . . .  
(Dylan, "Talkin' John Birch Paranoid Blues")

During that time, rock 'n' roll was becoming a success and it reached other countries as well. In Britain, as a consequence of that interest, there were many bands developing the genre through the years before the quality of these bands came to be recognized worldwide as the British Invasion. However, folk purists rejected this kind

of music for being commercial and pledging for a music “renaissance”. They were ignoring that, like them, these other music movement was stressing the importance of long lost genres within the American tradition, like Delta blues and Mississippi blues pioneers, who were make up by The Rolling Stones, among others. That is why, albeit independent and different from each other, these musical manifests were, to a certain extent, connected between them, This was somewhat due to their common origins and to the fatal consequences of World War II that had obscured from the audience many music genres from the audience. Genres such as blues, gospel, and other folk styles that had been played on the radio before, suddenly disappeared. Also, lots of music industries had been wrecked after 1929, and the war was no help either. However, little record companies started to raise and now “they were more willing to gamble on untried talent of all descriptions and they fundamentally replaced the major companies in marketing folk music and records with regional appeal, including polka music, blues, and white gospel music” (Lornell, 2012: 289)

As I said earlier, the folk revival was motivated to a major extent by the action of the explorers and anthropologists of sound (Lomax, Seeger and Smith, Moe Asch, Vanguard Records) who pioneered an interest for the sounds of America, although at the beginning they operated at a very independent niche who only a few people got to know. Barry Shank shows that, “the obscurity of the knowledge they were producing made it seem that much more powerful and important” (2002) Barry Shank, who is an expert in the field of American Studies, makes the first distinction between the members of the Folk Society and an amateurish Bob Dylan that had recently arrived to New York City,

While many of the folk singers reached for the most authentic, by which they meant the most difficult to find and, therefore, most valuable, music, Dylan was entranced by the songs found on a six-LP collection on Folkways called *The Anthology of American Folk Music* and by the songs of and stories about Woody Guthrie.  
(2002: 107)

I interpreted this difference as the beginning of a process of individualization articulated through repetitive figures in Dylan’s discography, all leading to the idea of reaching the ideal personification of the “authentic artist” and giving the more veracious and reliable facet of his persona, whereas "folkies" wanted to spread the sounds of their land as a revitalization of those ancient and culturally diverse practices

and they undertook an encyclopedic task of reunifying and organizing the different genres of musical expression that could be found on the continent. They knew these sounds belonged to anonymous peoples from different communities and so, they visited all those parts of the world in search for their sounds. These research procured listeners with a huge amount of field-recording documenting on how America did sound. These also gave Dylan the opportunity of facing a range of sounds that he identified with. For example, Shelton recounts the moment when Dylan listened to those Lead belly's songs as these had been released by Folkways Record Company,

The recordings of the forceful Louisiana singer, discovered in a southern jail by folk collectors John and Alan Lomax, were a revelation. With only his voice and his twelve-string guitar, Leadbelly filled Bob's head with "Rock Island Line," "Take This Hammer," "Green Corn," and "Midnight Special." The words meant more than most pop lyrics. Bob reveled in the musical storytelling.  
(Shelton, 2011: 146)

Moses Ash's record company wanted to become an encyclopedic compendium of all characteristic sounds of the U. S regarding "ethnic" and native sounds, too. He loved diverse cultures' characteristics and valued their individual power, for he had European and Jewish origins himself. Arrived at New York with his immigrant parents, he started his recording expeditions in 1939. He used to say, "I issued folk music, which was the bastardized pop of the day, to an audience who would appreciate it even though the guy who sang it was an old black country musician. I had to show this had value and content."<sup>21</sup>The milestone of the label took place with the release of the *Anthology of American Folk Music* in 1952 as edited by Harry Smith. It helped to bring everybody's attention into the richness of their country's music traditions, along with several unknown names whose ballads and songs influenced many subsequent songsters.

With the social improvements and economic recovery after World War II, musical entrepreneurs revived the music industry in U.S urban centers and it increasingly took into account the rising power that traditional music was exerting over society. The Chess Brothers in Chicago, for example, started reviving bluegrass musicians and ended up turning their attention to Delta blues referents who had become unknown to listeners. Sun Records, settled in Memphis, boosted the new music styles with some of the most crucial musical names at that time. Sun Records was famous for having represented the sound of Elvis Presley –who became one of the leading figures of rock 'n' roll– Carl Perkins and Jerry Lee Lewis, among others. "Their raucous and

controversial stylings helped to move this grassroots-based music further away from its wellspring and into a more commercial and international realm.” (Lornell 2012: 291)

### 1.3.1. Original Performers

The most prominent figures in the configuration of a popular American song were Jimmie Rodgers (1897- 1933), who brought country music to the emblem of national popularity and Hank Williams (1923- 1953), the singer-songwriter who won the attention of the industry. The honky-tonk performer became a charismatic figure who Dylan admired too. In fact, he recognized in him the same transformative quality he recognized in other singers who were able to go "beyond the circle", and create something new that had never existed previously.<sup>22</sup> His rise as a country phenomenon encompassed by his band, The Drifting Cowboys, gave rise to a major recording industry just after World War II and their ascend to top charts. “He amassed an outstanding 36 top 10 records on the country charts, including such Number One hits as *Love Sick Blues*, *Cold, Cold Heart*, *Jambalaya (On the Bayou)* and *Your Cheating Heart*.” (Starr and Waterman, 2006: 50) This is one of the first recognized singer songwriters of the twentieth century to reach fame. "After his death, he became a major influence on all the rock- and-roll groups and singers who turned to the country sound in the mid-sixties." (Scaduto, 2001: 160) From Hank Williams' singing style, Bob Dylan must have picked that particularly American twang that made sounds very nasal-like and so distinctive. The image of the rambling singer so present in Dylan's lyrics belongs to some of Williams' songs. Also, the outlaw hero myth became of Dylan's interest too, as it is portrayed in the following examples,

Some folks might say-ay that I'm no good  
That I wouldn't settle down if I could  
But when that open road starts to callin' me  
There's something o'er the hill that I gotta see  
(Williams, *Ramblin' Man* 1953)

Now the man that walks this rocky road usually gets just what he deserves  
Cause he's just a helpless servant to a master that he serves  
Now I've learned to slow my temper down and not to pick no scraps no more  
Boys it's a lot easier on the head and eyes I've been down that road before  
(Williams, *I've been Down That Road Before* 1963)

Originally, Hank Williams used the expression with which Muddy Waters titled one of his most popular releases, the homonymic single “Rolling Stone” (1950), that gave expression to Dylan’s “Like a Rolling Stone” (1965) and named the rock band The Rolling Stones and Wenner’s popular rock magazine (1967). The expression refers to that kind of person who is unwilling to settle for a long time in one place. It belongs to the popular phrase “a rolling stone gathers no moss” (NAOD) Besides that, the song where Williams first compared himself to a rolling stone was in Leon Payne’s creation “Lost Highway” that he popularized<sup>23</sup>. Leon Payne was another celebrated country music singer called the “blind balladeer” because he was born blind of one eye and lost sight in the other when he was just a kid<sup>24</sup>. The song says,

I'm a rollin' stone all alone and lost  
For a life of sin I have paid the cost  
When I pass by all the people say  
Just another guy on the lost highway  
(Leon Payne, *Lost Highway* 1949)

This song introduced the image of the road, too. An image that had been mythically attached to American music and culture, from literary to popular music and other artistic works.<sup>25</sup> The rolling gambler and outlaw hero whose only company is the highway was an idea very much related to this kind of singers –either cowboys or bluesmen– who would be traveling around the country with their music. That topoi puts together almost every figure in the so-called do-it-yourself (DIY) philosophy as a form of individual judgment that stands for a less marketing corrupted statement. That and the fact that for the first time in music, “there seems to be no separation between the singer and the song, or between the sound of his country voice and the meaning of its expression”, as Larry Starr and Christopher Waterman (2006) said about Hank Williams, made of the revival movement a strong influence to Dylan. Other critics (Greil Marcus, David Jaffe, etc.), as it will be observed later in this thesis, made this identification but connected his music with the blues tradition too.

However, folk music and songsters were finally reached by the industry, that had identified its popularization, and the effect that commercialism had over this kind of music styles provoked some changes in them and also in people’s consciousness. Eventually, they would all result in new product ideas derived from the mixture

between tradition and popular music. For example, the popularized 'western' style of old cowboy songs faded when Nashville became the most important location for country and cowboy music styles, fruit to their popular demand. Then, the so-called Nashville sound shaded other previous songs. The same happened with rock 'n' roll. It was not after many years from its apparition that blues was at last credited as the germ of rock 'n' roll.

At the same time, some groups of young devotees to roots music and non-commercial music started recognizing all the authentic artists that separated themselves from that business. For all this, popular music definition has been continuously evolving, because it matched society's fluctuating preferences and diverse communities. On one side, folk revivalists had their particular definition of traditional music –as a source of innovation and identity– very much in opposition to popular or commercial music where quality is valued in relation to sales.

While the categories of folk music and popular music were being rearranged and adapted to modern times, its evolution was rather unpredictable and was constituted by a multitude of different song and the group of singer songwriters heralded old styles while using them for their innovative formats until it became really hard to put a limit between what was popular and what was purely traditional or "folkish".

In this context, the more intellectual sections of the urban centers of the country and university students from Boston or other West Coast centers began voicing the yet uncorrupted sounds of America and their "authenticity", contrarious to mass culture, commercial interests and a prefabricated industry that tried to manipulate listener's preferences<sup>26</sup>. They believed these old styles had been ignored and as a result, alternative music genres started to be more and more demanded and record companies began making the profit of those underground ventures.

Many amateur folklorists now began enrolling in academic programs to earn credentials for what they had already been doing for love. As the folk boom of the '60s gathered momentum, the campuses of colleges and universities across the country became meeting grounds for the academic world and old-time musicians. This was the situation when my most notable musical venture . . . first got rolling.  
(Benford, *Old-Time Herald* 1989, 23)<sup>27</sup>

When the recording new technology made music accessible and reproducible for everyone, repetition started to make an integrant part of music's mode of consumption while it also consumes its signification. The kind of repeatability that surged from

music reproduction was not just a poetic or creative resource but also a very useful commercial and processing strategy, as it will be explained later. Record sales were, to some extent, easy to manipulate. Some recordings were played more in the radio than others and companies tried to search for any kind of marketing strategies that would end up making music their ambioned product. Even if success was initially hard to predict, they made whatever was at hand to find what people wanted. This caused the worst polemic at that time, as I mentioned above. The radio's payola polemic was a determinant factor for the creation of a revivalist fraction of people with a radicalize sense of music as an alternative movement.

A web of intrigues was discovered around music transmission favoring certain musicians and not others. Apparently, some artists were paying big amounts of money to MCs in order to be played on the radio with a certain ratio of frequency. To that extent was repetition studied as the major resource for music sales. This market advantage was not based on the professional taste of the show leader but only on money transactions, which produced a panorama of rebellion in music. The worst consequence was that this phenomenon destroyed the supposed quality criteria that radio leaders had promised to their listeners and consequently, they were seriously criticized, especially by the community of folk purists. The payola polemic was a determinant factor to distance them from any hint of commercialism in music and arts.

Singer-songwriters in America narrated their personal experiences and wanderings the same way Afro-American workers and left-wing idealists did before them. Some of the most significant figures of communist idealism are Woody Guthrie and Pete Seeger, a superb duo. They were so influential that their respective styles were long imitated by younger artists of the next decade who entered the music scenes of New York, like Guy Carawan, Peter Yarrow, and Mary Travers, to number a few.

Woody Guthrie (1912 - 1967) lived through the most belligerent years for songsters, when the interest of record companies started to flourish timidly but still, it was not an industry that could allow you to make a living, especially if you had a reduced audience. He fought for becoming the person he wanted to be and also to become a great singer. Songs were his particular way of describing the world around him and even though his talent brought him glories and successes very soon, his life was really hard as he went through many economic and social hardships. Woody never recognized a place like home, rather he would just be increasingly familiar with the vast U.S territory and considered it his homeland. He traveled all around it playing live and

recording for different studios before becoming a popular radio broadcaster and the voice of the masses in the 1950s.

Guthrie was a more complex person than he looked at first sight. His simplicity was supported by an uncontrollable hunger for reading. He used to read poetry, the classics, the Bible or politic essays. "He had a huge intellect: Albert Einstein is said to have delighted in talking to him down at Princeton, Franklin Delano Roosevelt sat with him in bull sessions in the White House and later, Eleanor Roosevelt often had him up to Hyde Park." (Scaduto, 2001: 2881) He was another Alan Lomax's musical discovery, that is why they both recorded some sessions for The Library of Congress around 1940. He also recorded for major record companies and for other visionary labels, responsible for much of the newly risen interest in folk sound, like Folkways Record Company led by Moses Asch. In fact, Moses Asch recollected the good understanding he had of the artist during an interview in 1971, "He had a frame and he used the music of American folk song as the base for his words. Woody would fit it into what he wanted to say"<sup>28</sup>

Like Dylan would do later on –specially during his first albums–, Woody Guthrie wrote his lyrics over borrowed musical compositions that had already been good exponents of American folklore. He wasn't just a folk singer, he –like Bob Dylan– was an artist, and that would make all the difference (Shank, 2002). Guthrie especially explored the talking blues genre, which consisted of putting a poetic rhythm to narration of a story. Talking Blues "did not require great singing talent in order to be performed. What it required, instead, was a talent for telling a story colorfully and humorously." (Eyerman & Jamison, 1998: 68-9) His vernacular singing and his crude technique would be imitated firstly by Ramblin' Jack Eliot, who followed him like an apprentice, and secondly by Bob Dylan, who imitated his style and used his songs as one of his most decisive points of departure. He tried to describe Guthrie's distinct singing style saying, "He would throw in the sound of the last letter of a word whenever he felt like it and it would come like a punch." He also recognized "his repertoire" was "really beyond category. They had the infinite sweep of humanity in them." (2004: 244)

What characterized Guthrie's use of the genre were his acid and satirical commentaries. The general mood of his songs was bright and positive, showing a triumphing idea of what the non-materialistic living of ordinary people is. For that, he sang country and folk, but also paeans and anthems, like "Pastures of Plenty" and his most famous song, "This Land is Your Land". He also sang children songs and his most famous collaboration in the music business came when he and Pete Seeger met and

started working together. In 1943 his autobiography *Bound for Glory* was published for the first time. The story recovers some of his experiences as a hobo, a permanent inspiration for the collective archetypes of the road map of America, its real people and the point of view of the individual against the social conditions. It's the same idea that pioneer writers of existentialism like Albert Camus had explored before and which contemporary beat writers were to explore during subsequent years.

Guthrie's major aspirations are expressed in the following quote found in Shelton's *No Direction Home*,

I am out to sing songs that will prove to you that this is your world and that if it has hit you pretty hard and knocked you for a dozen loops, no matter how hard it's run you down and rolled over you, no matter what color, what size you are, how you are built, I am out to sing the songs that make you take pride in yourself and in your work. And the songs I sing are made up for the most part by all sorts of people just about like you.  
(2011: 195)

Bob Dylan sang his respects to the man in "Song to Woody" (1962) published in his first album and later, in an alternate take which was published in *No Direction Home: The Soundtrack* (2005), he wrote how the singer's legacy populated his vision of the world. "I'm seeing your world of people and things. Your paupers and peasants and princess and kings". As a rule, Bob Dylan would use these characters in his music by refusing to say goodbye to Woody Guthrie's influence as well as all good people that had imaginarily traveled with him, like Cisco Houston, Leadbelly, etc.

Pete Seeger, for his part, started being the musical partner of Woody Guthrie. A longtime traveler and folklore explorer who submitted to temporary jobs and irregular recording sessions, Pete continued very actively during the 60s among the young promises of folk music. In fact, he became an ambassador of the European movement pro-folklore music that he wanted to attain in the U.S. He was a usual collaborator of several other artists, among these were Malvina Reynolds, Vern Partlow, Ernie Marris, etc. One of his activities was devoted to publishing distribution and music divulgation through song-sheets. He was a collaborator of *Sing Out!* magazine and *Broadside*, the latter being a smaller and little-known publication where Bob Dylan was recruited during 1962 to 1964. Shelton adds that "along with Paul Krassner's the *Realist*, and the *Village Voice*, *Broadside* probably pioneered the 1960s underground press" (2011: 335) Dylan's songs first public appearance was through *Broadside* numbers, where he participated actively. Later on, *Broadsides* became a series of albums in which Dylan –

due to the record company's contract restrictions— had to use his pseudonym Blind Boy Grunt. Friesen, one of the engaged artists said in Shelton's book that, "(...) there was no money on it, the whole thing being a benefit for *Broadside*." (2011: 337) According to published data, *Broadside Vol.1* didn't sell many copies –maybe that's why Columbia managers didn't care about his clear "violation" of the contract. However, this publication meant a lot for folk music and topical song revival. Other famous songwriters published there, like Nina Simone, Billy Edd Wheeler or Malvina Reynolds.

By then, folk music became the underground thing, attracting young people and amateur songsters who hadn't had the opportunity of being very popular and still felt the passion for playing in sceneries from all over the country. Ron Eyerman and Andrew Jamison explain that, "folk songs emerged and were transmitted into the culture in a kind of structural opposition to the manufactured popular music of the music industry." (1998: 63) Much of the old times wanted to be recovered by those purists among who Dylan was counted. Shelton documents that Dylan "was the purest of the pure. He had to get the oldest record and, if possible, the Library of Congress record, or go find the original people who knew the original song." (2011: 176) It was a race to find who was behind those lyrics and how did he or she render it properly.

Bob Dylan met the first acolytes of songwriting when he went to university in Minnesota. There, according to Shelton's *No Direction Home* (2011: 167), he was influenced by Judy Collins "a classically trained musician beginning what was to be a long career in 1959–60" and Jesse Fuller. Both played at the Exodus, the center for poetry readings, art shows, and folk sessions.

Fuller fused traditional songs, blues, his own writing, rural ragtime, and just plain "good-time" sounds. He was a one-man band, working his twelve-string guitar, cymbals, harmonica, and his own curious invention, the "fotdella," a foot-operated percussion machine that struck a drum and plucked an improvised bass simultaneously (2011: 167)

At one point in Shelton's story, a university partner of Dylan is interviewed. During he speech he mentions who, he thinks, was the earliest songwriter of Minnesota. He says it was Dave Morton. He does not specify anything about this name, but he is mentioned again in Epstein's *The Ballad of Bob Dylan: A portrait* (2011), where he is referred to as an active follower of Lead belly, and one of the very few who had the opportunity of listening to the bluesman on stage in 1948. He was an active singer

himself another adherent of topical song and an influential personality who introduced Dylan to the intellectual Dave Whitaker, a friend of the Beat authors and poets.

The genre of topic songs had never been abandoned and it proved to be a very useful format to comment on current events and present-day dilemmas. Some of the most famous compositions after Woody Guthrie were, Phil Ochs “The Marines Have Landed on the Shores of Santo Domingo” and Bob Dylan’s censored song “Talking John Birch Society Blues”. According to Wikipedia’s online target, “(...) one would call a song ‘topical’ only if the events referred to were at least reasonably recent at the time the song was written<sup>29</sup>.”

In 1959 the Newport Folk Festival was born as a place where folk music was given its homage in front of the U.S population. It had been settled in the city of Newport, in Rhode Island. They kept loyal to their sense of music, out of the business and rendered over the scenery. They configured it to allow as many performers as possible and to introduce amateur artists to the folk world. There were established a series of performances, but improvisation and collaboration between them in the form of sing-alongs were at the top of the event. These musical moments turned to be so unique that they proved to be a good time for on-site recordings, as it was quickly understood by some record producers.

The 1963 edition of the festival was a determinant event, as popular as the so-called “electric polemic” that took place in the 1965 edition. During this festival, the popular revolution pro-civil rights was at its highest and at least all the assistants were totally in unison around matters such as the negro alienation, his voting rights, their access to other people's social services, jobs, etc. “Musicians and listeners felt they were saying something to the rest of the country about another way of living and thinking. The hootenanny craze and the music business only provided the vehicle for a mass expression of social purpose” (Shelton, 2011: 405) Thanks to its closeness to New York, this festival reunited the best of the New York and Boston scenes and it proved young Dylan’s talent on stage, accompanied by the young spokeswoman Joan Baez, who, by the time, had seen published her first record success in Folkways Records.<sup>30</sup>

### **1.3.2. Greenwich Village and Urban Folk Music**

By the 1950s a countercultural conscience started to be created along with a prevailing search for revolutionary and humanistic values in the most powerful center of the country, New York City. The folk song movement mixed different traditions and artistic disciplines, “It also mixed radical politics with realist or documentary, aesthetics and populist or patriotic values. Its message was an American idealism that drew on the ideas of egalitarianism and frontier independence while trying to relate them to the concerns of the twentieth century.” (Eyerman & Jamison, 1998: 72)

All these Dylan contemporaries or as Sam Wilentz calls them “sixties newcomers, were impressed and inspired by some of the best of that displaced art of “yesteryear” and they were not the only ones.” (2012)<sup>31</sup> Their community raged against the music industry and the mercantilism of rock sounds. After payola scandals and the increasing success of R&B singers and rock ‘n’ rollers, this community –parallel to University students’ rioting movements–started complaining about the loss of purity and sincerity in music performances. According to them, “(...) the folk movement ran on greased wheels of anti-show business idealism.” (Shelton, 2011: 219) Simultaneously it became an entertainment scenario that showed diverse disciplines all around the contemporary society, problems with the nation, the recovery of the ignored voices of ordinary people, their arts, and music, etc. In the words of Robert Shelton, who was present at that moment and cohabited those night clubs and bohemia meetings, "no community better represented personal and artistic freedom than Greenwich Village. Within the Village, no scenes were livelier than off-Broadway theatre and the new upsurge of folk music, a revival that was part-circus and part-morality play" (Shelton, 2011: 218) With all their ideologies, no wonder they built on such conceptual aspirations as “authenticity”, which I have discussed above. This term was very much in relation to integrity, sincerity, personality, revelry, anti-system ideas and artistic attitudes and all of these terms were the basis of every folk artist that settled in New York at that time. David Yaffe writes about the specific peculiarities of the group,

There will always be an endless supply of pretentious 20-year-olds who think they can somehow make the world better than the one controlled by their lame parents and authority figures, but this group was special. They wanted to end racial segregation, stop cold war foreign policy and they did all this drinking coffee in joints with no liquor license.

(Yaffe, 2011: 16)

The ultimate definition of the singer-songwriter was made definitive at this historic moment, when “they began writing their own songs; albums and live performances mixed folk songs with self-penned verses” (Lornell, 2012: 299). This was the general process of such Greenwich Village pioneers as Dave Van Ronk, the New Lost City Gamblers, Paul Clayton, etc. And that was the same process Van Ronk advised Bob Dylan to go through in order to overcome his sensational “guthriesque” interpretations.

Slowly they moved into the popular mainstream by adding electric instruments and even lush string orchestrations. This process was repeated many times, spawning the “singer/songwriter” movement that touched American popular music in the mid- to late 1960s  
(Lornell, 2012: 298)

Widely acclaimed artists, like Peter, Paul and Mary, The Rooftop Singers and Joan Baez owed their fame to the previous success of The Weavers, the band of Pete Seeger that were originated in the Village. Afterward, other artists recorded their songs and became excellent sales products that represented the folk revival movement and the civil right fight.

The Weavers, formed in 1948 by Ronnie Gilbert, Lee Hays, Fred Hellerman and Pete Seeger, sang all kinds of traditional music, from ballads to children songs. They have played together during the second World War under the name of the Almanac Singers, but they changed their name at the start of the new era. They rapidly signed with Decca Records, which had become one of the major labels for blues and jump music<sup>32</sup>, and had their first hit in 1950 with a cover of "Goodnight Irene" by Lead Belly.

This historic moment meant a lot to folklorists since this fact revealed that this apparent "minor" music stream could easily become popular too, like the genres they had despised. Note that at the beginning of the 60s the division between high and low culture is getting more and more pronounced than ever before, due, in part to the strong development of the popular culture. At this moment, like the literary movement that preceded it, artists and consumers were concerned with providing some artists the merit of being considered so and others don't, and this merit was gained by collaborating in the perpetuation of American folk idealism and being connected to a somewhat socio-communist approach. They were one of the most left-oriented groups of the times and they became leaded, among others, by Pete Seeger. The band was a bestseller between 1950 and 1952, in spite of Seeger's reluctance to collaborate on such a big business, and

they were based in Greenwich Village, that is why they deserved a more careful commentary in this subsection.

I think in other parts of the country, we would have had either a much more limited audience than we had in New York, or we would have had to develop a very different kind of repertoire, quite possibly not as outspokenly left. I think New York was a very special place at that time and when we toured, I think we more or less again sang to the converted.

(Bess Lomax Hawes, 1977<sup>33</sup>)

Although the "red scare" prevented them from showing explicitly their political ideology on behalf of the group perpetuation, these groups of singers recorded and performed songs from old times, regardless of their genre. Their rebellious attitude soaked into the young minds of singers and listeners. Thanks to them music started being regarded as a good text for voicing social difficulties and people's way of living. Pete Seeger used to say, "For you and me, the important thing is a song, a good song, a true song. ...Call it anything you want"<sup>34</sup>—Social concerns and artistry would precede any economic interest on behalf of art and authenticity.

Some artists' compromise was so strong that, albeit their careful restriction to more left-wing songs and indiscreet public appearances, they were incarcerated. For example, when Pete Seeger was discovered to be a member of the Communist Party he was put on the black list during the McCarthy era and this event restricted the evolution of the pre-Weavers formation, the Almanac singers. The dismembered group reunited on a live show at Carnegie Hall in 1955 that was recorded and released by Vanguard Records in 1957. That event brought a hopeful band again on tour although the next year Seeger would leave the band definitely to start a solitary career.

The original atmosphere at that time, which meant a lot for the creative and cooperative work of its artists was explained by Bob Dylan in a poem he wrote and which was published in Peter, Paul and Mary's "In The Wind" album—in its liner notes—with the same title. It was later reproduced by the journalist Robert Shelton in Dylan's biographical book which included first-person experiences too, since Shelton accompanied all these artists during the Greenwich Village scene. I have selected the following nostalgic passage because it describes those special moments devoted to folklore.

Down there we weren't standin lookin out at the world watchin girls - an

findin out how they walk -  
We was lookin at each other ... an findin out about ourselves -  
It is 'f these times that I remember most sadly -  
For they're gone -  
an they'll not never come again -  
It is 'f these times I think about now -  
I think back t one a them nites when the doors was locked an maybe  
thirty or forty people sat as close the stage as they could -  
It was another nite past one o'clock an that meant that the tourists on  
the street couldn't get in -  
(Dylan, 1963<sup>35</sup>)

I also want to add the following verse insisting on their permanent obsession with accepting no trivialities and being always in search of self-definition in respect to their audience,

There was not such a thing as an audience—  
There was not such a thing as performers  
Everybody did somethin—  
An had somethin t say about somethin—”  
(...)  
“sing an speak as one yuh gotta think as one—  
An yuh gotta believe as one—An yuh gotta feel as one—  
(Shelton 2011: 221-222<sup>36</sup>)

His description stresses songs' communicative and participatory power as no other language can attain. I am sure part of these experiences of community would be fundamental to Dylan's personal style definition. As it will later be suggested in an incipient pragmatic theory around song's rhetoric structure, during song renditions people would be able to establish strong ties between them. They became friends, collaborators, etc. The community used to play music around the Café Wha?, the Gaslight, the Commons and the Folklore Centre; some of the leading bars and clubs of the scene. The Folklore Centre, for example, was also a repository of traditional knowledge that made the important work in collecting all popular knowledge that escaped the dominant forms of commercialism and government maneuvering,

Some time in 1960 Izzy Young and another folk entrepreneur, Tom Prendergast, convinced Porco to turn his place into a folk club. The name was changed to Gerde's Fifth Peg, and the folkies had a club of their own. By the summer of 1960 Porco had renamed his club Gerde's Folk City. It soon became the most important folk club of the nation.  
(Scaduto, 2001: 1700)

There were veterans and debutants and they all met to share their love for music and become famous interpreters. One of those debutant singers was Joan Baez who, albeit composing her own songs, mainly sang traditional melodies and children's songs. She had already participated in the music scene that took place in Boston (Massachusetts), playing live in different clubs and solo concerts. She met other songwriters, Bob Gibson and Odetta and the former invited her to participate in The Newport Folk Festival 1959, what she did before reaching fame in the U.S and releasing several records. After that, she went to New York and acted as the supporter for amateur artists like Bob Dylan. Around them and accompanying them in the New York sceneries, artists like Harry Belafonte, Josh White, The Clancy Brothers, would make the protagonists of the music festivals. The regents or managers at those night clubs offered them some money or even regular jobs that helped young artists to survive in the city.

Well, I got a harmonica job, begun to play  
Blowin' my lungs for a dollar a day  
I blowed inside out and upside down  
The man there said he loved m' sound  
Dollar a day's worth  
(“Talking New York”, 1961)

There was also some kind of mentorship coming from the owners and visionaries that headed those clubs. For example, Israel G. Young, one of the proprietors of the Folkways Centre, offered young artists some classes and produced some of them. One of those amateurs was Dave Van Ronk, called the Mayor of McDougal Street, who also served as an important tutor for young Dylan. Of Irish descent, Van Ronk had been a traditional balladeer, but he also played blues and black traditional songs since 1949. He started interpreting jazz music and later moved to blues and other black music styles. His personality, combined with his rough voice and special use of the guitar characterized his ragtime interpretations. He befriended Dylan, Phil Ochs, Ramblin' Jack Elliot, Joni Mitchell, etc. Shelton remarked some of Van Ronk's special skills that must have influenced in the young Dylan, “Van Ronk could scat, growl, or keen in rural south idioms.” (2011: 245) Bob Dylan also remarked the way he sounded like he had never heard them before when he listened to his performances (2005). The singer confessed his debt to songwriters like Red Grooms, mentioned for having inspired his aim at satire in lyric content, and Roy Acuff's ballads

in which his song "Let Me Die In My Footsteps" is based (2005). He felt equally inspired by Bertolt Brecht and Kurt Weil's musical and theatrical play *Threepenny Opera* (1934) which he saw in New York encouraged by his girlfriend Suze Rotolo. Brecht's songs appear disruptively on the scene and these showed their social commitment through the direct interaction with the audience. All the action depicted in his plays promoted self-reflection and a permanent critical view of society, especially from a Marxist perspective. He maintained that "every song seemed to come from some obscure tradition, seemed to have a pistol in his hip pocket, a club or a brickbat and they came at you in crutches, braces and wheelchairs." (2005: 272-3) The name of the songwriter Eric Von Schmidt also appears in Dylan's first album (1962) because he was the composer of *Baby Let Me Follow You Down* interpreted by Dylan on track nine of the same album. He was one of the important protagonists of the folk revival of the 1960s and one of the figures along with Baez, Jim Kweskin, Geno Foreman, etc; that led the movement at the East coast folk scene. In New York's Greenwich Village scenarios, he met Dylan and company. He was an interdisciplinary artist –folk singer, songwriter, illustrator, writer of children's books– and was the ambassador of folk music in the tasks of anthologizer, compiler and author of *Baby, Let Me Follow You Down: The Illustrated Story of the Cambridge Folk Years* (1994). He was a usual interpreter of blues like Van Ronk and he was interviewed by Anthony Scaduto, where he described Dylan's mind,

(...) like electricity. His mind was the most exciting... like a calypso mind, making instantaneous sorts of connections, relating seemingly unrelated things and putting them together into something marvellous. (...) He is able to make connections, not out of something studies, but viscerally.  
(Scaduto, 2001: 474)

The true fact is that singer-songwriters' compositions constituted a singular case within the American popular music and they were all making explicit connections first with their tradition and last between different artistic disciplines. Also, their genre helped to establish an ultimate connection between its participants, because it brought a more intimate relation between the singer and his audience since it is the author himself who interprets the songs. The author happens to be interpreting his own songs while playing the adequate melody he composed. That is why songwriters reintroduce the concept of "authority" in Art theory after Roland Barthes proclaimed the death of the

author in 1967. They make the audience permanently conscience of the authorial voice while they are impersonating one of their different characters.<sup>37</sup> However, after such poststructuralist theories of literature and art as Foucault's and Derrida's that began in Europe in the 60s, and which always denied the importance of considering the author as the leading interpreting guide and the comprehension of his work of art, their songs needed another critical point of view. During the act of singing, the author of the song uses his own voice to represent that of the voiced protagonist, masquerading his own self under that of his character. That musical role-play gave this category of songs a new force, specially since the roles of creator, mediator and interpreter got suddenly related between each other.

Robert Shelton indicates, "The biggest excitement in popular music was coming from folk music, a revival that was to set the tempo for the early Sixties" (2011: 66) Folklore became the point of departure to all of those songwriters who not only wanted to win public acceptance, but rather to share a common mental and mythical structure with every participant. This mythical structure could be measured up as a communicative code. Their use of topic song structure, for example, favored them the possibility of expressing stories and events that were happening around that time. Among the present situation, one the most important issues was the civil rights struggle and the integration movement. Both reached its peak after more than five years of overt conflicts when the major campaigns for civil resistance took form. That is why many of these songs took the form of hymns and anthems, inspired by their denouncing lyrics. They were supported by the deep tradition of hymnodies that the country had since the XIXth Century. This song structure based its popularity on its strophic structure and its catchy melodies that helped to learn them very quickly.

At some point within this specific community of artists, a different orientation started to rise in relation to commercial success. Various members that were referent names in the folk realm recorded with little record companies funded on the ethnic musical dogma and so, they were coherent with certainly expected attitudes on the part of the artist. Attitudes that are in relation to the mentioned "authenticity". Others, instead, were backed by major record companies, like Dylan, and instead, that fact was regarded as disloyal to their dogmas. Bob Dylan would become more a more famous and his music was in the hands of such big record label as Columbia Records. Even if his producer John Hammond proved to be in tune with the folk revival movement recently emerged and with Dylan's style of song and its tradition, the folk community

did not regard this record company as other non-selling labels –like Folkways Records– that were much more devoted to their community's musical better than marketing interests. This and other late events parallel to Dylan's target audience, which increased in number, caused Bob Dylan's ultimate break with their dogmas.

#### **1.4. Bob Dylan**

I would like to use Robert Shelton's idea to begin this chapter about the artist, because it gives an initial idea on how refreshing his art has been. The music journalist states, "Dylan broke all songwriting and performing rules—except those of having something to say and saying it well. Not every line seemed finished and polished, yet there was a sense of structure." (Shelton, 2011: 389)

Bob Dylan entered the musical scene by presenting a type of songs that set up the conscience of his era, a movement toward reincorporating lyrical sentiment and lyric poetry to the experience of listening to music. It is little wonder that he is considered to be the one who invented the category of singer-songwriters "in the modern era of song" (Yaffe, 2011: 3), at least he introduced a new lyrical direction to it. He "transformed the entire idea of a singer-songwriter and combined pop songwriting with dense poetic influence" (Yaffe, 2011: 96)

Franco Fabbri, who tried to define the limits of this music style, also notes that with Bob Dylan's particular worldwide success, the singer-songwriter kind of music chose another road. In his autonomy, Dylan carried a new musical figure within him. Apart from epitomizing the authentic artist per excellence –albeit betraying the previous folk dogmas– he also became a spokesman, a good dramatizer, powerful composer of melodies but metrically freer and richer in syllables (1981: 52-81).

Dylan belongs to the poetic tradition but he must be one of the most influential figures in popular music to bring lyricism back to notice, which in the late centuries had become a major written art expression. Not being considered a poet, he would rather be called either a "song-poet" (Shelton, 2011) or any of the other titles given to him along his career (bard, poet, prophet, genie, etc). He basically writes in the name of lyricism, but his words are meant to be heard and put into music. Like Robert Shelton stated, "Dylan took poetry out of its dusty shelves and put it on the jukebox" (2011: 36). If it

was not poetry, truth is his songs made everyone clear, especially those large numbers of no usual readers, what was poetry about and what did that feeling of the poetic meant to the soul of individuals and collectives. Professor of popular culture and American history Gregg M. Campbell said that,

The story of Dylan's art and poetry in the 60s is the story of a personal quest and dialogue in which Dylan led an entire generation of American and Western European youth to the realization of a pastoral vision of life –a vision in which man would live in harmony with himself, with his fellows and with his natural environment. But Dylan's quest was most essentially a search for personal identity carried out as an ever-expanding dialogue between the many facets of his own personality; between Dylan and his various audiences; between Dylan and the American myth; and, on the highest level, between Dylan and those poets and visionaries who have recognized man's universal and tragic fate.  
(Campbell, 1975: 695)

Traditional sounds and rituals reached one distant place close to the Canadian border, in Hibbing, Minnesota, where young Dylan was raised after having been born in the small town of Duluth. Before finally refusing to continue studying, Bob Dylan had already been the leader of various rock bands in town and he would participate in other musical formations when he entered his first and last university year. There, he wrote a blues, due to the early influence of Muddy Waters and Jimmy Reed. As Anthony Scaduto informed, “Bob would spend hours listening to Gatemouth Page, a disc jockey on a Little Rock, Arkansas, radio station who played Muddy Waters and Howlin’ Wolf and B.B King and Jimmy Reed.” (2001: 169) He was only 19 years old and most of the themes that would make part of his discography are translated to its lyrics.

The queen of his diamonds  
And the jack his knave  
Won't you dig my grave  
With a silver spade?  
And forget my name.  
I'm twenty years old.  
That's twenty years gone.  
Can't you see my crying,  
Can't you see my dying,  
I'll never reach twenty-one...  
(One Eyed Jacks, in Shelton 2011: 143)

He confessed one of the songs that most impacted him at that time was "Rock Around the Clock" by Bill Haley and His Comets. In fact, Little Richard, "Elvis and

Bill Haley and Buddy Holly really reached him." (Scaduto, 2001: 185) Bob's high school band was the Golden Chords and they would sing rock and rhythm and blues, the last best sellers, at the high-school theatre. Bob Dylan started writing songs after that and he wrote his first texts between 1941 and 1956. First, he would extract the structure from existent songs and then he would make his own version, as it was common to practice in the folklorist movement. Being so much in debt to the past, Bob Dylan set himself in the same music realm, although he always tried to get a personal style. In *Chronicles Vol. 1* the artist explains, "What really set me apart in these days was my repertoire. It was more formidable than the rest of the coffeehouse players, my template being hard-core folk songs backed by incessantly loud strumming." (2005: 17-8)

As it was signaled before, Dylan has been recognized as the leading figure of a new singer songwriter music. Donaldson encapsulates this idea,

Bob Dylan offered the most dramatic symbol of the shift from protest to the personal. Emerging on the folk scene in 1961, Dylan followed in Woody Guthrie's musical footsteps, and he soon became the songwriting darling of the topical singers. That all changed, however, in the summer of 1965 when Dylan released the rock and roll single "Like a Rolling Stone," and showed up on the stage of Newport clad in leather pants, backed by some members of the Paul Butterfield Blues Band. (2011: 278)

His new aims at communicating and expressing poetic ideals were made true at the core of the dancing and entertaining context of those highly industrialized years. He imbricated profound artistic categories into popular music, which is the ultimate feature of songsters' proposal, and propitiated the combination of the mainstream music flow with the independent current. Later in autobiographical book, he states, "(...) songs to me were more important than just light entertainment. They were my preceptor and guide into some altered consciousness of reality, some different republic, some liberated republic." (Dylan, 2005: 34-5) Paradoxically he holds an expressed aversion toward mainstream culture, ultimately expressed in his autobiography, and considers his music to be autonomous from marketing strategies. It is true he might have used the industry on his own terms and for the sake of widening his artistic reach, but in this fusion of styles, he shows how much he needed the extensive mainstream culture.

Robert Shelton was a journalist who lived side by side with the famous performer and who wrote the first positive critics he received in his career. He writes that, "Dylan's career has been a personal search, a constant flight along an endless

spiritual highway strewn with debris, gashed by crashes, hedged by ugly billboards, and relieved by interludes of serene countryside” (2011: 30) He continues, “with this gift, or curse, of magnetism, Dylan became one of the most influential artists of his time.” (2011: 42) Shelton (2011)<sup>38</sup> accounts for the tremendous events that took place during the first years of the 60s –so determinant to Dylan's success– The singer appeared in New York in 1961 after completing an unsatisfactory year at college at the University of Minnesota. His first objective was to see Woody Guthrie, and his second, he wanted to become a folk singer. Shelton numbers two clubs, out of the available ones, where Dylan experienced his first successes: the Gaslight and Gerde's Folk City. Grant Maxwell adds that "as with the many mutations Dylan underwent, his transitions from Hibbing to Minneapolis to New York certainly produced a hardening and sharpening in the young singer, both physically and psychologically." (2014: 3737)

At the beginning of Bob Dylan’s song writing and performances, the American popular song was developing new forms derived from the unexpected success of previously unappreciated forms of traditional music, especially blues. For example, around the 1960s there was a regeneration of blues harmonica and it also played an important role in Dylan's career. Blues music was one of those music genres that influenced Dylan throughout his career. The American novelist, literary critic and scholar Ralph Ellison wrote (1995), "As a form, the blues is an autobiographical chronicle of personal catastrophe expressed lyrically."<sup>39</sup>

From the moment he started singing, the young Dylan liked to imitate blues cadences and play the harmonica. He would also incorporate simplicity in form, therefore, he included straightforward messages too. These were the plainest characteristics of the bluesman and he certainly accomplished them in his songs because, among other thing, he shared with his peer folklorists the idea of America as a pluralist nation and always enjoyed giving voice to several social problems the same way Guthrie and Seeger represented them. Apart from being a factual replica of native folk music and regional music varieties, he was definitely identified with the figure of Woody Guthrie. With his music, Bob Dylan must have acknowledged how music can serve rhetorical purposes as well as lyrical signs as well as how powerful this artistic genre could be. He explored Guthrie's music and biography –*Bound for Glory* (1983)– to such an extent that the singer became one of his leading motivations to go to New York, once he understood that Guthrie was in a local hospital suffering from Huntington’s disease.

Dylan got integrated very soon in the Greenwich Village scene, sharing scenarios with John Lee Hooker, Brother John Sellers, Dave Van Ronk and Jack Elliot. Robert Shelton, who witnessed the action in those local clubs of Greenwich Village recalls how “he became very good at singing just like Woody. (...) Even his speech patterns began to change. That Oklahoma twang, which became much more extreme after he left here, came into his voice. That incredibly harsh gravel sound in his voice became more and more a part of him.” (2011: 191) Of course, Woody Guthrie was not only a musical referent, he provided him with a model that proved to be extremely important to construct his autonomous attitude and his authenticity. As I mentioned earlier in the section about songwriters, Woody Guthrie had built by himself the idea of the liberal man who searches for humanity all around the U.S territory. He became the spokesman of simple livings and unknown heroisms reconciling a Marxist philosophy with the first traces of existentialism that Bob Dylan followed through.

Woody symbolized the strongest fibers in American folk culture—empathy with the downtrodden, dislike for sham, joy in music, the independence of a man who can’t be bought, and a sense of justice that forced him to speak up or sing out when he saw people being pushed around.  
(Shelton, 2011: 193-194)

Dylan revived the talent of Woody Guthrie and other music composers for the youngest and unacknowledged audiences of New York and reminded them about the importance of their music legacy. However, he principally recuperated the genre of singer-songwriter and infused it with his particular concept, as David Yaffe also noted in his book titled, *Like A Complete Unknown: Icons of America* (2011).

Like many other protagonists of the folk revival, Bob Dylan has always been searching for his own style definition. He is been doing it all across the available musical manifestations. He tried them all, blues, gospel, rock, hillbilly, while he identified in all of them the sense of belonging to that specific culture. He loved pure artistic manifestations that disregarded political as well as commercial interests. “Bob was hooked on their existential lives, their freewheeling style, the radicalism, the freedom, and they sparked a further transformation on him.” (Scaduto, 2001: 949) The moment he signed a contract with Columbia Records and jumped into the mainstream arena with a new sound or arranging the old sound into a new kind of thing, he was not disobeying his fundamental credo, rather he was running free from anonymity, since

that situation would not have allowed him to explore music's legacy to its limits. "I rattled off lines and verse based on the stuff I knew (...) changed words around and added something of my own here and there" (Dylan, 2005: 228) If one of its aims was to communicate something to the world, the more people his music reached, the better.

That could just be done by the big recording companies. For instance, during his first years, when he was endorsing the revolutionary youth that grew out of the 1960s, the baby-boomers, who experienced this period of unrest "as a collective dream" (Street, 2001: 244), his messages reached a worldwide audience. He was addressing in his lyrics several revolutionary causes, like the Afro-American population that demanded equal civil rights during the historic march on Washington DC on August 28, 1963. On that occasion, Dylan and Baez joined singing for the cause before –among other people– Martin Luther King Jr. and his emblematic speech. Bob Dylan sang "Only A Pawn In Their Game" (1963), a song that starts with the incident of the murder of Medgar Wiley Evers, a pro-civil rights activist. The attention of the song unexpectedly drifts from the victim to his killer, who –from the singer's own words– was acting more under the influence of a whole society's restrictive thoughts and regulations.

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

Included in his album *The Times They Are A-Changin'* (1964), this performance, along with the album's release were determinant for Dylan's rising fame and definition of the protest song realm, cultivated later by artists like Neil Young, Phil Ochs, Donovan, Billy Bragg, etc. However, as Scaduto remarks, "He wasn't a songwriter who came into an established political mood, he seemed to be part of it and his songs seemed informative to the Movement as the Movement seemed informative to the songwriter." (2001: 3474) Thus, his relation to context was reciprocal. It could be both the atmosphere that influenced him or the fact that he pushed the atmosphere towards other mythical realities which in fact, allowed him becoming the epitome of protest singing. He adopted a more critical standpoint than other spokespersons at that time.

The racial crisis in the South was deepening and folk song had become a vital morale booster for the Southern blacks and northern whites who joined them in the civil rights struggle. "Blowin' in the Wind" became the most sung 'freedom song', north and south, black or white, and its author the most widely known protest singer. (Scaduto, 2001: 3694)

The rhetoric of revolution has always been more inclined to be sung. Advocating for a change in society, this kind of songs go back to its most notable antecedent, which was the French revolution. Folk music provided a good premise, thus their lyrics changed in favour of more rebellious messages and so did Dylan's. Record labels' strategy at that moment was to use revolutionary causes only to magnify its effects and make more money at its expense (Street, 2001).

Dylan's songs can be considered political just at the most immanent level, though. This is to say, it affects his creations the same way any artistic creation is affected "without necessarily" meaning that his songs showed "the form of speaking for a political or social program" (Gates Jr. 1988: 107) His songs were merging in a problematic socio-economic system, and as a reflection of that, most politic themes were there. As it was stated by professor Stephen Scobie (2004: 170) "the songs did not represent merely the dissatisfaction of an isolated individual; they were based on a cohesive social and political position, held by a community."

Bob Dylan was also conscious of how "music and song have helped to shape the imagery and the meaning of American social movements." (Eyerman & Jamison, 1998: 14) and that is why he is authorized as an historic protest singer among the leftist's sympathizers. However, while he was repeating what others had done before him, namely Woody Guthrie, Pete Seeger, The Weavers and Joan Baez, he maintained his own personality aspiring to a different kind of popularity.

There was one place where this purer and charismatic movement pro-revolution was voiced and it was The Newport Folkways Festival, where Dylan participated for the first time in 1963 accompanied by his partner Joan Baez. In that occasion, Dylan sang "Bod Dylan's Dream", "With God on Our Side", "Talking John Birch Society Blues" and "Hard Rain" (Shelton, 2011) a set list very much in accordance to the feel of these concerts. Baez played "Don't Think Twice is Alright" and a group led by Pete Seeger, Bob Dylan, and Baez sang "This Land is Your Land", Guthrie's major hit.

His first albums introduced the cult of authenticity that not only Dylan but a whole generation venerated. Charles Taylor (1991) studied this term in connection with

the symptoms of individualism that were particularly strong in Western societies by the 1960s. For my part, I interpreted in his works and performance history the secret ambition of winning that kind of ideal "authenticity" that results from his models and idealism. One-man bands, songsters, pirates, outlaws and criminals, gamblers, etc, all was part of this eclectic manifestation of the authentic persona. According to this idea, all he wanted was to grasp at the bounds of glory, "Traveling the hard way. Dressed the hard way. Hitting the long old lonesome go." (Guthrie, 1983: 7) The lonesome road in which Dylan ventured wasn't but an idea, in fact in 1965 he initiated another music course by leaving the restrictions of the folk revival movement behind, but he joined otherwise the company of a rock band. His only interest being the exploration of the song language and the procedures of performance as he could not possibly infer if it was going to be a good decision. For all those steps into the unknown, "due straight to nowhere" (Guthrie, 1983: 7) Dylan has been ultimately described as an "Odysseus and Homer, the bard singing of his own internal adventures into the heights and depths of being, driven by necessity more than ambition" (Maxwell, 2014: 4754). Inasmuch as other singers had done alike before him. Dylan just joined up this particular stream. The author David Yaffe numbers Muddy Waters, who compared for the first time man's life with the image of the rolling stone in "Rollin' Stone" (1948), women like Odetta, who just made use of the guitar to interpret his folk and blues music, and, of course, Woody Guthrie (Yaffe, 2011: 3) The fact that he is a permanent innovator sometimes created a barrier with his audience and the critics as he was ignoring how the audience's mind works and what type of expectations they have as far as the popular music scene concerns. It also proved a good way to remain alive in the artistic panorama. However, most often Bob Dylan's songs are indebted to the sound of America and its musical past, as well as their vernacular and that is what keeps them in constant harmony with the wider audience. His constant retrospection helps him elaborating on previous ideas that already had to mean to most people. Occasionally, this fact constituted one of the main arguments that the critics used for judging him to be a plagiarist. I would rather say he echoes the past in an obstinate way so that it allows him bridging his own past fulfilling his own program.

Firstly, Bob Dylan's songs provide a memorial setting which celebrates other times' splendour or simplest modes of living. Like in any other artistic portrayal, all the historical, mythical, and legendary elements are revisited again and again. These crossed references act synecdochically, derived from "synecdoche" and alluding to past

texts, while their transformation acts anaphorically, that is, showing a great independence from any previous formats. Although his songs can put together many popular genres of music (Tagg, 2013: 306), these songs can authenticate a parallel individual program that would ultimately result in his self-portrait. Anthony Scaduto described his creative process as follows, "(...) he sat and wrote a poem, and later found a tune, stole it, rewrote it, or composed one. And, he deliberately smoothed the transition from standard folk to his own songs by pinning his lyrics to a traditional framework." (2001: 3420)

Of the many people that accompanied during his self-definition, The Band proved to be the most determinant. He encountered its members, Rick Danko, Garth Hudson, Richard Manuel, Robbie Robertson and Levon Helm, in 1965 and from that moment they started playing together.

They were originally called the Hawks, and they came from Canada, although soon after playing with Dylan they already adopted the name of The Band. They backed other singers before Dylan since 1959, like Ronnie Hawkins who was considered "the king of rockabilly". After that, they started trying to take a new route on their own and in 1964 they began working with Vanguard Records. When Albert Hammond discovered them in New York, he decided to get them to meet Bob Dylan. Already in 1965, Robertson and Dylan undertook the composing work together, the guitarist followed Dylan's melodic progressions and proposed some ideas. In fact, Robbie Robertson was the tune writer of some of Dylan's songs. Hammond would say "he can only inspire you to play, and he inspired Bob." <sup>40</sup> Shelton quotes *Time* magazine where it was stated that their union was "the most decisive moment in Rock history". They developed their own sound and identity considering how difficult it must have been with Dylan's personality at the front of their ensemble. This has been proved with their incessant musical activity accompanied by the artist. From that moment until the release of their first solo album *Music From Big Pink* (1968), it has been a five-member party and so was accounted on several filmed documentaries that reflect their period together, like *Dont Look Back* (D. A. Pennebaker, 1967), *Eat the Document* (Pennebaker, 1972) and *Down In the Flood: Bob Dylan, The Band and The Basement Tapes* (Elio Espana, 2012). Concerning Dylan's creative process, Garth Hudson explains,

We were doing seven, eight, ten, sometimes fifteen songs a day. Some were old ballads and traditional songs, some were written by Bob, but the others would be songs Bob

made up as we went along. We'd play the melody (and) he'd sing a few words he'd written or else just mouth sounds or syllables as he went along. It's pretty good way to write songs  
(Hudson, 2015: 5226)

They backed Bob Dylan during the 1965 tours, the tours of the metamorphosis around Europe and America. Around that time Dylan was improving his rock music tendency, understanding its meaning and its force. One of the top signs of his metamorphosis from folk to rock according to Grant Maxwell could have been caused “by hiring one of his generation’s greatest bands, but also by forging a performative mode markedly different than his acoustic folk persona” (Maxwell 2014: 147) Then, they became something more than just backing musicians and recorded several tapes of private performances in Big Pink<sup>41</sup>The Band's basement in Woodstock from 1965 to 1967. Although they started at Dylan's Red Room in his new house in Woodstock, they later moved to the house that The Band had rented in the same location. After this, both the music formation and Bob Dylan took different ways and recorded different albums in the folk venue,

Big Pink followed Dylan’s John Wesley Harding, and the two albums were on nearly every list of the best 1968 albums. Their sedative influence on pop was almost immediate. Dylan found solace, healing, and rebirth in the country. The Band followed him, geographically and aesthetically, into the same curative pastures of plenty.  
(Shelton, 2011: 688)

After some years, the group worked together again in the creation of *Planet Waves* and the tour of *Before the Flood*, both released in 1974. They also accompanied him during the Tribute live show to Woody Guthrie on 1968 at Carnegie Hall and they appeared together lived in three more occasions during the period of silence, but each of those unexpected performances wasn't comparable to their double collaboration in the year 1974. Afterward, The Band signed a contract with Capitol Records and started recording their own excellent material. Their most remarkable and decisive albums for the history of country rock were *Music from Big Pink* (1968) and *The Band* (1969). At the same time, they were making public their first solo album, there were innumerable copies of the so-called Basement Tapes circulating all around the country. However, the official album was not published until 1975, responding to the audience's demand for these bootleg copies concealing the secret songs.

## 1.5. Bob Dylan's Discography

The following chapter explains album by album what are some of the most significant elements, so that the reader can have a better idea of the topics and themes, as well as about the recurrent symbols and obsessions of Bob Dylan's music career. The creation of each of those albums involved many people, among whom the role of the producer was absolutely determinant for the result. Despite these albums constitute the work of the artist, producers, band and non predictable elements came into play during their execution. Here, there are succinct details about the production of the albums owing to the significance of those works themselves, which are studied not as separate music creations but as part of an entire artistic purpose. The following lines just want to enrich the already interminable answers of his general works in the belief that "attempting to define it is to succumb to the illusion that truth can be reached through human logic." (Wilentz, 2010: 67) whereas people should know that, as Bob Dylan stated in one of his songs, "reality has too many heads" ("Cold Irons Bound", 1997)

Already from the moment he released his first album, the name Robert Allen Zimmerman is substituted by his artistic identity *Bob Dylan* (1962), the homonym title for the LP. After the interminable stories around the election of his alias, the singer began his musical career in 1962 recording a swift spontaneous album –it was recorded in two three-hour sessions– that reflected his distinct style in the big gathering that had meant for him the New York folk scene. Of the many songs included on the album, only two of them are originally composed by Dylan and both are examples of the talkin' blues genre whom he got from his major inspiration, Woody Guthrie. The prolific singer from New York is the main protagonist of at least two of them, "Talkin' New York" and "Song To Woody". In the former, there is a permanent sense of quietness in the rhythm, which seems to be hidden under the artists' voice, except for harmonica's sudden promptness. Margotin and Guesdon indicate that, "His harmonica is a Hohner Marine Band. He uses three on the album: in C, D, and G", (2015: 312). The apparent quietness contrasts with the singer's quick spoke-singing.

Bob Dylan declared his presence as a living inner voice that appears through many metalinguistic references from the start. While he sings, "all the things that I'm a-saying an' a many times more. I'm singin' you the song, but I can't sing enough" ("Song To Woody"). His devotion to Guthrie and his proudness at meeting him must have heartened an album which is mostly done in honor to him. Regarding the images, he

reintroduces the wandering tramp as the leading protagonist. Someone who, like in Guthrie's account (*Bound for Glory*, 1983), travels to achieve his personal and professional ambitions along the path of previous connoisseurs. "I'm out here a thousand miles from my home walkin' a road other men had gone down..." Albeit including various types of songs –like mountain folk, Scottish ballads, vaudeville singing, etc– the majority are based in talkin' blues characteristics. That is why most of them depict a dense lyric content and use the road as a symbol and a recurrent narrative element, "somewhere down the road someday" ("Song To Woody"). These songs employ a vernacular language and have the lonesome traveller as their principal character. This figure, as depicted in his songs, never had a specific ethnic origin. The range of rambling figures goes from black slaves to white fugitives, poor tramps or explorers. In the case of "Highway 51", this route was typically done by Afro-American ex-slaves but apart from that he never mentions the origin of the character.

Folk music proved to be one good template for incorporating himself to an inherited musical tradition. Due to his inexperience, he mostly picks traditional songs schemes and reproduces them using new words. He defined his own method of arrangement in the following words, "what I did was to take simple folk changes and put new imagery and attitude to them, use catchphrases and metaphor combined with a new set of ordinances that evolved into something different that had not been seen before." (2005: 67) He usually introduces western myths that contrast with African mythology and emphasize the richness of both cultures and their kinship in the folk revival context, full of democracy and diversity ideals. "Fixin' To Die", "Pretty Peggy-O", which he played live on numerous occasions, or "Gospel Plow", declare the richness of this musical enlightenment. The first one is a penitentiary blues song by Bukka White (Booker T. Washington White), one of the leading figures of the above mentioned folk revival movement. The song dates from 1940 and its original force is translated by the young singer while he demonstrated his excellent interpreting skills.

Many unreleased tracks from the same period were made available later through official and nonofficial bootleg recordings. In fact, *The Witmark Demos* (2010), volume 9 of *The Bootleg Series* and *The Bootleg Series: Rare and Unreleased 1-3* both included previously censored and rejected works of this period like, "Talking Bear Mountain" "Man On The Street", in which he sang the following pledge, "I'll sing you a song, ain't very long, 'bout an old man who never done wrong". This words anticipate Dylan's innovative long format songs and story-telling techniques borrowed from

antique topic songs and ballads. It also reveals his permanent obsession with the outlaw myth or the Robin Hoods that epitomized youngsters rebellion and freedom.

During this period he uses songs as a direct mirror of the current situation in the USA. His representations seem to be borrowed from the literary style of naturalism, representing the cruel reality of the hard times and injustices that people are witnessing. The confrontation between the US and the soviet world and the constant menace of the atomic bomb along with the defense of the civil rights all helped creating an atmosphere of dissatisfaction and popular activism. Songs helped Dylan and many other musicians broadcasting these fierce events in order to avoid social indifference, "This song is just a reminder to remind you fellow man that this kind of thing still lives today..." ("The Death of Emmett Hill", 2010) Another important song is "Let Me Die In My Footsteps" where he believes the serious state of the world will lead him to surrender and ultimately die. He sings, "the meaning of life has been lost with the wind" (1963). The "wind" –an important element of his music– can take apocalyptic attributes while it also represents the element of change and time pass. The wind is also the only element that announces predestination and which shares an intimate relation between voice and music, both instruments depend on the wind. Dylan himself personifies this natural element, because, like the wind, "through this open world, I'm a-bound to ramble, through ice and snow, sleet and rain" ("Man Of Constant Sorrow", 1962). This album showed the general frame of mind provoked by the prolonged menaces of chemical armament that the Third World War and its messages of apocalypse set off.

Sometimes his personal implication, that meta fictional drive living in his lyrics, could drive us to confusion. Even if there was some sense of authorship going on, Dylan does not want to be recognized for getting involved. He hides and reappears from time to time answering more in the negative to people's guesswork. In other words, he seems to be saying "it ain't me" all the time like he did with the homonym song (1964). Any rumor saying he is a prophet, obtained the same answer, "If I can't help somebody with a word or a song. If I can't show somebody they're travelin' wrong, but I know I ain't no prophet an' I ain't no prophet's son" ("Long Time Gone", 1990). The same way reluctance to pay the price of fame is revealed in the words of "Restless Farewell" where he explains, "but it's not to stand naked under unknowing eyes. It's for myself and my friends my stories are sung" (1964).

Another way he found to escape every distressing recognition, was to put on alternative masks. Around that time he used the nicknames of Blind Boy Grunt in the

*Broadside* bootlegs, Bob Landy in *The Blues Project*, Tedham Poterhouse when playing harmonica in Ramblin' Jack Elliott's album (1964) and Robert Milkwood Thomas in Steve Goodman's "Somebody Else's Troubles" where he played vocals and harmonica early in the 70s.

By then, he was starting to understand the meaning of what it meant to be authentic, judging from the title of his next album, *The Freewheelin' Bob Dylan* (1964) It all seemed to say his artistic identity was characterized by a disregard for rules and conventions; unconstrained or uninhibited<sup>42</sup>. He most definitely devoted himself to genuineness and to encourage people to question themselves about their own individual attachment. In respect to the sense of continuity –so evident during the first decade of his career–, Eric Bulson has said that on this album, "Dylan learned to be 'Dylan': the poet, the philosopher, protester, lover and most of all musician discovering his powers as a singer and songwriter." (2009: 129)

Apart from his personal project, he seemed to advise governors and powerful people to be well aware of the grand influence that their decisions could mean to other people's lives. That is why he addressed them in various music instants, "tell me what you're gonna do when you can't play God no more?" ("Whatcha Gonna Do" 1990) and he also blames them for not being able to thinking in social terms.

Songs are working on a morale in the limits between social and individual pronouncement. But, how does he sing about these important topics? We can check some of that extreme directedness in "Masters Of War" which is said to be an adaptation of the first Eisenhower's presidential speech on January 1961 (Carrera, 2011: 160). During this album the artist encompassed the idea of constant learning and self-will, "I turn many a lesson I learn from following them fairground-calling" ("Dusty Old-Fairgrounds", 1963). Before the turn to *Another Side of Bob Dylan* –announcing his metamorphosis– he already summarizes his obsession with the wind by singing "the only my guitar would play was on the cruel rain and the wind" ("Percy's Song", 1964) using again this image of the wind as if it was a direct witness of our desperate world ("A Hard Rain's A-Gonna Fall" and "Blowin' In The Wind") About "Hard Rain", David Yaffe has mentioned in his book, "the repetition is dazzling, overwhelming –like a Whitmanian list or a biblical incantation" (2009: 19) describing a kind of repetition that mostly governed his first albums and was reformulated afterwards, as it will be seen.

Continuing with the ballad tradition and the topic song style *The Times They Are A-Changin'* (1964) uses songs to narrate real events that had just taken place, like

the murderers of Hollis Brown, Hattie Carroll or Medgar Evers –all of them victims of racial abuse–. He uses these songs to introduce a sense of an irreversible apocalypse that will shortly come, “Oh the time will come up when the winds will stop and the breeze will cease to be breathin’. Like the stillness in the air before the hurricane begins, the hour that the ship comes in” (“When The Ship Comes In”, 1964). Most of the songs have an intuitive rhythm and they open with the coordination of guitar chords and harmonica reverberations. His voice has a strong re-echo –another type of repetition– contrasting with his apparently indifferent and sardonic attitude.

By this time, people had easily reckoned their culture, vernacular language, and philosophy in his music. Even though he seemed to be abusing of the existent formula, the artist showed from the start a divergent use of protest singing in which there are abundant poetic images, "it seemed as though he was trying to enrich his playing with various subtleties" (Margotin and Guesdon, 2015: 1802) Bob Dylan arranged old folk songs by maintaining the melody and changing only the lyric content. His own perspective re-establishes the cultural past of the American consciousness by emphasizing our individual way of looking at reality.

Me, I romp and stomp  
Thankful as I romp  
Without freedom of speech  
I might be in the swamp  
("Motorpsycho Nightmare" 1964)

After his preliminary encounter with the folk community, Dylan decided he should take another step toward his professional evolution. Derived from his increasing interest in literary discourses like poetry, biography, spoken poetry, and experimentation, the singer started realizing his own self more than ever and composed a series of songs in which the self, along with the multitude of other surreal images, were the source of his musical innovation.

In all the official records of his music career, *Another Side of Bob Dylan* (1964) is described as a break from his political vein. It was not with the polemic *Highway 61 Revisited* (1965), nor with *Blonde On Blonde* (1966) that the artist broke away from the folk movement. It was neither in the electric decisive moment that took place in The Folkways Festival, because months before that, this seminal album and the ensuing events had already announced his transformation. After *The Times They Are A-Changin'*, published the same year and including “the most thrilling collection of

‘finger-pointing’ songs” (Yaffe, 2011: 7) Dylan recorded this intimate album with more serene lyrics and an incipient taste for lyrical aesthetics. Additionally, the artist explores other subjects, like David Yaffe states, “Dylan bid fare-thee-well to politics” (2011: 70) while he got closer to Negritude.

Half-wracked prejudice leaped forth  
“Rip down all hate,” I screamed  
Lies that life is black and white  
Spoke from my skull  
 (“My Back Pages”, 1964)

It wasn't until he immersed himself more in formal experimentation that the audience and folk community started perceiving the mask through which he was looking distinctly at the past tradition. By way of his increasing popularization listeners were able to perceive, among other things, the special treatment Dylan gave to the English language, the increasing richness of his musical production, his acute rhyming and his distinct singing style, etc. Sean Wilentz has pointed that Dylan reverentially took language from a prosodic and a playful way. He, “composed lyrics in bursts of wordplay, including narratives and collage-like experiments” (Wilentz, 2010: 55) It was the same burst that had characterized other vanguard authors before him, in the area of Anglo-Saxon literature, people like James Joyce, or Wallace Stevens.

If ostinato figures in Bob Dylan's songs helped to process the message, intertextuality echoed other voices and the past contributing to an overelaborated language that configured his genuine style. A style he always tried to develop by keeping himself out of the show business.

During 1962-1964 the singer recorded a multitude of songs, "no less than 237" (Margotin and Guesdon, 2015: 2819), with the label Witmark & Sons free from his agents and producers control. Some of these songs weren't officially released until the edition of *The Bootleg Series, Vol 9: The Witmark Demos, 1962-1964* (2010) and so, they could just be heard across illegal bootleg copies. After that he edited new material in his third studio album *Another Side of Bob Dylan* (1964), an album where critical thinking, responsibility, and self-concept are the major themes.

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 shackles and chains, and your blood it  
Must refuse to flow

For you let this human race fall down so God-awful low!  
(Dylan, "The Death of Emmett Hill", 1963)

Time's inexorability is one of his constant themes. This idea boosted his appreciation of the instant and the present moment and gave him a sense of place. That is why he often mentions the problematic of the name as a fixity social condition that contrasts with a pervading mutability. "It ain't no use callin' out my name, gal" ("Don' Think Twice It's Alright", 1963).

As opposed to animals, humanity is not able to perceive the present moment. Its members are projecting their souls and desires to either future or past explanations. For this reason, it is my impression his works depicts corresponds the function of bringing us the moment of instant access to perception, "We feel trapped by no track of hours for they hanged suspended. As we listen one last time and we watch with one last look, spellbound an' swallowed 'till the tolling ended." ("Chimes Of Freedom", 1964) This idea is so present as to make sound able to be watched, perceived with our senses. This song continues describing apocalyptic visions with a careful precision, saying, "Through the mad mystic hammering of the wild ripping hail, the sky cracked its poems in naked wonder. That the clinging of the church bells blew far into the breeze, leaving out bells of lightning and its thunder." That "ripping hail" greets us and it calls our attention by making us process his messages through music. This fact reveals his unique communicative use of language to call our attention by reviving poetry in its old fashion (Camille Paglia, 2016) This side of Bob Dylan, the communicative, got to be more and more developed through the years showing his self-determination and aim at winning the ideal of authenticity and his freedom. All through the album, there are boxing combats and poetic recitals, nihilism and existentialism living in ballad rhythms, lovers' exchanges while the voice gets younger then than now. Reiterative sections ultimately confirm a familiar air of anthem or hymn, "Ye playboys and playgirls ain't a-gonna run my world" ("Playboys And Playgirls").

During the electric moment, he unexpectedly had shifted to rhythm & blues' emerging electricity. However, that mythical moment has been recently demystified by several authors (Shelton 2011, Renehan 2015) as an intent to discover what had really taken place during his Newport-Folk-Festival execution. Robert Shelton echoed Dylan's arguments against any of the risen suspicions that the audience were against his abrupt cooperation with commercial music features. On the one hand, he was already coping

with electricity since his 1964 when the album *The Freewheelin' Bob Dylan* was recorded in the studio:

When Dylan endured audience ferocity by switching to electric music in 1965, he was anxious to call attention to his first single and the deleted tracks from *Freewheelin'*. They prove how early he had been into an electric sound. Here was folk-rock long before the Beatles, long before anyone would be able to charge him with selling out to commercialism.”  
(Shelton, 2011: 364)

Ethnomusicologist Rip Cornell maintains that "At the 1965 Newport Folk Festival the Chicago-based (and racially integrated) Paul Butterfield Blues Band conspired with Bob Dylan to go electric and quickly became an important force in the blues revival." (2012: 339) On the other hand, there are suspicions that the raging hisses were nothing but shouts demanding the sound system operators to be wary of certain maladjustments concerning Dylan's voice. Besides any supposed conspiracy, Bob Dylan always refused any labels and he didn't like being quite as categorical as the rebellious commitment of his lyrics. What he was doing then and continued doing afterwards can be explained under Northrop Frye's five literary modes (1957) that refer to those each step that artistic movements endure during their activity. These are the following: mythic, romantic, low mimetic and ironic. While Frye uses them, taking Aristotle's *Poetics*, to categorize different aims in the poetic landscape, I found these categories describe Dylan's evolution too and can help us trace his poetic development. For example, during the first two years, he is singularly acquainted with traditional stories and folk music and although he gave most of these songs new arrangements he utilized other songsters credo and emulated them to the extent of becoming a key actor in the folk revivalist movement. In 1964, and being aware that each division is not rigorous and stable, the released albums *The Times They Are A-Changin'* (1963) and *Another Side of Bob Dylan* –apart from hinting that his music was transmuting– showed how he was starting to romanticize sociocultural responsibility and getting more and more involved to romantic ideals and forms. From 1965 onwards, especially after the release of *Bringing It All Back Home* (1965), his poetic mode developed into the lowest mimetic kind of literature introducing his paramount years. He wanted to work his lyrics poetically and be able to be considered not just a singer but a complete artist, the same way he appreciated other authors' work: Carl Sandburg, Allen Ginsberg, Jack Kerouac etc. Bob Dylan would bring songs to communicate more directly with his

audience. His paradoxical reverence to tradition and individual exploration suggested that “Dylan made intentionally alienating music to declare his independence from the folk movement.” (Maxwell, 2014: 131)

Regardless of how the critics surveyed his poetic and musical development, as well as his many identities and scenarios, he always avoided belonging to any group or specific label and he included these kinds of admonitions in his singing "credo". Songs like "Restless Farewell" (1964) serve as an example,

And the dirt of gossip blows into my face  
And the dust of rumors covers me  
But if the arrow is straight  
And the point is slick  
It can pierce through dust no matter how thick  
So I'll make my stand  
And remain as I am  
And bid farewell and not give a damn.

Freedom is the sole way to reach self-fulfillment. Dylan, like the foremost singer-songwriter of his time, directs a message for his society. I say he directs his message because he uses the song in a dialogical way. The voice seems to be making excuses to act like he is going to. The act is planned, he is going to leave his friends, his girlfriend and all the people who knew him until today. And he is going to do it momentarily, which add some tension to his discourse, “Oh a false clock tries to tick out my time”. Most verbs in Dylan's songs are performative (Austin, 1962) but all of them are performable as long as they are expressed throughout the course of their performance, that is, in the middle of the action.

The impetus of being an individual puts the act of leaving and persuading someone about why we are leaving at the same level. Although during any performance the signer does not expect any reply from the audience, his own speech, like his departure seem equally decisive. The contemporary philosopher, Charles Taylor explained that "the making and sustaining of our identity, in the absence of an heroic effort to break out of ordinary existence, remains dialogical throughout our lives" (1991: 35). The authorized rock music biographer Anthony Scaduto remarks how Dylan in the final song of *The Times They Are A-Changin'* declares that the ultimate thing a-changin' is his own individual attitude,

(...) he tries to step back from personal involvement, telling his audience that he is not really a prophet; he is just a man who loves his freedom and doesn't want to be locked into any stance; that his songs were written because he had to get down every thought that came into his head to keep from going insane; that they were written for himself and his friends and had no deeper design; and that he was bidding them farewell and not give a damn.

(Scaduto, 2001: 3886)

When Bob Dylan had won the necessary self-consciousness and was ready to explore the depths of his own personality and thoughts, *Bringing It All Back Home* (1965) appeared. On August of the same year, Bob Dylan met The Beatles for the first time at the Delmonico Hotel in New York and they became friends. Still, this album echoed the past tradition while lyrics made revolutionary experiments by giving words not just the modernist “stream of consciousness” but rather “the rhythm of thought” – translated from Isabel Paraíso (1985)–; a term that comprehends a poetic creation in which lexical, syntactic and semantic content occur within the phonic rhythms of discourse. All this is accompanied by a strong sense of civilization. Ironically, the artist –who doesn’t want any other to lead his acts but himself– ironizes too about social rules. For example, he mocks the supposedly “correct” western living in his song “Subterranean Homesick Blues” when he numbers all the things anyone should do: "Don't try "No-Doz", better stay away from those that carry around a fire house. Keep a clean nose..." (1965) Such orders, he sings, comes from the DA (District Attorney) who institutes legal proceedings against someone.<sup>43</sup> In this case, the orders are introduced to Maggie, Johnny and me, who play the role of another possible love triangle, also mysteriously connected to the image of the Christian Trinity. However, these three characters are independent, they don’t follow leaders, they don’t belong to any district or community. Indeed, they are like Dostoyevsky’s *Notes From Underground* (1864) leading character, or like Pynchon’s protagonists of *Entropy* (1960). Ultimately, in Pynchon's story, there is no order or orders. The type of characters that inhabit this album are all bums, vagrants, outsiders, connected to nature from their beds, like Maggie, and experimenting with new medicines. Like in Callisto’s house (“Entropy”), Johnny is also in the basement. There the characters who construct their intimate sanctuary, which was “hermetically sealed, it was a tiny enclave of regularity in the city’s chaos, alien to the vagaries of the weather, of national politics, of any civil disorder” (Pynchon, 1960). One of these typified creatures wants to escape "Maggie's Farm", a corollary of his escape from the Folk Society, with lots of cross-correlations

with his music context: "They say "sing while you slave" and I just get bored. I ain't gonna work on Maggie's farm no more". For its part, "Subterranean Homesick Blues" is not a strict blues, neither in form nor in content. Blues structure was simpler: four verses paired with each other and a conclusion to end each section gave form to love and lonesomeness ideas. Here, rhythm & blues music shows its recent electric temper and it also goes faster by composing a collage of new visions and revisions. Words have to chase after the rhythm with the singer's ability and he shows that rock 'n' roll can function equally good for his lyrical content.

There started to be a slight resemblance between him and the characters portrayed, like in the big hit included "Mr. Tambourine Man". What is more, this type of character will be thoroughly explored by the singer during his entire career. With all these strategies he censures conventional ways of thinking about life and art, emotion as opposed to logic. In "Mr. Tambourine Man" the main voice begs Mr. Tambourine Man to concentrate only on rhythm and not in rhyme, leaning towards music elements against words –the most inexact of the two. We owe this metafictional commentary a bigger explanation as it provides some answers to how did the author regard the role of lyrics in his songs at that time. In the lines, "And if you hear vague traces of skippin' reels of rhyme to your tambourine in time, it's just a ragged clown behind, I wouldn't pay it any mind. It's just a shadow you're seeing that he's chasing", the singer attributes the interpreter the adjective of the clown, because he fools and misinterprets the song's meaning. He would refer to the clown again in *Highway 6 Revisited* (1965) liner notes, "the Clown appears -- puts a gag over Autumn's mouth and says "there are two kinds of people -- simple people & normal people". However, his capricious use of words and images like enigmatic clues heartens interpretations. If it were not so, probably the audience would not worry about its meaning, whereas from the listener's viewpoint the song seems to be uncovering a hidden truth about the artist's personal vicissitudes.

From the point of view of this research and after analyzing many repetitive elements in his music, "Mr. Tambourine Man" seems to make another contribution to Dylan's portrayal of the ideal authentic being. I will explore deeper this idea in the point referring to authenticity and his mythic representations in the last section of this research, where some of the most salient alter egos are described. His idealism at this first period of his career goes parallel to such famous exhortation as Martin Luther King Jr's "free at last" (1963) that he witnessed first-hand. Like he sang in "Gates of Eden",

his ideal will also arrive when "the cowboy angel rides with his candle lit in to the sun" or during his numbered dreams ("Bob Dylan Dream", "Bob Dylan Dream 115<sup>th</sup>"). This project should constitute the only hope after "It's all over now, baby blue".

Besides introducing the idea of authenticity, he interweaves with special ability the always-in-combat forms of high art and popular art, producing an idealist form of their different idioms. "He made the topical protest song 'respectable'. When he sired 'folk rock' and other styles, the whole music world followed him." (Shelton, 2011: 42) His venturing in other musical genres gave him the impulse for creating under diverse musical formulas. That helped his songs reaching a wider audience –probably by an effect of his contract with the "Majors"–, and contributed to making of his experiments a popular element, no longer related just to the "high" culture. "Dylan is primarily an explorer of content, though he has also pushed the form in significant ways, particularly in terms of song length and melding various genres that had never been so deeply synthesized." (Maxwell, 2014: 3400) His writing recalled other literary compositions like vaudeville and minstrelsy, (listen to *The Basement Tapes*, recently completed 2014) and vernacular black folk music genres. Wilfrid Mellers (Gray, 2008: 624) says it shouldn't "astonish us that such an artist can have re-forged the links between folk and sophisticated culture" because in the 1960s theorist Marshall McLuhan predicted a revival of orally driven artistic forms. Regarding this aspect, Bob Dylan's unique use of song meant this comeback to oral literature in the realm of popular music. "Popular songs are the only form that describes the temper of the times. . . . That's Where the people hang out. It's not in books; it's not on the stage; it's not in the galleries." (Dylan, 1966) He gives a real referent to scholars and critics that studied what is known as ethno poetics, a possible solution to determine at what precise moment words started to combine poetically or to contain a meaningful sense or lyricism. According to Dylan, poetry started way back, aurally, in the sang words of bards and itinerant musicians and it should stay in this form because it is the only way it will be temporary, dependent on the wind. This renovated terms of literature were originally introduced by the Beat poets. Actually, on the cover of the album, there is a portrait of Lord Buckley laying over the mantle piece above the fireplace. Lord Buckley was a stage performer and recording artist who used comedy to ironize about humanity. He inspired the work of various other poets and performers of the Beat generation. In H. Sounes' *Down the Highway: The life of Bob Dylan* (2001) Dylan claims that the expression "jingle jangle"

in "Mr. Tambourine Man" was taken from him. As Tim Wood states in *The Poetics of the Limit: Ethics and Politics in Modern and Contemporary American Poetry*, the Beats “undoubtedly widened the expressive potential of literature, breaking the back of elitism of the New Criticism and opening Literature up to an unending series of collaborations with other forms of expression, particularly in the field of music.” (2006: 460)

Bob Dylan’s would never be more in the boundary between popular forms of expression and the vanguards of elitist artistic expression than in the second half of the 1960s when he started trying to incorporate as many poetic images and poetic resources to his lyrics as possible, added to a potent surrealist content. After stressing “the importance of tradition in both questioning and defining contemporary reality” (Eyerman & Jamison, 1998: 34-5), he reached the top of surreal and fragmentary images with his albums *Highway 61 Revisited* and *Blonde on Blonde* (1965), as well as with the imminent publication of his book *Tarantula* (1970). In the former he started producing a kind of postmodern poetry by making use of parody, fragmentation, symbolism, Joycean wordplay and the kind of Beatnik rhythms as could be found in Ginsberg's and Kerouac's books. The latter also proposed in his title *On the Road* (1951) a technique of spontaneity followed by jazz’s features. All of it emphasized the impossibility of poetic exegesis, provided that most songs had confusing clues, fragmentary images, etc. His sole intention might be just for us to rejoice in their form and sound the same way we enjoy paintings or the song of birds. As the singer would often say by questioning the basis of interpretation, “Why does one love a night, a flower, everything that surrounds a man, without trying to understand it all?”<sup>44</sup>

In musical terms, his ballad format, for example, his use of quatrains (four-line stanzas) and different ballad meters (depending on the number of syllables), changed to alternative structures, longer sections with a high density of words and rock music schemes. Note "Like A Rolling Stone" where he reintroduces the conventional opening for stories, especially for children stories –another element of naiveté. There is also good presence of internal rhyme and assonance. Rhetorical questions follow each other, for example, in "Ballad of a Thin Man". It is his way of imposing a new attitude towards the "real", a new vision,

Now you see this one-eyed midget  
Shouting the word “NOW”  
And you say, “For what reason?”  
And he says, “How?”

And you say, "What does this mean?"  
And he screams back, "You're a cow  
Give me some milk  
Or else go home

The singer rereads tradition through the lens of progressive stands giving to that old road, highway 61 –today US Route 61– often called “the blues highway” that leads to several determinant points in popular music. Both of his most prominent musicians, Alan Kooper on keyboards and Michael Bloomfield on guitar, accompany him and the whole band. Like in his next album, there are many vindictive words. Look at “Queen Jane Approximately” regarding the way some people hold to the conformist side of life and do not take any risks. His social evaluations make him able to continue alluding to what is wrong in the world according to a modern set of moral values and attitudes which the singer liked to give voice to (“Desolation Row”). However, the others’ attitudes are to some extent impossible to apprehend and it only remains who I am and my own meditations. Authors like Angela Carter remarked the way his music was turning inward this time. She wrote a review of one of his concerts in 1966 at the London Magazine saying, “The best of the songs on his latest all-electric LP ‘Highway 61 Revisited’, songs such as ‘Like A Rolling Stone’ and ‘Ballad of A Thin Man’, have a mature savagery and a scary kind of wit which is new and extraordinary in music of ass appeal.” (1966: 101)

Dylan’s blurriest version of himself –watch the cover of the album– came with the culmination of drug use and abuse, long touring activities and his contact with other vanguards. *Blonde on Blonde* contained his name (note the abbreviation<sup>45</sup>) and illustrated his effective use of other music genres. There are music phrases repeated over and over during most of these recordings, like in "Rainy Day Women #12 & 35", "I Want You", or the harmonica riff of "Obviously Five Believers". Repetition constitutes an exultant mode of approaching music consumes against the big lyric content of his songs. That is why we mostly listen to monotonous melodies and repeated word sequences playing the role of refrains. As a result of this, there is titles ad spread references to repetition and circularity, like in "Fourth Time Around" or verses that seem to emulate the unexpected appearance of a ghostly vision ("Leopard Skin Pillbox Hat", "Visions of Johanna"). The most conventional ballad is “One of Us Must Know (Sooner or Later)” depicting a long refrain that echoes the title twice, but inversely: “Sooner or later one of us must know...” and breaking with the voice’s

pretexts.

Apart from structural and prolonged variation, *Blonde on Blonde* provides the listener with a crazy context of pure social relationships that the artist chronicled regardless of their negativity. There are many discussions and vindicated discourses (“Stuck Inside of Mobile with the Memphis Blues Again”) where he blames others and unveils the wrongs they are doing: “Achilles is in your alleyway, he don’t want me here...” (Temporary Like Achilles”) Even the Mona Lisa is suspected: “Mona Lisa musta had the highway blues, you can tell by the way she smiles”. However, he specially directs his anger towards “the troublemakers and Pharisees of the modern era” (Margotin and Guesdon, 2015: 3710). He puts down many other actors too in his quest for errant souls. He even makes a journey description across the walls of a haunted house in "Visions of Johanna", where the all-night girls whisper of escapade out on the D-Train while he is stuck inside of Mobile, with the Memphis Blues Again. The repeated condition of the self is also stressed in "Just Like A Woman" where he repeats each stereotyped/unconventional behaviour of that woman/girl that must be an adolescent in the middle of an undetermined girlhood to adulthood.

Ah, you fake just like a woman, yes, you do  
You make love just like a woman, yes, you do  
Then you ache just like a woman  
But you break just like a little girl

Also in “Most Likely You Go...” the beloved singer makes a direct accusation towards his lover distrusting him or her,

You say you love me  
And you’re thinkin’ of me  
But you know you could be wrong  
You say you told me  
That you wanna hold me  
But you know you’re not that strong  
(1966)

The childish action of revealing others’ secrets contrasts with an opposite intent of hiding his individual feelings after symbols and clues: “My warehouse eyes, my Arabian drums. Should I leave them by your gate or, sad-eyed lady, should I wait?” (“Sad-eyed Lady Of The Lowlands”). This is the overall idea of the album, to reveal a

paradoxical nature based in making converge simultaneously a façade of incomprehensible imagery with a gist of veiled symbolism and complex unanswered questions.

His album *Blonde on Blonde* gave him the ambited freedom of one who sacrifices general market expectations and rationality to initiate his self-fulfillment he “provides the quintessential example of folk-based music reaching a mainstream, popular audience” (Lornell, 2012: 302) With this new attitude he was assuming the role of a celebrity whilst he procured a more insubordinate facet. Firstly, *Blonde on Blonde's* songs seemed like a speech in favor of another type of musical consume: "Everybody must get stone" ("Rainy Day Women #12 & 35") Secondly, these songs seem to pledge for prosody and aural enjoyment. Note the title of the album, *Blonde On Blonde*, that apart from a monochrome description of paleness, or an anthropomorphic proximity, is more a bilabial and tongued articulation with internal musicality.<sup>46</sup>—He seems to have discovered that monotonous sounds are inherently rhythmical and he uses this effect instrumentally and vocally. The listener can carefully attend to the way he terminates third-person-singular verbs “takes, makes, aches, breaks” in “Just Like A Woman”. Thirdly, there is a reflection on synchronicity. A theory of everything in Dylan’s terms would probably include rhythmic qualities to every different facet of our lives. This way, when we listen to his music he expects us to “come trough, too” for that message to be correctly processed.

Thirdly, inter textuality starts playing a different role from his first three albums, where there was a reaffirmation of the folk genre. Now, there are cultural and literary references that suggest a straightforward literariness. Lewis Carroll’s *Alice in Wonderland* elements appear here and there in the song "I Want You" where the voice seems to be after the capture of his white rabbit (aka, his lover) even though "time was on his side". His search will not end up there, it will conquer other spaces. He continues searching for the "white rabbit" in "Absolutely Sweet Marie" and "Most Likely..". Besides, there are many elements corresponding to Carroll's novel: sleep, cries, and weeps, drunkenness, broken cup, gates, the Queen of Spades, chambermaid, the child with a flute, etc.

There might be, again, a reason for such repeated use of the adverbs likely, obviously, approximately. They all seem to estimate reality and so, its directedness in terms of truth and reliability. Can you trust my discourse? Well, most likely, approximately or obviously.

Among the thematic differences, one of the most salient is the substitution of gentile love with a platonic description of women like queens, ladies, and Madonna's, followed by wicked commentaries like, "You see, you forgot to leave me with the key. Oh, where are you tonight, sweet Marie?" ("Absolutely Sweet Marie"). Overall, the album's main figure is love and women, or "blonde on blonde", although it risks the offence that the adjective denotes when spelled different for describing men and women hair color.<sup>47</sup>—As a matter of fact, Eugene Stelzig—as indicated by Margotin and Guesdon (2015: 5030)—believed there was a direct correlation between the feminine soul or anima of Lady of the Lowlands and the singer's imagination.

Additionally, this album is full of fragmentary techniques that provide him with the title of a composing "collagist". Like previous American authors like William Carlos Williams or T. S. Eliot, who used the collage technique in their works *Paterson* and *The Waste Land*, respectively, Dylan also used 'spatial incoherence', 'semantic overlapping' and, 'discontinuous composition' (Clearfield, 1984<sup>48</sup>). Collage art "was explicitly linked with an almost prerequisite questioning the nature of representation and reality" (Cran, 2014: 32). In fact, as scholar Rona Cran has also observed, Dylan made use of collage for his artistic detachment, one that allowed him gaining a wider perspective of every cultural sign.

Dylan used collage to effectively cast himself in the lead role at the center of the counterculture whilst simultaneously navigating the pressures of being a valuable product in the new age of mass consumerism, speaking of the need to be 'hip to communication' and of his desire to create a 'collage of experience' to his listeners. (Cran, 2014: 24)<sup>49</sup>

Among those images there are old relics of romanticism, especially when he transmits his secret admiration and reverence for someone, "Who among them do you think could resist you?" ("Sad-Eyed Lady Of The Lowlands") "And you, you took me in. You loved me then. You didn't waste time" ("Fourth Time Around") Most of his critics and scholars agree that his highest inspiring years were between 1964 and 1966. Robert Shelton states that, "Back Home (*Bringing It All Back Home*) and Highway 61 (*Highway 61 Revisited*) changed pop lyrics by successfully amalgamating oral literature, folk tradition, and rock experimentation." (2011: 587)<sup>50</sup>

In my opinion, these years announced the importance of the artist's works and gave his discography a preliminary argument for being studied. "By the 1960s, folk music was a conglomeration of styles and influences, from mountain music to Kingston

Trio, and Bob had already tried the all, including the black folk and urban blues he had first heard and played back in junior high school" (Scaduto, 2001: 712).

His most inspiring lyrics came when he started reporting his listeners a lot of questions and enigmas that assessed communication, "An' you, just what do you do anyway? Ain't there nothin' you can say?" ("She's Your Lover Now").<sup>51</sup>—These were not the usual call-and-response songs that could be found in blues music. They were more a call for attention, an invitation to make more transcendental decisions. At a certain point of his career, namely the Christian period, these enigmas would mostly deal with spirituality.

Dylan disregarded critics and fans who claimed for his disloyalty and he preferred to call for individual autonomy as the basis of his poetics. In Dylan's notes to *Biograph* he advised other songsters to do the same and be able to find their inspiration in talented people, "To the aspiring songwriter and singer I say disregard all the current stuff, forget it, you're better off, read John Keats, Melville, listen to Robert Johnson and Woody Guthrie." Materialized via record companies, his songs have always shown that type of eclecticism characteristic in postmodernism. His most popular biographers, like Anthony Scaduto, point that "Bob listened to every conceivable popular music style, from jazz to hillbilly, studying and soaking up those that interested him, learning to imitate, to rework, to transform them into something of his own" (2001: 552). This way, he became a personality and the regime of that personality would force him to try and find several new identifications that would fit that personality, new masks, and sounds that would feed his exploring aims. He is quoted in Scaduto's saying, "(...) From now on I want to write from inside me, and to do that I'm going to have to get back to writing just like I used to when I was ten —having everything come out naturally. The way I like to write is for it to come out the way I walk or talk."<sup>52</sup>—This casual attitude towards creation is borrowed too from the blues philosophy too. In fact, of the many musical echoes that persisted all through out his career, there is a strong prevalence of black music and the evolution of forms within those styles.

Critic and activist LeRoi Jones wrote once that in language terms, "the African tradition aims at circumlocution rather than at exact definition" (1963: 31). In this sense, Bob Dylan could be considered the most verbose singer, the lone bird who sings prophecies harmonized with music. Angela Carter adds he is a "prophet of chaos" (1966:100) perhaps referring positively to a kind of creative chaos that permeates his music. The same sort of creativity that drove African American music to the core of

modern American music styles. Folk music and ballads turned, thanks to rhythm 'n' blues into faster and rolling forms, including the kind of electric sounds that Dylan wanted to reproduce as well.

After those inspiring years and the motorcycle accident, he made one of his most radical changes. From that moment on, he started exhibiting his disdain for the folk community and their music conventions. He continued exploring its forms and signs but he got to a complicated depth. His techniques of fragmentation, subjectivity, metaphor and his ironic mood are characteristically represented all through this period, with special significance in *John Wesley Harding* (1967), and, more concretely, in his song "All Along The Watchtower", which refers symbolically to a passage from the Bible, the book of Isaiah (Margotin and Guesdon, 2015).

At this moment, his previous use of vernacular language is changed towards older syntactic structures. He experiments arranging and giving a new form to the folk mold the same way he used folk music during *The Basement Tapes* (1975) private sessions. Or in the way *Self Portrait* (1970), *Biograph* (1985 ) and *World Gone Wrong* (1993) employ tradition to his personal detachment.<sup>53</sup>—He used traditional emblems to call the audience attention while he operated his personal significations. For example, he recovered lost "signifyin(g)" units of the Afro-American tradition, like the image of Yoruba, the trickster (Louis Gates Jr., 1988) in his "joker" and "thief" who seemed duplicates of his own self-image.

After his motorcycle accident and with all the rumors about his health, he decided to break out of his incessant touring activity for eight years. During that time, he released his seventh studio album and the double volume CDs of his *Greatest Hits*, both published in 1967 and 1971 respectively. Additionally, his seclusion resulted in one of the utmost evidence of his performing talent: *The Basement Tapes* (1975), a collection of performances that got chronicled in a basic reel-to-reel tape recorder at the basement of an old house in Woodstock. There was a lot of expectation on these song's copies until the label Columbia Records decided to launch the definitive *Bootleg Series Vol. 11: The Basement Tapes Complete* (2014) Preceding this album, in January 1975, Bob Dylan authorized Columbia to launch the first official record among the multiple available bootlegs copies. "The double album included twenty-four songs, eight by the Band on their own" (Margotin and Guesdon, 2015: 5236). From that moment on, this recording has been considered a music breakthrough. Billy Bragg said that "listening back to The Basement Tapes now, it seems to be the beginning of what is called

Americana or alt-country" (Margotin and Guesdon, 2015: 5237) Many magazines recovered the story of how they got accidentally published and how Dylan always thought they weren't publishable material. Apparently the Band and him were just doing musical exercises, "we were just fooling around" (Hudson as quoted in Margotin and Guesdon, 2015: 5227).

What makes this record a phenomena in the theory of performance and the history of music is that it transgressed the simultaneity of any other performance and despite being unrelated to an audience –or recorded– its special aura would contradict Godlovitch's concept of the performance as requiring an audience (1998).

Like Kafka's major written works, which the author wanted to be burned out, *The Basement Tapes* emerged out of the fire of total ignorance like a phoenix out of fire flames, and had a configured an alternative idea of performance. Their destiny would have been uncertain if it had not been for Hudson's custody. However, these were relatively hidden from the audience during forty-five years, only divulged in alternative illegal copies. Considered one of rock's best secret treasures, the tapes have been extensively chronicled by Greil Marcus' *The Old Weird America: The world of Bob Dylan's 'Basement Tapes'* (2011) and by Sid Griffin's *Million dollar bash: Bob Dylan, The Band, and the Basement Tapes Revised and Updated Edition* (2014).

As I was saying previously, during the period of determined captivity, immediately after *Blonde On Blonde's* impact, Dylan had released another album which I mentioned above. The album was *John Wesley Harding* (1967) and it named the definitive outlaw murderer who would come to head the infinite number of references of this kind of characters that could be found in his music. It confirmed Bob Dylan's enthusiasm for the outlaw hero or the anti-heroic gambler, rambler, and loner who defends his freedom of choice over everything becoming an exceptional figure, the perfect sample of the individualist character. The homonym song corroborates this role, although the real person has nothing to do with the fictional character except for the name. A name that "did resound" amongst the multitude of other resurrected myths Bob Dylan used. Again, most of his enthusiasm for this type of characters comes from the search for authenticity in every of its aspects. The role of these outlaw figures and their charisma led him directly to authenticity and Dylan treated them as the pure reflection of his ideal transforming their crimes in historic battles. He approved of their legendary charisma and helped to turn them into heroic exemplars of their culture. All those previous legends and histories that people used to tell in folk songs increased the impact

of the robin-hood-like character. The way he has always been regarded and the lyrics of his songs show how much he shared with the audience being in their homeland while he uses the character as an excuse to represent the whole US ground, "he traveled with a gun in ev'ry hand all along the countryside". He knows where he belongs, ever little place in its geography, the character, like Dylan, is a cultural expeditionary, a nomad. Margotin and Guesdon do not sustain this idea, they maintain, "Dylan is not trying to idealize Hardin, but rather to have a new look at an outlaw, as filmmaker Arthur Penn did in *Bonnie And Clyde*" (2015: 5908). Truth is that John Wesley Harding, as described in the song, is an "outsider who tries to bring wisdom to the people of his land, who travels with weapons, shooting down all men who will deny him" (2001: 6343) The song recalls an earlier folk period of the artist but it doesn't have any sense of continuity, which was probably what his audience expected. In fact, the artist remains an outsider who gets away from his previous albums, as well.

This was probably the most expected album of his career, full of transcendent words and medieval imagery, along with a religious intuition contrast with the psychedelic and rolling forces that characterized his prior rupturing LPs. On the hand, he seems to have returned to northern literature while the universe he recreates makes us "depart from me (him) this moment" ("As I Went Out One Morning"). This way we can only gaze at those instants of the past that the songs recollect and that have much to do with the constitution of his contemporary land –a conscious sense of place and the American identity included. In fact, Dylan goes as far back as to recover the American Revolution or the articles that preceded the charter against slavery in America while his characters are Afro-American natives, cowboys and political writers like Thomas Paine, who appears in "As I Went Out One Morning", a piece that "has given rise to countless interpretations" (Margotin and Guesdon, 2015: 5945). Everything helps recreate an image of the past fruit of his individual study during this period of calmness. Dylan started to show his aim at moral arguments to individual freedom, as it will be seen in the chapters devoted to his craving for authenticity.

On the other hand, he pays more attention to dream revelations and oneiric images, judging from songs like "I Dreamed I Saw St Augustine" and the apocalyptic foreseer of "All Along the Watchtower". Additionally, he makes use of the themes and iconography of the western movie genre, including his own personification that got confirmed when played Alias in Sam Peckinpah's movie, *Pat Garret, and Billy The Kid* (1973) Margotin and Guesdon note, "behind the typically American western movie

genre, Bob Dylan used untouchable irony as he found equally to blame the industrialists who built assembly lines and the critics who replied with ridiculously simplistic slogans” (2015: 4204).

Albeit his recognizable enthusiasm to unconscious impulses and mythical elements, morals still played a major role in his music. For example, in the song "The Ballad of Frankie Lee and Judas Priest" or in "The Wicked Messenger". Indeed, these morals were always related to religion dogmas, filled with a complex set of biblical imagery. For example, he includes among his characters the choking presence of the Christian philosopher St Augustine. Perhaps because, like him, and his confessional writing style, Dylan sometimes uses songs as a catharsis that liberates his conscience. Their souls coexisted during that dream and as the character of the philosopher says in the song, "Go your way accordingly, but know you're not alone", another demonstration of his constant search for the individualist perfection.

Of these references' perceivable role I can only add they must have served him for encoding secret themes, no confessional things that the artist wanted to convey under any recognized signs. He includes one of these enigmas in the album's liner notes when he ends up saying, "the key is Frank!". This is a parable of the “jolly” kings who are searching for the key that leads them to the Kingdom. That key, apparently, is Frank, another possible impersonation of Bob Dylan. The fable is written in the jacket of the album, and it includes an “ironical touch”, like Anthony Scaduto has concluded, in that “you made me a Christ, a keeper of the keys” (2001: 6321). There are additional references in “The Wicked Messenger”, where Dylan cites Elijah's<sup>54</sup> book (Margotin and Guesdon, 2015: 6218) and characters whose characteristics are based on the eternal dichotomy between good and evil (the joker and the thief or Frankie Lee and Judas Priest, who represent a moral). There is an explicit moral in "Drifter's Scape", as well, by picking up the thread of the outlaw tradition.

In his conversation with his biographer Anthony Scaduto, the singer says that before this album, he had already discovered something,

I discovered that when I used words like ‘he’ and ‘it’ and ‘they’ and putting down all sorts of people, I was really talking about no one but me, I went into Harding with that knowledge about all the stuff I was writing before then. You see, I didn't know that when I was writing those earlier songs.  
(2001:7369)

Like his following title, *Nashville Skyline* (1969), John Wesley Harding depicted Dylan's new singing voice and its privileged country music. Robert Shelton (2011: 866) remarked, "Dylan provided the strap that began to link pop closer to country, with *Skyline* as the buckle. A good part of the pop and rock of the 1970s explored country music." From a structural point of view, it is evident enough that this album's songs are shorter and that lines are briefer than they used to be. Extensive meanings are shortened to give each song a simpler quality, more direct, albeit ironically it seems more cryptic than ever. Also instrumentally speaking, as described by Margotin and Guesdon, the album "is entirely acoustic, no electric guitar is used. The piano is heard on two tracks, "Dear Landlord" and "Down Along The Cove". Finally, although he did not play harmonica on *The Basement Tapes*, he plays it here in many keys, C, D, E, F, and B." (2015: 15591)

During all these recording sessions it became clear that his new interest was in the city of Nashville, the land where so many representative artists of the country and western music appeared. From this symbolic as well as concrete space, Bob Dylan entered his most peaceful period. The one that would characterize his next four albums *Nashville Skyline*, 1969 *Self Portrait*, 1970 *New Morning* 1970 and *Pat Garret & Billy the Kid* 1973. Part of that quiet country mood was also followed by a renewed concept of love –romantic encounters, lovers affairs, and erotic propositions– substituting all the allegorical and philosophical tone of his previous album. Some examples of this new idea of gentle love can be found in "I'll Be Your Baby Tonight" antecedent of "To Be Alone With You", "Lay Lady Lay" or "Tonight I'll Be Staying Here With You". All of them belong to *Nashville Skyline*, one of the most unjustly criticized albums of the artist. The reason for all this criticism could be due to Dylan's contemporaries standpoint, who had witnessed his music's protest idiosyncrasies in the past and did not want to listen to something so different. For them, such swift must have meant a turn to conservatism (Margotin and Guesdon, 2015), to the bland style of cowboy music, which was the opposite of his previous music. However, this accusation had no grounds and Dylan's country music was nothing but innovative again, as it was commonly found in his career. His hybridization of country and rock rewrote the history of popular music in America during the seventies. Although, at the same time, Dylan's compositions were again put in question as a supposed plagiarism. It was not until the album's released that Johnny Cash's opinion got to be known by the audience, as these were included in the album's liner notes. The popular country soloist, who played with him eminently in

"Girl from the North Country", resolved the polemic saying, "(...) there are those who emulate/ At times to expand further the light of an original glow". This time Dylan borrowed the bluegrass music style, along with African styles and classic music. These so-called "polyrhythms" made it richer, warmer and friendlier than most other albums.

At the break of the new decade, Dylan's albums had continued revealing an inventory of Nashville's music style, country music. He had visited the city in 1966 during the recording of *Blonde On Blonde*<sup>55</sup>—and perhaps it all surged from that moment. A derivation from folk styles, country music, seemed to describe romantic images of day-to-day monotony and the relation of man with nature—an existentialist topic once more. It seemed to give straight answers to all the previously opened enigmas and his surrealist suggestions. His peaceful adequacy contrasted the previous convulsion and, in a way, announced that rock's preliminary form had finally died.

After becoming the prime figure of protest singing and folk, he stepped into folk-rock with the same force. One of the differences was that its quasi-permanent idea of using common language—as it was expected in the ballad tradition—was then abandoned for the first time in favor of a more archaic language. Additionally, Dylan imposed a repeated view of himself or his impersonations as a lonely bird since that moment on. The simile is not arbitrary, in "Down Along The Cove" (1967) he sings and feels "as high as a bird", but then again this parallels the overall positivity that the album breathes. This expressed flight might be revealing Dylan's explicit desire to overview the panoramic of country's music genre. Note the pleasurable emotions derived from his rendition of "One More Night" with his new tone of voice getting increasingly higher akin to the plenitude of his being, even if he is taking the blame for his failed relationship. Perhaps their break-up meant a rupture with his past bringing a new stimulating idea of the future. Note the moment he realizes that a "new light can shine on me", which is what I hear him say regardless of his lyrics official transcription.<sup>56</sup>

Critics overtly expressed his hostility against this renewed state of peace (Varesi, 2002; Attwood, 2015), pledging for the kind of confusion that made *Blonde on Blonde* so characteristic and where "love is all there is, it makes the world go 'round". They would rather have that vicious atmosphere of fragmented images and distortion proper of his 1965-6 albums than this calmness, perhaps due to the fact that Bob Dylan was studying Judaism with a rabbi in Brooklyn. Besides that, there is a strong change in Dylan's voice, from high pitched tones and nasals to a smoother and adult voice that

reflected his important transition from young madness and revolution to a hidden establishment, and not every listener was ready for such a radical turn.

The modesty of the lyrics during this period brought us straight dialectics, like those between the night and the day, that are extensively recurrent through all the three albums and which express a stereotypical hidden passion for gentile love affairs. Songs say such things as, "Love to spend the night with Peggy Day", or address that woman who makes him unable to set off and catch that train which is blowing, only because "you cast your spell and I went under" ("Tonight I'll Be Staying Here With You") That incessant wordplay boosts the positive idealism of any incipient love relationships as it brings light after darkness, as well. This idea is present in the verse, "Turned my skies to blue from gray" ("Peggy Day"). For such reason, the lover is called for staying up all night or bringing him company taking pleasure in those encounters, "I long to see you in the morning light, I long to reach for you in the night" ("Lay, Lady, Lay").

The repeated signs of the day versus night give an internal cohesion to the four successive albums after Dylan's comeback. Their roles represent somewhat the "Nietzschean" dialectics between the Dionysian –the passionate– and the Apollonian nature of beings, here depicted by the harmony of daylight and its timorous lustfulness. Note that in "I'll Be Your Baby Tonight" the voice keeps constantly mollifying his lover with such words as, "do not fear", "you don't have to worry anymore" or "you don't have to be afraid". It is coherent with the view that the light brings to light the most tremulous nature of ourselves whereas night sets our spirits free. No wonder the voice sometimes exhorts the night to come, "I wish the night were here, bringin' me all your charms" ("To be Alone With You") and "I've waited all day long for tonight when I'll be stayin' here with you" ("Tonight I'll Be Staying Here With You"). The night is also the moment we live the blues, whenever we feel lonesome. A moment that is especially important to reassure ourselves, like in "Living the Blues",

If you see me this way  
You'd come back and you'd stay  
Oh, how could you refuse  
I've been living the blues  
Ev'ry night without you

Among these group of albums and their common themes, it is remarkable the way an album *Nashville Skyline* distinguishes in the idea of saying, wording or naming something just to confirm its presence. This aspect is connected to his mania for

trueness and authenticity which made him forced every language expression to be the veritable confirmation of one's state of being. Obviously, truthiness could also be taken as the light of day as opposed to darkness, because it can illuminate ideas and real problems.

In general, his works show recurrent ideas around the fact that he –the self– is ultimately composed of many different people all at once. He is all his characters as much as he has given them a concrete voice. This fact led all his followers and scholars to speculate an answer to the ever-present question of "who is that man?", something Mr. Jones ("Ballad Of A Thin Man") explicitly wondered and which I have borrowed in one of the sections of this study. As a consequence, the interpreter, like Mr. Jones, ends up trying so hard but he cannot understand who hides behind his artistic persona. Whoever he is, he has voiced humanistic characters that were, to a certain extent, in direct relation to him. Indeed, all these characters helped him elude and escape the common territories of definition and ekphrastic knowledge which he always evaded. These characters seem to be always running the man's own course: "If you ever see me comin' and if you know who I am. Don't you breathe it to nobody 'cause you know I'm on the lam" ("Wanted Man", 1969).

Robert Shelton situated his newly born folk-rock style among the rebellious rockabilly of Eddie Cochran's "Summertime Blues", Trini Lopez's "The Hammer Song" and "Lemon Tree". He recognizes that there have been poetic lyrics also in music by the Gershwin, Rogers and Hart, Cole Porter and other musical theatres (Shelton, 2011).

The difference between folk and folk-rock can be approached through the lens of another dialectics. One of those dialectics that articulates the history of arts, as it has been understood by the musical explorer Keir Keightley in his essay of 2001, which was included in *The Cambridge Companion to Pop and Rock* (2001) In "Reconsidering Rock", Keightley reflects upon the romantic and the modernist point of view of authenticity. Such dichotomy will be raised again in section two of this thesis when talking about the implicatures of the concept of "authenticity" in his music. According to music theorist Keir Keightley (2001), these two postures regarding poetic composition can be useful to describe the key paradox found in Dylan's compositions, that –regardless of commercialism– he envisioned songs as a strong communicative and evolving form of artistic transgression. Indeed, his songs would never be traditionalist in the strict sense of the word, rather they would be constantly examining new communicative and aesthetic strategies. This argument is supported by other authors

(Maxwell, 2014; Scaduto, 2001). His friend and journalist Robert Shelton (2011: 707) wrote, "In the last part of *Blonde On Blonde*, folk tradition meets modern poetry" confirming this idea of the double combination between popular forms and poetics. He adds later that "Bob Dylan has brought high metaphoric development and literary allusion into rock" giving an avant-garde quality to his use of songs and music. What's more, "at the time of *Blonde's* release, the older pop critics were reorienting their sights and the new rock critics were realizing that literature, art, and rock were all converging." (2011: 710-2)

I mentioned before that by that time, one of his most important collaborators was Johnny Cash. The tandem reached its highest expression in 1969 when Cash collaborated in Dylan's *Nashville Skyline*. After that, they appeared together on the Cash TV show singing "Girl from the North Country". It all started when Johnny Cash wrote a letter to Bob Dylan confessing his admiration and desire of covering any of his songs. Bob Dylan felt immensely dignified and inspired by Cash's commentaries and befriended him forever. Grant Maxwell says that as long as Dylan "had idolized" the songwriter from Arkansas, the idea that he wanted to "sing one of his songs and essentially acknowledge Dylan as his successor" must "have liberated Dylan perhaps more than any other factor from being exclusively the heir of Woody Guthrie and Pete Seeger." (2014: 3820) After that, they made their special collaboration while working together on the same album. These recording sessions had another important implication for the young singer, as Scaduto remarks, because "(...) by using Cash on the album, he was going for a broader audience. For something that would last a long time" (2001: 6587) I would rather say he tried to mend the previous impulses of his youth and gain further knowledge from the myths and models that inspired him at the start of his career. "The problem from now on is to talk to America" (Scaduto, 2001: 6587)

Of *New Morning* I would remark its capacity to authenticate his experimentalist attitude and to praise for a new kind happiness and balance found in his land. He introduced female background vocals for the first time (Hilda Harris, Albertine Robinson and Maeretha Stewart) and new music styles like bebop, gospel, and waltz. He uses music more as an expressive new way to reach true emotions and to uncloak true ideas to an anonymous public audience without whom his verses "wouldn't ring true" ("If Not For You"). The natural exultation of the senses, domestic tranquility and the powerful and beautiful orchestrations that accompany him during this stroll through

the country define the overall sense of the album. Boogie-Woogie pianos, swing, electricity, all converge their own forces in every sensitive song. Refrains in "Time Passes Slowly", for example, evidence the obstinacies of the artist around time, dream, and wishes. Dreams like the one he relates with in "Went To See The Gipsy" where some critics have distinguished the eternal Elvis, because "he did it in Las Vegas and he can do it here". Overpowering prosody recreates that dominating calmness in the song "Winterlude". This waltz provides the perfect context, again, for such feelings of laziness, calmness, etc. Its intimacy is also a call to loosen up ourselves, "come on, sit down by the logs in the fire". The hedonistic urge is directed to an enraged audience that was too anxious to capture meaning in his other albums. Now the important thing is to delight with poetic virtuosity for "If Dogs Run Free", then why must we live with such a mental strain? However, the evident repetitive phrases of the song "New Morning" and its chorus also depict the songwriter in a permanent positive state of renovation that allows him perceiving real things differently every time. Margotin and Guesdon wondered whether this song "was Dylan amusing himself by idealizing country life and chronicling the world that ultimately only existed in his own mind?" or if it was a result of his love for Sara (2015: 7412) What is certain is that this song, together with "Three Angels" and "Sign On The Window", retake gospel and sermon-like lyrics. These "gospel tinged" (Margotin and Guesdon, 2015) songs certainly announce his imminent religious turn as he was introducing more and more references to the sacred texts.

That general joyful feeling that dominates the album is transmitted with a blues-rock force in the tracks "One More Weekend" and "The Man In Me". Additionally, it is perceivable in the rhythmic quality of George Harrison's collaboration, "If Not For You". "The Man In Me" ends up with the sing-along "lalala" fragment celebrating marital life with exultation. In the refrain of this song he also makes use of the expression "get through to someone" which means succeeding in communicating with someone in a meaningful way, a comprehensive declaration of his musical acknowledgment in terms of interpersonal communication, especially between the two sexes, "Take a woman like your kind to find the man in me". Albeit most Dylan's feminist critics think his ideas are male chauvinistic (March, 2016), this is making clear how much one gender owes the other for individual's self-esteem. From my own perspective, one of the leading objectives that embrace his musical works is to configure one's identity –regardless of gender issues– according to a far-reaching ideal.

He holds a male-dominated perspective on its issues, but occasionally he puts himself in the role of women, specially obvious when there is a section of dialogue and he plays both roles or when his narration includes notes of women's awareness ("Boots Of Spanish Leather" , "Brownsville Girl" 1986, "Like A Rolling Stone" 1965, "Just Like A Woman" 1966, "Nettie Moore" 2006). Finally, *New Morning* includes the female voice backup for the first time, "which would reappear later in the decade beginning with *Street Legal* and continue with his Gospel albums" (Rogovoy, 2009: 137).

The three not-so-decisive subsequent albums –the second volume of the *Greatest Hits*, the soundtrack version for Peckinpah's *Pat Garret and Billy the Kid* and *Dylan*, (1971 and 1973)–did not satisfy the audience very much either, at least not until the singer resurgence in his musical apotheosis joining The Band again. The result of this reunion was *Planet Waves* and *Before the Flood* (1974). The latter is a live testimony of the last concert together, a legal bootleg that transmitted how present was still their rock version of their music legacy.

*Planet Waves* (1974) starts with the night as it was most commonly romanticized by the artist before. "On A Night Like This" talks about waking senses and sensing dichotomies between cold and heat, the past and now, right and wrong, when it sure feels right, again "on a night like this". The voice calls for a sexual encounter and ends accepting a tender kiss, probably a good start for such a love-themed album. However, the track that follows is more related to past accounts, like when he went freewheeling for the first time and said goodbye to all friends and relatives. In his nostalgic mood, he also calls to mind what his grandma used to say,

I've just reached a place  
(...) I been hangin' on threads  
I been platin' it straight  
(...) I been walkin' the road  
I been livin' on the edge.

This song moves, like a three-step refrain, in three different dimensions: the past, present, and future. That gives the song's lyrics a cinematic or sequential feeling, "I'm closing the book, (...) I'm going, I'm going, I'm gone", although the voices express as well that he despises the future, "I don't really care what happens next".

It can also be mentioned how in the album he revisits the concepts of "mojo" and other signifyin' clues around women that seem as mutable as himself. This "tough mama" is also a stubborn one, very different from other women he described before.

Theirs is a covered relationship, covered with keywords and elusiveness around their sexual encounters. At some point he tells her, "now, don't be modest, you know who you are and where you've been (...) with that long night's journey in your eyes" as if she was working as a prostitute. It is not the only time he includes these references in his lyrics. There it was "Dark Eyes" (1985) of which the artist said was inspired by an encounter with a prostitute. Note that, as in "Tough Mama" the voice comments on her eyes. Like in *The Basement Tapes*, of which many different bootleg were circulating, there is a parade of such kind of characters along with corrupted and obscured stories, although prior to that, a song like "Stuck Inside of Mobile..." also included these suspicious lines,

When Ruthie says come see her  
In the honky-tonk lagoon  
Where I can watch her waltz for free  
'Neath the Panamanian moon  
(1966)

Accordingly, the kind of woman described in "Tough Mama" finds its absolute dichotomy in "Hazel", a song about a gentile love relationship with a woman described as a sweet goddess and a silver angel. Albeit following the idea that love is a thing of the past, "I'd shaken the wonders and the phantoms of my youth", it is also a thing of the present. In "Something There Is About You" the singer confirms this is an album strictly about all kinds of love and the undetermined emotions it arises in him, namely, paternity. That new familiar love had, as a result, the popular song "Forever Young" in two different versions. He often used love to establish a more intimate relation with human beings. Indeed, this universal concept served him as an excuse for being able to say what he would never have said in a regular conversation. "Forever Young" provided the ideal father-and-son encounter during which the singer is advising his son carefully and almost in an unapparent way about how he should face up to life. It represented a similar idea to that contained in "Father And Son" by Cat Stevens (1970). But there is a slight difference between the two. While Steven links up various imperative actions, Dylan uses a more cautious discourse with the repeated and polite formula of, "may you". In fact, this alliteration resembles preaching, "may God bless and keep you always". Steven's fatherly discourse serves his character to say goodbye and passing on his son's vital trajectory whereas Dylan's character gives his child a blessing while he is taking for granted his influence as an elder and more experienced human being. He tries

to endow his child with a self-aggrandizing knowledge that perhaps might serve him to becoming a real authentic being –as suggested by Dylan's philosophy– and having his proper demeanors, "May you grow up to be true. May you always know the truth and see the lights surrounding you". To balance this prophetic tone he offers two different versions of the song and one of them is moving faster and shallower over this topic.

If he was celebrating life and love's different origins in his previous songs, in "Dirge" he offers a crying lament about the destruction of, perhaps, his ever-silenced relation with his father. The death of his father had been withdrawn from his public and artistic career and perhaps he wanted to pay his particular tribute. However, the lyrics are too dark and distressing to relate them to his father, with whom he never seemed to be so furious, "I hate myself for loving you and the weakness that it showed". As he intones in the last part of the song, "The naked truth is still a taboo". Other than this interpretation, the song is the way he found to redeem his character and make him go to Dante's Inferno, "I went out on Lower Broadway and felt that place within. That hollow place where martyrs weep and angels play with sin." It is considered by Margotin and Guesdon as the most beautiful song on *Planet Waves*. After this song there is a trilogy around platonic love and direct references to his marriage in "Wedding Song" ironically an announcement of his ominous separation in 1977.

The two-year period that connected his last album to the next one, Bob Dylan suffered the loneliness again due to his marital problems. This experience is said to be one his major inspirations during the composition of the album *Blood On The Tracks* (1975), one that, "as the years go on, more and more fans and critics regard (...) as Dylan's best album" (Willman, 2015) Except it is the most biographically justified album, it could have been inspired in Chekhov's short stories, judging from his sarcastic comments.<sup>57</sup> Besides, this album meant his comeback to Columbia Records after he had departed from the company and record two albums with the label Asylum (*Planet Waves* and *Before the Flood*).

This time he worked again with John Hammond, who had helped him during his first years, and he came back to Studio A in New York, where he had recorded some of the most famous songs of his career. The album was accompanied by Pete Hamill's liner notes, which won a Grammy award. His words described a decadent America where few things, among them Dylan's songs, endure,

Poor America. Tossed on a pilgrim tide. Land where the poets died.

Except for Dylan.

He had remained, in front of us, or writing from the north country, and remained true. He was not the only one, of course; he is not the only one now. But of all the poets, Dylan is the one who has most clearly taken the rolled sea and put it in a glass (Hamill, 1974<sup>58</sup>)

His official record *Blood On The Tracks* would surely become as controversial as valued. Its estimation grew more and more during the years as the album ripped peacefulness up and tore romanticism leaving his injuries without any protection. It was called “the album of a wounded sensibility” by Margotin and Guesdon (2015).

Firstly he picks up the road again ("Tangled Up In Blue" and "Buckets Of Rain") to make a new route straight to absolution. Muttered secrets, out of the blue references and blue moods cohabit this long song in which he shows the importance of being true and genuine to one's self. One of the objectives was to become the only perdurable thing in life. All this philosophy seemed to glow from *Blood On the Tracks* "like burnin' coal pouring off of every page like it was written in my soul from me to you". Cadence in music is combined with such perturbed refrains as "Idiot Wind"'s, which establishes his first quarrel with one of his most displayed symbols, the wind. The soul of a man bears in his lyrics throughout some confessions that tingle here and there ("Simple Twist Of Fate", "You're A Big Girl Now"). He wonders on the common nature of love and fire, "what's good is bad, what's bad is good, you'll find out when your reach the top you're in the bottom". In the chorus he echoes Woody Guthrie's images of terrible dust storms, this time putting them in relation to lover's misery, "Idiot wind, blowing through the dust upon our shelves", which are nothing but ourselves too. As it transpired from the verses, the act of reflection and one's intentions of answering biggest unsolvable questions are the main topics of "You're Gonna Make Me Lonesome When You Go". The songs says, "Stayin' far behind without you. Yer gonna make wonder what I'm sayin', yer gonna make me give myself a good talkin' to." This musical monologue is sharing everybody's doubts about our own acts, again, putting the emphasis on our own miseries and self-accusations. This idea is especially prominent in the love-theme songs. The interpreter talks to her although he also questions his own state of mind, "look at the sun sinking like a ship. Ain't it just like my heart, babe, when you kissed my lips?" ("Meet Me In The Morning").

It seems we all throw our trust into fortune and fortune belongs to the Jack of Hearts, a trickster who plays with our interpretations of reality the same apparent

randomness of the dices. Lily and Rosemary ("Lily, Rosemary and the Jack of Hearts"), the other two characters in this epic song, would surely agree that the scene it describes resembles Dostoyevsky's *The Gambler* (2003). Like the novel, Dylan's lyrics depict entangled relationships among the characters while all of them suffer from the constant influences of greed and love, like the leading protagonist of Dostoyevsky's classic.

Another female voice leads the next track, a song where there are at least three distinguishable voices. The other two voices are, the man, who blames it all on her and the narrator who describes her as someone who always promised to relieve our pain, a symbol of the temporary protection of a shelter. She acts like a refuge of all the vicissitudes and problems the couple is going through. Besides, she is described with the look of the pacifist, a lover-goddess who is "standing there with silver bracelets on her wrists and flowers in her head" ("Shelter From The Storm")

In this album there are multiple contrary feelings and word play, like in "Buckets of Rain", "All you can do is do what you must. You do what you must and ya do it well. I'll do it for you, honey baby can you tell?". A confusing apology, like this one, for acting so irrationally, challenges rationalism. But that is a persistent theme in his music: the fight between dichotomies such as logic versus emotions. He would record this song later with Bette Midler for the album *Songs for the New Depression* (1976<sup>59</sup>) a direct testimony of this album's general feeling.

The overall feeling of the album is that the ship is shrinking in the middle of an unknown acoustic ocean of literacy and intimacy. Like an old Don Quixote who wakes from his ideal revelry, we find out that "life's a pantomime", as the verse of "Up To Me" recites (an outtake of the album).

By that time Columbia Records had made the first official selection of tracks from the recently discovered tapes that he recorded with The Band during his silent period. The sessions had been previously distributed in bootleg copies by the active supremacy of his fandom who were conveniently and strategically used by the label. *The Basement Tapes*, unlike Dylan's style, were released officially for the first time responding more to the needs of his audience –at least to all those bootleggers that had already wanted them materialized–. The audience, with their illicit researches had already reported the quality of the missing tapes that the whole band recorded between 1966 and 1967. However, Columbia's first record was not complete and it wasn't made definitive until the recent apparition of *The Bootleg Series Vol. 11* (2014). No one had had access to the entire music document earlier than that.

Regardless of this unexpected new discovery, at that moment, the published version included a distinct facet of the artist and his loquacious band, not just playing music but singing, covering, shouting and celebrating the troupe of traditional folk songs and frontier ballads that they identified with. Having taken place in Woodstock's old pink house's basement, in a very unusual isolation, permeated the lyrics ("Odds & Ends") although there was always a feeling of communal sympathy and musical joyfulness between them. That is why these songs illustrate what kind of a social event was that of performing without pressure, only for the joy of it, in such an intimate encounter. Senseless words are being pronounced just for the aim of prosody and far more signs of sexual aspirations are hidden between their melismatic cries ("Goin' to Acapulco").

With his cheeks all forged  
And his cheeks in a chunk  
With his cheese in the cash  
They are all gonna be there  
At that million dollar bash  
("Million Dollar Bash", 1975)

There are also lots of parodies and absurd situations as if the whole band members were not sober. In fact, "Please Mrs. Henry" has that touch of drunkenness that was also patent in previous tracks. In "Restless Farewell" (1964) the interpreter's voice seems to be unable to modulate his voice while he expresses his desire to move far away from everything and everyone. Margotin and Guesdon remarked this aspect too, "Dylan's voice has a cynical tone, as if the alcohol were flowing freely in the basement of Big Pink as he sings of the character's disappointments, his erotic fantasies, and the last dollar in his pocket" (2015: 5459). The voice of the artist has grown and he has finally escaped from social judgmental statements, "I'm a thousand years old and I'm generous bomb".

One of the most remarkable songs, "Tears of Rage", shows how close to religion he was increasingly getting, mainly from a prophetic and apocalyptic point of view. Critic Greil Marcus suggests that 'the song is from the start a sermon and an elegy, a Kaddish'<sup>60</sup> – Here, the allusions to the moment of awareness are connected to a beloved daughter who represents the flag, the land, "we carried you in our arms/ On Independence Day/ And now you'd throw us all aside/ And put us in our way" He calls and pledges for renewed feelings and a new encounter because "life is brief".

The title of his next album, *Desire* (1976), the first out of Columbia Records, would insist on the sanguine humor characteristic of the passions and the socially useful personality. While red is the dominant tendency the album goes back to some of his obsessions, as Robert Shelton noted. Themes like the “apocalypse, personal or societal; identity, the hero’s quest for love, knowledge, redemption and liberation.” (Shelton, 2011: 991) He recovers the perdurable image of the outsider and the outlaw, this time more vilified and unjustly alienated from our society, like boxer Hurricane Carter or Joey. He, then, seems to recover some of his legendary protest singing and his old talkin’ blues style acting as if the album was a boxing ring that was giving its welcome to the most eagerly awaited fight between truth and lie.

The popular apologetic song dedicated to press for the boxer's freedom represents the innocent man as a victim of other people’s lies, concretely, that of a police officer. The singer’s bare truth style and reliability give evidence of every single detail of the story which Dylan acknowledged in Carter’s own memories in prison (The Sixteenth Round, 1974). Dylan identified himself with Carter straight away, especially after they met in prison. He recalls, “the first time I saw (Carter); I left knowing one thing... I realized that the man’s philosophy and my philosophy were running down the same road, and you don’t meet too many people like that.”<sup>61</sup>—But, what was that philosophy? According to writer James S. Hirsch, who published *Hurricane: The Miraculous Journey of Rubin Carter*, “he studied, wrote and tutored other inmates about the need to look within themselves to find answers to the world outside” ( 2000: 4). With Carter’s approach to the definition of the self, we could imply both men have similar conjectures about the importance of being authentic.

Representing the spirit of talkin’ blues music, he presents the story without decorations or rhetoric elements. Among the many denouncing statements he makes, Dylan explains how "in Paterson, that's just the way things go if you're black you might as well not show up on the street 'less you wanna draw the heat." In that sentence Dylan is referring to the expression "to draw fire" that, according to the New Oxford American Dictionary, means to attract hostile criticism. Here, the word "heat" rises up the level of severity to the extent that "the heat" can allude to produce unwelcome pressure from the authorities. His censure against police corruption contrasts with Carter's trial, that was, according to the singer, like "a pig-circus". Then he asks us again, "How can the life of such a man be in the palm of some fool's hand?" This question makes the song resemble an interrogatory, a trial; only this time responsibility is thrown upon us. The use of the

riffs with violins gives suspense to every description and aestheticizes facts. It also helps to remind the listener about the former importance of the figure of the fiddler in the vast tradition of American folklore, this time represented by a woman violin player, Scarlet Rivera who added some of her world music accent to the album.

After we revisit his most repeated mythological representations, it must be said that there are other allusions besides the frequent outlaws. In the second track of the album and co-written with Jacques Levy a woman appears. Her name is "Isis", after the Egyptian goddess and the singer says about her, "What drives me to you is what drives me insane", which is an inversion of the ambitioned richness and ambitioned love. This song shows that Dylan's favorite archetypes are in relation with each other, regardless of their genre. The charismatic influence of the goddess can also taken like the same influence of someone who is authentic.<sup>62</sup>—After all, Isis is worshipped in pagan contexts as a revitalization of the figure of a woman who befriended the sinners, the slaves and the artisans. The story of the song reminds me of one that appeared on screen in 1948 thanks to filmmaker John Huston (who also wrote the script). It was titled *The Treasure of The Sierra Madre* and the protagonist, starred by Humphrey Bogart, leads a gold exploration at the Mexican border line. He among other secondary characters will finally learn the power of human greed. Coincidentally, Sierra Madre is located in Mexico from where much of *Desire's* tex-mex influence comes from ("Romance in Durango"). In the story of "Isis" there is also a protagonist, the narrator, who wants to explore the treasures of a pyramid in company of another man whose death is caused by his greed. Note that the album bears the mark of his world travels more than ever ("Mozambique", "Black Diamond Bay"). His coquetry with exoticism is combined with a sacred humanism right in the verge of his Christian capitulation ("Joey", "Sara"). All those images of love reigning in the popular outtakes of "Abandoned Love" and the pastoral "Golden Loom" are in balance with the idea of the lover as a favorite, a queen – "won't you descend from the throne from where you sit?"— are substituted by Him.

Another important woman to sum up to his collection of characters who question the laws, in his best protesting vein, is the protagonist of the outtake "Rita May". Co-written with Jacques Levy, like most of the album, this one was recorded in 1976 and includes Emmylou Harris and Scarlet Rivera on vocals and violin respectively. The song praises a character, Rita Mae Brown, for her work as a pacifist and feminist intellectual (Margotin and Guesdon, 2015: 9592) As a matter of fact, intellect is the most praised thing in the song, "I am gonna have to go to college, 'Cause

you are the book of knowledge Rita May". She defended the gay liberation movement and published a novel in 1973 that is known for the exalted portrayal of a two lesbian's lovemaking relationship. As the head editor of the magazine *The Furies*, she always maintained that the real source of their oppression was in the heterosexuality dictates.

His album *Street-Legal* (1978), probably referencing theological legalism, is his preliminary salute to religious dogmas, a distinct topic within this period. As Sam Wilentz observed, the songs belonging to Dylan's Christian phase "came to have two predictable themes: warning the unrepentant of imminent apocalypse and the second coming, an affirming his personal redemption and gratitude to the Lord." (2010: 117) While this is so, *Street-Legal* served as a good introduction. The lover's hunt is substituted by episodes of mystic gathering between man and God. "Changing Of The Guards" resembles "Desolation Row" in that both depict characters who get into a crowd of figures (the captain, merchants, and thieves). The Jupiter and Apollo, the two Gods of "Changing Of The Guards" substitute Ezra Pound and T. S. Eliot from "Desolation Row". In both songs the self is looking for his queen, but he fights an open heroic battle against all sorts of mythological images, semi-gods, and different characters. The saxophone and the women voices, the voices of Regina Havis, Mary Elizabeth Bridges, and Mona Lisa Young add to the rock band and the lyric's content. "But Eden is burning. Either brace yourself for elimination, or else your hearts must have the courage for the changing of the guards"

Women characters change along the album, notwithstanding the fact that this is an album of transition, so every role changes to some extent. We can find an evil woman like that of "New Pony", who represents temptation. She interferes in the voice's spiritual affairs and reminds the listener of the role of the voodoo women who were used before in American folklore (Koko Taylor, Bobby Goldsboro, Curtis Knight, or Steve King's "Satan Is Her Name"<sup>63</sup>). Some female roles are weaker and he tries to heal their pain ("Baby Please Stop Crying"). They might be typifying the idea that love hurts. By recalling their unpleasant form, the album makes them vain and useless ("Is Your Love In Vain?") with the sole intention of restoring the one kind of love that makes you risk it all, his love for Christ. While this idea is not explicitly expressed, the listener can feel the constant presence of someone receiving his praises, an angel as described in "No Time To Think". It is also someone "who sleep-walks through your dreams into walls" or a spiritual guide, like "Señor" in "Señor (Tales of Yankee Power)" (1978), the one he addresses all his interrogations after most of these had been

previously addressed to the audience. In harmony with Sean Wilentz' s argument, his prophetic music could have ruined his communication with the audience, "Can you tell me what we're waiting for, señor?". His lyrics seem to announce an official break up between him and us, especially in "We Better Talk This Over" where the voice puts an end to their relationship for an analogous reason, "I'm an exiled, you can't convert me". Only God can convert him and so, there is no place for human intercourse anymore, the soul prepares for a more ascetic will. He brings forward the idea that "Sacrifice was the code of the road" and that he "couldn't tell her what my private thoughts were" ("Where Are You Tonight "Journey Trough Dark Heat"), precisely because some of those thoughts included serving God only and living according to His moral code. A year before the Gospel Tour (1978), Dylan was still producing rock music with a little touch of romantic touch on them.

*Slow Train Coming* (1979) was still a rock album with traces of loving, cynical and poignant lyrics. This time the artist states, mostly like he did before in 1966 and 1969 with "Rainy Day Women #12 & 35", that no matter who you are there is a true fact everybody has to be prepared for. That fact is that either you must get stoned or you're gonna have to serve somebody. There are less than twenty years in between but these two statements that, albeit reasonably meaningful together, illustrate the two opposite credos of the artist. While in 1966 the song got recorded in a haze of euphoric conclusions from art and living, the other is the result of a thoughtful reflection related to attending someone's laws and prescriptions. The artist who usually expressed "Don't follow leaders" in his stimulating mid-1960s is here interpreting the role of a deep mind that recapitulates and who does not offer intriguing questions anymore. He thinks about the dialectics between the evil and the lord and considers he is helping somebody. He repeats this idea in the next song of the album "Precious Angel", "Ya know I just couldn't make it by myself. I'm a little too blind to see". He shows his dependency on a different celestial creature, an angelical woman, "shine your light on me", he pledges her. We can understand there are allusions to Christ the moment he says, "one time the man who came and died a criminal's death". He starts alluding to physical desire, "flesh", and his plea for mysticism or the soul's desire. This way his sensuous love for her is confused with his absorption in the Deity, "you're the queen of my flesh, girl, you're my woman you're my delight, you're the lamp of my soul and the torch up the night." Everybody's bewilderment does not make but to confirm his beliefs, as he sings in "I Believe In You" with the triple-verse meter, "And I, I don't mind the pain. Don't

mind the driving rain. I know I will sustain.” The curse of this train, as evoked in the album, symbolized the increasing annoyance he feels towards his judges. Dylan predicts he is going to be criticized, almost condemned by his audience and followers and so, he judges first and admits a great part of the American society is not worth his faithfulness,

Man's ego is inflated, his laws are outdated, they don't apply any more  
You can't rely no more to be standin' around waitin'  
In the home of the brave  
Jefferson turnin' over in his grave  
Fools glorifying themselves, trying to manipulate Satan  
And there's a slow, slow train comin' up around the bend

With his words, he indicates that "this land is condemned" like he said once about US southern states quoting the Bible (see “Blind Willie McTell”). Parallel to images of apocalypse there are a set of familiar symbolic elements also chosen from the bible, like body parts metonymy in the manner of sermons, "For all those who have eyes and all those who have ears" ("When He Returns"). One of the most important philosophical keys of his works, "truth", is mentioned here again, only this time he gave it a more radical standpoint. Truth is now a synonym of metaphysical revelations. It is stimulating and transforming, "Truth is an arrow and the gate is narrow that it passes through". His viewpoint differs from everybody else's while he is standing on the side of God, that is why he is able to foresee that the enemy "wears a cloak of decency". Also, he cares about his equals as opposed to nonbelievers and masters of the proposition.

In music terms, this album puts him in contact with minstrelsy again as he mixed his music style with touches of ska and reggae plus a Ray Charles-Aretha Franklin style. It revitalizes the powerful reference to the myth and historic role of the train as treated by bluesmen like Charlie Patton, Blind Willie McTell, Lead Belly and Woody Guthrie, among others. He joined Dire Strait's band and made a duet with Mark Knopfler's spectacular guitar riffs. What remains clear is that in 1979 Dylan had officially embraced his Christian faith. From this moment on, nothing was more alluded than Him and the graces of being on his side. Remember that the new boomers anthem used to ask everybody "Which Side Are You On?". If there was a Christian side, Bob Dylan would have chosen it during these consecutive albums as it was explicitly divulged in *Saved* (1980) and *Shot of Love* (1981).

In the meantime, he won a Grammy for Best Male Vocalist while he was proclaiming in his concert tours that the answer was not blowing in the wind anymore, but in Jesus Christ (Scaduto, 2001: 7669).

*Slow Train Coming* smoothed the path for *Saved* (1980), an album that in spite of obtaining only two stars in the online database allmusic.com, had been described positively by the popular *Rolling Stone* magazine. Kurt Loder's review states that it is "a record bereft of the rhythmic exuberance that has always characterized the artist's best work." (1980) Despite the lack of agreement in critical terms, *Saved* depicted boogie woogie piano rhythms combined with gospel style and it was also backed up by Afro-American women singers that echoed the critical words. To this formal novelties, Dylan added up many different new themes and addresses, related to Christianity, all those that had to characterize this extended period of his career. On the one hand, the album seemed to be related to the construction of a whole new persona, yet the listener could not say it was not Dylan's distinct music style. On the other hand, his born-again philosophy had nothing to do with the fact that this is a respected album instrumentally speaking. After all "his achievements could be panned (as happened to *Self Portrait*, *Renaldo and Clara*, and *Tour 1978*) but the background of authenticity was hardly questioned and it provided symbolic resources for the definition of the "real" Dylan" (Cossu, 2016). This album was even more interesting than its predecessors, specially if we sum up the prodigious Gospel tour that preceded its released, about which the music critics have finally express admiration. Among all the positive contributions there is one precious moment in his song "Saved" in which he makes the same concluding statements or aphorisms he used to voice back in his non-religious discography. The only difference is that this time these statements are directed to Christ and the importance of his presence in his life, "By his word I have been healed, by his truth I can be upright." He pledges for his freedom of choice as he did in his previous lyrics when he suggested that the only way to reach freedom is to be true to yourself. What's more, the artist asks his audience in the last track "Are You Ready?", "Are you thinking for yourself? Or are you following the pack?" He also refers to himself asking whether he has already surrendered to the will of God or he still continues acting like the boss.

The structure of these songs is not so different from others. There are riffs, bridges and verses with ending refrains if not with a repeated refrain. As in *Slow Train Coming* (1979), his previous album, love matters are more in relation to the idea of finding a religious mediator that could make a man complete. Additionally, he only

refers to a woman in "Covenant Woman" because romantic ballads are ignored during this LP, entirely committed to Christian issues. Thematically there are two imposing ideas: one is that men are inferior to his grace and cannot win against him. The other is that his grace is yet unperceivable by everybody and so, he persuades us to identify him in small imperceptible things, rather than trying to read any signs, "What kind of sign they need when it all comes from within, when what's lost has been found, what's to come has already been?" ("Pressing On"). In his song "In the Garden" he regrets past history, most concretely the bible fragment when Jesus is betrayed by one of the apostles and murdered by the military fractions of Rome. However, his major and greatest confession in the album comes from the lyrics of "Saving Grace", one of the top songs of his Christian phase that works most persuasively than ever, as stated by Kurt Loder for Rolling Stone Magazine.<sup>64</sup> In it, Dylan makes evident that he is eventually using songs to pray –again, another way of communication– for resurrection. The fear of death is more palpable than ever, along with a dreaded nothingness, "I put all my confidence in Him, my sole protection"

His next religious album was *Shot Of Love* (1981), although here there were fewer biblical references and something of his earlier years music had returned. First thing, love came back again in its original form, eagerly rejuvenated after too many chords had been played without it in mind. At this moment, as explicit as he stated it, he needed a shot of love and nothing else. As he seemed to explain in his track "Heart of Mine", his heartaches made him leave this theme behind in favor of a pure kind of love related to his Christian phase. Religion had helped him getting over any kind of love suffering as he explained, "Heart of mine go back where you been / It'll only be trouble for you if you let her in".

In a revision of his most memorial images, he despises his perpetual roaming and commands his heart to "go home". Similarly, fire, a symbol he uses in relation to passionate love, is no more wanted here to define instead a watered-down love, a suicidal concept of love that he stops perceiving ideal to be described as something that will "write it up and make you sign a false confession". Being so centered on the dangers of the self and in the hands of love, in marriage hardships, and conventionalism, it is no surprise the idea of authenticity reappears again, as understood by the author and the existentialist concept. Remarkable piano riffs go between its verses.

The song "Property Of Jesus" makes a general allusion to those who are exploited by superstition or try to be bribed with the things you adore, "What happened

to the real you, you've been captured by whom?" Those that according to Dylan steer clear of any exterior influence have a "heart of stone", quoting the famous rock title that the Rolling Stones had published in 1965. A heart of stone comes from the bible (Job 41:24) referring to a very cold and unfeeling nature. However, here Dylan did not use it strictly for that. Rather this term was designating someone who is not easily hornswoggled. In other words, someone who is not easily cheated. Such idea of keeping being true to yourself and not deceived is referred to, also, as being pure at heart "try to be pure at heart". An advise that is also biblical and repeated in many of its psalms, "Surely God is to Israel, to those that are pure at heart!" (73:1) "He who has clean hands and a pure heart. Who has not lifted up his soul to falsehood. And has not sworn deceitfully." (24:4). Also in the sermon on the mount, keenly compared to Dylan's speech, there is one verse that blesses those that are pure at heart, for they will see God. According to what the Minnesotan singer sang in "Watered-Down Love", "love that's pure, it don't make no false claims". Again all love issue ends up revealing a biblical connection afterward, as "In the Summertime" reveals.

It all proved to be a good way to introduce "Every Grain Of Sand", the expected comeback of his solo harmonica and his intimate solitary ideas about confession, experience and Blakean referents, "I am hanging in the balance of the reality of man"

William Blake wrote in his longest prophetic work, *Jerusalem: The Emanation of the Giant Albion* (p. 194):

What shall I do! what could I do, if I could find these Criminals  
 I could not dare to take vengeance; for all things are so constructed  
 And builded by the Divine hand, that the sinner shall always escape,  
 And he who takes vengeance alone is the criminal of Providence;  
 If I should dare to lay my finger on a grain of sand  
 In way of vengeance; I punish the already punished: O whom  
 Should I pity if I pity not the sinner who is gone astray!  
 (Blake, 1804)

Resembling this poem the song declares itself to be an outcry directed to the individual self and his questions about the nature of the divinity, who controls the degree of punishment that no men's laws could ever determine.

After such declaration of independence, we receive something back which have also been forgotten. We have another outlaw figure playing the leading role in the protest song "Lenny Bruce". Like other claimed outlaws before he didn't deserve to die

because he didn't commit any crime. Then, why is he an outlaw? What is it about people living on the verge of admissible behaviour attract Bob Dylan so much? Lenny Bruce was not a conventional outlaw, to tell the truth, he miscalculated humor because he was a popular comedian who questioned the limits of morals and respectable behaviour. Up to a certain point in his career, in 1961, he was imprisoned for obscenity and his career in Britain and Australia was finished. He might have personified the values of authenticity Dylan was aiming at, the fact is his death was not a matter of humor and Dylan railed against it, "Maybe he had some problems, maybe some things he couldn't work out. But he sure was funny and he sure told the truth and he knew what he was talkin' about" The author defends all these coherent individuals who are in charge of their own lives and who always defended defending those whom are able to masters his own rules and world perspective.

During the song, as in most of his songs around that time, dominates the dichotomy between the author or the song's leading voice, who is able to perceive real and unique symptoms of uniqueness in his society and the rest of the people. We, the others, are not so capable of discerning such things, "they stamped him and they labeled him like they do with pants and shirts". Additionally, there is in this character, as in most outlaws, the repeated value of truthiness that makes everything they did real and concrete. That is what happened with the kind love affairs revealed in the songs "Watered-Down Love" and "The Groom's Still Waiting At The Altar".

The self is overtly expressed in Dylan's verses too and the tone is alike, only he pledges for a heavenly answer while "toiling in the danger and the morals of despair".

Oh, the flowers of indulgence and the weeds of yesteryear  
Like criminals, they have choked the breath of conscience and good cheer  
The sun beat down upon the steps of time to light the way  
To ease the pain of idleness and the memory of decay  
(Dylan, "Every Grain of Sand")

Perhaps he is not only in search of spiritual support, rather an ideal of authenticity, which, according to Charles Taylor's book *The Ethics of Authenticity* (1991: 81), "requires that we discover and articulate our own identity". We have ample evidence of how expertly Dylan articulated the different topics around the problems of building your own identity. This is evident both in his original recordings and in the songs that would not get released until the bootleg compilations.

In 1991, ten years after *Shot Of Love*, Dylan would repeat a similar structure to “Every Grain of Sand” in other of his song –this time explicitly directed to God– as he would recall once more the imaginary of William Blake:

You were glowing in the sun while being peaceably calm  
While orphans of man danced to the beat of the palm  
Your eyes were on fire, your feet were of brass  
In the world, you had made they made you an outcast  
(Dylan, “You Changed My Life”)

Like William Blake, Bob Dylan always composes with a certain direction or addressee. The same way Blake named each part of the piece according to its addressee (to the public, to the Jews, to the deists, to the Christians), so was Dylan trying to do in his songs, to reach out someone. In these respects, during his religious period, he was trying to reach somebody who could share a natural inclination for such spiritual matters, even if that involved getting a new audience.

The topic of identity is intimately connected to this idea and if religious matters are any use, that is to underline Dylan's unattainable nature,

You can laugh at salvation, you can play Olympic games  
You think that when you rest at last you'll go back from where you came  
But you've picked up quite a story and you've changed since the womb  
What happened to the real you, you've been captured but by whom?  
(Dylan, “Property of Jesus”)

His use of religion as the main topic infuriated his audience and most people that followed him in 1981 expressed their rejection of Dylan's late doctrines, celebrating analogously his slow transition to secularity. As stated by Christopher Connelly in his 1983 review of the album for *Rolling Stone* magazine, “(...) Dylan's audience did not take kindly to hearing their hero parroting beliefs that many of them had already rejected” This epoch of religious spirituality lasted a couple of years after 1978, when – as the author described– he received “a vision and a feeling”.<sup>65</sup>—An album exceptionally produced and a promotional campaign supported by videos for his singles, *Infidels* meant the definitive Bob Dylan comeback giving a new impetus to his career.

Like the split image of the mirror, Dylan divides himself in "I And I" to be able to comprehend his true reality and his true capacity to be a liar, to get transformed in many other myths, like the "Jokerman". He is depicted as a messiah character built from

frequently revisited myths like the outlaw hero. Thus, Dylan puts in the hands of such characters the description of his ideal of individualism. Most of these characters are in relation to people who are outsiders and were previously alienated by their societies. As the critic and scholar David Jaffe observed before, Dylan contains multitudes of this kind of characters. In this albums he retakes some of them adding up some theology to it, "you're a man of the mountains, you can walk on the clouds" ("Jokerman") The character in "License To Kill" has God-like ambitions too and rages against spirituality trusting only empirical evidence, "All he believes are his eyes and his eyes, they just tell him lies" In this line the listener can easily asses how close the word "eye" is to "I" making of the self as Stephen Scobie suggested (2004) a constant wordplay in his work. Explicitly, a referent of the multiple I's the individual can reunite with his creative protean qualities. This creativity is followed by an excursion into dreamlike spaces whose characters and themes aren't so easily expected. See "Neighbourhood Bully" and "Union Sundown", where rock and roll resuscitates while boding freedom chants like never before, "In bed with anybody, under no one's command, he's the neighborhood bully".

Of course there is some underlying narcissism and a questioning of will power in our modern society, an aspect that reveals the worst fear of the ethics of authenticity (according to Charles Taylor, 1991), "Now he worships at an altar of a stagnant pad and when he sees his reflection, he's fulfilled." All is there to concretize the problem of world's mighty abuses, "Democracy don't rule the world, you'd better get that in your head. This world is ruled by violence, but I guess that's better left unsaid" ("Union Sundown") While his previous album dealt with Christ this one seems to be illustrating the sort of anti-Christian attitudes that men can have. "I hear that sometimes Satan come as a man of peace" ("Man Of Peace").

In 1983 there is a short presence of love balladry in "Don't Fall Apart On Me Tonight". Harmonica and country visions take us away from the ultimate attacks to irreverent minds while we relax in lovers' exchanges that promise there is nothing to reveal, "I ain't too good at conversation girl so you might not know exactly how I feel".

Finally, one of his most salient songs belonging to this era of inspiration is "Blind Willie McTell" a sudden turn to his origins after his current extensive career. It was recorded the 5 of May 1983 in New York, at The Power Station or Studio A where he recorded most of his albums for Columbia Records. For unknown reasons both producers, Bob Dylan and Mark Knopfler, decided to leave this song out of the album.

The set box named *The Bootleg Series Volumes 1-3: Rare And Unreleased* published the outtake in 1991 and it did it as if it was the most precious gem, accompanied by the applauds of critics, scholars and fans of the artist. Everybody wondered, why this song could ever be rejected initially? And if so, why is it so important now from a critic point of view? Well if we attended only to the lyrical content, the beauty of its images contrasts with a dreamy revision of the past miseries the black population of America went through. It touches on racism, colonization and the Secession wars. It explicitly refers to this historic event when the voice, who is walking through the land, refers, "I travelled through East Texas where many martyrs fell". The Civil War that occurred in the period between 1861-1865 started when seven southern states of the US territory, which practiced slavery, declared their secession from the recently independent territory of the USA and formed the Confederate states. Those four years of combat resulted in at least 750.000 deaths and other disasters. Finally, the Confederacy collapsed and slavery was abolished but slaves had to wait a long time until they got their freedom and among them, blues singers –like owls– only had the stars above the barren trees as their audience yet.

Dylan's sorrow over their history is even more urgent when he implies natural beauty isn't comparable to McTell's talent, "Them charcoal gypsy maidens can strut their feathers well, but nobody can sing the blues like Blind Willie McTell". It seems really a tragedy that McTell or other bluesmen had to suffer such historical circumstances. The singer continues numbering things of the past as if he was walking through a bygone scenery: the plantations, the cracking of the whips, the ghosts of slavery ships all are signs of slavery practices. The latter refers to naval and industrial power as well. The smell of sweet magnolia, being "magnolia" a nickname to refer to river Mississippi, is a beautiful image to homage his origins and those of the blues territory encircled by the waters of that river, as well as mentioning its important role in the mentioned war<sup>66</sup>.

His denunciation of racial abuse is paralleled to McTell's personal biography as the singer was given a terrible beaten that put an end to his life due to brain hemorrhages, "I can hear them rebels yell".

Finally, the song echoes the idea that some men, misled by mirages of power, reach a certain God-like ambition and start determining each individual life course, like the course of the Mississippi river. McTell wasn't anonymous, though. Here the singer

"writes ev'rthing's been returned which was owed" back to make explicit references to McTell's and blues history.

At the same time, this song alludes to other blues songs references, like "St. James Infirmary Blues" sometimes known as the "Gambler Blues" an anonymous composition depicting once more the major myth in Dylan's compositions, the outlaw man. The reference to this song is doubly confirmed when the voice of the song, the rambler, recalls what surrounds him at the present moment, "I'm gazing at the window of the St. James hotel".

The Dylan-Knopfler duet reached their peak in this song. With Knopfler on acoustic guitar and Dylan on piano and vocals, it could not be more appropriately done, since these are the most salient instruments. In fact, Dylan's hair-raising voice gives one of its widest ranges. It goes from the mysterious low voice tone, so necessary for telling the story, to the increasing volume and pitch at the moment of the refrain when Dylan severely recapitulates that "no one can sing the blues like Blind Willie McTell".

This song would have probably meant the greatest discovery of Dylan's unpublished music since *The Basement Tapes* (1975) as it obviously showed how his talent perdures.

What followed the recording sessions of *Infidels* was the preparation for his next album, *Empire Burlesque* (1985), appealing to more modern tastes whilst using some characteristics of the mainstream 80s sound. Dylan, so annoyed with technology, includes a powerful presence of music synthesizers bringing a radically new sound to his music. Truth is, there are just a few gems in this album, covered by contemporary decorations, but then, these few ones have become really important songs.

Of all these remarkable tracks, I would like to point to "Seeing The Real You At Last", because it articulates one of the pivotal themes of his music, the overcoming hardships a man has to endure to become a real authentic being. It also refers to that permanent anxiety of his audience towards seeing the real him at last, an enigma echoed in this research too. Largely, this song could be a conversation with himself, with his mirror reflection while he plays with the double role once more, revisiting the figure of the *doppelgänger*. Whether it is through his self-annihilation, in order to reach mystical completion during his catholic period, or through self-assertion, the singer is constantly analyzing another the "You/ I" subjects in order to understand the meaning of his life, "Well, I sailed through the storm, strapped to the mast, but the time has come and I'm seeing the real you at last". These questions raise a certain complex anxieties in the

audience as well, who never stopped questioning him about who is he in reality or how come his attributes have always been so intricate.

Another key song in relation to authenticity in this album is "Trust Yourself" that explains how only you, "know the way that will prove true in the end". As its ironic title announces, he uses this song as a plea for mistrusting his own words again, "Don't trust me to show you the truth (...) And look not for answers where no answers can be found".

In "Tight Connection To Your Heart (Has Anyone See My Love)" we have a spectacular combination of vocal and instrumental rock love song. Women voices and his own voice recuperate their force for finding out what was left of his lover. It is not a matter of having got physically lost, but of an identity problematic again. It could be read as if someone had discovered his unpronounceable secret or as if the lover we're chasing after, had another kind of answer for us. We always move in the verge of disinterring promises in this album. The only painful facts exhibited can be found in "Clean Cut Kid", whereas more metaphysical questions linger here and there in its refrains, "I had so much left to do, I had so little time to fail" ("I'll Remember You") or "who are you that I should have to lie?" ("When The Night Comes Falling From The Sky"). The utmost song around these issues is "Dark Eyes" (again, possibly interpreted as dark I's) where he comes back to bare singing and the acoustic sound which directly make the text more reliable. Yet his digressions come to be as elusive as, "I live in another world where life and death are memorized". Apocalyptic juxtaposed scenes are succinctly described by the voice who seems to be immersed in a dreamy enterprise, one in which the nature of things shows is true appearance, "I feel nothing for their game where beauty goes unrecognized, all I feel is heat and flame and all I see is dark eyes." Fear continues to be there and things are still wrecked in 1985.

A year later, his album *Knocked Out Loaded* was launched. Reviews detected a weaker content except for his on-going collaboration with Mark Knopfler and the playwright Sam Shepard who also accompanied him during the Rolling Thunder Tour. That experience got chronicled in his book *The Rolling Thunder Logbook* (2010). This time Shepard co-writes the song titled "Brownsville Girl" in the manner of another of his road-movie scripts, like *Paris, Texas* (1984) where direct speech unveils the subconscious meanderings throughout the voice's destination. A destination more psychical than physical, towards the authentic behaviour of permanent role models, like honest outlaws and ramblin' men portrayed by men such as Gregory Peck about whom

he says in the lyrics, "it was the best acting I saw anybody do". Note that reaching authenticity is a moral purpose and such role models are simpler ways of reaching the objective.

The overall references of the album, included this song, belong to western fiction. From the cover of the album to the title, there is a whole new world built upon the seed of pioneer stories where the leading voice "is knocked out and loaded in the naked night, caught between heaven and hell" ("Under Your Spell") Metaphors invade the solipsism of the rambling man, "the memory of you keeps callin' after me like a rolling train" in which he echoes many decisive obsessions posted before, for example in "Visions Of Johanna". There is a threesome relationship like the one operating in "Tangled Up In Blue" and "Desolation Row" as well, only here the dark or prophetic image of the feminine anima is felt more than ever, "Now she ain't you, but she's here and she's got that dark rhythm in her soul." The singing style is plain and almost spoken, like during his first talkin' blues songs. The experimentation eliminates the chorus that is only repeated three times for a duration of more than eleven minutes. There are unquestionable elements of cinema fusing with the lyrics and also meta fictional references to interpreting a role, "(...) why I was in it or what part I was supposed to play" leading the listener to habitual digressions around identity.

More ex-lover relationships are reflected in the songs "Drifting Too Far From Shore", "Maybe Someday" and "Under Your Spell", where the metaphors occult other true representation of reality. These topics combine with a required space for denunciation, only this time is a bit surprising because Dylan interprets a song by Kris Kristofferson around the main peace leaders of contemporary history and how someone had to kill them before they completed their objectives. Here the structure of dialogue is conveniently chosen again with the backup singers echoing his main statements.

The dried inspiration governing this album continued with the versions he included in *Down In The Groove* and his tour with Grateful Dead, the rock band, both in 1988. The only remarkable thing is that from now on, the so-called Never-Ending Tour would carry the artist and his different backing bands to give more than 100 shows every year. Also, the bad spell was about to be broken, like everything else is broken, with his next studio album *Oh Mercy!* (1989), produced by the excellent Canadian musician and producer Daniel Lanois who had previously won his professional prestige working with Brian Eno and U2. Thanks to that and Dylan's superior lyrics this historic album has become the swift point that erased all the audience previous antipathy. The

album starts with anaphoric relations through the verse of songs like "Political World" and "Everything Is Broken", in which the state of modern society is judged again. The former song's video clip displays a list of dishonorable things in our culture because he's singing his lines to an apparent opulent and wealthy group of people celebrating a party. There are many demurring things in this world, "a political world, where courage is a thing of the past". In "Everything Is Broken" there is a possible reference to the poetic process, as seen in the passage where he sings, "broken words never meant to be spoken". It is obvious that his words weren't made to be spoken because they were meant to be sang, the same way traditional poetry was meant to be read.

Again, as permanently suggested by the American artist, there is an excess of empiricism and a lack of mysticism in the world, "We live in a political world, the one we can see and can feel. But there's no one to check, it's a stacked deck. We all know for sure that is real" ("Political World") Signs of power and ambition are everywhere, like when he interprets the track "Disease Of Conceit": the idea, "comes right down the highway, straight down the line, rips into your senses, through your body and your mind." If it weren't for his rasping voice, his adult voice, these messages, more calmed and sceptical than ever, the lyrics would never have the same effect. Just the opposite kind of worldview from his poetic visions in "Where Teardrops Fall", including the allusions to "the cuttin' of fences, to sharpen the senses". Plain and simply delivered, his message is quite clear: poetry, like religion, rely both on a different apprehension of reality.

"Ring Them Bells" gives the album that current perspective while anaphora serves him to pray for the possibility of a better future for humanity, especially now that "they're breaking down the distance between good and bad." Here "the wheel and the plow" might refer to Rimbaud's "hand that ploughs" in his *Season In Hell* (2011). Biblical images, like Rimbaud's composition, appear here and there ("Man In The Long Black Coat") along with hieroglyphs (masks, dust, sticks in the throat) and the mysterious atmosphere that his voice emphasizes, closer to whispering than singing. In the increasing acts of introversion that whispering entails to music, there is still another step towards intimacy and that is to talk aloud about your silenced suffering thoughts about her and the end of your relationships, like he expresses in "Most Of The Time". Probably the most ironic song in his whole discography, "Most Of The Time" contains, once again, a dialogical situation, this time –I would rather say– reflective as if we had entered his mind. There is a lot to say about dishonesty in this song. There is an implicit

and uncovered honesty after this overtly dishonest discourse. The voice's stand seems to be wrong. He believes words can lie and he does not stop suggesting how poorly he misses her, whereas language is treacherous and contrary to that thought and so, his weaknesses are being revealed more and more. Such deliberations show his insincerity towards himself, the leading type of human falsehood, according to Dan Ariely's *The (honest) truth about dishonesty: how we lie to everyone - especially ourselves* (2012). Expressions of modality and doubt come and go during his playing: "Most of the time", "I don't even ...", "I can..." Even as he plays music, he is also playing with the audience and showing his ability to disguise a figurative meaning under the shadow of the literality. He says, "I don't cheat on myself, I don't run and hide. Hide from the feelings that are buried inside", when he means just the opposite. He cheats on himself and tries to cheat on us, despite the fact that we discover something else is hiding between irony and elusiveness. We find he is hurt yet and that he cannot overcome his feelings for her. These kind of reflective monologs about the nature of his feelings are everywhere on the album. Even if more preliminary songs seem to have a centrifugal force driving music towards social issues, the moment we hear "Most Of The Time" the whole LP enters a divergent motion, one more centripetal, in which the leading questions concern the self. I say questions and their titles explicitly show what I mean, "What Good Am I?" and "What Was It You Wanted". The first carries on the idea of responsibility and moral behaviour as dictated by society. It questions the validity of being able to behave under one's own prescriptions, but then he asks for probation to an anonymous collective of beings that are part of this society. It is similar to the image of the rebel boy that faces his parents and tries to anticipate their reaction by putting his intentions in question, "Could I do this? Should I do that?" It all proves that, to a certain extent, personal decisions must be questioned in the eyes of other's feelings by procuring not to hurt anybody only for the sake of my actions. His strategic use of rhetorical questions resembles "Blowin' In The Wind" in that these really make the listener formulate them in his own mind. The curious thing is that in predicting our answers, the song becomes what it probably does not want to become: doctrinaire. Mind that albeit the kind of reprehensible situations he mentions – "If I shut myself off so I can't hear you cry" – the question's formula is reversed and intentionally indirect. There are also remarkable intents of the singer for positioning his character at the same level of everyone, with the statement, "I'm like the rest".<sup>67</sup>

Dylan's voice turns somber in "What Was It You Wanted" a whole song devoted to assessing communicative understanding in a unidirectional dialogue. The expressions "could you say it again?", "you got my attention", "would you remind me again", are only some that the artist imitations of real language usage to decorate or emphasize song's loquacious power. Here, instead, he is not so loquacious and the song only depicts a splendid use of rhyme and rhythm with lots of rhetoric and multiple interpretations, but no concrete messages. Even now, it seems that, generally, the songs are inquiring us to act first, better than examining our mind too much, "What was it you wanted, Do I have it here in my hand?" He could also be referring to the loads of questions people usually threw at him for interpretation.

In "Shooting Star" his use of prosodic meaning dominates the lyrics. That /I/ flows over the night of nostalgia and also serves as an elegant farewell closing in an album of such unexpected renovation. The shooting star makes its trajectory while Dylan's epiphany takes us to a past relationship or to better times with the purpose of making a promise, "It's the last temptation, the last account, the last time you might hear the sermon on the mount" as if referring to his previous narrow-mindedness. The metaphor is established between shooting stars and individual trajectories as they meet in the course of our lifetime with others, "you were trying to break into another world". His last exclamation of compassion coincided with the previous promise and listeners expected another discourse, different from the type he used during his Christian recession.

The beginning of the decade brought a new conscience to popular American music. Now the amalgam of styles grew to an incredible extent and the impact of non-followers of the mainstream culture, like Dylan –with his differentiated style– hearten other artists to follow their own rules and to free themselves from the hands of the industry. That is how a new alternative movement began and the introduction of new sounds, like electro-pop, grunge, post-punk leaders from the mid-80s making their aesthetics over. A new tendency towards disturbing sounds or noisy music paralleled the nihilism of the times, converting ugliness into the new interest. This is the moment when *Under The Red Sky*, Dylan's following album, was published. However, it would always be at the shade of *Oh Mercy*. This album has been one of the most polemically reviewed. It has been regarded to be the artist's transition from *Oh Mercy*'s great achievement to his most acclaimed works published after the official bootleg compilations and the two albums of covered material: *Good As I Been To You* (1992)

and *World Gone Wrong* (1993). I am referring to his trilogy of glory *Time Out Of Mind* (1997), "*Love & Theft*" (2001) and *Modern Times* (2006). But it has also been redeemed by other authors (Paul Nelson, *Musician* and Robert Christgau) Robert Christgau's critic began this way,

This Warner Bros. pseudo throwaway improves on the hushed emotion, weary wisdom, and new-age "maturity" of the Daniel Lanois-produced *Oh Mercy* even if the lyrics are sloppier--the anomaly is what Lanois calls *Oh Mercy's* "focused" writing. Aiming frankly for the evocative, the fabulistic, the biblical, Dylan exploits narrative metaphor as an adaptive mechanism that allows him to inhabit a "mature" pessimism he knows isn't the meaning of life.

During the album, the listener feels increasingly familiarized with the images and tones of his new mature voice, but at the same time, his predicting attitude grows to an expert level, regarding what the predictable tropes and parables the singer are reusing. For example, in his second track, named like the album, there is a casual storytelling accompanied by an optimum backing band –accordion included– in which the force of nature poses every creature's experience of the pass of time. Dylan uses his classical storytelling to put it simple and easy to understand. The figure of the lonely bird and the wind are recuperated as main symbols of his work. Both allude time's almost imperceptible speed and the presence of man against its evidence in nature. The same kind of feel lives in "Born In Time", except here he adds some romantic touch and announces a utopia where he will finally uncover himself, "In the hills of destiny, in the foggy web of destiny, you can have what's left of me. When we were born in time". Simplicity and naiveté remind me of children's songs and nursery rhymes all through *Under The Red Sky*. He explicitly refers to a young girl and tries to guide her to her future events, "Someday girl, everything for you is gonna be new".

The previous track's nonsensical repetition, "Wiggle, Wiggle", makes it stand out on the album, but "Wiggle Wiggle" was risible, so it was his depiction of numerology's excellence in "2X2". The questions starting with "How many..." remind us of his big hit "Blowin' In The Wind". These resemble each other in their approximation to unattainable answers related with our means to measure everything, pretending to give figures to emotions, "How many tomorrows have they given away?" Numbers and enumerations are connected through the album. For example, in the prolonged enumeration of things God supposedly knows ("God Knows"). The more you insist on an idea, the easier the song gets fixed to our minds and so, doctrinarian

statements such as these. Dylan's alliteration is the confirmation of his trust in a possible conquest of his afterlife. A conquest after which he should walk a million miles by candlelight. Finally, how could an album be terminated without its verified song about an outlaw? This song is "Handy Dandy" and, albeit the sweetness equated with criminality, "he got a stick in his hand and a pocket full of money".

There is a seven-year separation between Dylan's own creations at the start of the decade and his next ones. In 1992 and 1993 only two cover-versions albums were released, the special edition of bootlegs the label Columbia was putting at our disposal. These albums were titled *Good As I Been To You* and *World Gone Wrong*. With the former title, Dylan could possibly have referred to all traditional music gifts the album was putting forward, but it could also be an indirect appeal for patience to his audience and critics who are always expecting so much of him. He seems to be making a pre-apology supported in defending his quality in the past. However, in *World Gone Wrong* there is an evident assonance from which we can infer something. Perhaps it has a negative drive and its acronyms (WW) mean World War, perhaps it anticipates some of the topics treated in the album, like the parade of outlaw figures ("Jack-A-Roe", "Love Henry", "Stack A Lee", "Lone Pilgrim", ) or it could be just pointing to the motif of his homonymous song in which his arrangements over a traditional song give the listener a fatalist point of view of the world that has him overwhelmed, another 'state of the union' songs, as Jann Wenner of *Rolling Stones* called them.

Then, why is it love the main theme? Because love and only love –like Neil Young's song prays– is responsible for one's desperate feelings, "If I didn't leave you I would have to kill you dead." The voice of the singer feels corrupted, like old skin it got creased enough after suffering the damages of living. However, it is the most genuine decision he made in the last decades. It separated his works in an unofficial and natural way regarding that this world of us, like his voice, had gone extraordinarily wrong. Obviously, his new traditional facet wouldn't guarantee his success in front of the critics, but it won him several Grammy prize recognitions among others.

In my opinion, the following albums, starting with **Time Out Of Mind** (1997), constitute the second top event of his whole musical career after 1964 and it is my pleasure to examine all of them. The first one became a firm recommendation not to give up in his attempts to reach his own artistic standards while bringing another musical proposal. Those previous "times" not "time" should and should not be forgotten, in as much as both periods share equal excellence in terms of singing and

songwriting. Indeed, it was a curious title announcing one its main topics, the demented time-awareness. Multiple songs in the past were somewhat related to this theme –what artistic work isn't intensely related to the time issues?–, but this is the final corollary. Songs like “Tryin’ To Get To Heaven”, “Till I Fell In Love With You”, “Not Dark Yet”, “Cold Iron Bound” or “Highlands” show the importance of this topic where the subject, like in most existentialist thought and fiction, enunciates the importance of time awareness for reaching his own individuation. Like his, the protagonist of *Being and Time* by Martin Heidegger (1962) or *The Sickness Unto Death* by Soren Kierkegaard (2012) reflect upon this ideas too. Parallel to this linguistic aspect, his music has always been a matter of proficient timing, measuring words and music rhythm at the same time. For instance, in "Tryin' To Get To Heaven", time is a resolute component the character has been regarding at since he wants to get to heaven before they close the door, implying that eventually they will close it and no one else will ever get in. "I have been all around the world, boys trying to get to heaven before they close the door". However, his soul is eager to go to heaven and make part of heavenly creatures. This sense of recapitulation is permanent, "Now I feel like I'm coming to the end of the world" ("Til I Fell In Love With You"), along with his love stories, which this time represent a trivial theme in comparison with his own rambling destiny. For example, "Million Miles", as some of his antecedent songs did ("It Ain't Me Babe", "If You Gotta Go, Go Now", etc) recognizes his distance, translatable to timescales, from the lover, "Well, I'm trying to get closer, but I'm still a Million Miles from you" –repeated at the end of every verse. About love "there are no words to be said" ("Standing In The Doorway") Note that someone else is escorting his steps, "I know God is my shield and he won't lead me ashtray", as he sings in "Till I Fell In Love With You". He even speaks directly to the deity as in his past period of Christianity, "I found my world, found my world in you" (Cold Irons Bound").

His use of a plain style concerning composition and recording combines with his straight lyrics in contrast with the previous hermeticism. This album is more invaded by a narrative robustness, as it is stated in “Highlands”, his most epic song in the album. In this song, the eternal Rambler recites anecdotes in free direct style, composing a collage of thoughts and a road map very similar to "Tangled Up In Blue", only here he wants to undermine love affairs for a terrible exchange with an illiterate but beautiful waitress, "She got a pretty face and long white shiny legs". His lonesome itinerary and his musings resemble Don Quixote's, a figure with whom he shares much in common,

who could only understand reality in his individual laws, "some things in life it gets too late to learn". Like the hoary knight-errant, Bob Dylan also mixes fiction and reality until both terms cannot be split up.

The figure of recapitulation is present too in the texts of "Cold Irons Bond" and "Highlands", although with different musical tones. The former initiates with an industrial rock quality, quieted down before it starts. There is a soft and unnoticeable reverb in Dylan's voice that gives it a garage-like touch. His voice appears grave and enigmatic. A new exploit of its maturity gives songs like "Highlands" the country blues feel that dominates every aspect. The most remarkable thing about the last song is how plain his singing is in respect to figures of lyricism and symbolism. There are none of this in a text which is merely devoted to express the most reliable thing possible. In his careful observation of blues myths and laws, Dylan ignites some old –apparently trivial– themes of Delta and Mississippi songsters. He talks about the sense of belonging somewhere, reflecting also about time and space, loneliness and the self in different and seemingly absurd situations, "talking to myself in a monologue". Nevertheless, the most remarkable song on the album is "Not Dark Yet" –also recapitulating life's long way and announcing life's irrevocable truth, that everything terminates. As I said before, the album started with pessimism and it would be maintained all through it, "My sense of humanity has gone down the drain". The profound and dried feel of his voice, something he had worked upon in previous songs, culminates in this song. He masters a bare blues, a kind led by sadness, acrimony, and nostalgia. This nostalgia can be mostly felt at his title "Things Have Changed" which he composed for the soundtrack of *Wonder Boys* (2000), a movie by Curtis Hanson. This was released in 2000, although it wasn't included in *Time Out of Mind*, but in *The Essential Bob Dylan* as an extra track of some featured classics of his extensive works. This song connects his line of work: from that refrain where he announced that "the times they are a-changin'" up until this one, "I used to care, but things have changed" that points to his past commitment and rejects it. He possibly feels weary because it was worthless. However, he does not weep at this cruel reality, rather he accepts it and acts like a judgmental advisor that, albeit secretly, wants to share his revelations. "I've been walking forty miles of bad road / If the Bible it's right, the world will explode".

In this song it is also revealed the possibility that the author might be considering to abandon after his life-long process of individuation. It is all due to his fatalistic point of view, "I've been trying to get as far away from myself as I can / Some

things are too hot to touch / The human mind can only stand so much / You can't win with a losing hand." References to Rimbaud's "Un Saison a L'Enfer" and "The Drunken Boat" (2012) are plain, "Standing on the gallows with my head in a noose / Any minute now I'm expecting it all to break loose." These combine with allusions to Morrison's strangeness and alienation. The sentence "all truth in the world adds up to one big lie" is playing with the subjectivity of beliefs, real and fictional concepts like he always did in name of existentialist belief that everyone must seek for their own truth.

By the second half of the 1960s, existentialism was regarded as one of the philosophical approaches that triggered the last revolutionary rages in history (Krill, 1966: 289). His following album, *Modern Times*, would reveal how existentialism was still a modern worldview and how it still was driving his self-discovery. The evolution of his temperament was parallel to the fall of European music from Eden to Hell as expressed by Wilfred Mellers in his article "God, modality and meaning in some recent works of Bob Dylan" (1981: 145). This fall "from grace to disgrace" was fundamental because without it, "the splendours and miseries of 'modern' 'Faustian' man would have been musically inconceivable". As I was saying above, this aspect is evident in *Modern Times* (2006), where the singer, like most bluesmen and folk-affiliates before him, represents life's "eternal return" which, according to Mellers is "the basic motion of music" and the most philosophical role of repetition in the words of Nietzsche. A fight against Western linear dominance that seeks to understand human existence more "naturally" by freeing it of any religious affectations. I point to this circularity because Dylan seems to be using the symbols and signs of older music times, even if the title seems to contradict this idea. In fact, "modernity" can have different meanings and even if this title "alluded to Charlie Chaplin and perhaps Jean-Paul Sartre, (...) it sounded like the opposite of making it new" (Yaffe, 2011: 101) Rather it recuperated the essence of the intellectual and cultural movement referred to as Modernity that had its major impact on the verge of the twentieth century. In fact, there is a tremendous primitivism invading the bluesy rhythms and occasional syncopation in the manner of 1920s New York night clubs. His first beat on the album comes from a "Thunder on the mountain", a declaration of his love for music. The man is put against nature and he is by himself, surviving thanks to music and searching for some company, "Gonna sleep over there, that's where the music comes from". His hobo characterization serves him again to explore the idea of existence and the significant role of nature over our choices, "Gonna make a lot of money, gonna go up north / I'll plant and I'll harvest what the earth brings

forth" It is the same topics he sings about in "The levee's gonna break" and "When the deal goes down" where the only certainty is that, "we live and die, we don't know why". It recovers the attitude of fortune seekers, among which singers can be counted. I am thinking about Woody Guthrie's autobiography *Bound for Glory* (1983) where an indomitable spirit of adventure dominates his direction, "Now I been here an' I been there / Rambled around most everywhere" (1983: 263). Dylan's songs have always demonstrated the same belief Guthrie declared in his only novel, that we can take as many myths and interesting stories from the reality around us,

If you think of something new to say, if a cyclone comes, or a flood wrecks the country, or a bus loaded with school children freeze to death along the road, if a big ship goes down, and an airplane falls in your neighborhood, an outlaw shoots it out the deputies, or the working people go out to win a war, yes, you'll find a train load of things you can set down and make a song about.  
(Guthrie, 1943: 236)

Indeed, there is one song by Dylan recounting the vicissitudes of a common working man ("Workingman Blues #2") which was Guthrie's preference for.

One of the many different topics Bob Dylan makes a song about is love. Love's presence in this album is specially significant. His almost reciting technique gives it a taste of unplanned declaration, "You are always on my mind / I can't stay away" ("Spirit On The Water" "Beyond The Horizon"). David Yaffe declared that "when that voice is brought down to a near whisper, it sound like it can tell tales from the other side..." (2011: 29) Contradictory feelings appear when all he wants sometimes is to escape from love's hurt, "Why was I born to love you?" ("Someday Baby") while he bawls for her absence ("Nettie Moore"). Also, his old prayers respond to his urge to meet her,

Today I'll stand in faith and raise  
The voice of praise  
The sun is strong, I'm standing in the light  
I wish to God that it were night  
("Nettie Moore", 2006)

With this album, the artist reached number #1 in the top lists of UK and US. That fact made him the oldest man that ever got to such position in the top charts. He produced it under the pseudonym of Jack Frost, putting in question the by-then-

generalized belief that his late successes were due, in part, to Daniel Lanois magnificent production.

After that album, another two non-official albums were released by Columbia Records, the collection *Dylan* (2007) in collaboration with Legacy Records, where there are 51 major themes composed by the artist and another Bootleg Series, Volume 8, was brought out. It was called *Tell Tale Signs- Rare and Unreleased 1989- 2006* and it revealed hidden music secrets previously discarded from the golden mature period of his career. A career that had continued for 36 years at that moment and thus, disserved an explicit allusion like his next big album *Together Trough Life* (2009), where I think the main allusion comes from his union with music.

He seems to be confirming one of the existentialist propositions, life's nihilism, in "Beyond Here Lies Nothing", where love is the most repeated word and existence its main ally. Where even language cannot do anything to prevent the recurrent truth, "nothin' done and nothin' said". Nihilism is permanently there, hidden in secret symbols such as the "nowhere café" in "This Dream Of You". The album's dominant slow-paced rhythm is most felt in "Life is Hard" This languor that his voice accentuates, revisits the traditions of the lonesome traveler and the western canteen, as in "If You Ever Go to Houston", where he indirectly apologizes for not being there. There are harbors and ships, again and of course, the lifelong road theme that characterizes the greedy hero of "Jolene". Most songs revisit the blues tradition but with the raucous tone of his voice it seems it might be coming from a deeper part, at the break of day, down in hell, where that feminine and passionate feeling comes from, "Hell is my wife's hometown"<sup>68</sup>.

It won't be until 2012 that his next compositions were published, under another maritime referent, *Tempest*, a Shakespearian allusion that secretly conveys other connections and his last album as a creator, followed by other cover-version launches: *Shadows In The Night* (2015), which is based on Sinatra's interpretations and the last release, *Fallen Angels* (2016), also a reinterpretation of classic themes. It seems such a versioning tendency could mean the end of his creativity and his will to compose, thus *Tempest* should be regarded as his ultimate piece of art, even if the quality of its songs is not always as high-leveled as they used to be.

*Tempest* seems like the perfect excuse to praise his late ability to summarize and include all typically American sounds in his albums. It begins with a frontier-ballad, ("Duquesne Whistle") that brings back the oracular power that the sighting and hearing of the train maintains. The atmosphere encourages the appearance of another great

character, the gambler, always described as an astute trickster. Music is built on many past forms and mysticism, providing a pacific encounter between his religious vein and his post-rock style. Both the title and its homonymous song recall sailing topics and historical facts brought to the front with the Titanic's story, which he gives a sense of premonition through the voice of the female narrator. The event is put in relation to Dante's inferno, or the "underworld", and Shakespeare's most intriguing play, under the same name, in which the characters, headed by Prospero, are shipwrecked into a mysterious new land, "the ship was going under, the universe was opened wide". Indeed, the only repeated element of the lyric content, that, like the music pattern, continues all the song's duration, is the prophecy itself. This is not the only song devoted to historical remembrance, "Early Roman Kings" gives a diverse theme to a blues song, namely Muddy Waters' "I'm a man" as if he was establishing a comparison between bluesmen and Romans. At least that is what the listener can interpret from such explicit correlative,

One day  
You will ask for me  
There'll be no one else  
Bring down my fiddle  
Tune up my strings  
I'm gonna break it wide open  
Like the early Roman kings.  
(“Early Roman Kings”, 2012)

One who is said to be remembered (Hermes, 2012) in the song “Roll On John” is John Lennon, dealing with the moment he found the singer had been murdered.<sup>69</sup>— This unparalleled rendition of death is triply confirmed in “Tin Angel”, an epic drama. This song makes the usual ground-breaking mention of existentialist elements like time, death, and life’s nihilism including them all in a popular music atmosphere.

From that moment on, the artist has published three revealing bootlegs (Vol. 10 and 11 and 12), the *30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Concert Celebration* (2014) and his latest albums *Shadows in the Night* (2015) and *Fallen Angels* (2016) that do not include any original song but depict good arrangements of old classics that Sinatra interpreted too.

Thus, here it finishes the journey through his works as opposed to his performances, where there must be someone who is simultaneously receiving the language, (Godlovitch, 1998). All these records would contribute to offer the desired image of Bob Dylan, as opposed to his performances, which are discussed in the next

point, that reflect his ideal image in the convex mirror (Ashbery and Parmigianino), as much as these would not always resemble the recordings. They would try to surprise the audience and their expectations.

**A SONG IS SOMETHING THAT WALKS BY ITSELF. THE IMPORTANCE  
OF THE PERFORMANCE AND THE ROLE OF AUTHENTICITY**

But now, Lawd God, let my poor voice be heard

—Bob Dylan, *Let Me Die In My Footsteps*

## 2.1. Bob Dylan's Performances

Even if the translation of sound events into words makes it sacrifice part of its essence, as Charles Bernstein made clear, any interdisciplinary study must strive to include a commentary on the performance dimension and its implication in his work. The biggest challenge is to summarize all of his performances into one big theory or to analyze the main coincidences in his inaccessible works. The only documents that record in detail any lost performance are the reviews and chronicles of several other authors, followers, critics, who wrote not just about the technical details but to a certain extent tried to heighten a transcription of emotions into words.

On the one hand, this study considers the poetic process as a preliminary step to the music performance. It must be regarded that each song needs to be rendered to be made a definitive artistic product and who better than the artist himself to introduce the kind of vicissitudes he has to face in order to turn into performance everything he has previously written:

The writing part is a very lonely experience, but there's strength in that loneliness. But I'm a performer too, and that's an outward thing. One is the opposite of the other, and it makes me crazy sometimes because I can't write with the energy that I perform with. I can't perform off the energy that I write with. There just has to be time for both (Dylan, 2011<sup>70</sup>)

The analysis of a music performance is hard to accomplish for various reasons regarding their fugacity, their immateriality, and their changefulness. To look for the signification of certain units in action, in motion, calls for an eyewitness whose experience and knowledge allows him describing as best as possible what he or she perceived in a few seconds. Some theorists have considered music as something really difficult to verbalize in speech, even though many other writers and music critics have already accomplished verbal descriptions of many of the signs and emotions involved (Muir, 2013; Marcus, 2010; Shelton, 2011; Epstein, 2011; etc.) Among the inherent qualities that make performances a complex objective of analysis is its double reality. Nicholas Cook affirms in his journal article that “music can be understood as both process and product, but it is the relationship between the two that defines ‘performance’ in the western ‘art’ tradition.” (2001) As is often the case, when people witness one of his performances, songs construct a memory of that specific artist, a moment when we interpret all those external and apparently non-related elements that

acted synchronically within the context of the show. In other words, the idea of the artist on stage immediately precedes other less important evocations, such is the importance of the live show. This happens because it puts together the vision of the artist and his audience and after all, we shared that moment and it became a part of our lives (Cook, 2003; Frith, 2003). However to recover all those elements from the patient public is a hard task, one which resembles the Freudian unconscious as T. J. Clark affirmed once (1973<sup>71</sup>).

As Alex Ross (2010) explained, Dylan's legacy is the sum of all those concerts offered across the past decades and the cultural indebtedness they reflect. Agreeing to this idea, this study would like to count on the performing dimension of his music and comment on its contribution to the overall understanding of his works. I regard the field of Performance Studies, started with the publication of one of its founders Richard Schechner's *Performances Studies: An Introduction* (2002), as a swift "comparable to the breaking away of theatre studies from literary studies that took place during the last generation, the flavor of which is conveyed by the dance and theatre theorist Nick Kaye's characterization of performance as a 'primary postmodern mode'" (Cook, 2003: 255).

Addressed as interdisciplinary or as a discipline without borders (Harding, 2004), performance studies can be approached from two main categories: the cultural and the artistic. The former has more to do with socially involved situations, in which case music live shows have to be included. It establishes a communicative relation between its participants and cultural values are always displayed and determinant for every assistant's conclusions. The artistic performance deals with the value that specific performance has from the standpoint of art. Here it is not so indispensable the audience response and this kind of performances may constitute an artist's works.

However, subsequently, some music theorists and semioticians (Philip Tagg, 2013; Godlovitch, 1998) have agreed that songs' have to take place in front of an audience in order to be considered performances. I would rather say that if Dylan's performances on stage, in front of an audience, include the artistic and the cultural, at least the one that was not witnessed by his audience can be taken just as artistic performances. Let's number here all his recording sessions, even those he never meant to release, like *The Basement Tapes*. The main problem for reviewing his live shows and determine all those aspects that were interestingly repeated or whose repetition was avoided is that Dylan's amount of data in this respect is almost impossible to calculate

or to approach. Indeed, his touring activity is so incessant that his last tour is widely known as the Never Ending Tour. If we counted on his concerts, live shows, his TV appearances and festival attendances, it could probably make of one of the vastest corpuses ever. On top of that, most of this corpus data have not even been recorded or translated into words and so, how can any research access all those past experiences and infer any significant elements in his practice?

Once the spectator is allowed to witness one of these shows, it is still impossible to objectively include in the analysis all the elements that come into play and their effect on the audience. Finally, I wonder if it still would be possible to access the total meaning of the object of study?

Apart from the fact that some of those performances were recorded either professionally or amateurishly, also some of these attendees have written great articles and chronicles about Bob Dylan's work on stage. These reviews have also served as unique examples on the translation of the aesthetic experience into words. Regarding all those available texts and following a semiotic approach for the analysis of music performance (Tagg, *Music Meanings*, 2004), this study wants to describe the conspicuous features of Dylan's performances, verifying as well as regarding at any coincidences in important written extracts. All in the firm belief that, despite the fact that he has always tried to escape a stable ritual or pattern, he has a traceable performativity that is very important to understand the depth of his aesthetic accomplishment. During the last 30 decades, Dylan has showed a tendency towards segregating the community of his listeners, attending to the fact that,

The shift from ritual to aesthetic performance occurs when a participating community fragments into occasional, paying customers. The move from aesthetic performance to ritual happens when an audience of individuals is transformed into a community. The tendency to move in both these directions are present in all performances. (Shechner, 2013: 81)

While moving in both directions too, Bob Dylan seems to be more worried now about raising people's individual consciousness about what's that sound, what are these messages trying to tell me. That is the reason why apart from getting all data from videos and sound records, I also make use of written stories and music reviews that give the individual impression of the critic, the sovereign molder of good taste.

The first question is, what does a song need in order to start being considered a great performance? Well, according to the philosophical study *Music as Performance*

(1998) by Stan Godlovitch, it has to be certainly directed to an audience. In comparison to his other works, including official and non-official recordings, performances need to address someone. The same as in any communicative exchange, these are especially intended to make an effect or produce a response in the audience. As Godlovitch's essay explains, the musical object of study can be examined in two ways: on one side considering the artist's works and on the other, his performances. For example, if we consider that premise, that "an audience which is present at the moment of its action" makes it a real performance, as Godlovitch explains (1998), then *The Basement Tapes*, that vehement tribute to field recording sessions accomplished by Garth Hudson, a member of The Band, cannot be taken as a real performance. They were recorded while playing in the basement of a Woodstock rented house named "pink house" after its outside appearance. Members of The Band and Bob Dylan were completely by themselves and there was no other attendance. Also, these songs weren't meant to be recorded as their players declare. They "were rehearsals and experiments, private play among friends" (Lethem, 2009: 161) That is what makes them special, even if theoretically these recordings would only be part of Bob Dylan's works, but not of his performances. Greil Marcus wrote about what the reception of those illegitimate recordings meant to him,

In 1967, in the basement of Big Pink, this event was in the air, the peculiar air of that particular room, as history's dare to the pioneer, the Puritan's dare to the future. The past hadn't claimed the future, but the past was alive with temptation and portent, a kingdom anyone could rule.  
(Marcus, 2011: 67)

He even evoked the framed space as an open theatre that reunited the past and the present music of America's culture. There can be no doubts about Dylan's efforts to braking the rules of a perfect record result. In the studio all the hypothesis and commentaries are mainly directed to the artists' creativity, his rendering of the song, the production behind it, etc. However, in performances, where the relation is bidirectional, the study can also count on the listener's understanding and overall impression, which is what many music critics and aficionados have done over the years and what this paper will rely on. The main problem in dealing with individual impressions is that they can be very changing and dependent on external factors and cultural signs. This is explained by Philip Tagg, the semiotician, who says, "musical meaning is never created by the

sounds on their own. They always exist in a syntactic, semantic and socioculturally pragmatic context upon which their semiosis depends." (2013: 346)

Some other facts to be considered for the diegesis is that the listener privileged access to the message is through Bob Dylan's singing. Being the composer and ultimate interpreter of the song brings some special significance to this act of reception as opposed to other artistic fields. Although his works have been versioned by the multitude of other artists, the moment he sings his compositions the overall message changes in favor of a more direct and reliable point of view. This phenomenon constitutes one of the most decisive implications in the sake of song's communicative goal and how the message is regarded more reliable and authentic than ever. Dylan said in one of his interviews that, "You do lose your identity, you become totally subservient to the music you're doing in your very being..." (Epstein, 2011: 262). The artist voices and embodies an extensive group of characters while he shares with his audience an imagined world in which his particular experiences are exemplary. Bearing this in mind, it is no surprise that Stan Godlovitch differentiates between the artist's works, constituting abstract entities, and his performances, which turn these abstract entities into particular experiences (1998: 84) In other words, performances make concrete works out of preexistent abstraction through the voice of the interpreter, who is the official intermediary between the text and the emotions.

Another two important terms have to be considered before approaching a performance analysis. These terms are "inspiration" and "performance". Albeit the artist seems to relate himself to improvising techniques driven by pure inspiration, how much of his performativity mode is closer to a studious craftsmanship than to the force of improvisation relying on inspiration? (Maxwell, 2014) This dichotomy, between a planned performance and an inspired one, is present too in the never-ending fight against art and commerce, the two poles of any overall artistic action. Bob Dylan's constant overcompensation between what was strictly considered of commercial interest and the artistic part –devoted to experimentalism and vanguard– made part of his performance credo. He always tried to fulfill the audience demands or expectations while raging against them. As he maintained once before Mikal Gilmore, a journalist of *Rolling Stone*, "my songs are personal music; they are not communal. I wouldn't want people singing with me. (...) The thing you have to do is make people feel their own emotions. A performer, if he's doing what he's supposed to do, doesn't feel any emotion at all. It's a certain kind of alchemy that a performer has"(2013). Consequently,

this statement cannot be more evident than during his performances when looking at the audience's reactions. A field study that consisted of recording people's commentaries during and after the show would be valuable at this point, it would probably show there are at least two different kinds of audiences, as William Brooks observed. There are those who “expect performances to recreate recordings” and so, they value them more if they give an exact idea of what the album portrayed. Spontaneity and the magic of simultaneity, as well as the idea that songs must be constantly reworked, as Dylan’s performances illustrate, would not be valued by them. In the past, it seemed most people “had prized personality, spontaneity and improvisation” while “now, approbation depended on precision and fidelity to the score.” (Brooks, 2006: 346) Bob Dylan seems to be a creator who, out of his changing identities, did not share this philosophy. He always felt more inclined to perform in front of an audience that priced the event as a unique experience that would never be equally repeated. It is curious to see how the artist, albeit using a great deal of repeated patterns and recurrent artifices, refused to be repetitive at the level of performance. He even confessed having grown tired of his songs at the end of the 1970s when lyrics didn't seem to have no more sense for him (2005). Daniel Mark Epstein explained this phenomenon as being the fruit of that moment when, "he could no longer understand their origins (the origin of his songs) or their meanings, and so he could not make the emotional connections he needed to perform them.”<sup>72</sup>– (Epstein, 2011: 285) That was the moment when “Dylan discovered that he could perform his old songs effectively by bypassing his brain, somehow releasing the song from the tyranny of the lyrics.” (Epstein, 2011: 286)

If songs are always performed differently and recordings should not be regarded as the stable and original form of his art work, then how can we understand the concept of a song? Current theories of performance maintain, "there is no ontological distinction between the different modes of a works' existence, its different instantiations because there is no original" (Cook, 2003: 207). Songs are moving and non-definitive, at least from Dylan’s artistic principles. However, the lack of an original performance can bring a lot of confusion to reception and interpretation as there is no model, no perfect example and to a certain extent, the whole music process seems to rely on causality.

Nevertheless, this attitude on scene demands a legitimate freedom to the author and interpreter. Followed by unexpectedness, his message is delivered like in any communicative event producing a clearer reaction in his audience that was also used by the author to showing other people that "he had written a song whose meanings could

change as much and as often as he desired..." (Wilentz, 2010) Dylan's act of empowerment gave his songs a changing quality and relied on improvisation, another of his trademarks, as Sean Wilentz noted (2010: 100).

For all this, as Stephen Scobie stated in his referential book *Alias Bob Dylan Revisited*, "Dylan minimizes the importance of a stable text as product and maximizes the importance of the process of singing and listening." (2014: 118) In other words, he brings to the fore all that is related to the action, to performance, and everything whose aim is to change something, in terms of communicative pragmatics<sup>73</sup> because his technique would "make the songs more effective vehicles for the elicitation of affect." (Maxwell, 2014: 1221)

For example, Bob Dylan introduces unexpected songs in the song list, he changes melodies to the point they get unrecognizable and adapts the lyrics to each new context. One of his biographers, Daniel Mark Epstein quotes Dylan's drummer describing Dylan's performances during the Never Ending Tour. He explains why it was hard for him to deal with this situation.

He would play the song. And one night it would be a shuffle beat. And the next night it would be a straight-note feel. He purposely wanted to be that way. And me, I wanted to hear 'Lay, Lady, Lay' played the way it was on the record because I thought the recordings of the songs were the ultimate.  
(Kemper, 2011<sup>74</sup>)

The extent to which he disguised his song list on the scene will be thoroughly explained in the next subsection. Let's see now other elements that make performances an important issue to be approached academically.

The "tensions between the work's fixity and performance variety complicate the relation between works and performances" (Godlovitch, 1998: 84). It also complicates the hierarchy and order of analysis in this research. If anyone considered analyzing his works, the product of his analysis would be focused just on the listening experience. To do it, the analysis could comment first on the top elements of each song, like music patterns, melody etc, and then it would start describing everything to the lowest element of analysis, constituted by the lyrics of the song. In other words, something that was similar to a formalist method of approaching poetic texts such as Wellek and Warren's described it, using the terms "internal and external form" (1962). However, in reference to performance, there are lots of multimedia aspects that count as well. Things like, if we are being able to live the experience in the first person, if we are watching it

recorded in any video format, if it is an amateur video recording, if the sound quality is good, if ever people in the audience cheer or chant all together, etc; all should make part of the analysis. The above mentioned details would sum up other paramusical signs: the venue, the lighting, how are they arranged over the scene, the screening, Dylan's customs, the band's sound, etc. Almost everything plays a significant role in his performances, from the way he modulates and pronounces the words, the rhythm, and mood of the melody, how they interact with each other to the venue, the silent intermission between each song, etc. Like Joey Burns would describe for *Mojo*, his experience when listening “Drifter’s Scape” made him aware of this aesthetical venture,

The song has this story, and then there is a moral behind it as well. Then your start getting into the performance aspect: the looseness of its delivery, the band’s playing – which is just phenomenal. It’s not overdone, it’s not over-thought. It’s just very organic and completely beautiful.<sup>75</sup>

Bearing in mind that performances imply a series of signifying conclusions during and after taking place, both from the audience perspective and from the point of view of the singer, anything that signifies also can have meaning and multiple interpretations. They might have a prior intention or purpose, present a symbolic quality, or indicate the way something can be seen differently depending on the cultural background. In respect to how the units of meaning and cultural elements are combined with each other, there is one study that must be highlighted, and this is Henry Louis Gates Jr. *The Signifying Monkey: A Theory of Afro-American Literary Criticism* (1988) In this book, the author uses the term "signifying(g)" to reconsider the perspective of the viewer on behalf of his Afro-American culture. According to him, this perspective clashes with the white-dominant culture that imposed their own criteria of signification until that moment. Among other things, Louis Gates explains how the process of signifying alludes to repetition with a significant difference (Middleton, 2006). It is a self-conscious changing of the repeated intertextual or intratextual elements of the discourse –be it musical or literary– and it defines the difference of Afro-American cultural elements against the rest of the Western tradition.

It is not difficult to see the force of the theory of Signifyin(g) for understandings of Afro-American music. For example, tonal chord sequences are often turned into riffs and looped to create repetitive frameworks, undercutting the received significance of such sequences as prime sources in European music of, precisely, sequential, goal-oriented logic.

(Middleton, 2006: 166)

In the “signifyin(g)” theory, which is related to vernacular, the author in question is very much aware of his performance’s interpretability and starts playing with the concepts of message and meaning. As opposed to the predominating linear and unequivocal attribution of meaning by white people, “the process of “signifyin(g)” makes fun of (play, play as fun, funny, incongruous or uncanny connections) of sense; of the signification process itself, its orientation around doing rather than meaning pointing toward the sphere of the body” (Middleton, 2009) and it is more related to performance analysis than to recorded forms of artistry, like music notation, literature, etc. It was Richard Middleton who first applied Louis Gates’ theory to music performance invoking the importance of the difference between both languages and their elements of repetition, or what the term implies, “repetition with a signal difference”. Nicholas Cook indicated that “the concepts of signifying and double consciousness can help to articulate the creativity that has always been present in the performance culture of western “art” music” (2003: 210) and Richard Middleton’s reliance on the signifier is revealed because for him “popular music comes to us through the effect of sounds, words, and words about sounds: in short, through the work of the signifier” (2009: 256).

For all this, I have decided to address the particular and the general in Dylan’s performing world by using both my point of view, the studies around this topic, and other people’s articles and live-shows reviewers. I include in this section some texts written by the alleged scribes of those emotions raised in Dylan’s live music, in order to help this research compare every possible standpoint. By prior understanding, the main idea they all share in common is that "Dylan's uninhibited manner, monotonous voice, and monotonous songs are, I suppose, a separate art form unto themselves" (Steve 2011: 395<sup>76</sup>).

### **2.1.1. Where time and Tempo Fly**

To understand the signifying elements of Bob Dylan's performances we must not just look for meaning and interpretation but also for enjoyment, as it is characteristic in any popular manifestation like Ellen Willis explained. The idea that Dylan created an aural

context to poetry should not be forgotten either. Allen Ginsberg said in his notes to the album *Desire* (1976) "that he and fellow 1950s beat dreamed of a quest for liberation, and of the marriage of poetry to music." (Shelton, 2011: 996) Dylan achieved this after experimenting with the limits of spoken poetry, poetic performances, folk music, etc. They wanted to enlarge language-use until it exceeded "its inherently rational limitations in poetic and philosophical illumination" (Maxwell, 2014: 407) Some critics, like Ellen Willis (1967) or Camille Paglia (2006) maintain that Dylan's songs are the ultimate approach to poetry in its most purer and original form: in song.

He expanded folk idiom into a rich, figurative language, grafted literary and philosophical subtleties onto the protest song, revitalized folk vision by rejecting proletarian and ethnic sentimentality, then all but destroyed pure folk as a contemporary form by merging it with pop.  
(Willis, 1967).

Either his live shows or in the recording studio, where Dylan played music on target for a new liberation of the musical forms, his music performances should be reckoned as being part of a different new segment that turns to oral forms of literature and music composition. He is an important ambassador of this combined art form, to the extent that Ellen Willis explained that musical and literary epistemology's main caveat is that they tend to separate from each other and "If the gap between literary culture and the uncertain terrain of pop gets any wider, we will continue to need artists like Dylan who can cope with both." (1967). The music critic also pointed that, "his strength as a musician is his formidable eclecticism combined with a talent for choosing the right music to go with a given lyric. The result is a unity of sound and word that eludes most of his imitators." (Willis, 1967). If originally all started copying older music styles, there must have been many things that intervened in his search for his unique style and one of this factors could have been the jazz and blues singer, who also belonged to the New York scene, Dave Van Ronk. Apparently, someone heard him shouting this words to a young Dylan in one of their most frequented clubs, "Guthrie's dying, and his generation is dead (...) You can't keep rewriting the songs they wrote. Do your own songs. Their songs are for the history books. You're just going to be a history book writer if you do those things. An anachronism."<sup>77</sup>—Van Ronk's advice was important, yet he never abandoned tradition completely.

In fact, Dylan's performances show us his permanent attraction to African-American music and native balladry, an important aspect David Yaffe's study (*Bob*

*Dylan: Like A Complete Unknown*, 2011). This attraction was transferred to his music scene and constituted one his leading sources for the innovative reinvention of the term popular music. Several music styles have been especially important in his repertoire, being blues one of them. This interest could be grounded in the fact that blues is somewhat synonymous with a sense of trueness and honesty in the arts and also in the fact that the lyrics meaning is articulated by the elements of rhythm and melody. The white singer, like the essayist and activist LeRoi Jones or Amiri Baraka (1965) discerned, must have ended up understanding blues more as an attitude than as music.

Dylan's relation to blues never faded, "Indeed, though he explored many styles in his long career, Dylan would always return to the blues" for, as he writes, "it was a counterpart to myself, a mode of relation that defined him at his very core." (Maxwell, 2014: 2686) According to music experts, this elementary music style plays a relevant role as long as it goes parallel to particular experiences:

Scholars have observed that the blues is an example of improvisation in everyday life; blues singers like Sleepy John Estes, Robert Pete Williams, and Big Joe Williams are among the most interesting and powerful poets in the field. Their language was both colorful and inventive and they draw upon their own experiences. In this regard they followed the advice given to many budding authors of fiction: write (or, in this case, sing) what you know about!  
(Lornell, 2012: 331-2)

It does not mean all the experiences that are recounted in blues songs must be personally related to the author, but through them, the artist is able to deliver, as if he was a messenger, other people's memories. The topoi of memory is connected to that of repetition. Bearing in mind that he transgresses reproducing a song the same way it was reproduced in the past, then he is the archetype of Hermes, the thief, traveler, and trickster who ends up playing all sorts of different roles in order to deceive us (Scobie, 2004). Most commonly his music breaks with any historic genre in favor of building its own identity; yet, some of his best songs establish a paradoxical relation between the purest form of singing, the most visceral –characteristically used during ancestral rituals–, and the craftsmanship it involves in order to obtain a good performance result.

Since blackface minstrelsy is a performance--one in which white entertainers frequently "performed blackness"--Dylan can be linked in numerous ways to this discourse. From his early 90s cover version of Stephen Foster's "Hard Times" (a song by an artist whose dialect songs were central to the minstrel show repertoire) to Dylan's decision to title his 2001 album "Love and Theft"--itself "thieved" from Eric Lott's influential study of

minstrelsy and 19th-century American identity politics--Dylan clearly understands how race, like gender, is constantly performed, and he repeatedly acknowledges his debt to two centuries of African-American musical culture (McCombe, 2011)

As it was commented in McCombe's article, the musicologist Barry Shank, author of the article "That Wild Mercury Sound: Bob Dylan and the Illusion of American Culture" (2002), compares Dylan's covers of artists like Blind Lemon Jefferson and Little Richard, especially since they were his preliminary influences. One of the conclusions of this comparative study was that Dylan's particular interpretation of blues musicians showed to what extent he was willing to become as "authentic and autonomous" as they were. He depicted "both black and not black--a tension central to blackface" music (McCombe, 2011) Dylan has a lot in common with blues flairs, like the regular flat tone of his voice, expressing so mysteriously the feelings of each new role. Robert Palmer added that "the flatter the pitch, the more intense the feeling" (1981: 102-3); as listeners can perceive in songs like "Most of the Time" (*Oh Mercy*, 1989) or "Ballad of Hollis Brown" (*The Times They Are A-Changin'*, 1964). He uses ragtime piano, as well, like in his eulogized album "*Love & Theft*"(2001), especially on the track "Summer Days" and in the song "Thunder on the Mountain" (*Modern Times*, 2006). The same way black American musicians did around 1890s. Like other bluesmen, he does not use performance to entertain or create beauty, the first out of seven types of performance enunciated by Richard Schechner (2013: 46), but rather to mark or change his identity and to never stop teaching and persuading and having its communicational impact, while ignoring pop music's unfeeling reproductive systems.<sup>78</sup> Additionally, music –like theatre and dancing shows– import "authentic rituals" that transmit an overall sense of authenticity in relation to the singer songwriter. Like in most ethnic and native music in the U.S history, Dylan used improvisation conscious that, like LeRoi Jones (Amiri Baraka) proclaimed in his famous book *Blues People: Negro Music in White America*, "the role of the improvising –and usually non-reading– musician became almost heroic" (1965: 152). For native blues performers, improvisation played an essential part in their major performing models, because like the words of professor Kip Lornell express, "Improvisation in black folk music is a valued skill and takes many forms. Instrumental and vocal improvisations represent the basic ways musicians seek individuality in a performance. Most black folk singers view their ability to replicate musical styles as a gift" (2012: 325) That could be the reason

why Bob Dylan chose diverse black music sceneries to represent his ideal attitude towards music, to individualized himself from the repetitive source of inspiration or as Adorno (1949) misunderstood, it could fabricate spontaneity in order to disguise the hegemony of these song schema.

To illustrate this, harmonica must be regarded as one of the most genuine choices of Dylan's autonomy in the music tradition. Barry Shank shows that "(...) by simply breathing into it" Bob Dylan "created a high tonal center, a core sound around which his musical representation of the continuity and coherence of American popular music and the illusory possibility of self-constructed, authentic yet autonomous, identity could be projected." (2002: 112). The use of the harmonica belongs to the afro American tradition too, as long as it tries to imitate the vocal sounds of the singer as if they were involved in a perpetual conversation. Lomax said, describing blues style, that "the guitar or piano can make rhythmic and harmonic responses to the singer" (1960: 26) They function "as an afterthought or comment on what has gone before" (1960:432). The use of the harmonica was extended among bluesmen because it was portable and easy to transport. Philip Tagg said its evocative sounds, "act anaphorically in that they resemble sounds, touch or movement that exist outside musical discourse" (2013: 308). This sound connected him to rock 'n' roll and rhythm & blues music because, literally, every blues revivalist group –majorly coming from the British invasion– was using it and its suggestive power. For example, The Rolling Stones cover Slim Harpo's "I'm A King Bee" (1957<sup>79</sup>) and harmonica evokes bee's noise. It was also used as a cry or a weeping sound showing the lament of the singer. To illustrate this, note "My Babe" (1955<sup>80</sup>), one of Little Walter's solitary hits or the expressive dialogue Little Water and Muddy Waters execute in "Walkin' On" (1958<sup>81</sup>).

Bob Dylan and most bluesmen seek out improvisation in their lyrics, that is why their songs have a block pattern or a fixed structure that makes it easier to readapt for brand new lines that the artist may invent during the performance. Like Lornell explained, if the artist, at the time of composing the song, takes care of easy musical cadences that repeat the same pattern over and over, it will be easier for him, later, during its rendition, to make it fresher with new unexpected lines. Again, this made his performances get increasingly decontextualized, for his songs have reached a moment when their degree of customization is the most extremist. The choice of versioning and editing his own songs on stage showed his interest in purer musical performances and spontaneity. Shelton remarked about one of his tours, "spontaneity dominated the tour,

including itinerary changes, improvisation, and guest appearances” As it was explained in the referential study *Blues People: Negro Music in White America* by LeRoi Jones, “music, like any art, was the result of natural inclination” (1963: 82) For its part Bob Dylan’s tendency towards more spontaneous forms of music playing also served as new music paradigm for upcoming bands that sprung up in the industry and technological era of music. Many of these bands backed him up during some of his most remembered touring collaborations. Namely, Tom Petty from Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers that accompanied him during the True Confessions Tour (1986), said that,

He gave us the kind of courage that we never had, to learn something quickly and go out on stage and play it. You had to be pretty versatile because arrangements could change, keys might change, there’s just no way of knowing exactly what he wants to do each night. You really learnt the value of spontaneity, of how a moment that is real in a concert is worth so much more than one you plan out.  
(Tom Petty, 2013: 20<sup>82</sup>)

Like Afro-American musicians, Dylan also understood that the primary aim of music is communication. “The concept is simple—to communicate with the audience—and all of these practices are important in engaging the audience, grabbing their attention, keeping them focused on the performance, and drawing them into the event.” (Lornell, 2012: 326) Due to such communicative impact in the popular music field and their interpretative potential, many music critics have played a determinant role in the ever-changing consideration of Dylan’s performances from one period to the next.

During this act of communication, "trans musicality", named after the homonym title by H. P. Ureña that, based, for its part, in Gerard Genette’s “transtextuality” (1982<sup>83</sup>), acts as a crucial notion for any performance analysis. This term refers more to the multidisciplinary nature of songs, rather than to their ethno-music value. While Genette's term referred to the transcendence of one text in relation to another, be it subtle or explicit, trans musicality focuses in the process of transformation that the poetic text experiments in favor of the other disciplines. This trans musical approximation to a song makes words performable and configures them as the sole kind of text where words and music are equally important. Professor Maxwell concludes that "Dylan seems to have possessed a kind of energetic animal magnetism drawing multiple genres into his field of influence, leaving anything he touched transformed" (2014: 3180) In addition, being so immediate and direct, performance, like speech, is dependent on contextual elements too, what in the semiotics of art Umberto Eco (1965) named an

atmosphere of "metaphysic rarefaction" that act significantly during their reception. These elements help to connect both the executant and his audience and produce what Bob Dylan regarded as "a certain alchemy" in his performances, as he stated in 2012 (Maxwell 2014: 3188).

In the middle of Dylan's performance diversity, the researcher can make a sum of their differences and similarities, but it is easier to approach if it is divided into different periods or moments. Most scholars agree there are, at least, three distinguishable performing periods in Dylan's career (Scobie, 2004; Rings, 2009; Yaffe, 2011) equating his music with his different identities. On one hand "**the first phase** extends from 1961 to the motorcycle accident of July 1966" (Rings, 2009). This period is distinguished by taking place in smaller scenarios. Some of those gigs took place in clubs and bars at McDougal Street in New York's Greenwich Village district, like Gerde's Folk City, about which there are lots of bootleg recordings, and the Gaslight Café. Around the second half of this phase, his fame increased and the dimensions of these scenarios grew. This is the moment when he chose to rock electricity and amplification systems, a year before his accident. This moment would always be remembered as "one of the most thrilling moments of his career" (Scobie, 2004: 22) After the motorcycle accident most critics agree that his **second period** starts. It constitutes an anomalous hiatus that only brought us scarce concert appearances and a private recital that, albeit recorded, was never meant to see the light of day. These weren't released until Columbia Records launched *The Bootleg Series, Vol: 11 The Basement Tapes* (2015) out of whose original tape recordings diverse other songs have been slowly unveiled. Stephen Scobie (2004: 22) considers the inspiration years didn't end after the accident because he was producing, albeit privately those music sessions at the basement that house in Woodstock. These "so-called" fortuitous performances, brought to light well after they were actually made real, shouldn't be counted as "true" performances if this study following Sean Godlovitch's requisites (1998), where it is said that performances have their present audience and have to be rendered before them. Bob Dylan returned to scenarios in 1974, when the **third period** starts, to tour around the U.S territory with his most popular backups, The Band. The Rolling Thunder Tour reunited him with Joan Baez, Allen Ginsberg and many other artists from the folk scene preceding a poorer period that took place in the decade of the eighties. A decade that connected the third period with **the last one**. In 1988 the artist began his popularly known "Never- Ending Tour" (NET) that continues bringing him and his big backup

bands all over the world until today. The unifying characteristic of all these appearances is his ultimate use of songs on a scene, of which this study will give a brief account in the following section.

Stephen Scobie, the Canadian literary critic, and poet, distinguished another three distinct periods in Dylan's career, each of them related to a quality that stands out (creation, commitment and performance). He established that, although each of those elements coexisted during his whole career, "(...) at different times one quality or another may be usefully regarded as dominant." That is why, he continues, "I designate the three phases as the Years of Creation, the Years of Commitment and the Years of Performance." (Scobie, 2004: 20- 21) Like him, I do not think these categories make separate periods, but rather that these are important and repeated qualities in Dylan's music works. Indeed, this study observes various repeated patterns all throughout his career that stayed in his music always, despite the fact that other superficial aesthetic elements could change. However, the division serves Stephen Scobie to approach more easily his works and characteristics. What I find most interesting of his contribution to the analysis of Dylan's career is that it shows to what extent it has been commonly agreed that the years of the NET (Never Ending Tour) –defined as the year of performance by Scobie– "are vivid evidence of a new mode of music making" (Rings, 2009). This is more important since, during that period, Dylan started using the technique of the "song in disguise" that has ultimately characterized his "modus operandi". Following the most victorious moments of his career on the scene or the milestones of Dylan's life in music so far, I make discrete commentary on each of the different performing periods of his career and the most important characteristics of all of them.

#### **2.1.1.1. First Period**

Bob Dylan began playing live officially and for a specialized audience during the decade of the 1960s, just after he had arrived in New York with the aim of becoming a singer-songwriter. He had had smaller and not so professional audiences before, at high school when he had just started his own rock 'n' roll band based on the model of Jerry Lee Lewis and Buddy Holly.

The author of one of his most remarkable biographies, Anthony Scaduto accounts for the first serious New York folk-song sceneries, "In a mere half year he had

learned to churn up exciting, bluesy, hard-driving harmonica-and-guitar-music, and had absorbed during his visits with Guthrie not only the great Okie musician's unpredictable syntax but his very vocal color, diction and inflection." (1973: 1996) During the first years his "poetics of retrospection", as Stephen Rings called them, were stronger than ever. In other words, his music style was being modeled on traditional and preceding music traditions and other popular iconographies. People of that age remarked how much he resembled Charlie Chaplin on the scene, with the same gift for comedy that was so evident in the way he walked, his body language and his zany humor (Robert Shelton, 2011; Paul Williams, 2004). Especially during these years, his reproduction of folk styles and his background influences were generally misunderstood because people would think to what extent they were not mere influence but obvious plagiarism. Bob Dylan's limits of reproduction have always been put in question and the endless dichotomy between copy and influence has overshadowed his creativity.

If Dylan worked in blues, he was a white man stealing black music. If he developed Woody's talking blues, he was an imitator. If he adapted Anglo-Irish folk songs, he was a thief. If he wrote topical protest songs, traditionalists thought he was a traitor, yet if he turned subjective, he was a self-involved existentialist.  
(Shelton, 2011: 569)

It was not just that his first steps into the music scene were only an emulation of other people's styles, it was rigorously proved that these were the accustomed steps for any debutant. However, it is interesting to see, and it will be recovered later in the section about repetition, how this revivalist phase aimed at recovering the authenticity of one-man-band songs, their structure, themes, motifs, vernacular, rhythms, diction, etc. In this sense, he was echoing, repeating, the macro structural level of American popular music. This type of indebtedness to his tradition provided the artist a starting point to later wander and explore other languages. Obviously, "he knew the old folk songs weren't him. He was just searching for whatever was him." (Scaduto, 2001: 2100) The first traces of him are implicitly felt and each listener has to carefully compare them to examples of such genres as the topic song, talkin' blues, ballad, etc; as these are the major influences of the artist. For, as much as his music was subject to any song genre, like in topic songs or talkin' blues, he always maintained a different standpoint in order to innovate. For instance, when the balladry tradition used newspaper articles as an inspiration, so were doing some Dylan songs, except they shared an impassionate third-person voice whose language was full of metaphors and indirect allusions. Dylan would

also interpret them distinctively by stressing specific words and highlighting the pronunciation of certain sounds to create a sort of melisma sound by elongating the syllables and playing with phonetics. He would also make rhymes fit and statements match the timing of the song. His audience never stayed emotionless after “this kid was putting stresses on syllables that were seldom stressed before, bending notes and lyric lines, mumbling some words to get past them so he could come down hard on the ones he wanted to stress.” (Scaduto, 2001: 2258) Even if the audience didn't know how to label his art, they did bear in mind that folk and traditional forms of music were driving them there. At the outset, many must have thought "It wasn't a black sound, something a bit different, and possibly a bit incompetent ...on first hearing." (Scaduto, 2001: 2264) From that moment on he became a leading figure in protest singing. During certain periods of his artistic life, he has translated real events to songs as if they were a mirror in which the major part of society's wrong morals and hypocrisy were reflected. Like in "Who Killed Davey Moore?" (1963), where the singer directs the question to all the people who was present in the boxing combat and each of them was making excuses:

“Not us”, says the angry crowd  
Whose screams filled the arena loud  
“It’s too bad he died that night  
But we just like to see a fight  
We didn’t mean for him t’ meet his death  
We just meant to see some sweat  
There ain’t nothing wrong in that  
It wasn’t us that made him fall  
No, you can’t blame us at all”

In the studio version, he prominently stressed the last rhyming words –“fall”, “at all”– in a challenging and defiant way. At Town Hall (1963<sup>84</sup>) he intones as if he was speaking “a capella”, pausing with each fragment and changing intonation radically. It adds more drama to it, making evident he is playing different characters by giving voice to population collectives and the guilty boxer who killed Davey Moore.

Besides performing traditional songs in a distinctive manner, wearing his harmonica holder and low-hold acoustic guitar at the same time, he always put a poetic accent in his lyrics that consecrated him not only as an imitator but as a major innovator within the genre. What’s more, “it was more than just writing, it was more like something flowing out of him” (Scaduto, 2001: 2938).

During those first years he made part of the folk revival scene of New York city and knowing, as we know now, that his relation to the collective and its music has been changeable, it is still an enigma why he chose the folk venue to launch his career. Albeit rock 'n' roll had always captivated him –when he started playing in rock bands at a high school he confessed he was impressed by Little Richard's style– it was folk music that made him popular at first. Of course, his musical influences, Woody Guthrie, Pete Seeger, Ramblin' Jack Elliot, etc. were partly responsible, but he must have got a natural idea about what was to be expected of a performer and that idea had to do with showing your respects to precursory folk singers and traditional genres of music. In a certain extent what he was doing was establishing an analogy between his role in music and the role of other musicians before him. The moment he rethinks his role in that long tradition is the moment when his successful career began to take form.

The audience had already shown a keen interest to listen to folklore manifestations, but this group of singers and folklorists that met at New York's Greenwich Village scene were especially proud of performing away from the industry. Apart from the general revival of these music styles, he could have considered this step a self-affirmation process from where he could start creating his personal "authenticity", by looking at all that ancestral imagery. Like them, Bob Dylan learned how to articulate the vernacular and rural sociocultural elements with contemporary Beat and pro-urban ideas, so characteristic of the combining paradoxes that cohabit his music. Guthrie's directedness "infused with hip, urban radicalism" must have been his point of departure (Rings, 2013). Van Ronk explains in Scaduto's biography (2001) that he might have chosen folk music to become an entertainer and be able to do it alone. That could be another reason why he chose folk music, where he could also shift from one style to the next bringing forward what is emblematic of them all, what is essential of "signifyin(g)" –adopting Gates' leading term for his performance reference book.<sup>85</sup>

The first sceneries where Bob Dylan reasserted his personality began taking place in 1964-5 when *Another Side of Bob Dylan* (1964) had already been released and he took to the stage the kind of show he had always wanted, supported by an electric band and rock 'n' roll riffs. This is the moment when he started touring all around the country and when he traveled overseas, to the United Kingdom, for the first international tour of his career. Albeit much of the audience ended up being booed and harassed by the audience, people waited in long lines to get the concert tickets which were sold up in short time. During this exhausting tour he raged against the press, the

imposing fans, and producers in favor of what he and his manager Albert Grossman considered important for his career, but most of all he experimented with noise electricity and a louder kind of voice that showed part of his raging qualities.

#### 2.1.1.2. Second Period

The second-period would start just after the car accident and, since there were no “strict” performances<sup>86</sup>—during the hiatus that lasted eight years except for a few unexpected appearances, I have only included a brief commentary about them in order to focus on the evident evolution that his sound on stage was experimenting. Also he started adopting different rituals that made him known from that moment on,

The big difference between seeing Bob Dylan in 1963 and seeing him in 1974 is that now you could hardly see him. You could hear the band fifty yards away but as one of twenty thousand spectators in a sports arena you had no illusion of intimacy with the singer. You had the feeling he preferred it that way.  
(Epstein, 2011: 182)

Backed by The Band, the first show took place in New York's Carnegie Hall in 1968. Many other artists participated too: Jack Elliott, Pete Seeger, Tom Paxton, Judie Collins, Odetta, etc. Later, Dylan and The Band reappeared surprisingly at the Mississippi River Festival in Illinois. There are barely any records about these shows except for Robert Shelton's writings (2011). Most importantly, the whole formation appeared at the Isle of Wight and at The Band's concert in Manhattan's Academy of Music. Emmylou Harris, Crosby, Stills, Nash, and Young, etc; got congregated at the largest event of the year, the concerts of The Isle of Wight (1969) in U.K that were attended by the estimated number of 150,000 people. The big announcement was that Dylan was playing too, after a semi-retirement from the scenes that had lasted three years. *Mojo* magazine explained Dylan's appearance had been magnified to such an extent that it was considered “the big hit of the decade” (Harris, 2001: 69)

Two years later he goes to 1971's *Concert for Bangladesh*, headed by ex-Beatle George Harrison in Madison Square Garden, where his surprising appearance was also very well received. There are audio-visual records of this concert<sup>87</sup>—that show us how Dylan interacted with other artists as opposed to his solitary performances. For example, he played guitar and voice in his hit “Just Like Woman” accompanied by

George Harrison and Leon Russell in bass and back-voices. His nasal and super high pitched voice makes the perfect companion to country rhythms making the ballad sweeter than in the original record. He makes slight changes in the bridge and uses efficiently his voice putting it at risk with harder tones. He performs a duet with George Harrison singing "If Not For You" during which the two voices sing simultaneously and in polyphony. During its rehearsal, available in youtube.com, the two singers look constantly at each other and both wear denim styles, so proper of their music styles. He sang these two songs along with "Blowin' in the Wind," "A Hard Rain's A-Gonna Fall," "It Takes a Lot to Laugh, It Takes a Train to Cry," "Love Minus Zero/No Limit," and "Mr. Tambourine Man." The editors of *Rolling Stone* magazine remarked at that moment how, "His voice now had a beautiful fullness to it, but it was closer to *The Times They Are A-Changin'* than *Nashville Skyline*" (RS Editors, 1971).

There are rumors he played anonymously in other scenes, but there was no official touring until January 1974, when he had already produced another three coveted albums, *John Wesley Harding* (1963), *Self Portrait* (1970) and *New Morning* (1970). Daniel Mark Epstein, who reported the first concert after the hiatus, makes a comparison among the two different ways in which Dylan played the song "All Along the Watchtower" (*John Wesley Harding*, 1968) before and after Jimi Hendrix brought about his own powerfully distorted version.<sup>88</sup>—He says, "when Dylan started performing this piece live in 1974, with his band, he played it in the florid manner of Jimi Hendrix, in honor of that ghost of the 1960s" (2011, 341-2) It seems Hendrix version, the most famous arrangement of this old ballad, had fulfilled all the needs of the lyrics. If every word carries a strong signification, Hendrix's guitar would punctuate the dialogue between the two characters and their perilous search for something.

I have pointed out before the idea that this was a period of development during which Dylan finds a different inspiration and another listenership. He adopted a different look, one that recalled his gratitude to the land where he was born. Looking out of his glasses, he was a man of the land, a country man who looked calmer and more easy-going than during the mid-60s. His voice had a different color, and his country rhythm marked the beginning of a new era, during which rock, blues, and folk would live together in his music. In fact, he was preparing a good ground for this relationship through the sessions of private playing that would later make the famous Basement Tapes.

Paul Williams, who conducted the three-book examination of Bob Dylan's interpretations, started talking about the second period or period of maturity after he came back on the scene, in 1974 and until 1986. He gave special prominence to the Rolling Thunder Revue, of which we can get numerous written confidences by writers like Sam Shepard (2010) and Allen Ginsberg (n.d.). During this tour he adopted the genuine theme of itinerant artists, derived from the circus, theater, the variety shows and minstrelsy. "By the time the carnival took to the road in late October it had another karmic purpose: raising consciousness about the black prizefighter Hurricane Carter, serving a life term in a New Jersey prison for a murder he claimed he had not committed." (Epstein, 2011: 223) Afterwards he would write a song about the whole criminal case. A song that was recorded for the album *Desire* (1976) and which picked up the thread of the protesting narrative living in his previous works ("Hollis Brown", "Hattie Carroll", "It's Alright, Ma"). With this tour Dylan also meant to bring to life some movie referents, like the *Les Enfants du Paradis* by Marcel Carné (1945) and configure a community of poets and musicians that would share the experience of the project together.

Within this period, people start perceiving Dylan not only as a prompt rebel of social and artistic causes, like he was seen during the sixties, but as a mature and decided man of the arts a resistant, not of the Nazi forces, but of popular music industry. In an interview with Ron Rosenbaum, his second major interview with Playboy magazine, he explains the consequences of a true music performance,

You do lose your identity, you become totally subservient to the music you're doing in your very being... It's dangerous, because its effect is that you believe that you can transcend and cope with anything. That is the real life, that you've struck at the heart of life itself and you are on top of your dream. And there's no down.  
(Dylan, 2011<sup>89</sup>)

This quote marks the start of his next period when his whole identity changed towards religiosity and mysticism, the two major stimulus of his works. Some of his best hits were recorded in their live version for the album *Before the Flood* (1974) that Paul Williams exhaustively reviewed in *Bob Dylan: 1974- 1986* (2004-5).

### 2.1.1.3. Third Period

The third period starts with one of his most radical changes. One that would make not only his performances but his works take another direction, a polemic one, that was considered by some to be his darkest period. I am referring to his Christianity that changed the focus and aim of his songs, his music style, the content of his words and eventually, his communication with the audience. This period it is mainly followed by the announcement of his trilogy *Slow Train Coming* (1979), *Saved* (1980) and *Shot of Love* (1981). A moment when, “he took to wearing a cross around his neck onstage (...) and he changed the lyrics of “Tangled Up In Blue” so that the woman he meets in the topless bar is not reading “an Italian poet/ From the nineteenth century” but verses from the Gospel of Matthew instead” (Epstein, 2011: 263)

Albeit the general negativity that media and experts threw upon this period, there are several exceptions. For example, the different gospel tours, fruit of these decades on stage promoting each of his, that took place from 1979 to 1980. These lasted a complete year and these tour took him and his new band formation through a total of ten countries and a hundred and fourteen concerts. There is a multitude of late written reports about this tour that rated his performances as extraordinary and celebratory moments of his recently found devoutness to Catholicism. As I see it, Bob Dylan recovers part of his aggressive mood on the scene and uses his voice and lyrics to worship God and advise seculars of preparing to believe. It is equally emotive than Gospel and he, unquestionably, becomes a gospel singer for the first time as it has been regarded in that music realm. Dylan was homage by that the Brothers and Sisters, a gospel formation that sang his most famous songs of that period.

The first thing that distinguishes these concerts of Dylan’s renaissance or gospel years from other contexts of the artist, according to Paul Williams (2004-5) is that Dylan for the first time violates the structure of his shows, which alternated between an acoustic song and a rock song, this time there is no alternative, the singer offers his audience a show full of new religious songs. However, as Paul Williams would explain and I have also confirmed in the videos available<sup>90</sup>, there is something stronger than mere lyric singing and music, there is emphasis and sincerity during his so-called gospel tour where he would also modernized the secular sound.

These were extraordinary concerts. They began by asking the audience to listen to six

songs by the gospel singers with piano accompaniment, and then when Dylan came on he featured only gospel songs, and therefore no material from any album prior to *Slow Train Coming* (Gray, 2006: 77)

Michael Gray also reports the moment he went to Toronto, after winning the Grammy for ‘Best Male Rock Vocal Performance of 1979’ as a ferocious and mesmeric music scene, one of favorite moments of his career for his fans, of which we can only recover the track “When He Returns” from the album/CD Rom *Highway 61 Interactive* (1995).

#### **2.1.1.4. Fourth Period**

Called a period of light and shadows by Paul Williams (2004-5), I distinguish three additional sections in this period, related to his main aspirations and the features of his performances on stage. Firstly, he publishes his most tuneful albums, from *Oh Mercy* (1989) to *MTV Unplugged* (1995) those that put him more than ever before in the populist music side provided that, for the first time, he had recently won a Grammy was going to win an Oscar distinction for the best original song. Secondly –in the words of Stephen Rings– he experiments a “re-connection with what he has called “archaic” music old-time folk, country, blues, and parlor song” (Rings, 2013) and which resulted in the albums *Good As I Been to You* (1992) and *World Gone Wrong* (1993). Thirdly, his jazz-orientated revamped style after publishing the cover-album around Frank Sinatra’s songs, *Shadows in The Night* (2015), and the recently-released *Fallen Angels* (2016).

There is a special feature out of his performing style during this period and it has to do with the way he never re-interpreted the same song equivalently. Derived from this fact, there are many authors (Scobie, 2004; Yaffe, 2011; Dalton, 2012) who wonder about the unraveling nature of his artistic persona as well. All of them have tried to discover the secret behind such a transgressor idea. For instance, the playwright Sam Shepard, who toured with Bob Dylan all around the United States, stated something close to this kind of musings and wrote the whole chronicle of the tour in the book *The Rolling Thunder Logbook* (1977),

Dylan has invented himself. He's made himself up from scratch. That is, of the things he had around him and inside him. Dylan is an invention of his own mind. The point isn't to figure him out but to take him in. He gets into you anyway, so why not just take him in? He's not the first one to have invented himself, but he's the first one to have invented Dylan.  
(Shepard 1977: 100)

From 1988 onwards, Dylan started disguising his songs in different musical costumes that would make them unrecognizable even to an expert listener. Stephen Rings observed that "most attendees at Dylan shows in recent decades (excluding 'Bobcats' who have been following the tour via bootlegs) have to exert a considerable effort to recognize the songs, a fact that is borne out by belated cheers when a recognizable line emerges clearly" (2013).

How can some musical changes turn the song so different? According to musicologists and music experts, if music endures a slight change in the melody and in the lyrics, it becomes really arduous for the listener to try to discover which song is being played. Musicologist Philip Tagg and his group of students concluded that "making simple changes to rhythm, tempo, articulation, and instrumentation definitely made a difference while transposing the music up and down a semitone made virtually no difference at all" (2013: 255). On very few occasions did the artist render a song with small semitone variance. The least differences he makes vary in tone and rhythm the structure of the original album recordings. In that case, it is understandable how strenuous the process of song discovery turns to be. But now let's note some positive viewpoints at this respect since there are multiple music critics and writers who transcribed this morphing quality of Dylan's songs as their best attribute making them a landmark of music experimentation on scene comparable to jazz and other milestone genres.

Old songs on new arrangements sounded as though they had just been written, and details to which he gave focused articulation, seemed alive with fresh experience. "Don't Think Twice It's Alright" drained of bitterness and self-pity, was sung with mischief and gentle curiosity. Lines like "you could have done better/ But I don't mine" became almost forgiving.  
(Docx, 2012)

There is another para-musical aspect that had abruptly changed in his shows, as it was explained by the expert live-show assistant Andrew Muir (2013: 26), "After year of big bands, string sections, horns and female backing singers, it must have been quite

a shock to see Dylan take the stage flanked only by a three-piece band: Chris Parker on drums, G.E. Smith on lead guitar and Kenny Aaronson on bass.” However, this is just one of the unnumbered backing accompaniments that the artist has had. As every Dylan fan knows, he started as a one-man band at the beginning, a tribute to all his major influences at that time: Woody Guthrie, Jack Elliot, Bling Willie McTell, Blind Lemon Jefferson, etc; and after that, he’s been backed by different formations, like Al Kopper, Harvey Brooks, Robbie Robertson and Levon Helm –members of The Band, that were his first rock band–, Keith Richards and Ron Wood, Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers the Queens of Rhythm<sup>91</sup>, Willie Nelson, The Grateful Dead, Mark Knopfler, etc.

### **2.1.2. The Re-interpretation of his Songs**

During many of Bob Dylan’s career the listener has confronted diverse unexpected things that changed a collective mind-set regarding live music, but certainly, nothing was as radical as the morphing process during which it is impossible to distinguish which song he is playing. It is as if he was covering his own songs and carrying each song out of an inexhaustible stylistic travel. The artist declared in his autobiography that, “ a folk song might vary its meaning and it might not appear the same from one moment to the next. It depends on who’s playing and who’s listening.” (Dylan, 2005: 71) If the listener is Andrew Muir, a true Dylanologist who followed Dylan’s entire career on tour, there are more positive surprises, in this sense, than negative. He points, referring to “You’re a Big Girl Now” that, “there were much more fine versions of this song to come in 1988, Dylan even rewriting a verse as the show progressed. (2013: 26)

If repetition or musical reproduction is the mode of subject construction itself<sup>92</sup>, then Bob Dylan demolishes the subject in order to become a subject of his own music during his performances. That is, he subjects himself to the laws of authenticity that require examining our personal lives and our society’s. Kierkegaard, considered father of existentialism, speaks of subjective reflection and how this brings us truthiness, authenticity as opposed to Hegel’s rationalism and objectivism (Flynn, 2006)

However, if this performance's act of renewal is analyzed from the negative point of view, the communicative and mental contingencies derived from the act of searching for the original song, understood as the original recording, during their

reception, appears as one of the most polemic topics. Alex Lubet's article (2012) calls for professionals in the areas of cognitivism and neurologism that could bring more research about the phenomenon of 'song finding'. This phenomenon takes place during his performances, while the listener has to guess what Dylan is singing due to the radical changes the singer has introduced in that particular song. Lubet's approach hypothesizes the kind of new emotions that heighten from his song processing and if during that moment the listener is facing "a sea of generic signifiers" (Rings, 2013). Unable to reach a definitive scientific answer, and being the audience so divided at this respect, the only thing we can assure is that, from the poetic point of view, this aesthetic decision must be based on Dylan's own beliefs regarding the artistic process. As he suggested in 1993, this technique gave him the opportunity of knowing how this or that song ought to be performed. It was during an interview for *The Chicago Tribune* where he said, "The songs I recorded in my past, they're almost like demos. I'm still trying to figure out what some of them are about. The more I play them, the better idea I have of how to play them" (Dylan, 1993<sup>93</sup>).

However, Michael Gray does not believe this excuse and he rather points to Dylan's lack of inspiration and lyric composing to justify this behaviour, which would put in question Dylan's authentic search for the ideal interpretation.

(...) how come the unfinished texts Dylan revisits the most are so often the easy rockist numbers, like 'Rainy Day Women \_ 12 & 35'— which by the end of 2003 had received nearly 800 performances. That's not re-interpretation, it's settling for the lowest-common-denominator easy option.  
(Gray, 2006: 569)

He affirms that even this phenomenon is based on the idea of being "truly authentic" or "honest" in music, as I was explaining above. In other words, Dylan's arrangements put his songs' identities at stake (Rings, 2013), but also his own identity is examined. The whole process means there is no original performance anymore. Everything is a representation and there is not a unique truth anymore, but multiple truths.

Also, the idea of introducing an extra element of surprise in his shows might be to liberate their fixity and to elaborate on alternative compositions. "He says almost nothing and never introduces his songs. He radically and continuously revises his interpretations in concert. The degree of re-composition can be so great that even a knowledgeable professional listener may not recognize them" (Lubet, 2012: 50. Lubet

maintains that as long as everybody demands it, there must be pleasurable to hear the songs as we expect to hear them. So, Dylan's "performative reinvention" (Rings, 2013), according to him, is not pleasurable and, indeed, it upsets his audience as long as they have to guess what song is he playing during their reception.

Nevertheless, these practices seem to bring more honesty to music playing, due to the fact that, "when we know what's coming in a musical excerpt, the listening becomes a motion, an enactment, it "moves" us." (Margulis, 2014: 12), whereas if we don't yet know how is it going to continue, we are more obliged to stay in the present rendition than to project our future expectations. From the above said, we can infer that our concentration is intensely driven by such simultaneous polyphonic or signifying' experience.

I definitely needed a new audience because my audience at that time had more or less grown up on my records and was past its prime and its reflexes were shot. They came to stare and not participate. That was okay, but the kind of crowd that would have to find me would be the kind of crowd who didn't know what yesterday was.  
(Dylan: 2011<sup>94</sup>)

Like some cognitivist have proved, there is a derived problem caused by the songs which are overheard, that would make his proposal very interesting as well. In contemporary society, with the emergent musical technologies that the music market offers, new listening experiences accompany us wherever we may go. This proliferation caused the act of listening to be more and more present in our lives until music became only a rumor that accompanies our daily activities. Then, listeners stopped attending to lyrical and musical contain anymore. For, as it was explained by the critic Christopher Ricks in *Bob Dylan's Visions of Sin* (2004: 259), "(...) well-known songs can become too well known, may no longer prove as open to our knowing them as they once were when we were all ears. Our having so often heard them may make it hard for us truly to listen to them. Now, if the ears of perception were cleansed..." What's more, this is not only a consequence of the songs that we are listening, but it has a concrete response in our brains (Margulis, 2014). What has come to be known as *a rumor* is a direct consequence of that problem concerning the message content of those songs? Eric Sattie calls the resulting music "musique d'ameublement" or furniture music because it stays as unnoticed as those elements that structure space. Much later, Brian Eno would call it *Music For Airports* (1978) in an album that became a pioneer in ambient music.

So, what could be worse to Bob Dylan's oeuvres than losing their meaning after too much-repeated reproduction? Like Epstein stated in *The Ballad of Bob Dylan*, “his art, like dreams, will not answer to any authorities, politics, or the needs of the market place” (2011: 186).

What seems to be quite paradoxical in this last period of his career is that along with that movement of constant revision on the scene, his records essentially revive the traditionalist perspective of his amateurish years, going back to folk and country music. There is a resurgence of his "poetics of retrospection", as defined by Stephen Rings (2013) talking about the elements attached to traditional music scenes that reappear in Bob Dylan's performances and make part of his poetics. Things like the structure of his songs, the instruments he used, the vernacular, etc. All of them are the result of Dylan's effort to situate himself in a particular sociocultural perspective while bringing another perspective of musical and historical events that took place in the nation's remotest past. To demonstrate this, regard Dylan's album *“Love & Theft”* (2001) which indexes parlor songs, minstrelsy, slavery and the nineteenth century Civil War years too:

City's just a jungle; more games to play  
Trapped in the heart of it, tryin' to get away  
I was raised in the country, I been workin' in the town  
I been in trouble ever since I set my suitcase down  
(Dylan, “Mississippi”)

Progressively, his albums showed an amalgam of multiple genres of traditional music that were also based on different locations of the American geography. In the words of Robert Shelton (2011: 30), his is a “tradition of change”. What Dylan has done in these last years of performance has been precisely to “season” his music with these more “mature” genres, especially the blues and the blue/grass gospel of the Stanley Brothers.” (Scobie, 2004: 24-5) In his article of Stephen Rings called him an “ancient singer and curator of a quasi-mythical past” (2013).

The truth is things in music shouldn't be as predictable as the modern audience grew increasingly used to. Aside from their production for a major industry of musical consumerism, songs must be reconfigured every time they hit the scene avoiding any repetition artifact that would give an idea of mechanization. His use of that changing rhetoric is evident even during his recording sessions, where the artist used the intervals to rewrite and reconsider musical compositions as well as he and the other instrumentalists tried to record each song in the least time possible. This phenomenon

has been witnessed before by people who accompanied him in the studio and it was made evident in his edited album, *The Bootleg Series: The Cutting Edge* (Vol. 12) which revealed the whole recording process during the year 1965 while it helped Bobcats compare the different versions of his best hits. For example, we can hear how the live version of “It’s All Over Now Baby Blue” changes from the original (1965) version. It changes the third line of the third stanza from “the lover who just walked out your door” to “your broken hearted lover at the door” condoling with all of those “you” that are going to left behind in order to “go start anew”.

Similarly, in “Lay, Lady, Lay” as sang in the album *Hard Rain* (1976), there is no such intimacy as in the original recording, where the voice is looking for a sexual encounter between lovers. Here, instead, she is appealed to “forget this dance, lets go upstaris” whereas in the original (1969) he said, “stay lady stay, stay with your man awhile”. It continues “Let’s take a chance, who really cares? Why don’t you know, you got nothing to prove. It’s out in your eyes and the way that you move” and repeats again his proposal “forget this dance, let’s go upstairs” acquiring a more sensual tone, but also alluding urgently to a possible love affair.

#### **2.1.2.1. According to the Scribes of Live Music**

Having in mind that music “is ephemeral, sounding and then disappearing, and its meaning cannot be summarized or handily captured” (Margulis, 2014: 2), I have chosen the discourses of critics and people who have been overexposed to Bob Dylan’s performances to support that part of the reception of his music which is so dependent on the particular experience and the context of the listener. The way these experiences are described provides the analysis with a whole set of emotional as well as gestural and musical conclusions around the effect these songs produce in the audience.

Not only authors, but some artists have also praised Dylan's shows. For example, Nick Cave. The musician, writer, and Australian author confessed once that his favorite Dylan track was "I Threw It All Away" included in his 1970 album *Self Portrait*. He makes the following description of its sound. He says, "The production is so clean, fluid and uncluttered, and there is an ease and innocence in Dylan's voice in its phrasing, in its tone that is no Dylan record before or after. There is the perfectly measured

emotional pull to the singing. This is a guy doing the job God put him on Earth to do and doing it well." (Cave, 2005<sup>95</sup>). It is basically Dylan's love for music which empowers him to do it this way. Talking about love, "no matter what you think about it/ You just won't be able to do without it" and this section proves so.

In the selection of these passages I have not only look for patterns of intersubjectivity but for the clear manifestation of how music meanings and emotions can be verbalized. Intersubjectivity means that at least two individuals experience the same thing in a similar way. This would confirm that music "relies mainly on iconic, indexical and connotative types of semiosis", according to music semiotician Philip Tagg (2012: 195-6) Tagg states that, "it makes more sense to investigate patterns of intersubjectivity about music's meanings among its listeners (aesthesis), less so to focus on the production pole (poïesis) of the communication process" (2013: 197). That is why I considered this standpoint an essential part of Dylan's performances. Also the American music critic Alex Ross explains, in connection to the history of listening reception and the multiple interpretations of song's meaning, that song's persistent meanings might be better explained today "with reference to beats, chords and raw emotion" (2003: 16-7) This is what these professional listeners will provide the research with. Their reviews reflect, among other things, that Dylan's songs have finally put an end to the old battle between words and music. One can conclude from their texts that there is no prior element over the other. Both are significant elements that work together trying to reflect Dylan's secret communicative as well as emotional aims in song's artistry. This section honors all those texts that repeat that moment when "words in music became less important than words about music" (Kramer, 2016). When all the interpretations seem to be exhausted, a different one appears to decipher unperceived truths. Lawrence Kramer adds that "we use language to breach the ineffable constantly. Why should music be exempt? Why should we be afraid to use language creatively to explicate the force of musical experience?" Like Kerouac's leading character, who translates all his prophetic and mystical jazz encounters on stages all around the U.S geography, these authors corroborate that anyone can transfer these feelings. Especially "if you lean your head out far enough from Desolation Row" (1965) and stay fully aware of the musical instant. That is if you liberate your creative impulses and free yourself from dialectical reason. In fact, there isn't just one truth, "At times I think there are no words / But these to tell what's true / And there are no truths outside the Gates of Eden" ("Gates Of Eden", 1965). Instead, all these textual instances come from real

circumstances and they are written by music or literary critics who have prevailed transferring their emotions to verbal understanding. Also, their presence in Bob Dylan's career has been significant for different reasons. Robert Shelton and Greil Marcus are the two leading music critics. One accompanied him during at least the first decade of his career and wrote the most determinant pieces of criticism for the artist's rising star. I am talking about Robert Shelton, who wrote a catalyst review of one of Dylan's performances at Folk City for *The New York Times* on September 1961.

The subjective response to all these critics enrich other listener's experiences and the way everyone regards the artists personality. There are several non-decipherable features in music studies which this authors have been able to translate into words, and that is why I found them indispensable for this research. Elizabeth Margulis writes that people "lack this capacity to summarize a passage of performed music" (2014: 2-3) but I would rather say there are some individuals, I have called them scribes –not ignoring they are very good authors too– that make a perfect transcription of their sensorial experience in written words. Christopher Ricks, the British literary critic, highlighted Greil Marcus's specialty in this kind of writing during "The Inventions of Bob Dylan" lecture at The Philoctetes Centre for the Study of the Imagination (2010). He and Sean Wilentz also mentioned Robert Shelton's aesthetic descriptions, and I have here included theirs and other lecturers and critics. That is why this section is devoted to such examples and significant exponents of the critic's craftsmanship.

These experiences would count as providers of the cultural context so important for any communicative and aesthetic act. As Philip Tagg used to say all these significant elements "must be addressed in order to avoid the 'perverse discipline' of semiotics without pragmatics" (2013: 269).

**Andrew Muir** is the editor of Dylan's magazines *Homer*, *the Slut* and *Judas* apart from the author of *One more night: Dylan's never-ending tour* (2013) that provides a vivid description of the shows the artist has been offering since 1988. The Never Ending Tour name is only a fan description of the continuous series of tours the artist has been involved in ever since. Muir follows him and his band formation all across the American territory, providing a detailed overview of each song and analytical details.

**Greil Marcus** has established himself in the now wide and varied tradition of rock critics as one of its most important figures. Accompanying Dylan's career since he started, the journalist is the best know for offering a wider perspective of the social and

politic implications of music. He also sanctioned on of Dylan's albums with the most famous punish ever, "What is this shit?" a commentary that contrasts with his more than the exceptional way of writing about the experience of listening to music.

**Robert Shelton** was a music and film critic who launched Dylan's career as a young member of the folk revivalist movement. He wrote several columns in newspaper and music magazines reporting his admiration for Dylan and the intense emotions that his performances arose in him. He is the author of one of the most detailed biographies of the artist, *No direction home: The life and music of Bob Dylan* (2011), which is undeniably one of the most faithful accounts. Manifesting a limited hermeneutic skill, very much accomplished through the biographical references, what Shelton does not fail to consider is the emotive significance of Dylan's playing and singing. That is why I have included some of his poignant commentaries about the act of music reception.

**Kip Lornell** is a remarkable author in the area of music and ethnomusicology. He collaborates with the Smithsonian Institute, an archive of folklore, anthropologic research, and sociology in the music of north America. He is the author of *Exploring American folk music: Ethnic, grassroots, and regional traditions in the United States* (2012) that offers a diachronic study of the history of music and cultural manifestations in the United States. Specialized in blues music manifestoes, the ethnomusicologist witnessed one of Dylan's most iconic performances and transcribed better than anyone the tremendous influence of blues music in his songs.

**Daniel Mark Epstein** is an American poet, biographer and dramatist who has published several of his erotic and lyrical poetry in the popular magazines *The New Yorker* or *The Nation*. He has been a professor of poetry and drama at the John Hopkins University. While maintaining a regular success as a story teller and poet, his major hits in the publishing world were his biographies of artists such as Nat King Cole or Edna St. Vincent Millay. He gained his major recognition for his work writing about Abraham Lincoln in *The Lincolns: A portrait of a marriage* (2004) named one of the best books of the year by the *Chicago Sun Times* and the *Wall Street Journal*, several years before launching his biography of Bob Dylan, *The ballad of Bob Dylan* (2011) in several languages all over the world. He maintains, "the audience is not an individual to be known, possessed, satisfied, but instead a creature with many faces tat must always be left wanting more. The singer, onstage, is not really himself but a hero the audience has created in its excitement." (2011: 28)

**Paul S. Williams** was an American music journalist and writer who created the magazine of music criticism *Crawdaddy* in 1966. He was author of more than 25 books among which the famous three-part series titled *Bob Dylan: The performing artist* was a remarkable work of innovative performance's reporting. At the moment of his death he was claimed by Jim DeRogatis, in an article for [wbze.org](http://wbze.org), to be "the first rock music critic, and one of the best" (2013). He was called "the most perceptive critic of Bob Dylan's performances" by literary scholar Stephen Scobie (2004:118)

#### **2.1.2.1.1. The Sound**

Andrew Muir wrote once, "the meaning of the songs weren't simply buried in nostalgia or in the lyrics, it was in the way he played with inflections and the sounds of the words, the way he changes the timbre of his voice to exact the most from the frazzling guitar cauldron or the weird, disfigured acoustic interlude" (Muir, 2013: 49)

Greil Marcus showed his expertise transcribing the sound effects and emotions of music. He usually makes quick associations or metaphors that bring to mind the kind of effects music has on our minds. Part of what he does is to chronicle each sound movement following the music rhythm almost. This an explosive illustration of his emotive mode of translation from music to words,

The Singer was flashing a red axe at the lead guitarist, sending out the last lines of "Baby Let Me Follow You Down" as he set up for the crash of notes that was sure to follow. They hit it; the two Musicians whirled around the microphone, guitar only inches apart, fingers almost touching, the sounds climbing lighter and up to the rafters, the roof getting in the way.  
(Marcus, 2010: 1)

Where the critic wants to avoid a simple adjective, he has resource to metaphors. Like Bruce Springsteen and Phil Ochs singer-songwriters themselves, they both have expressed their impressions on Dylan's music alluding or comparing his music to something that has just changed their mindsets. Ochs said, "it's the kind of music that plants a seed in your mind and then you have to hear it several times –ten times"<sup>96</sup>

A major description of Dylan's strong blues influence and personality is Kip Lornell's following review of a concert where the singer-songwriter included "Highway 61 Revisited" in his set list,

It is a hot sultry night with beer flowing and sweaty bodies (men and women) pumping and grinding as they dance together while mosquitoes seem to emulate their two-legged counterparts. The guitarist retunes his guitar to an open chord, slips a metal slide on the small finger of his left hand, and launches into a strident, repetitive figure high on the neck of his old blond stratocaster. The rhythm guitarist echoes the walkin' boogie line of the bass guitar and the drummer sets up a quick shuffle beat. The singer's wavering, grave, though highpitched voice begins a song about the Highway 61 that parallels the Mississippi River down through the Delta, familial violence, and the power of the Lord. The sonic qualities of this particular performance, especially the sound of the instruments blending and blurring together into a single voice, reminded me of the Bihari Brothers' powerful live recordings of Elmore James in a Canton, Mississippi, juke joint in 1953, which were issued on their Flair label and are now considered classic sides. But this was not an African American blues band entertaining patrons in some backwater club. The performer was pop music icon Bob Dylan (on tour with Paul Simon in July 1999) once more revisiting his own roots. (Lornell, 2012: 340)

Everybody recalls how, at the peak of his career, Dylan started his influential collaboration with one of his most remembered bands, the early The Hawks, that became officially The Band and with whom Dylan became an spectacular entertainer and new rock 'n' roll artist. Greil Marcus said, "the sound they produced was stately, extravagant, and visionary" (Marcus, 1969).

Bob Dylan's voice is the vehicle and the messenger of the sound and lyrics of the song. It is the element that plays the role of Hermes as the messenger of sang messages. Hermes is also a trickster (Scobie, 2004), a trickster such as that described by Henry Louis Gates Jr. (1988) as the monkey or Esu, who rules the understanding of truth (or Ifa), figures the hermeneutical order that serves the powers of interpretation. That is why "the voice could be a mask or an open wound" (Yaffe, 2011: 13). It is also the most impure sound reproducing rasping and howling sounds pre-existent in folk and blues, specially raucous in his last albums.

The voice of the singer-songwriter plays a major role in the representation of the individual, the persona, the mask. It is related to these terms since the ancient Greek and roman theatrical traditions. As Philip Tagg explains, it "derived from the fact that revealing the true nature of a dramatic character involved projecting the voice of that individual through the mask worn by the actor playing that role" (2013: 351). It helps the idea of representation getting closer to its listeners and, as it was a theatrical accomplishment, it personalizes the truth that is being sung. I say the truth because whenever this is retold by a human voice there is a truth that lives in fiction, the unreal details are given by breath. So the fictional facts are told through a natural media,

communication and the reliability attached to that acquires a certain degree of complexity from the point of view of artistic exchange.

His audience will feel the mood, the ambiguity and the rhythm of the words through his voice. Thanks to this element he will make physical what is extraordinarily abstract. Like an actor, he will dramatize the words. Through the immense quantity of voices it represents, Bob Dylan tended to mask his voice over and over again depending on the character he was interpreting.

Still, it is easy to describe it as a newly unique kind of voice whose vital soul is hard to pin down. In his quest for sincerity the voice is one of the main tools. He must have got some moments of luminousness in this sense. Moments that seemed evident whenever he shouted verses with an unused level of voice as if he had reached the highest level of confidence. Analogously, during his quest, the artist acknowledged his voice needed to evolve because, like the text, which is not fixed, his voice also “consists of the dynamic and indeterminate relationship between truth on the one hand and understanding on the other”. Like Henry Louis Gates Jr. said before “the relationship between truth and understanding yields our sense of meaning.” (1988: 25) and the notion of “text”, like voice, is flexible and adaptable to the moment of oral transmission and narration. As music critic Greil Marcus says, “it’s the attack, the way the voice enters a piece of music, what it does there, how it gets lost, how it gets out, how it remains the same, which is to say that voice remains unpredictable” (2010: 19). His voice has experimented many changes, some were not in relation to those regular effects that come with the pass of time and they had to do more with Dylan’s interpreting range. Some critics attribute a different kind of voice to each period of his career. For example, Daniel Mark Epstein points that, “at a primitive level the young man’s voice was a cry for attention similar to his shouting and screaming rock and roll on the high school stage; on an artistic level it was a sound of alarm, “I have something important to say and you need to pay attention.” (2011: 80). Others have described this changes or inflections as creators of aural meaning (Bowden, 2001). Shelton quotes *Time* magazine saying, “Dylan is definitely doing something that can be called singing. Somewhere, somehow, he has managed to add an octave to his range.” (Epstein, 2011: 856) He began having a high-pitched tone that resembled very much that of bluegrass styles from the beginning of the century, being its structure practically homophone and only accompanied by harmonica and guitar. Melisma is there from the beginning as it helped him adapting such an intense lyricism into musical cadences. It is a technique

coming from old baroque chant style and gospel. Its technique consist in changing the height of tone in the middle of a syllable. This aesthetic effect could be perceived during his first period, in songs like “All I Really Want to Do” (1964), “Down The Highway” (1963) in his evolution to rock singer in “Maggie’s Farm” (1965) or “Stuck Inside Of Mobile With The Memphis Blues Again” (1966). Later, he would use it in “I Shall Be Released” (1967) as a plea. Any of such effects he imprints to his music through his voice would have never be seen in a poetic recital, only during musical performances.

(...) in the song there can be this thing called melisma, where “one word flowers out into a passage of several notes”. Or rather, not one word but one syllable can do so. God save the Queen: “long to-oo rei-eign over us”, where “to” and “reign” are not just extended through time, not just held longer, but are granted two notes, not left as one note per syllable. Dylan’s imaginative decisions as to when and when not to take this responsible liberty would furnish matter for a whole book.  
(Ricks, 2004:403)

There are many attributes in his voice that raped the attention of the audience. For example, Robert Shelton remarked this characteristic of his voice in various of his journalistic reviews but also in his book *No Direction Home* (2011: 263),

His pinched, constricted voice seemed to be fighting its way out of his throat like a captive breaking jail. It was a rusty voice, suggesting Guthrie’s old recordings. It was etched in gravel, like Van Ronk’s. It sometimes crooned a bit, like Elliott’s. Yet it was also a voice quite unlike anyone else’s. You didn’t think of it as something beautiful or sinuous, but as something that roiled up from the heart. He didn’t sound a bit citified, but more like an old farmhand folk singer.

He used to raise his chin to the microphone like he couldn't easily reach the tone or his breathing technique depended upon it. Also, his voice had a particular nasal tone that he exaggerated more in those comical or ragtime songs; for example in "Honey Just Allow Me One More Chance" (1963) or "Talking New York" (1962). But the *Times* review that served as a confirmation of his "distinctive" style was again the famous Shelton's review on September 29, 1961, that read, "Mr. Dylan's voice is anything but pretty. He is consciously trying to recapture the rude beauty of a southern field hand musing in melody on his back porch."<sup>97</sup>

But why did he always feel so interested in oralism? Perhaps like William Burroughs, who shifted to oral literature more and more, he also felt the written text more easily corrupted and didn't like to lose his control over his words. He also

understood that in order for something to signify, that element has to be made emblematic through repetition and only oral repetition can be as repeated as the speaker or singer wants.

From the moment he learned how to express through his voice what he wanted to express, he started working on another potential source of expression: his narratives (Maxwell, 2014). Subsequently, there is an inherent experimentalism in his employment of lyrics and music which make listeners feel attracted since the beginning. "In his music, people are struck by something and yet they don't really seem to know what it is. That's always been the case with the most acute and exalted poetry." (Shelton, 2011: 712) Many of his formal decisions contributed to making the listener's attention drift from sound to "the metaphysical power of the lyrics" (Scaduto, 2001: 2986).

The way Bob Dylan sings and the manner in which he utilizes song's structure promote this motion from music sound to lyrics. These singing methods have been discussed by the expert musicologist Philip Tagg (2013: 367-8) that named them "metric chanting", "recitative" and "sprechgesang" (speech-song illusion). According to this, all three are different singing strategies that make the audience pay more attention to the linguistic quality of songs than to its tonal and musical dimension. Through metric chanting what the singer does is to produce music rhythm with linguistic and speech elements, like in street demonstrations, in speeches, rap music or poetry readings. Let's hear "Highway 61 Revisited" (1965), where rhythmic chanting leads fast pace rhythm and captures our attention and "It's Alright Ma (I'm Only Bleeding)" (1965) where he passes from one verse to the other at the highest speed possible by producing a radical contrast with slower sections of the song,

Disillusioned words like bullets bark  
As human gods aim for their mark  
Make everything from toy guns that spark  
To flesh-colored Christs that glow in the dark  
It's easy to see without looking too far  
That not much is really sacred

While preachers preach of evil fates  
Teachers teach that knowledge waits  
Can lead to hundred-dollar plates  
Goodness hides behind its gates  
But even the president of the United States  
Sometimes must have to stand naked

Also “Subterranean Homesick Blues” (1965) where the words go even faster, precluding hip hop uses of rhyme and verbosity. The latter motivated a video clip in which Dylan sustains posters with words that appear during his discourse. Of course, this idea wanted to put emphasis on those words, but inherently the video and his own presence are confirming this leading role of the words in music by making of the linguistic side of his song an element to exalt the poetic drive of his music. The hyper-presence of such words could lead the audience to understand its message but at the same time, it seems to make a logogriph as well as it increases our sense of confusion regarding reality. It was the time for public demonstrations, the era of countercultural and civil rights revolution and it is evident the important role that public posters and advertisements had during all these rites. The words can be evoking the predominance of public opinions and individual realities in those convulsing times.

If we continue regarding Dylan’s strategies to conceal musicality under language, we can find examples where he makes use of a recitative tone in which, like that Philip Tagg described, “the tonal traits of song (fixed pitches) are retained and a full melodic tonal range is in operation but speech rhythm replaces that of song and there is no clear musical meter” (2013: 367-8). In this case I am thinking of the example of such songs as “I Shall Be Free No. 10” (1964) or “Only A Pawn In Their Game” (1964), especially in the following section,

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

This strategy is hard to distinguish from the latter, “speech-song”, where apparently the singer is talking more than actually singing. The ethnomusicologist Kip Lornell gives a name to those performances that are partially sung and spoken. He calls them “cante-fable” (2012), a performing technique borrowed from bluesmen. There are several occasions in Dylan’s songs during which such spoken discourse appears. For example, in “Talkin’ Bear Mountain Picnic Massacre Blues” (1962) where, as his biographer Anthony Scaduto noted, “the nine verses were spoken, with simple guitar

chords as background under the recitation, and the “blues” simply broke up the crowds” (2001: 2070) Also Epstein reflects about it,

His voice was deeper than we remembered it and less melodic, something more declamatory. He growled and shouted the words defiantly, “upsinging” the word wrong, delivering it several steps above the expected note so that it sounded like speech instead of song.  
(2011: 124)

I also have this spoken feeling during some concluding verses in the long stanzas of “Most Of The Time” (1989),

I can follow the path, I can read the signs  
Stay right with it when the road unwinds  
I can handle whatever I stumble upon  
I don't even notice she's gone  
Most of the time

The voice is so rough and its verses so contained, that he sounds as if he was speaking to himself while looking at the mirror, trying to convince himself he does not love her anymore, while it is not true. Given that his voice was increasingly drier, most people thought it was the even (Yaffe, 2011) but nonetheless, the new old voice – apparently contradictory– started declaring its position. Today most people do not think about Dylan's voice as a younger artist, “(...) what he lost in dexterity, he more than made up for in drama. Its wreckage, in fact, was crucial for the delivery” (Yaffe, 2011: 111)

While delivering messages and poetic elements, Dylan was also delivering part of his national consciousness. Gates writes his essay *The signifying monkey : A theory of African-American literary criticism* (1988) with the aim for differentiating the “signifyin(g)” elements of the Afro-American culture from those imposed by Western figures. Dylan's signifyin'<sup>98</sup>–elements rage against any type of standardization while keeping Afro-American and other ethnic traditional values alive. From African American tradition he recovered a certain voice quality, as well as many other inspiring elements. He emulated the original blues-shouters who hollered their misadventures. For example, there is a good blues song, this time a version of a famous gospel sound with the title, “In My Time Of Dyin'”, that he recorded for his first album (1962), recalling this singing style. Not just because he is shouting but rather because “he has to project a fervor and energy into their delivery that gets the audience on their feet and

creates a certain electricity in the air” as it was issued in *All About Blues Music* (2017).

Voice, in conjunction with prosody, timbre, aural staging, pitch range, register and, of course, with melody, must bear different sign types too. Daniel Mark Epstein says, "Dylan sometimes settled on a key just because of the way it made the song sound, to get a particular color or tone quality" (Epstein, 2011: 615). Along the years Bob Dylan voice also experienced an increasingly harsh sound that he dwelt with his more romantic ambitions. Like when he describes the hardships of striving for a sexual encounter as if he had "blood in his eyes for her" ("Blood In My Eyes", 1993). He sings these words, thanks to his hoarse sound, with all the violence of an aging man who wants to make love to a young girl albeit the girl is constantly rejecting him. "I got blood in my eyes for you, babe. I don't care what in the world you do." David Yaffe said about this voice that it "nailed every take. He was good at being old. He sounded like he could do it forever" (2011: 27). All his period of inspirational recovery from the 1990s onwards witnessed the profundity of such a voice as Dylan knew very well how advantageous it could be.

Clive James (1972: para.21) invites scholar research to give an argument about the real quality of Dylan's prosodic achievement, especially centered on "Dylan's handling of language" on how he became language himself disserting of his vocal mechanisms and performing painfully without aesthetics. In fact, many authors and other artists described Dylan's voice as an element that looked for a thoughtful search of metaphoric content to be as suggestively described. Philip Larkin said it was a "cawing, derisive voice" (1965)<sup>99</sup> and David Bowie described it as "a voice like sand and glue" in his "Song for Bob Dylan" from the album *Hunky Dory* (1971<sup>100</sup>). Researcher Betsy Bowden said, "it was the voice –that whining, grating, snarling voice that can drip scorn or comfort, can stretch or snap off words in disregard of their meaning or in fulfillment of it can say for the listener what she has not quite yet said for herself" (2001: 3).

- Mississippi (1997):

In order to bring a sample of Dylan's changing voice, I chose the track "Mississippi", recorded in 1997 for *Time Out Of Mind*. It was not included until Dylan made a different version for "Love & Theft" because apparently, he was not satisfied with the result. Afterward, the previously recorded performance, more acoustic, had to be included in *Tell Tale Signs: The Bootleg Series Vol. 8*.

Ever since the 1980s, Dylan used a shabbier voice with lots of texture than contrasts his young timber. On scene, it was much clearer that his past voice had died like one of his characters. Note how in the tour of 2001, available in [youtube.com](https://www.youtube.com)<sup>101</sup>, his voice abuses discourse techniques or spoken-rather-than-singing to reproduce the long venture of this song. In the border between remembrance and projection, this song is the symbolic trajectory of an innovator who regrets having stayed in the Mississippi a day too long, perhaps referring to his admiration for the folk culture of his country. However, according to other interpretations (Attwood, 2015), the lyrics repeat the regretting declaration of several prisoners songs and this situates us in political scale of interpretation where the singer reveals the true character of his homeland. It does not leave the prisoner's semantic field to use it as the metaphor of what life could mean to some of us, only an epitome of how "time is pilin' up, we struggle and we scrape. We're all boxed in nowhere to scape" which means we are all heading to mortality and, in that sense, life is anguishing and makes us stay afloat but only as we are drifting to a certain death.

His regrets are another element to think about. He does not regret his actions but he speaks in the plural as if he was voicing humanity, "So many things that we never will undo I know you're sorry, I'm sorry too." This is why his protesting skills are reproduced in a surreptitious manner because we can only interpret he is speaking on behalf of the whole nation. As Tony Attwood maintains, "In short, this is a review of what has gone wrong with America, and what could have gone right, and for this expression, the simple two guitar production is utterly perfect" (2008: para.6).

And it is important to say that he voices the wrongs of people's doings because I want to use this song as an example of how much his voice seems to have changed. Nasality is still there, but the grave and solemn tone give him the air of a chancellor a superintendent whose morals have been acquired through experience. Those attributes in combination with his new presence in the sceneries help to acquire a radically new conception of the artist and his personality, perhaps coinciding with the moment when he finally achieved his authenticity.

### 2.1.2.1.2. The Structure of the Show

Paul Williams (2005) also calls it the script and it could be repeated for several concerts, or even tours. I am referring more to his tendency to alternate between acoustic and rock, which is what the audience demanded of him during the electric period. One of the main trends in Dylan's acting was generally divided into two main sets: the acoustic and the electric. An alternate electric rhythm is played between every acoustic song. Sometimes the first part of the set the band would play rock and the second he shifted to the acoustic part. While in the acoustic set voice, guitar and harmonica played an important role, it was his voice which led the three-force coalition. Indeed, "he sang most of his songs with his eyes closed or half closed as if he were in a trance." (Epstein, 2011: 26<sup>102</sup>)

When Dylan is into the song, though, as he was here, it drives along with power and sweeps you up in the moment. He performed it in a challenging, ranting style to close the first electric set; setting a trend for this spot in NET sets to be occupied by a theatrically key song. A trend which was, with only a few exceptions, to last for a long time  
(Muir, 2013: 27)

Daniel Mark Epstein would compare one of his performances and the artist himself with Dante's journey through Hell saying, "he had done, in those minutes, exactly what he said he would do, gone to hell and returned to tell the tale. The event was illuminating –promising further illumination upon reflection– and thoroughly cathartic, a tragedy in a jewel box." (2011: 38)

Lyrics had to be understood because they urged some intention, they contained a poignant message and had a special ability to move the audience. For example, "John Brown" as played live at the New York Town Hall in 1963 and years later in the MTV Unplugged (1995) like his epic "Knocking On Heaven's Door" with such popular chord progression: "GDC". Each carries an explicit content about war effects and the concept of heroism in the patriotic USA.

According to Paul Williams (2005), Dylan's commentaries on scene, between songs, rarely take place, but when they do they seem to make a similar use of repetition and rhythmic figures in order to configure them not as simple speeches but as another extension of the songs. Besides, there were some songs that he liked playing more often than others. It is the case of this ballad titled "Barbara Allen" that he wanted to arrange

several times across his years playing live. Andrew Muir explains, ““Barbara Allen”, played in a variety of ways, was a regular standout. I swear that on some nights the way he sang the words: “Oh yes, oh yes, I’m very sick, and I will not be better” was worth the admission price along.” (2013: 37). In fact, one of his songs on the album *Tempest* (2012) was inspired by “Barbara Allen”: “Scarlet Town” and the album *Live at the Gaslight 1962* recovers one of his earliest renditions.<sup>103</sup>

- Barbara Allen (Arrangement):

Included in lots of his set lists, from 1961 to 1991, “Barbara Allen” is a seventeenth-century Scottish ballad brought by immigrants to the New World. According to ethnomusicologists Steve Roud and Julia Bishop, it is “far and away, the most widely collected song in the English language –equally important in England, Scotland and Ireland, and with hundreds of versions collected over the years in North America.” (2014: 406-7) In the *Gaslight* recording, we hear a young Dylan use his softer voice with nasal elongated syllables that finalize each verse. He presents the story of Barbara Allen, in media res, as a messenger reaches Barbara's house to tell her of the sudden agony her Sweet William who is suffering in his deathbed. He says he wants her company and when she comes to his side, he says he's dying. In Dylan's version, lovers recall a day out in the tavern as she looks west and east, which means the past and the future. Suddenly, he recognizes a horse a-riding whose rider means to take the corpse away after she has gazed upon him. In the original song, she pledges “oh mother, mother” and here it is “father, father” a more deific reference after he has certainly died. He asks him to dig her grave, for if William died for her today, she will die for him tomorrow. Then the singer describes how they were buried beside one another. From his heart, it did grow a rose and from hers a briar. This reference to the rose and the briar echoes Tom Waits homonymous song that uses this last image as its point of departure.

Dylan's voice interprets the role of an omniscient narrator who voices the characters dialogue as well. He never changes the mood of his voice, a languid and depressing tone of voice that accompanies the soft and paused role of the backup guitar. This “a capella” interpretation recalls the kind of casual executions that took place at those clubs in New York. We can almost feel the atmosphere of the setting. Its simpleness is part of a common dogma, which was shared by the revivalist movement,

that no garments or decorative melodies are needed when there is such an important story to communicate.

If some versions like “Barbara Allen” would always be granted in his shows, another aspect was the prevalent use of “Like A Rolling Stone” as a closing track. This song, “was the crowd pleasing closer” (Muir, 2013: 28) It was always due to the song’s related success and probably it was also related to the ideals the song invoked. The same ideals that once configure a period of the American history: rebellion, independence, freedom, experience, empathy and responsibility; equally important for the existentialist philosophy, as affirmed in the study *Existentialism: A Short Introduction* (2006), written by Thomas Flynn.

As with other songs he would sing in the years to come, this was one of those strange compositions, one of those uncanny performances, in which the whole of what is happening comes through instantly and irrevocably. You hear the song once, on a car radio, with the singer’s voice only two inches from your face, or at a concert, the singer many rows away but physically present— and you understand it completely. (Marcus, 2006: 18-9)

### **2.1.2.1.3. Surprises**

At a certain point in Dylan’s career, each of his shows and live experiences started to be reviewed by the Press or any official media. However, they could never predict what the singer was going to do in his following scenes and so, Marcus recognizes about his 1974 tour with The Band, that “what the press did not prepare me for was the sound, the singing, the playing, and the impact.” (2010: 44)

Bob Dylan's cryptic messages were always accompanied on scene by a secretive personality, that rarely showed any enthusiasm or made any commentary. It became an unexpected surprise if the artist ever referred to the audience, which he did on some occasions, and if he ever laughed at a scene or showed any dancing disposition.

Another key strategy that Dylan used in order to be overlooked or simply unable to be tagged under any analysis or review was to avoid playing any of the expected songs and to transform his best-known tracks in different new melodies, as I explained above. Muir prevents young writers who attend one of his concerts that,

If a writer prepare for a Dylan show by playing Bob's "Greatest Hits" or his latest album, the scribe would be lucky to recognize any of the former until the song was well underway, and in the case of the latter he might be lucky to hear any tracks from it at all at this point in Dylan's touring.

(2013: 38)

During these new renditions, the artist explores the multiple shades of his popular hits and widens the sense of the lyrics in a different context each time. As Andrew Muir marked during his "Just Like A Woman" rendition in the Never Ending Tour, "Dylan was clearly alive to the song, still exploring its possibilities, and producing all kinds of interesting stresses" (2013: 46) Viewed as a positive rediscovery of his music corpus, Robert Shelton divulged this as one of his most talented skills,

Dylan caught his live audiences and listeners off-guard with biting, punching, sometimes snarling interpretations. "Most Likely You Go Your Way" leaps out from an obscure back page of *Blonde*. "Lay, Lady, Lay" acquires a different profile. "It Ain't Me, Babe" becomes jumping soul à la Otis Redding. Frequently, Dylan seemed to be using a black soul voice, grainy but with new range and phrasing. "Mr. Jones" becomes "Mr. Jo-hones." In "Just Like a Woman," "knows" becomes "no-hose." In "Don't Think Twice," the word "right" trails off with a wounded sound. Several of the songs have "wind-up" introductions as if cranking up an old Ford that takes off like a Lamborghini. This slow smoldering works to optimum effect in "Like a Rolling Stone." There's a palpable frisson in the audience when Dylan demands to know how they "fee-heel." (Shelton, 2011: 937)

In yet another surprise, Bob never played harmonica on the 1988 tour (Muir, 2013: 28) which is one of his key accompaniments. And it certainly became a surprise to listen to him playing it in the middle of the show, without previous assumption; a gesture that the audience highly rated and related with his original and authentic persona.

Even if the show is unquestionably good, there are moments during which the listener perceives something is even more special. A moment when the interaction between public and singer is provided is when the former feels they are being referred to. As Daniel Mark Epstein expresses it, "Dylan built the suspense and volume to a climax. He had cast the tale in the second person, so that the "you" who was Hollis Brown eventually became every member of the audience" (2011: 21). These sudden climaxes are perceived as moments during which we recognize what is really taking place in front of us, and the listener reconciliations with the unreasonable, the unutterable and music's incomprehensible nature in his or her search for meaning. Most of the time songs imply an ontological understanding rather than an intelligible one. The

problem with our intelligible minds is that while any of us witnesses Dylan's performances, we are trying to find a clear explanation to all that, as Greil Marcus described around one of his most acclaimed songs, "Blind Willie McTell". "So the prophet answers his own prophecy with a mystery, not even he can explain; the singer sums up and transcends his entire career and the listener, still in the world, turns off the stereo, walk out the house and goes looking for an answer" (Marcus, 2010: 154). Of course, it is always enigmatic and surprising to find ourselves looking for the impossible interpretation of such a rendition. Susan Sontag's comprehensible study *Against Interpretation* (1966) addresses such issues and she blames the old conception of art as mimesis for making us consider that art has to justify itself. Interpretation in the pictorial art has always adduced that all art must be figurative and on a general basis, it is assumed to say something, whereas performance shows us that the question is to understand what it does. Furthermore, Sontag claims that our need for interpretation comes from a desire to resolve the discrepancies between the text and the demands of its readers (or listeners). The artwork itself, in this case, Dylan's performance, should be the one who proved meaningful "per se", rather than being the recipient of our interpretations.

Bob Dylan might have always shared Sontag's opinion, even if they never met because he has constantly tried to surprise his audience with unexpected things, turns and remade lyrics. "Again and again he has refused to give his audience what it paid for" (Marcus, 2006: 25). Also, as Marcus expresses throughout his works on Bob Dylan, the singer makes a special use of language that continuously captures the listener.

It's his ability to unsettle, to unhand the conventions by which anyone lives a life –what one expects to hear, say, be told, learn, love or hate– that defines Bob Dylan's voice in the smallest and in the greatest sense. It's the ability to bring the whole world into focus with the dramatization of a single syllable –the way the word *care* drops off its line in "High Water" like someone quietly stepping out of a tenth-story window, or being pushed –and that I've tried to follow.  
(Marcus, 2010: 19-20)

- Abandoned Love<sup>104</sup> (1975) :

Not yet released until the album *Biograph* (1985), this song is a good example of how surprises have always been an important part of Dylan's shows. Prior to its official

release, Bob Dylan played this song live at a small club in New York City, The Bitter End. People in the audience had come to see Ramblin' Jack Elliott live, and did not expect to see the appearance on stage of Bob Dylan in person.

At that moment, everyone in the room was in a trance; it's not every day one gets to hear an impromptu Bob Dylan performance in a tiny club. After a couple of lines, we realized he was performing a new song, with each line getting even better than the last. The song was "Abandoned Love," and it still is the most powerful performance I've ever heard.

(Kivak, 2000: para.3)

There is something in the lyrics of this song that reminds me of old canonic literature, specifically, to T. S. Eliot's "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" (1963<sup>105</sup>) a poem referencing music in contrast to Dylan's lyrical messages. The voice of Dylan's song, like the voice in the poem, is heading to his lover, trying to prepare himself to declare his love to her. He needs to address her that he loves her but that even if that is so, he needs to retreat for his own sake ("I've given up the game, I have to leave"). He says, "as long as I love you I'm not free. How long must I suffer such abuse". Although he speaks of his own identity most of all he does it because, like Prufrock, he seems to need some confidence in order to face up to reality. More than a "hundred indecisions" and a "hundred visions revisions" seem to be expressed in the lyrics. "My head tells me it's time to make a change, but my heart is telling me I love ya but you're strange".

The only difference with Eliot's poem is that the voice here speaks on behalf of his own character, he declares himself selfish since the song starts ("I've been deceived by the clown inside of me"). He thinks more about a way to free himself from the tortures of love than about loving someone. In fact, he is not "abandoned" by love but is the punisher who will abandon her love. One the things these two texts have in common is that both describe the love for someone who seems to be in a different social scale than the main voice. Dylan says, "won't you descend from the throne from where you sit?", repeating "from" twice as if to persuade himself they belong to different worlds and this idea is elementary in Prufrock's love song. The voice of J. Alfred Prufrock describes her society taking her garments and daily living as her most salient characteristics. He states, "And I have known the arms already, known them all -/ Arms that are braceleted and white and bare/ (But in the lamplight, downed with light brown hair)/ Is it perfume from a dress/ That makes me so digress?/ Arms that lie along a table, or wrap about a shawl". At this point, it can be almost be stated that Dylan

acknowledged this comparison and that he based his song on it because he also mentions "Take off your heavy makeup and your shawl".

Tony Attwood includes a musical perspective to this beautiful track that was illicitly recorded in the middle of the show. He says,

This song is bouncing along, and no matter what the words say it is hard to find it “yearning” or full of “grief” with such a musical background. It seems to owe more to some Irish folk songs in which the subject is death, doom, destruction, poverty etc, and yet the whole piece sounds rather jolly.  
(Attwood, 2016: para.10)

The preference for a discourse that admits explicitly the incoherencies of love, he cannot even stand her presence but, at the same time, he is aiming at watching her one last time, might be one of the reasons why the voice does not even dramatize the idea of losing her. His gaiety of spirit is not strange compared to her and their society, as he states, "Everybody is wearing a disguise to hide what they've got left behind their eyes" This paradox between the words and the musical mood is confounding, considering love is going to be abandoned but it is more astonishing in the *Biograph* (1985) version where a female voice accompanies him during a faster tempo track.

What Tony Attwood remarks in his interpretation is that apart from its unusual recording and performing process, this song is musically uncommon. It is a surprise. He explains this is so because we have an, “unexpected chord structure in which the lines don't end on the expected chord” (Attwood, 2016: para.37) It all might attest this unconventional love story where the love-renegade prefers to listen to his own inner voice and follow his own instincts rather than accepting that "the pot of gold is only a make-believe" (Dylan, 1975).

#### **2.1.2.1.4. Physical Appearance**

His physical appearance over the years, which at certain times became iconic, replicated traditional and modern types of fashion trends, like his music. It is another important issue when treating on every involved detail in music performance. While he changed his voice, he also changed his image, probably because “It wasn’t necessary for him to be a definitive person” (Maxwell, 2014: 3665) Dylan's appearance has been widely commented on and during certain more mythical eras of his music it became an icon.

Certain elements of his attire, like his black glasses or his hair, are so iconic that they can be recognized as his immediately. Additionally, they have been copied or emulated by many others. At the same time, Daniel Mark Epstein in his biography of the artist hypothesizes that,

(...) the sunglasses and sarcasm, and even Dylan's growing reluctance to speak to smile for the camera, was all theatre directed by Grossman –compelling theatre, no doubt about it, the angry young man and his mystique; that role enshrined Dylan as the coolest entertainers of the high sixties.  
(2011: 130)

Around 1963 he developed his first great change when he got slimmer and he had an ageless look. Around that time he had just come to New York, although any trace of urbanity disappeared in favor of a more wasted look, tired and ragged. As Maxwell notes, "Dylan shed his baby fat, from which emerged the gaunt, angular visage that would become iconic in the ensuing years, suddenly appearing less like a pudgy ragamuffin and more like a Jewish Woody Guthrie or James Dean." (2014: 3626) He looked in pain, among other reasons, because he was devoting the largest time to compose music and lyrics. Suze Rotolo insisted that she was afraid of his physical state, that it gave the appearance of a man who was searching for his own death. People at that time would have thought something like Scaduto writes, "(...) we'd better love him now because tomorrow he may be dead." (2001: 3715)

In 1965 shortly before his definitive two most inspirational releases, the albums *Bringing It All Back Home* and *Highway 61 Revisited*, his looks changed again:

Gone were the boots and the jeans and the work shirts. When Dylan made himself over in a new identity, he did it inside and out, and the outside was now a reflection of the sights he had seen in England: kids expressing themselves and demonstrating their disdain for authority in wild and freaky clothes. Dylan had returned with a wardrobe of the latest London mod fashions, and he came out onto the Newport stage black leather jacket, black slacks, a dress shirt, and a pointed black boots with Chelsea heels. Carrying a solid body electric guitar.  
(Scaduto, 1973: 5405)

This famous period gave Dylan an androgynous look that dominated the rock scene ever after until modernity, when still “ala Dylan” looks are used as emblems of youth culture, rebel attitudes and authenticity. Todd Haynes suggests that androgyny “was obviously evident in the Warhol Factory world and this influenced how (Dylan) dressed and behaved (...). Even if you weren't in a totally queer world, you dressed and

acted that way if you were going to be on the cutting edge" (2014: 130).

After several months had passed since his electric polemic, Dylan appeared at the beginning of his European tour, "dressed in a black suit and striped shirt with a collar clasp, and black high-heeled boots, the wind whipping his already tousled hair." (Scaduto, 1973: 5488).

Grant Maxwell (2014: 3535) refers to the artist as "constantly leaning like James Dean, had slyly cocked, leg shaking, bouncing on the balls of his feet, hands flittering and gesticulating in fractured motion, like a kind of Dadaist dance." He adds that his intellectual interests were not only made explicit through his songs but performed in his whole body. This way, we can check, as part of his artistic persona, the way he dressed during this or that period had to do with the kind of things he was composing and the way he presented himself over the scene.

The artist got even photographed in the sixties by Andy Warhol who must have found "Dylan's enigmatic posturing as part of a cultivated mystique". David Dalton adds another hypothesis,

Dylan became such an obsession for the counterculture because he so immaculately embodied its newly hatched mythologies: From folk music he brought the authenticity of a crusade, from rock the idea of a revolutionary momentum that could change the world, and from the Beats the fusion of drugs and attitude that made hipness seem like an enlightened state of being.  
(Dalton, 2012: 178)

Decades later, Dylan has developed a rebel attitude too, that of the resilient man that does not show any of his personal feelings but only act for other people's feelings voicing them and giving them the poetry of his words.

The sixty or more songs that Dylan wrote and sang in those years are full of remarkable poetry. But the attitude of the speaker is as cold, predatory, and aggressive as the younger Dylan had been magnanimous and vulnerable. It is a tonal difference of night and day.  
(Epstein, 2011: 135)

- Ballad of A Thin Man (1965):

If there is any particular song where Dylan reflects upon the physical appearance of the other is in the resounding "Ballad of A Thin Man" included on the album *Highway 61 Revisited* (1965) where alliterative questions function like a reflexive mirror where the

self-doubles in two adversative persons –the good and the evil, the moral and the immoral, the young and the old–. It is related with the looks of the protagonist as long as it is related to the iconic image of the 26-year-old international singer. After his famous Andy Warhol cinematic portrait, the documentary *Don't Look Back* (1967) directed by D. A. Pennebaker, and subsequently recovered by Martin Scorsese's *No Direction Home* (2005), we can still visualize him playing seated in front of the piano while acquiring with every repeated refrain the best remembered mischievous look of his entire trajectory. Also because, as I said above, it is one of those songs that beats up society with a series of hurting physical comparisons. The dispassionate referee is compared to animals "you're a cow. Give me some milk or else go home" and in addition is known to have many contacts among the lumberjacks, an underappreciated collective of southern inhabitants of the U.S. The dialogic domain of the lyrics and the call for an unknown Mr. Jones, made it popularly interpreted as a song that he directed towards the critics and journalists who judged his works so insignificantly. "Because something is happening here, but you don't know what it is. Do you, Mr. Jones?" However, I believe more he is judging the self when confronted against the mirror and recognized as a poor, lame and unconvincing living creature. In this sense, it is deeply metaphysical as the voice questions reality and his own existence. "How does it feel to be such a freak?" If the self is constituted by two distinct parts, these two can dialogue between themselves while they acquire their distinct voice. One represents the rationalist side and the other the artistic and mystic side that accepts that some answers are unreachable. This being known how to live with the uncertain, as opposed to the other one. What Dylan mainly does here is to confront the least rationalist side of the self with the stereotypically successful represented of the rationalist side. Described as the man who apparently has been with the professors, with the lawyers, who has read all F. Scott Fitzgerald books and who is very well read, "is well known", yet he can't discern the real from the fictional, he cannot interpret anything.

Now you see this one-eyed midget  
Shouting the word "NOW"  
And you say, "For what reason?"  
And he says, "How?"  
And you say, "What does this mean?"  
And he screams back, "You're a cow  
Give me some milk  
Or else go home"

During the period this song was launched, Dylan has already accomplished one of his most radical experiments in music. He already had devoted song's lyrics to suggest profound and lyricist images and now he was using the code of electricity to approach rock 'n' roll music. His musical looks had just changed and within this noisy outbreak of his band he recommends the rationalist kind, "you should be made to wear earphones" as if he belonged to the polemic fraction that had cried out "Judas" in his 1966 tour.<sup>106</sup>

## 2.2. Bob Dylan's Records

This thesis agrees that, "(...) recording should be integrated into discussion of Dylan's art alongside the attention devoted to lyrics, performance and biography" (Negus, 2010: 213-227) and tried to accomplish this task by introducing a whole subsection devoted to it and to how this topic will provide more ideas around the aesthetic and poetic implications of his songs.

In view of how other recognized artists, like Bruce Springsteen, highlighted the ability of the artist to overcome "the limitations of what a recording artist could achieve".<sup>107</sup> –I have collected some testimonies about how he did operate in the recording studio apart from the theoretical artistic implications of the recording song. Recording implies a marketing device, a means to transform music into a saleable product. Derived from this fact, it also means getting framed and labeled in a certain way, something Dylan tried to avoid. Indeed, Dylan's refusal of this idea is best seen in his idea of the "Jokerman" –one of Dylan's ultimate impersonators–, or the trickster figure who never wanted to give us a clear response, when even "its name is unsayable" (Piazza, 2004: 228) and he is the messiah of uncertainty.

Recordings or his "phonographic imagination", as designated by Keith Negus (2008) show how strong is his concern with keeping his music pure within the pop music system. But, what is the meaning of "phonography"? Eisenberg explains that "phonography" is any "performance that is constituted or realized in the very act of recording; the 'art of phonography' is the composite construction of an ideal event" (Negus 2008: 89<sup>108</sup>) This is demonstrated through sound, perceivable in the way he and his band transformed his performing potential to the record, on how they turn the famous term of authenticity to a concrete reality and this he does it,

(...) in a way that he always loved: with minimal invasive technology and production reduced to a minimum. Micajah Ryan recalls Dylan "being concerned with the difference between analog and digital, how digital recording was ruining modern music. At each session he worked at least two songs, doing as he had always done throughout his career: several takes in every key and tempo until he felt he got it." As a result, the record has warmth the sound, which according to the engineer, came in part from the intimacy the all shared in the studio.  
(Margotin and Guesdon, 2015: 12840)

This ritual resembles the past and is still true to his origins. As Nicholas Cook

indicated in his article “Between Process and Product: Music And/As Performance” (2001), the representation of past performances makes the recording heritage of the artist. However, Dylan once said that it wasn't in the studio where songs come alive because what's missing in those cases is an audience. Later, he explains that whatever he wanted to say, was not meant to be played forever on a record; demonstrating to what extent the artist has always put more attention to living shows rather than studio versions, which, on the contrary, are too static for a moving artist.<sup>109</sup>—He never allowed himself to feel too much technological intervention during his recording sessions. In his interview for *Playboy Magazine*, the singer said, “until now my recording sessions have tended to be last-minute affairs. I don't really use all the technical studio stuff. My songs are done live in the studio ... That's where they're alive.” (1996: 811). However, thanks to technology, such thing as the amplified loudspeaker allowed us perceiving not just his voice but “the loudness of rock” (Théberge, 2001). What's more of the most famous anecdotes in Dylan's musical career are in relation to the amplification systems, like his famous turn to rock music in 1965 during the Newport Folk Festival. It came to be known as one of the most commented episodes of his professional career, the electric Dylan controversy, when the audience and started booing the band and someone among the folk-oriented audience (a confessed Pete Seeger) tried to cut the cables that allowed them to be heard. Apparently, all the true elements helped to build the legend that we all know unless we recount all those technological elements that intervened and created the legend. Indeed, it was the amplification technology that caused the main problem as people in the audience initially complained about the fact that they couldn't properly hear the lyrics (Scaduto 2001; Dalton, 2012). All complaints began to spread and create that atmosphere of confusion that Dylan witnessed too. Eric Von Schmidt's first person explanations<sup>110</sup>—indicated that Paul Butterfield Blues Band were the ones who revealed their secret intention of including electricity in this sacred temple of traditionalism, which seduced Dylan to do so. "As far as I know Dylan was planning to use the acoustic guitar for his set Sunday night, but then realized these guys were just fantastic and they rehearsed for the show, practicing." (Scaduto, 2001: 5445). No one knew that band was going to back him up and the unexpectedness of the show produced technical maladjustments that, as a result, avoided hearing Dylan's lyrics. Von Schmidt declares that "The people who first started shouting were not putting Bobby down for playing electric; it was just that we couldn't hear him." (2001: 5459).

Dylan has always shown the interest of the artist to maintain the natural quality of a song first heard, provided that the mechanization of records could turn their messages into unperceived truths. He confessed once that, for him, “(...) songs aren’t any good unless they can be sung on stage. They’re meant to be sung to people, not to microphones in a recording studio” (1978<sup>111</sup>). In fact, there have been many people who have talked about his unusual recording sessions, especially those who witnessed it directly, like Bob Hudson, who notes how,

He often recorded his takes in fewer takes because he'd tell the band to stop if he didn't like the sound they were getting –even if he didn't always know what to do about it. His customary method involved starting a song, calling off the band if he didn't like the take, then repeating the incomplete takes till they finally made it all the way through the song and got the sound he wanted.  
(1993)<sup>112</sup>

Dylan has always been aware of the advantages of improvisation and he maintained a firm conviction around playing a song to single it out of any other apparent resemblance. For this reason, many of his recording sessions resemble a jamming ritual during which the artist is conscious of keeping them natural better than making them sound perfect, as people around those sessions recount. His ritual consists in playing differently and recording the song in the fewest attempts possible before it gets exhausted. This way it sounds fresh and belongs to that specific moment. Of course, every session involves tuning the instruments and preparing the scenario, but the improvisatory twists of the harmonica, his vocal inflections, the mood that he and the band imprint to the performance, and their body language, all add different changes and proposals. As long as Dylan has to interpret the voice of his characters and their feelings, it is much too important to rely on prime impulses, on pure direct emotions and inspiration. The transmutation of his songs in new songs can be the result of the artist’s rejection of the causes that the redundant presence of music in our lives can have over the reception of his songs. It could also be interpreted as a direct rebel act against the musical industry, or as another way to pursue major results in the artistic medium of popular songs. There exists, however, a permanent ambivalence at these respects, since Dylan –first a one-man-band– fights the artifice of music apparatus while he makes profit from its major advantages. Always a “protégée” of Columbia Record Company, he aimed at getting the most versatile and comprehensible producer, who would help him achieving his sound while leaving him some freedom. For example, around the first

recording sessions of his album *Bringing It All Back Home*, which was considered the first album out of a trilogy of his most creative period, the complexity of sound was evident. First thing he did was to enroll a band of exceptional musicians. It was as if he was saying to the audience: now linguistic meaning is not the only important element, mind the simultaneity of music and words, the feel of music plus the integration of poetic messages (Bowden, 2001). Moreover, Bob Dylan made an exemplary use of timing when he decided that the musicians started playing slightly ahead or behind the beat in order to incorporate suggestive syncopations and polyrhythms that would add more complexity to the whole track (Maxwell, 2014).

Bob Dylan's avoidance of repetitive performances is well known at the stage, but it was also present during his recording sessions. He's keen to that idea that art should be aware of its surprising capacity and be able to keep its essence, even if the consuming levels in the popular music industry could wreck the musical ritual. He must regard this phenomena like John Rahn's idea that "lively" repetition is related to transformation to the extent that its "sense is dependent on repetition, without which nothing can be recognized" (1993: 50, 53). Rahn goes further saying this gives an idea of our longing for life and not for death. Bob Dylan foresees a symbolic death in the way mechanical reproduction can put an end to music communicative experience and the start of automated practices. He understood the maxim of Walter Benjamin (2006<sup>113</sup>), about the work of art's "aura" and how, in order to keep this, he should relate both an "enhanced experience associated with a unique, irreproducible work of art". This way he could guarantee his spontaneity. The philosophy of avoiding some kind of damaging repetition is, to a certain extent, incompatible with the recording process and the audience expectations. Although it should be pondered that the element of repetition in music plays a paradoxical role. According to many musicology experts, like William Brooks, "recording enabled music to be heard again, passed directly to associates or descendants, but they also devalued the acts of listening of performance. Only a unrecordable music carried an aura of uniqueness." (2006: 348). Besides that ontological aspect of recordings, what Dylan did use in terms of repetition are iterative figures and patterns (musematic and linguistic) that contrast with the previous anti-replica statement around performance. These powerful mechanisms of repetition add up to the industrial repetition derived from recording technology systems and they can be aimed at aesthetic and rhetorical affairs that most generally participate in inducing us to revisit that place in our memory over and over again.

Every act of reproduction, thanks to recording technology, has, as a result, another possibility of repeating the songs as much as we want. Indeed, records will continue repeating or bringing to mind –not just the songs we have heard– but the instant of performance that took place in front of us. Records will provide music its mythic quality, assuming their ritualistic behavior.

Technology plays a major role in the issue of recording and reproduction. The main advance that signaled the development of the recording industry and which allowed Bob Dylan to reach a worldwide audience, was the multi-track tape recorder (1943) parallel to the invention of stereo sound. The tape recorder provided the opportunity for listening to music in any kind of particular experience. Along with the stereo and other music reproduction systems, it made music a subjective practice. According to Paul Théberge's study in *The Cambridge Companion to Pop and Rock*, "Plugged In: Technology and Popular Music" (2001: 4), "It is not simply a technical process of sound production and reproduction. It is also a compositional process and is thus central to the creation of popular music at the most fundamental level."

Dylan's most experimental use of the multi-track tape recorder took place during the famous *Basement Tapes sessions*, that stand as one of the most important in-the-flesh records of those first years. The session took place just during his tour hiatus from 1965 to 1974. Actually, the recording sessions occurred in Woodstock, 1967 in The Band's rented pink house.

At first, they just played old folk, blues, and R&B songs, but Dylan quickly began writing again, composing lyrics on a typewriter at the kitchen table. He was just as prolific as ever, recording up to fifteen songs a day, some of them improvised over traditional chord changes. Organist Garth Hudson captured the proceedings on Robbie Robertson's Uher multi-track tape recorder.  
(Schinder, Scott, and Schwartz, 2007: 197)

Technology could have produced some inherent qualities to its users. For example, after the use of long plays and vinyl technology, singers were given the opportunity of creating longest musical or lyrical statements in his songs. Of course, no one had still used it to its fullest before Bob Dylan. As Starr and Waterman (2006) explain, the first longest album capacities in the 50s and 60s weren't used by the artists, who used that extra time with bad fillers. Well, Bob Dylan did. In the words of Robert Shelton, "Dylan broke the pop convention that the album track should be limited to the length of a three-minute single. He inaugurated what was known by the late 1960s as

the “heavy” album track.” (2011: 599). In that sense, he would take those advantages as an opportunity to produce something new in the American popular music panorama. “Technology doesn’t determine the decisions made by a musician or an audience, but it can make a particular range of choices available to them.” (Starr and Waterman, 2006: 7).

Bob Dylan recorded in the studio more than 40 original albums, but counting on published live shows, the bootleg series and greatest hits they make 69 released albums, until January 25, 2016, when this work began to be written.<sup>114</sup>—During the recording sessions of his first album, *Bob Dylan* (1961), some of his permanent attitude towards this ritual are witnessed for the first time. Albert Hammond’s opinions about the sessions were explained in Shelton’s *No Direction Home* (2011: 280) where the manager says, “He remained outwardly cool, putting down most of his songs in less than five takes. A few songs came off in a remarkable two takes; even Sinatra would do a dozen just to warm up.” In his second album, *The Freewheelin’ Bob Dylan* (1963) and I would say during the first five years of his career, there is a sense that records should be a true reflection of his performances. They distil that quality of naturalness and spontaneity so different from other artists. In this album, the song “Bob Dylan Blues” starts with the singer’s talk. As if he was on scene, introducing the song to his listeners, he says, “and like most of the songs nowadays have been written uptown, at Tin Pan Alley, that’s where most of the folk songs come nowadays, and this, this isn’t a song that was written up there, this is written somewhere in the United States”. He speaks about the origin of his songs like he was predicting the overt reaction of “Deja vú” that his songs will lead them to. He acknowledges the story of Tin Pan Alley music, how it was created for the general appeal and how it built on a particular industry. This industry, dependent on records, produced less improvised material and their sound was arranged and intervened by producers that are why he does not want to be related to that. Instead, Dylan was closer to jazz music styles in that he is keen on the unpredictable quality of performances that he transferred this to his recording sessions too.

Luckily for him, his rituals in the studio were very well received by John H. Hammond and Tom Wilson, his producers at Columbia Records Company. However, the short rehearsals and record intents on the part of Bob Dylan were also due to Columbia exigencies. Before his 1964 album, the record company marked a date of released and producer Tom Wilson pressured the velocity of the whole process. According to Scaduto’s data, the planned to record the album in just one take.

He confesses after *Another Side Of Bob Dylan* had been released (1964), “What I was trying to do on my fourth album, on *Another Side Of Bob Dylan*—well, I was just too out of it, man, to come across with what I was trying to do. It was all done too fast. All done in one session. I liked the idea of it.”<sup>115</sup>

After track five, we can listen to similar sang-as-spoken songs where the cynical lyrics produce some laughs during the recording session, laughs that we can hear in *Talking World War III Blues*. This feeling of spontaneous recording is felt through the modulations of the harmonica, left to yield occasional emotions and feelings (listen to the harmonica solo in minute 3: 17). Starr and Waterman (2006: 148-149) remarked that,

(...) this record is, for all intents and purposes, simply a document of a live studio performance –with minimal, of any, editing or obvious “production” effects. Dylan has remained true to this kind of sound ideal throughout his recording career, eschewing the highly produced sound typical of so much 1960’s (and later) rock.

At the start of “Restless Farewell”, the final track of his following album *The Times They Are A-Changin’* (1963) Bob Dylan is heard coordinating the beginning of his song for a few seconds.

Contrary to Simon and Garfunkel’s albums that could take months to be recorded, as it was said in different sources (Shelton, 2011), Dylan’s were performed a few times and that was all. He took a relaxed attitude toward this process, relying on the force of an instant. The peak of one-take-oriented recordings, in the limits of face-to-face documentary experience, took place during the sessions that gave way to *The Basement Tape* –1<sup>st</sup> edition– in 1975.<sup>116</sup>–All these sessions took place in a familiar context, in the pink house that The Band and had rented in Woodstock, and where they played old hits of folk and country music. During their performances a reel to reel tape recording that was barely unnoticed reported the evidence of one of what would become one of the most popular events in folk music and the starting point of folk-rock music.

Lastly, he has experienced another milestone recording, his thirty-sixth studio album *Shadows In The Night* (2015) which, apart from being recorded live, it took place at Capitol Record’s Studio B in Los Angeles where Sinatra had also recorded albums.

Listening to these tracks, the reader can perceive that sense of revival hootenanny where voices make a theatrical interpretation “a la Bertolt Brecht”. There is a blend between phonic and melodic sounds and a tone of celebration. They seemed to

be celebrating that they had built a symbolic settlement some place between traditional American sounds and popular music where they could enjoy both parts and use them as their own language. Robert Shelton confirms this idea saying, “The LP carries an overwhelming impression of the joy of jamming, right along with flawed ensembles, rough-hewn singing, unkempt instrumentalism, disbalances, distortions, the lot.” (2011: 830) And he continues numbering the amazing list of styles replicated in the album,

(...) this album could have been titled “Roots.” What a massive catalog of chanteys, old blues, early rock, and truck-driver, hoedown, gospel, and folk songs! Consider how much “Odds and Ends” owes to Fats Domino. Or “Orange Juice Blues” to early 1950s R&B. There is parody and toying with clichés  
(2011: 832)

The period of experimental exploration wasn’t separate from his recollection of traditions, even during his most revolutionary years –revolutionary belonging to the artistic forms more than to politics–, his music was something similar to other’s kind of music, and cultural iconography. Authenticity, whose permanent role in Dylan’s career has been profoundly reviewed in this thesis, belongs first to white young interpreters who rendered their music to revisions of the past and to emulate other ethnic folk music and second to Dylan’s status of autonomy in music.

### 2.3. Authenticity

There have been many discussions about the author's multiple impersonations throughout his voice and performances for years. Although trying to see how this playing and acting phenomena take place during his performances, it can be stated that the whole philosophy of his works drives towards a definition of the individuality; what it is that makes us unique and how everyone is at liberty to do what they consider appropriate or ideal. Bob Dylan's *casa* made this statement one of his most important ones, in terms of art and existence. He includes ontological statements, either explicitly or through a wide-ranging area of topics, "I and I. In creation where one's nature neither honors nor forgives. I and I. One says to the other, no man sees my face and lives" ("I And I", 1983) Additionally he epitomizes, from the point of view of the listener, the preliminary conditions of the authentic artist, as distinguished by Allan Moore, "artists speak the truth of their own situation; that they speak the truth of the situation of (absent) others; and that they speak the truth of their own culture, thereby representing (present) others." (2002: 209)

Authenticity is a term mainly borrowed from existentialism, ethics, the folk revival, Americanism, Dylanites, Beat culture and the American mythology. The term "authenticity" is not only present within the music of Bob Dylan but in many other standpoints. "Dylan's ambition –like that of all other possessed egomaniacs– Sinatra, Bogart, Einstein, Picasso– was to implant an indelible image of himself in our heads." (Dalton, 2012: 329)

The idea of authenticity is not only a recurrent element of his works and public manifestations, but it works in this thesis –as it has been observed– as a linking element that puts in common different areas: philosophy, sociology, the pragmatics of communication, sociology, music, etc. Some of the most compelling ideas around Dylan's appropriation of the term lead me to the possibility that he was configuring the ideal of authenticity (as stated by the philosopher Charles Taylor, 1991) in order to counteract the fearsome individualism of our era. However, I have also observed that perhaps he took it because it was a prerequisite of the folk and rock community –as related to the music industry and the show business–. That idea permeated so profoundly in the society of musical consumerism that the author felt free for playing with its connected sense of reliability and the overall idea of truth and fiction in his music, always thinking about songs as communicative satisfactory suppliers.

In fact, one of the leading roles of being and seeming authentic has a huge effect in the area of communication or the rhetoric of songs. If songs were analyzed from the pragmatic point of view, perhaps it would be observed that the term somewhat plays a coherent and cohesive role in the song speech that makes them be tantamount of one big communicative type of text, as it will be observed in the following chapters. As Keir Keightley explained once, “authenticity is a value, a quality we ascribe to perceived relationships between music, socio-industrial practices, listeners or audiences.” (2001: 130)

Finally, it is also a term that empowers to a great extent the role of the artist as a god-like figure and that, as it has been observed by Virginia DeJani (2013<sup>117</sup>)—executive director of the US Arts Academy—, is one of his main accomplishments. His hand is like the poet’s as it was described by the applauded Arthur Rimbaud. It “guides the pen” and “is worth the hand that guides the plough” (2011: 7). Indeed, the metaphor of the artist as the plougher is revealing in terms of how his work puts together America’s most important symbols and emblematic traditional music styles with his unique song style. Also, there is a linguistic expression worth referring to in relation to the phrase that says, “to plow a lonely or one’s own” and which means something like “being able to follow your own course of action independently from your society’s judgment.”<sup>118</sup> That phrase holds the secret of Dylan’s evolution as an artist and it also illustrates his self-determination. He certainly epitomizes the idea of that man who takes a divergent path in the American popular music scene in order to win his place in the worldwide music scene. In fact, in many of his songs, he moralized premises such as, “Stay free from petty jealousies/ Live by no man’s code/ And hold your judgment for yourself” (“I Am A Lonesome Hobo”, 1968).

To sum up, this chapter will describe the origin of the term “authenticity” at the heart of the existentialist movement, from the philosophical and cultural point of view, and it will connect it, thanks to social studies like Charles Taylor’s *The Ethics of Authenticity* (1998) and Keir Keightley’s “Reconsidering Rock” (2001), with Dylan’s context starting in the 1960s during which time there is a revitalization of existentialist ideas as boosted by the civil rights movements. After that, it will be hypothesized about Dylan’s projected idealism through his song’s texts and performances and the important adherence to reliability and trueness for a brief sketching of the rhetorical power of songs.

### 2.3.1. The Origin of the Term

In as much as there is a certain kind of authenticity connected to the American tradition, this study has to differentiate first the cultural and traditional idea of that term, which Barry Shank (2002) considered artificial, the existentialist-borrowed definition and Bob Dylan's posterior elaborations on the term.

Initially driven by the virtue of being authentic as described by the folk revivalist regionalism<sup>119</sup> (Donaldson, 2011) The authentic individual is someone who reveals the naturalist side of the common people –their vision of life and their surveillance–. Inspired by that model, the singer sang about the glories of the cowboy, the housemaid, the wandered, etc.

The concept of personal development flourished on college campuses and among popular culture figures. Part of this intellectual climate was the rejection of expectations, either real or imagined, that society foisted on the young. Boxing great Muhammad Ali exclaimed, "I don't have to be what you want me to be. I'm free to be what I want."

(Taylor and Israelson, 2015: 94)

During many of his initial public statements, he showed his compromise with social activism and with having a sense of place. As C. K. Konrad explained, "For Dylan to be 'true' or authentic was an essential element to his writing" (2010: 9) It is as if he examined his own authenticity and society's authenticity through the process of music making. Professor of popular music in America, Grant Maxwell also noted how "Dylan's primary drive seems always to have been this search for mature authenticity, for both his music and his physical and verbal personas to be expressions of his intrinsic and ever-changing self." (2014: 3052)

He had inherited this idea of being authentic from the existentialist philosophy which he took from his reading of Albert Camus, Brecht's theater, etc<sup>120</sup>. All these authors borrowed the idea from European philosophers like Kierkegaard, Sartre, Nietzsche and Heidegger who had an impact in the worldwide panorama of arts and literature, like the beat writers, symbolist poetry, etc. One of the leading existentialist prerogatives is to impart your own meaning to life issues<sup>121</sup> – and that is a lesson of the American credo. Note what the father of transcendentalism, Ralph Waldo Emerson, had done before. We can easily trace a link between the way the singer describes natural elements –as a means to escape social restrictions and to portray American's fairly

recognized landscapes— and Emerson's *Nature* (1836) Like Margotin and Guesdon wrote, “the influence is evident of the poet and leader of the transcendentalist movement of the mid-nineteenth century, (...) for whom individualism must be inspired by nature a for whom a ‘foolish consistency is the hobgoblin of the minds’” (2015: 2091) There is a significant reference to Thomas Paine, the promoter of liberalism and democracy in “As I Went Out One Morning” (1968), a man “who placed the rights of man at the center of revolutionary thought” (Margotin and Guesdon, 2015: 5954).

It can be regarded as such kind of authenticity because so it is reflected in the lyrics of most of his songs and themes. He has always been concerned with being a freethinker individual while he held confusing ideas about life's meaning, death and the metaphysical. Like the heading lines of "All Along the Watchtower" (1974) illustrate,

“There must be somewhere out of here” said the joker to the thief  
“There’s too much confusion, I can’t get no relief  
Businessmen, they drink my wine, plowmen dig my earth  
None of them along the line know what any of this is worth.”

This confusion drove some of his songs to put different opposing terms, like David Dalton stated (2012), cohabiting with each other. As Daniel Mark Epstein asserts, "Dylan had established himself not only as a sex symbol in the mold of James Dean; he had also been set up as the rebel poet, the existentialist outsider who disdains conventional politics, education, manners and morals" (2011: 163) His reflections about the present-day situation and his ironic mood have no precedent. Regardless that one of its main objectives of our individualistic society is to be permanently conscious of one's existence and being true to it, the young artist explored the sense of responsibility first and used it as a lever to raise a civic consciousness in the so-called democratic society. Diversity and humanism were among the leading ideas that permeated through his first works, especially during that period when protest songs called for everybody's social awareness on matters such as racism, religion, power, etc. Songs like "Ballad of Hollis Brown" (1963), "The Lonesome Death of Hattie Carroll" (1964), "Only a Pawn in Their Game" (1964), "Percy's Songs" (1966), "Seven Curses" (1964), show his compromise with these topics.

His idea of authenticity added to the preconception of singer-songwriters as complete artists, while the term alludes to a kind of artist whose intention is staying somewhat outside of the market interests. For all this, singer-songwriters' role could be

taken as that of poets in the literary venue. Not only because of both play with words and the emotive function of language, but because they both have a true artistic commitment and both are regarded as sharing the same social status. They seem to be equally indifferent to materialism than to social recognition, Because they seem to be guided by an abstract but powerful image of who they want to be and how much they enjoy writing, singing, composing, etc. As Regina Bendix formulated it, "the quest for authenticity is a peculiar longing, at once modern and anti-modern. It is oriented towards the recovery of an essence whose loss has been realized only through modernity and whose recovery is feasible only through methods and sentiments created by modernity" (Bendix, 1997: 7-8).

Like his role giving voice to certain civil causes, his idea of authenticity was so much in harmony with Taylor's approach to the ideal ethics of authenticity (1991). One which could separate the individual as unique without damaging the principles of social relativism and responsibility. His ideas on that sense led him to create a particular language out of the traditional forms of America as an inspiration.

Firstly, the young artist molded his identity to the requisites of the folk community, especially since he has been recently arrived in New York City and, like Holden Caulfield, although he had nobody to buzz, he wanted to act by himself. He rapidly caught the sense of what being authentic was for that specific context and he decided to transgress it. It is something similar to what Keightley expresses in the next lines,

Folk authenticity refers to musical experiences that are valued as unalienated and uncorrupted 'anti-mass' pleasures which were perceived to be musically pure, genuine and organically connected to the community that produces them. By emphasizing roots, tradition, the communal and the rural (...) folk pursued musical authenticity as a bulwark against the alienation of mass society.  
(2001: 121)

In a way, his role arranging part of the folk music past helped him to understand what he needed from every single element of his preceding music. It seems for him, as for David Dalton, "folk songs are sacred texts in which you could divine the mythic past of America and its fate" (2012: 311) because folk songs helped Dylan prognosticate which step was coming next in artistic terms and then, ingeniously, suggesting new ideas. In fact, many people took a stand against Bob Dylan's apparent authenticity and he was believed to have utilized people and their influence, especially in the folk scene,

for reaching his objectives with respect to rock music and mainstream culture. Her many critics put in question everything that makes his music unique and everything other fans attributed to his music.

Secondly, authenticity's meaning was seen as comparable to terms such as originality and experimentalism. That is why he constantly fought against conventions and, I would add, against the audience's expectations. The same way Bob Dylan represents several other paradoxes –that make his artistic persona very difficult to define– if we look at how much he abhors being labeled it could be stated that he used ambivalence to try to escape any indolent trivialities.

One of the main paradoxes, one that boosted my interest in his works in the first place, was to guess how does his experimental standpoint cohabit with the concept of entertainment especially as it was understood by rock and roll music and the overall popular music domain. Indeed, he once described himself as a "song and dance man" a dual title that acknowledged the performing dimension of his works so characteristic of the entertainment business. According to Grant Maxwell's study around the philosophy of rock and roll,

(...) despite the depth of purpose that the genre enacted, the explicit focus of the music has always been enjoyment, for rather than being incidental to the genre's meaning, it is because rock and roll is enjoyable that it has been such profound force for liberation from cultural constraint and for the development of novel experiential forms.  
(2014: 1061)

In my opinion, the singer used the idea of “authenticity”, so proper among the philosophy and culture of his time, to search for his self- realization. Because, as Arthur Rimbaud wrote, “I is another” (2004) and so was Dylan’s search ultimately focused in revealing the most determinant faces/voices of his existence. His attributed multiplicity of character, his masquerading, albeit apparently contradictory, is the only way to reach an ontological truth. As Dalton states, “the public and private Dylan –his music, his times, and our perceptions of him– are inextricably linked, a sort of Zeitgeist Kid.” (Dalton, 2012: 2) It is through the appropriation of other’s voices that the individual takes its unique form. Like an actor, “you make a song real by becoming the character – the voice– who’s singing it. Dylan’s shedding and adopting of characters (dramatized in the 2007 film *I’m Not There*) is a form of authentic counterfeit– the minstrel as Hamlet” (Dalton, 2012: 1-2).

There is a constant access to the authentic *ethos* of his characters while he is

trying to give meaning to the song. As Ellen Willis concluded in her commentary *The Sound of Bob Dylan*, "Dylan's songs bear the stigmata of an authentic middle-class adolescence; his eye for detail, his sense of humor and his sense at evoking archetypal sexual skirmishes, show that some part of him is off, as well as in the world" (Ellis, 1967: 71).

Transparency is something that must have influenced him as it was delivered in the arts by other honest voices before him, such as the songwriter Woody Guthrie or his lifelong worshiped bluesmen, as opposed to politicians and authorities of any kind, more related to hypocrisy. Also, his interest could have been motivated by such general recognized values of honesty and humanism as those related to the figure of the singer-songwriter. The father of talkin' blues, Woody Guthrie, wondered about the transcendent and curative power of truth over people and society in the following lines, Initially, Bob Dylan's obstinacy in being authentic does not differ from the American popular music conscience that aims at linking "performers and audiences in the remaking of traditions" and "in the collective construction of identities and histories." (Shank, 2002: 99) but later he followed a process of self-discovery that led him to create and interpret certain types of characters and not others: Jokerman, the Jack of Hearts, etc. He then started separating from their artificial concept of authenticity and playing with this term by combining it with images of apocalypse and nihilism that could seem ugly and unpleasant to folk revivalists.

And though her eyes are fixed upon  
Noah's great rainbow  
She spends her time peeking  
Into Desolation Row.  
(Dylan, 1965)

It seems there is a big separation between, "oh my name it ain't nothing, my age it means less" ("With God On Our Side", 1964) and "I was raised in the country, I been workin' in the town, I been in trouble ever since I laid my suitcase down" ("Mississippi", 2000) but both texts identify with the unknown members of the American society, the people about whom Woody Guthrie did refer in the lyrics of his songs too. They both went the source of the true men and women, who like true stories give a sense of comfort to their audience,

Does the truth help to heal you when you hear it? Does a clean mind make a sick body

well? Sometimes. (...) Yes, I could talk. Did that make them get well? What are words, anyway? If you tell a lie with words, you cause all kinds of people to get sick. If you tell people the real truth they get together and they get well. Was that it?  
(Guthrie,1943:164)

The notion of “truth”, according to the New Deal party members of the urban folk society is similar to the romantic consideration of poets like John Keats (“Ode to a Grecian Urn”) and Schiller, who considered the values of nature, existence and beauty commonly related to the virtue of truth and who thought about the artist as an outcast and a hero of his time. Dylan has also played with the notion of “truth” and he put it into question. This machination seems to play with the overestimation of truth as applied to facts and answers. “I’d say people will always believe in something if they feel it to be true. Just knowing it’s true is not enough. If you feel in your gut that it’s true, well, then, you can pretty much assured that it’s true.” (Dylan, 2012: 1054) At the same time, listeners are boosted unto learning to live with a certain degree of incertitude,

A question in your nerves is lit  
Yet you know there is no answer fit  
To satisfy, insure you not to quit”  
 (“It’s Alright Ma, I’m Only Bleeding” 1965)

The most equivocal thinking regarding truth in his works is the fact that he could be speaking about himself and his own experiences –a general belief among the critics–. He always opposed to this belief saying, “I don’t write confessional songs. Emotion’s got nothing to do with it. It only seems so, like it seems that Lawrence Olivier is Hamlet...”<sup>122</sup> Maybe that is why "she said / Don't waste your words, they're just lies" ("Fourth Time Around", 1966), because Dylan is more than conscious that words are literal artifices too, ways of masquerading yourself and people's reality. Therefore, Dylan explores the limits of language, whether they are nothing but communicational elements or musical and suggestive representations of the self. "At times there are no words / But these to tell what's true / And there are no truths outside the Gates of Eden" (1965) He seems to inherit the same understanding of truth that relies on the following Nietzsche's explanation, where the existentialist philosopher wonders,

What then, it truth? A movable host of metaphors, metonymies and anthropomorphisms; in short, a sum of human relations which have been poetically and

rhetorically intensified, transferred and embellished and which, after a long usage seem to people to be fixed, canonical and binding. They are metaphors that have come worn out and have been drained of sensuous force, coins which have lost their embossing and are now considered as metal and no longer as coins.  
(Nietzsche, 1979)<sup>123</sup>

Indeed, this idea of words, music, and arts getting increasingly wasted by use, is cohesive with Dylan's works, where concepts are as moveable –specially the idea of love– as his reinterpreting performances.

Finally, "authenticity" is also a concept related to the leftist movement that grew out of the New Deal and the 1960s counter-cultural movements in the US and which became transferred to the folk movement. According to author Barry Shank, "Dylan managed for a short while to articulate the artificial union of both" the terms of autonomy and authenticity. He explains that "the white branch of the New Left believed in the possibility of uniting autonomy and authenticity –individual freedom and social connection" (2002: 102-3). What's more, the rock 'n' roll philosophy always moved in dialectical terms, like him, some of which had been distinguished by Richard Meltzer, "arrogance – vulnerability, innocence–evil are probably the most basic temporal dialectics in rock (as opposed to *a priori* dualities or duality-identities such as awesome-trivial)" (1987: 68) Dylan's epistemological play made his ideas circle around two apparently contradictory terms, truth and lie –"All the truth in the world adds to one big lie" ("Things Have Changed" 1999)–, although other important dialectical terms of his works are: autonomy and vulnerability, love and hate, morality and legality, virtuosity and responsibility, reason and madness, life and death –"find out something only dead men know" ("Silvio", 1988), question and answer.

### **2.3.2. Authenticity in the World of Music**

Before the repeated echo of authenticity had driven me to analyze its important effect in music, people like Keir Keightley or Simon Frith had made this topic the center of their musicologist researches. In "Reconsidering Rock", Keightley explores the importance of authenticity for experiencing music and musical identities in the U.S. This is valid for different genres starting with the folk scene and moving to rock music, where the element of authenticity is reasserted to its ultimate limits. He claims that it "designates

those music, musicians and musical experiences (that) seem to be direct and honest, uncorrupted by commerce, trendiness, derivativeness, a lack of inspiration and so on” (2001: 130)<sup>124</sup>

For all these reasons, it is a term that has been always associated with Bob Dylan, even if he was at the head of market sales –like he has been during a great part of his life– when everything he touches immediately becomes a treasured object.

Authenticity is not just referred to music, "it requires a sense of music's external contexts and a judgment of the 'objective' effect on music of such factors as record company marketing strategies, music-making technologies or the ongoing history of music's broader stylistic changes" (Keightley, 2001: 130). So, Bob Dylan might be judging at once who is Bob Dylan and what is the image that Bob Dylan wants to give to his audience, aided by the important role of music producers and managers among who the most relevant names are Albert Grossman, John Hammond, Tom Wilson, Bob Johnston, Don Devito, Daniel Lanois, Jerry Wexler and Barry Beckett.

He even reached the point when he had to develop a second identity or alter ego devoted to the production enterprise. He became Jack Frost, and he appeared for the first time in his album *Under The Red Sky* (1990), then in *Time Out of Mind* (1997) –co-produced with Daniel Lanois–, *Love & Theft* (2001), *Modern Times* (2006), *Together Through Life* (2009), *Christmas In The Heart* (2009), *Tempest* (2012) and *Shadows In The Night* (2015).

Robert Shelton declares that Bob Dylan was aware of each and every movement he should make, to the extreme of preparing the kind of answers he gave to the press or the determinant turns to electricity right after the publication of his album *Bringing it All Back Home* (1965).

Even if Bob Dylan had become a big name, people monitored all the artist's movements and tested his authenticity over and over again. The year before the Newport definitive festival when he switched to rock, he leads another polemic that put in question his authenticity in the eyes of the folk community. Anthony Scaduto explains what happened in the biography of the artist (2001). Following the act of censorship that was decreed to his song "Talking John Birch Paranoid Blues" (1963) that the company refused to include in Dylan's second album, Bob Dylan was accused of being just a puppet of the big record company that had been representing him since 1962, only a year after he arrived in New York. The song was not released until the appearance of *The Bootleg Series Vol. 1-3: Rare And Unreleased* (1990) and it wasn't

the only case of refusal. Apparently, Dylan had accepted this and other censoring acts on behalf of the contract he had signed with Columbia Records and which gave them that right. Scaduto (2001: 3546) defended the author explaining,

Dylan was relatively powerless, a kid with a lot of promise but no real influence. If the fuss over the Birch song had occurred in 1965 when Bob Dylan was a power, when his albums each grossed over a million dollars and his songs were being recorded by everyone, it is likely he could have won the argument. But not in 1963. His first album had been a flop. He had no track to record as a moneymaker. If he was going to record for anyone he had to record for Columbia, on Columbia's terms. He had no choice but to accept the decision.

This fact raises the same problems to form the point of view of folk's idea of authenticity than his late decision of taking advantage of rock's electricity in order to combine it with his unique style. Did his refusal of the folk credo sacrifice his authenticity? Or, on the contrary, did this ultimate act enthroned him as the most authentic artist?

Perhaps Dylan was not as considered for his Guthrie's resemblances as for his blues ones, which were less perceived. The fact that this music style had sprung among the disdained black minorities made it harder for their music genres to reach fame and glory. Before that happened, Dylan had already valued the personality and uniqueness of such artists as Blind Lemon Jefferson, Son House, Robert Johnson, Little Walter, etc. This is made evident in small details, careless details of maneuver during his performances and his recordings, when the listener hears a cough, a laugh or an instrument out of tune, or he sings a word out very loudly, etc. All of them stem from the idea of being true, being honest and singing unpretentiously.

Needless to say, no one in those days told him how to sing, either. If it was a blues number with an allegory vaguely inspired by Moby-Dick, Dylan would dig deep into Howlin' Wolf and Herman Melville, emerging a blues-based obsessive literature reader on amphetamines and brilliance.  
(Yaffe, 2011: 10)

The harder task for any theoretician who tries to explain this term and its role in music is to define its presence in the works and career of the artist. The abstract quality of the term, along with the fact that it is related to the self, makes it become a dangerous assumption that only the subject of the hypothesis should confirm. "Authenticity is not something 'in' the music, though it is frequently experienced as such, believed to be

actually audible and taken to material form" (Keightley, 2001: 130) It is as playful as the term of repetition, which according to Deleuze is something "that disguises itself in constituting itself" or "that which constitutes itself only by disguising itself" (1994:18). Both are terms that must be represented in order to be observed.

Dylan described it himself when he talked about another folk-revivalist members that he admired during his first period and who accompanied him during many musical anthologies. I am talking about The New World Singers the epitome of folk "authenticity". Of that kind that Dylan also represented,

(...) they ain't no tin pan alley put together the group -  
they ain't been sucked in or swallowed down or drawn under by the money eaters -  
their kind a music ain't the brainstorm of the halfwit hit office boys -  
they ain't singin' to sell soap suds -  
their kind a songs ain't worked over an' layed out by no music factory an'  
their singin' ain't spat out a any IBM machine -  
they ain't wearin' no song they sing as their own private expensive suit -  
they ain't changin' no songs cause Mr. Sense a Style tells 'm to ....  
they sing like they are -  
They sing like they know who they are  
They sing like the Ol' Almanacs used to sing  
They sing like the Memphis Jug Band used to sing  
They don' have to prove nothin' to nobody  
They don' have no row to hoe  
They got a new world to win (...)  
(Dylan, 1963)<sup>125</sup>

In fact, one of the best indexes of Dylan's work toward authenticity can be deduced from the kind of people he admired and shaped his music. His recognition of their individual value accounts for his sensibility and artistic disposal.

Sociologist David Grazian presents the dichotomy surrounding the term "authenticity",

First, it can refer to the ability of a place or event to conform to an idealized representation of reality: that is, to a set of expectations regarding how such a thing ought to look, sound and feel. At the same time, authenticity can refer to the credibility or sincerity of a performance and its ability to come off as natural and effortless.  
(2003: 10-11)

### **2.3.3. Authenticity in Other Cultural Manifestations**

Cineastes, critics, writers, and fans have distinguished this and various other morphological aspects of his music as well as other meaningful signs, basing all of them

in the evasive nature of the artist and its tendency to act like an alibi of the myth he has already become, "but I'm not there, I'm gone" ("I'm Not There", 1956). People must have asked themselves at some point whether his constant metamorphosis is the opposite of being authentic. Christopher Ricks (2004: 381) said that the listener is "again and again confronted with one of Dylan's quirks of wording or phrasing or condensing or sentencing, you find yourself having to choose between having faith and having unbelief and there is no neutral ground." As Todd Haynes showed in his movie *I'm Not There* (2007), Dylan had a "black self, a symbolist poet self, an outlaw self, a misogynistic matinee idol self, and, for a spell, a preacher self." (Yaffe, 2011: 47) However, is it "authenticity" opposed to masks and concealment? Because, from the point of view of philosophers, folklorists, and ethnomusicologists, "authenticity" describes more a process of self-fulfillment only achievable through the recognition of the different selves. Charles Taylor says that even if "authenticity is clearly self-referential" it doesn't mean "that on another level the content must be self-referential (..) I can find fulfillment in God, or a political cause or trading the earth" (1991: 82) As Dylan stated once, he "didn't have too much of a concrete identity... I'm a rambler – I'm a gambler. I'm a long way from home."<sup>126</sup>

Today the theme of authenticity surrounds his world of influence to such an extent that other authors had turned inspiration towards this idea. Anne Waldman wrote a poem from her experience on the Rolling Thunder Tour where she calls him "Shaman" repetitively, like in prayer. In "Shaman Hisses You Slide Back Into The Night" in his volume of poetry *Kill or Cure* (1994), the author enumerates the various signs showing Bob Dylan's shamanic, charismatic and authentic qualities. She even makes some wordplay quoting some manias of the singer-songwriter. Like when she says "shaman, may I ask another question" acknowledging the multiple interrogations in Dylan's music (an aspect included in this thesis). Other remarkable verses for the following "authenticity" tribute, are, "shaman hypnotizes us", "shaman wields the power", etc. The poems finish with an ironical verse fruit of a wordplay that reflects upon the artificiality the impostor quality of this mask of authenticity that always has to be fictionally justified: "there's a sham in shaman".

### 2.3.3.1. The Movie 'I'm Not There' by Todd Haynes

In his journal article "Minstrelsy, masculinity, and "Bob Dylan" (2011), published online, author John McCombe (2011) uses the motion picture as an axis to analyze the signifying texts around Bob Dylan's figure. David Jaffe does it too.

Firstly, McCombe explains the kind of movie we are in front of:

I'm Not There offers an alternative to the traditional Hollywood biopic. After all, six different actors perform the roles of these seven Dylan-like characters, and the film itself announces almost immediately that it is "inspired by the music and many lives of Bob Dylan." Haynes quite literally presents many lives for his audience to consider, and none of the characters is actually named "Bob Dylan." In Haynes' film, a fixed conception of Dylan's identity is not there.<sup>127</sup>

Secondly, he speaks of the constitution of Dylan's major performing identity balanced between his idea of masculinity and his own interpretation of blackface minstrelsy. However, this is just one of the many texts who related the idea of "authenticity" to that of his multiple identities, as the movie tried to show too. Right at the beginning, the voice over says, while different acting roles representing the singer make its appearance, "There he lay. Poet. Prophet. Outlaw. Fake. Star of electricity." This way, the narrative makes its first allegiance to the mutability of the artist and the impossibility to categorize him under one unique label. Additionally, both Allen Ginsberg and he shared a common view of the figure of the poet, according to Stephen Scobie (2004), as the prophet too, because he must declare his public moral position at all costs. It is interesting to note that authenticity consists in declaring the total independence of the individual from the morals of his society. So, the connection between a prophet and being authentic is important to consider, "(...) in the pre-postindustrial age, victims of violence were allowed (in fact it was their duty) to be judges over their offenders" (1993: para.3).

Correspondingly, David Yaffe uses the film to introduce a deeper relation between one of this represented figures and the artist himself. That figure became a myth and a heroic figure, in Dylan's music it is always admirable and more than that, a model of behavior: the outlaw, as personalized in any rambler, gambler, thief, trickster, prisoner etc. "Rebels, outlaws, and activists possessed, or at least strove for, levels of freedom unavailable within the mainstream" (Taylor and Israelson, 2015: 93).

This study includes a profound relation of the mythical identifications of the

concept of authenticity in the poetic repetition at the mythical level.<sup>128</sup> The presence of all these myths in his songs confirms that “Dylan contains multitudes and a book attending to get to his genius must examine both the Napoleon in rags and the complete unknown, the Jokerman and the Queen of Spades, the lover and the thief” (Yaffe, 2011: 12). His body –not only his voice– gives expression to many of them, as Cate Blanchett shown the spectator with her magnificent interpretation.<sup>129</sup>–Aside from the fact that he metamorphoses into different mythical incarnations, I believe there are still some fixed elements that make him an icon and ultimately turned him into the character ‘Bob Dylan’, his final mask. The actress pointed to these facts during the film promotion saying that “the way to be ultimately liberated and free as an artist, which I suppose Dylan absolutely inhabits is to constantly escape the physical definition. If you look at his various incarnations, I mean, he’s quite schizophrenic”.<sup>130</sup>–Again, this is no obstacle to discriminate other details from his gestural dictionary, like his hair, his silhouette – described by Blanchet as one of the most iconic ones–. Cate Blanchett adds that Todd Haynes’ movie (*I’m Not There*) converts the outward persona –as revealed in his textual and gestural characters– with the idea of “imagining what the inward persona might possibly be”.

The only plausible way to make his character more concrete is considering the term “authenticity” and how it foresees other crucial interpretative implications. “*I’m Not There* is a film structured on an authentic/inauthentic binary, and the character deemed a “fake” surely possesses a formally privileged role” (McCombe, 2011). While being applicable to different cultural disciplines and useful for imbricating different terms together and configuring the puzzle of his mysterious and charismatic personality, “authenticity” also plays an important role in the production and reception of his songs. Subsequently, in the realm of literature, the term is related to the fact of reliability, so important for the resulting view of his messages. If the voice is identified with an authentic mask, that devotes his messages to true translations of his emotions and other people’s emotions, then, the reader, listener or spectator will observe the things that are being communicated to him as convenient and accurate. Those stories, confidences, thoughts, surreal images, etc. are more reliable only if author and performer are the same people. Something that doesn’t happen in other literary discourse, since the author impersonates in written format a completely fictional world whereas Dylan tells stories through his songs more realistically as if he had lived these stories firsthand. That is why the term “authentic” is so much related to that of voice, as it is the voice the main

physical materialization of the author behind the art. The aura of one who sings the words and what his or her words relate to is sensed, in music, as an extension of the self. After Dylan's interpretations no other can equal the theatricality and the force he infuses to his songs, even if he's been covered by recognized music talents such as The Animals, Antony and The Johnsons, Jeff Buckley, Solomon Burke, The Byrds, Calexico, Johnny Cash, Glen Campbell, Cat Power, Joe Cocker, Judy Collins, Elvis Costello, Nick Cave & The Bad Seeds, etc. Jon Landau, a *Rolling Stone* journalist, makes an important commentary around all those impersonations Dylan interpreted:

He has transcended his limitations more successfully than anyone else in rock...Dylan hasn't handled every role with equal skill. He was unconvincing as the happy homeowner. People...reacted to the fact that he couldn't make that experience as real as he could the emotions of anger, pain, hurt, fear, loneliness, aloneness and strength. Like James Dean and Marlon Brando, he was better at playing the rebel than the citizen, the outsider than the insider and the outlaw than the sheriff...in returning to his role as disturber of the peace, Dylan hasn't revived any specific phase from the past, only a style that lets his emotions speak more freely and the state of mind in which he no longer denies the fires that are still raging within him and us  
(Landau, 2011<sup>131</sup>)

In this sense "authenticity" is felt in the corporality of the creator. He wasn't just an actor or an interpreter, he was real and he was living his life within the various masks and characters that he carried onto his performances (Maxwell, 2014). David Hajdu writes, as quoted by Maxwell (2014) that "the irony of Robert Zimmerman's metamorphosis into Bob Dylan lies in the application of so much delusion and artifice in the name of truth and authenticity". Every act of representation that he makes by way of voicing the particular characters in his songs, helps to confirm the ultimate authenticity of his major character: Bob Dylan.

The notion of "authenticity", although apparently related to coherence, stays independently and immutable, in spite of the changing identities of the author. Even if he is considered a "fake"—as the movie says—his song messages, interceded by his voice, express the true visions of his author. As Keir Keightley calls it, this instance evidences a case of “ethical integrity” (2001: 133-134<sup>132</sup>) That is why everything song by Bob Dylan acquires a quasi-true and coherent confession always expected to reflect the ways in which he understands the world.

Whereas there is a paradox fruit of this relation between the authentic or real and what is unbelievable or impossible to be held as reliable or true, and Dylan acknowledges this paradox as he always calls for truth in his songs. The term also refers

to particular and individual realities, which means subjectivity and relativism can make something true and untrue depending on the point of view. As singer Harry Jackson said in Grant Maxwell's book "He's so goddamned real, it's unbelievable" (2014: 3388).

#### **2.3.4. The Strengths of Authenticity in Musical Analysis**

First of all the artist is an author, a composer and ultimately an interpreter of his songs. By composing his own music and lyrics he becomes the direct mediator –with the backing band, of course– between the song and his audience. The evident presence of the author during the music performance attributes a special concern for the interaction of the two parties: singer and listener. As the composer of the song and expert on its own authoritative version, he must absolutely he is supposed to act authentically. As Keir Keightley states in his article "Reconsidering Rock", "The singer-songwriter emerged as the ideal of authentic rock in the late 1960s, fostering a sense that the integration of authorship and performance was evidence of ethical integrity." (2001: 121). Currently, any artist doing playback or reproducing a different sound than what people are expecting is not considered authentic. These are only a number of things the artist has to take into consideration, but in the case of the singer-songwriter, people's expectations can be more inflexible. Like the utmost expression of artistry, their abilities have to fulfill their demands. "Since about 1800, there has been a tendency to glorify the artist, to see in his or her life the essence of the human condition, and to venerate him or her as a seer, the creator of cultural values" (Taylor, 1991: 62).

The famous musicologist Alex Ross demonstrates there is no need he is idealized in order to represent the authentic artist. Rather, the contemporary definition of the artist, according to Ross, "is the one who displays himself in art, who shares "felt" emotion and "lived" experiences, who meets and greets the audience. Art becomes method acting; art, in various senses, becomes pathetic" (2004: 312). Ross is giving us the archaic definition of "pathetic" in relation to the artist. A definition related to the emotions, based on late Latin transformed into Greek "pathētickos" or "sensitive", according to which the artist is an expert in attributing human feelings and responses to inanimate things, or animals, especially in art and literature, or what is known as the "pathetic fallacy". There is a sense of that pathetic quality in Dylan's

unclassifiable timbre of his voice, his anti-academicism, his uncontrollable shouting and unpredictability on the scene. All of this contributes to making the audience more emotionally implicated, able to process the message of his songs as if they concealed secrets that are about to be revealed. Secrets that, most often, had been related to the man's personal convictions, his own feelings, etc. This is how we arrive at the equation between the terms **auto ethnography** and authenticity. The former term has been borrowed from Kevin J. Dettmar, author, and editor of the historical volume of academic essays around Bob Dylan, *The Cambridge Companion to Bob Dylan* (2009). According to Wikipedia's online definition, "auto ethnography" is a "qualitative research in which an author uses self-reflection and writing to explore her personal feelings and connect this autobiographical story to wider cultural, political and social meanings and understandings"<sup>133</sup> – If the author relates this idea to Dylan's works it must be because Dylan's lyrics and his use of traditional music made of his music a personal relocation, a code of self-expression. But that is art's main intention, what is there in Dylan's works that make them look like private entrances into his inner self? Any artist incorporates his own experience unconsciously, but Dylan also evaluates what kind of experience is that and makes it part of our imagination. His authority over the words and experiences he voices makes the message more reliable than any other discourse.

In the mid-1960s, Dylan's lyrics became more opaque and less literal. If the songs were no longer topical, his lyrics exemplified a search for personal freedom by circumventing standard definitions and expectations. Thus, the expression of freedom in Bob Dylan's art became less overtly political on a societal level but more individual and existential. (Taylor and Israelson, 2015: 95)

The authority of authenticity can be put in a wider context because the term is related with what the classics understood as a coherent voice, a voice the referee can trust and enjoy in a pleasurable way. As such, this idea can be determinant for the work of art, as it is described in Plato's dialogues, "Laches, or Courage". It is not applicable to Lord-Jim's *topoi*<sup>134</sup>, rather to those whose character Laches described in front of his master Socrates:

I compare the man and his words and note the harmony and correspondence of them. And such an one I deem to be the true musician, attuned to a fairer harmony than that of the lyre or any pleasant instrument of music; for truly he has in his own life a harmony of words and deeds arranged, not in the Ionian, or in the Phrygian mode, nor yet in the Lydian, but in the true Hellenic mode, which is the Dorian, and no other. Such a one

makes me merry with the sound of his voice, and when I hear him I am thought to be a lover of discourse; so eager am I in drinking in his words. But a man whose actions do not agree with his words is an annoyance to me, and the better he speaks the more I hate him, and then I seem to be a hater of discourse.  
(Plato, 1994-2009<sup>135</sup>)

Like this kind of men, Dylan is a multiple musician, because he not only harmonizes with the medium, but with his manifested position and his true unity. So, albeit he is popularly described as a dividing personality with multiple egos, authenticity unifies them definitely.

Apart from being a reliable and emotive vehicle, his voice is among those charismatic elements of his work, while it constitutes the most commanding element in the interpretation. Other voices, coming from the literary world and the music scene have tried to define Bob Dylan's voice. People like Joyce Carol Oats, the American storyteller, made the most poetical approach to its definition. She described in her poem "Dylan at 60", "When we first heard this raw, very young and seemingly untrained voice, frankly nasal, as if sandpaper could sing, the effect was dramatic and electrifying" (2004: 259). David Bowie dedicated a song to him, in a familiar code, where he described it as a voice of sand and blue.

The other important standpoint from which we can judge the power of authenticity is the idea related to linguistic pragmatics and rhetoric and the way it has been widely studied in relation to literature. Although to assume that Bob Dylan's songs are literature could make a whole different chapter in this thesis, the long search for an argument in favor of the communicative intricacies of the literary speech pushes me to declare that Dylan's songs could constitute the answer to the problem of that literary speech that never fitted Austin's main conditions. The linguist scholar set some maxims of communication (1962) and he examined that one of the main differences between the literary language and the common speech is that the former cannot be taken as performative in the true sense of the word, that is, able to change the "real" when being enounced and so, it cannot provide a regular communicative context. According to that, the element of reliability –so dependent on the authenticity of the artist– will play an important role in communication, because one of the aspects that dissociate literary language from the common speech is its impossibility to be regarded as a true kind of discourse. Against this essential element, Dylan's performances yielded all the obstacles to connecting with the audience successfully. One of his major achievements was to be regarded as the authentic artist he wanted to be.

A whole range of phenomena may interfere in the link of artist and audience: forms of technological mediation, the involvement of superfluous personnel or industrial procedures, monetary corruption of the performer's motives for performing, an over-investment in soundly 'up-to-date', the repetition of old ideas, or any number of forces which render musical expressions of the self-compromised or distorted. (Keightley, 2001: 133)

That is why the role of performances is determinant. They provide songs with an ideal context for its evocative lyrics to function at a level of a communicative intercourse and so, to act like any other speech act. The author himself becomes conscious of the effect of his song words, "Feel like talking to somebody but I just don't know who" ("Million Miles", 1997). At the same time, authenticity is only expressible in communicative situations because like Charles Taylor pointed, "the thing about inwardly derived, personal, original identity is that it doesn't enjoy this recognition a priori. It has to win it through exchange, and it can fail." (1991: 48) That is the reason why singing becomes a necessity born out of the artist self-fulfillment: he has to communicate with the outer world in order to find himself. This idea is not only an abstraction, there are many instances that show his proclivity to dialogical situations in which characters share their visions and points of view about the world. Listen to "Boots of Spanish Leather" (1963) and the argument between the lover who parts and the lover who stays. Their understandings of love differ and they have to leave a part of themselves behind and find completeness in the absence of that part which was so important to their lives until now. Dialogues reach a true polyphony when the lover has already parted and the only voices remaining are those of the love letters. The singer interprets a lover who is reading the letters of his recently departed loved one and the words he means to send the other back:

I got a letter on a lonesome day  
It was from her ship a-sailin'  
Saying I don't know when I'll be comin' back again  
It depends on how I'm a-feelin'

Well, if you, my love, must think that-a-way  
I'm sure your mind is roamin'  
I'm sure your heart is not with me  
But with the country to where you're goin'  
(1963)

This example helps me illustrate through his music the fact that "no one acquires

the languages needed for self-definition on their own. We are introduced to them through exchanges with others" (Taylor, 1991: 33) Especially, as Taylor himself states if we are dealing with artistic expression. Any of Dylan's songs show their character and objectives as addressed.

There are songs which are manically dialogical. In "Highway 61 Revisited" alluding to the homonym titled album of 1965, presents various frenzy dialogues during which indirect style is led by the voice of the singer, "Oh God said to Abraham, "Kill me a son" Abe says, "Man, you must be puttin' me on" God say, "No." Abe say, "What?"

Other important term linked to the social terms of "authenticity" picked from philosophers like Hegel and Rousseau, and coherently gathered by Charles Taylor, is recognition, also derived from the dialogical aim of individualism and self-fulfillment. What results from such a phenomena is "the understanding that identities are formed in open dialogue, unshaped by a predefined social script, has made the politics of equal recognition more central and stressful" (Taylor, 1991: 49) That is why he failed to be recognized depending on the predefined community who was judging him. Finally, the lack of recognition can be stressful, but especially it can be oppressive when it is denied to certain social groups. In recognition of those faults of governmental and political fractions of the American society, Dylan committed many of his songs' messages –at least those of his first period– to social civil rights, racism, hypocrisy, etc. In view of this aspects, "the understanding of identity and authenticity has introduced a new dimension into the politics of equal recognition" (1991: 50).

In the history of music, authenticity can go as far back as the blues notion of Mojo in as much as it describes the essence of the leading voice behind those songs and it attributes a strong sexual and charismatic appeal to it. "Authenticity" in rock comes from the inseparable connection of the song to its artist, and in the case of Bob Dylan, from the correlation between the voice and his public persona, who showed such a mysterious quality. "The more mysterious he is, the more it causes a flutter to actually see Bob Dylan himself" (Yaffe, 2011: 45) As much as he has been trying, in what has been perceived as the strongest contradiction of his career, to perpetuate his multiple personalities, he has also refused to be subjected to labels and categories, "So I'll make my stand. And remain as I am. And bid farewell and not give a damn" ("Restless Farewell", 1964)

The music that was born within the postmodern artistic context considered less important talent and abilities and gave a new force to the concept of *attitude* (Kramer, 2002: 16- 17) I have a reason to believe the term of attitude is intimately related to that of authenticity. In fact, Jonathan Kramer, the American composer and music theorist, included a list of subjective characteristics which any postmodern music should fulfill. Among these postmodern music conditions, there are some that hold the same view as Dylan's,

- (...) is, in some way or in some level, ironic.
- Does not respect boundaries between sonorities and procedures of the past and of the present.
- Challenges barriers between "high" and "low" styles.
- Shows disdain for the often unquestioned value of structural unit
- Questions the mutual exclusivity of elitist and populist values
- (...)
- Considers music not as autonomous but as relevant to cultural, social, and political contexts
- Includes quotations of or references to music of many traditions and cultures
- (...)
- Embraces contradictions.
- Distrusts binary oppositions.
- Includes fragmentations and discontinuities
- Presents multiple meanings and multiple temporalities.<sup>136</sup>

All of these proves Dylan was ahead of his time in many senses and this quality of his (so authentically driven) is what made most postmodern artist to base their music styles in Bob Dylan's (David Bowie, Frank Zappa, The Beatles, etc.)

Far from the current individualism and its difficulties to go together with empathy, humanism, and relativism –all of them are key terms of the existentialist theory– Dylan's self-discovery formulates another possibility, the idea of authenticity as understood by Charles Taylor (1991). "Modern freedom and autonomy centers us on ourselves and the ideal of authenticity require that we discover and articulate our own identity" (Taylor, 1991:81). The formulation of this process of self-discovery, in Dylan's case, sets the artist/interpreter as an "expeditionary" of other people's feelings, aiming at knowing how does it feel. That is the principle of empathy, so assumed in an actor or interpreter. A faculty that not only privileges our self-knowledge but also makes communication and social intercourse possible, as Wittgenstein anticipated<sup>137</sup>. "Ah, my friends from the prison, they ask unto me 'How good, how well does it feel to

be free?' And I answer them most mysteriously 'Are birds free from the chains of the skyway?'" ("Ballad in Plain D", 1964).

But all these are just hypothesis. How can we know what Bob Dylan was trying to track down from all his impersonating experiences? He explained in his autobiography (2004: 235) that perhaps he was looking for something he had previously read in *On The Road* (1957), the big city, the speed. He was probably after something his friend and poet Allen Ginsberg had called 'hydrogen jukebox world' ("Howl", 1956), perhaps defining that utopic state where the ideal of authenticity seems to be capable of including social understanding.

Taylor also claimed that one of the terms intimately related to authenticity is "dignity". In these terms, any democratic society like the one predicted by individualism should make an appeal to every single person regardless of their social status (Taylor, 1991). Dylan's discography is plagued with Mr. Jones and Miss Lonely's as well as ladies who lay and ladies like Lady Luck, "who shines on me" ("Dirge", 1973), Kings and Queens of Spades, Mamas ("Mama, You Been On My Mind", 1964), etc. All openly claim the importance of those titles in order to emphasize the reign and sovereignty of the unknown individual as a person who radiates authenticity.

Among the numerous fictional character in the history of American literature who incarnated the spirit of being authentic, there is one who is especially important: Holden Caulfield, the protagonist of the novel *The Catcher In The Rye* (1951) by J. D. Salinger. No surprise young Bob Dylan was eventually compared to this character, especially since the singer seemed to enjoy his closeness. Apart from the physical coincidence, Bob Dylan also acted like a young Huckleberry Finn. Both literary names, Caulfield and Finn, are truly linked to honesty, self-fulfillment, and determination. David Yaffe says that Dylan's songs, "unlike those of Elvis, Bing or Sinatra, were not cooked up by Tin Pan Alley tunesmiths but were all emanating from the young man with the Huck Finn cap" (2011: 100). The same way Dylan had clear his future as a singer-songwriter, the "forever young" Caulfield was able to decide whether to stay in that college albeit his ultimate disputes and contradictory beliefs. Holden Caulfield revealing hunger for truth resembles that of Dylan's songwriting, especially during his first period during which he does the same kind of adult-life judging as Salinger's fictional character. "I keep picturing all these little kids playing same game in this big field of rye and all. Thousands of little kids and nobody's around –nobody big, I mean– except me" (Salinger, 1945: 185-6). Like the character of J. D. Salinger's novel, Bob

Dylan's Tom Paine award acceptance speech at the Emergency Civil Liberties Union's annual *Bill of Rights* meeting, censured adults behaviour,

It is not an old peoples' world. 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.  
(2013: para. 16)<sup>138</sup>

Bob Dylan's reverence for a certain kind of authenticity must have also come from his reading of the book *On the Road*, by Jack Kerouac (1957). Dylan said, "It changed my life like it changed everyone else's"<sup>139</sup> – Especially the character of Dean Moriarty, as depicted all the admired rootlessness of the free man, ungovernable by the principles of the American establishment and emerging capitalism. He was the fictional double of Neal Cassady, who "epitomized the consciousness that Kerouac had christened 'beat' as early as 1948" (O'Hagan, 2007).

At the same time he based his ideal of authenticity in other music personalities like Elvis, Little Richard, Hank Williams, Blind Willie McTell, Buddy Holly, Woody Guthrie and Ramblin' Jack Elliot –among others–. Cinema became another source of inspiration and some of its fictional characters were real models of behavior, attitude, and personality. Like James Dean, immortalized in *Rebel Without A Cause* (1955), Bob Dylan wanted to be the next Jim Stark who defied the social opinion and their diatribes. And he certainly did. Still, he kept that characteristic aura that started musically with his voice and ended up with his press conferences and interviews. "The international music business is a colossus, and Dylan had to put a saddle on it to ride it. He knew its rewards, defeats, and hypocrisies. He worked within "the business," but tried to keep some detachment" (Shelton, 2011: 62).

One of his role models was Woody Guthrie who brought him the firmest connection with the folk venue. Dylan was the most passionate admirer of the singer-songwriter. For him, as for many of the folkies members, Guthrie epitomized the simplicity of character that permeated in his songs and the topoi of characters represented in his songs. All of them common people, workers and strugglers whose lives kept being anonymous until Guthrie's songs honored them. According to Anthony Scaduto's book about Bob Dylan: "Guthrie's simpleness was, in part, a pose; he was simple, non-commercial, authentic folk primitive because it was expected of him and because he was most comfortable in that role" (1973: 2881). Those could have been the

same premises under Bob Dylan's quick power and reign over the folk community at the start of the sixties when Peter Seeger applauded his talent and precious "finger-pointing" songs.

The artist must have perceived the beauty of the songs, their signifying presence and he wanted to build his own identity as an artist getting on the road of blues. The origin of that perceives legacy of black American culture is ultimately evident in Jack Kerouac's descriptions of that "Jazz America" –as it was baptized by Sal Paradise–, the setting of his inspiring novel, *On The Road* (1957). John MacCombe, who studies Dylan's interest in black minstrelsy and black music styles, notes that in the novel those "African-American cultural forms (...) are idealized because of their purported purity and authenticity" (2011). Most importantly, American Studies specialist Barry Shank takes for granted that "Dylan's appropriation of black music partake of minstrelsy" (2002: 111) What Bob Dylan must have noted according to Shank is that in the blues tradition, "the singer matters more than the song" (2002: 111) an aspect much in common to the transcendentalism that media, critics, and fans gave to Bob Dylan's words in and out of his fictional creations. An aspect that bears much significance with the way Bob Dylan sang about the blues singer Blind Willie McTell, as well.

The critic and essayist LeRoi Jones, also known as Amiri Baraka, wrote the book *Blues people: Negro music in white America* (1963) where he describes the social history of Afro-American traditional music. When he is explaining the different instruments on which the classic, country and urban blues counted on (the three different types of blues that he distinguishes) the comments that there was no training to sing or play the blues and that "it was assumed that anybody could sing the blues" (LeRoi Jones, 1965: 82) Bob Dylan, in an admiring gesture towards the bluesman, *Blind Willie McTell* –the title of a song included in *The Bootleg Series Vol. 3* (1991) and *The Essential Bob Dylan*<sup>140</sup>– revoked LeRoi Jones' statement, "And I know no one can sing the blues like Blind Willie McTell" (1983). He does not say "nobody sings the blues" but rather "no one", which annihilates "anyone" making it evident there is still no born soul in the earth who "can", stressing the ability of this interpreter, "sing the blues" like him.

There is an obvious reverence for authenticity in singing a general truth about another singer-songwriter like the bluesman Blind Willie McTell (Willie Samuel McTell, born 1898 in Thomson, Georgia) because with that assertion, the singer not only reveals his admiration, but also the importance of McTell as a creator and

generator of its proper style or, to a greater extent, of the whole blues style. Perhaps Bob Dylan imagined himself following his model and becoming the leading figure of a new singing style, totally created by his own. A style that could reflect upon the artist like a figure of coherence and conservation of his tradition, because to be authentic is to have an “undisputed origin, being genuine” or doing things “in a traditional or original way, based on facts and reliable” (Maxwell, 2014: 2652). In connection with this, Grant Maxwell points "Dylan hardly says anything innocently, rarely expressing ideas in an impartial, objective manner, but rather speaking in ways that demonstrate that he understands concepts because he has lived through them and that those concepts are always already embodied." (2014: 2652) His knowledge and words are the result of experience and escape academicism in favor of empiricism. The existentialist philosophy –a core subject in respect to Bob Dylan’s compositions–, is related to or denotes an “emotionally appropriate, significant, purposive, and responsible mode of human life.” (The New Oxford American Dictionary, NOAD) and Bob Dylan undoubtedly regarded blues singers as personifications of that authenticity,

What made the real blues singers so great is that they were able to state all the problems they had; but at the same time, they were standing outside of them and could look at them. And in that way, they had them beat. What’s depressing today is that many young singers are trying to get *inside* the blues, forgetting that those older singers used them to get outside of their troubles.  
(Dylan, 1963<sup>141</sup>)

Going back to “Blind Willie McTell” (the song), Stephen Scobie (2004) refers to Dylan’s permanent endowment with the “old masters” in a pessimistic way, by acknowledging that tradition has become only a quote. He is referring to the cryptic quotation marks of his album “*Love and Theft*” (2001), but ends up explaining that,

(...) this modes can now be understood only as quotation, that it is no longer possible for anyone, even Bob Dylan, to “sing the blues like Blind Willie McTell”. That is, the phrases which a blues singer like Blind Willie McTell could use with a kind of naïve authenticity can now be used, by a postmodern singer like Bob Dylan...  
(Scobie, 2004: 100)

Afterwards, in the analysis of this song, Stephen Scobie concludes, that, “By singing that no one can sing the blues, Dylan proves that he can”, which can lead us thinking that Bob Dylan’s song is an ironic statement, fruit of the unparalleled interpretation he makes. Irony after irony, this song wasn’t published until the *Bootleg*

*Series* vol. 3 and its text wasn't even included in the *Lyrics*, a fact that makes us think "It is a story Dylan refused to tell" (Scobie, 2004: 140). What's more, it is the only song by Bob Dylan that includes the word *bootleg*, as signaled by Scobie in the notes to *Alias Bob Dylan Revisited* (2004: 324).

The refrain of the song became CBS radio most popular statement "Nobody sings Dylan like Dylan" (Heylin, 1994: 44) It was the slogan the people of Columbia used to promote the artist. So here, for the first time, the two possible reasons for being authentic meet at the core of the industry. "In June, Columbia announced a major American promotion campaign, "The slogan that Dylan is 'Bringing It All Back Home' is the primary theme of the campaign." Columbia cooked up another slogan, "No One Sings Dylan Like Dylan" (Shelton, 2011: 644).

Suddenly, that natural music quality of Blind Willie McTell, which Bob Dylan so fairly wanted to relate to his blues idol, turned out to be his too. He was talking about his expectations with respect to music and his professional goals. What's more, Dylan developed a strong sense of experimentation in search of his unique style. In order to achieve that, it was completely necessary "to emulate the styles of their predecessors, internalizing the way of approaching the world through music. By engaging in this kind of rigorous apprenticeship, they acquired the tools, the vocabulary of the genre in which they were working" (Maxwell, 2014: 1233). Ray Coleman writer at *Melody Maker*, the popular rock music magazine, repeated this idea, as quoted by Robert Shelton (2011: 906), when reviewing the exceptional concert for Bangladesh, "Nobody sings Dylan like Dylan... he demonstrated again in that hesitant, piercing voice that he is the ultimate solo artist in contemporary music. Dylan seemed to have come full circle and to have fallen in love again with his old songs." And David Yaffe demonstrated in his study going through many of his racial contacts that "after nearly half a century of imitating, protesting, loving and thieving, he is still trying to earn the right to sing the blues" (2011: 89).

Dylan belongs to such kind of artists whose renditions reach a point when they seem to be inseparable from their song. That is something I had read previously in *American Popular Music: The Rock Years* (2006) about Hank Williams style, but it has been put in relation to Dylan in many other discourses. Certain singer-songwriters are being able to reach such a special intimacy with their songs that they finally make part of them. If we follow this line of interpretation, Mr. Jones –in "Ballad of a Thin Man"

(1965)– is no longer seen as an enemy of the author, but the author himself who played with this kind of double figures and hermetic qualities full of riddles and mysteries.

The artist interprets all the characters that live in his songs at once in what is, without any doubt, a great manifestation of empathy. Indeed, he can play different roles in the same song especially when these include dialogues. In each of his songs, Dylan sounds as if he already had an opinion about what was stated and he was being clearly explicit about it, sometimes persuading the audience to think the same,

I think we better talk this over  
Maybe when we both get sober  
You'll understand I'm only a man  
Doin' the best that I can  
("We Better Talk This Over", 1978)

Also in "Lily, Rosemary and the Jack of Hearts" (1974) or in "Jokerman" (1983) there's a strong presence of the author as "he's the Jack of Diamonds, he holds all the cards, and he's been turning the tables at this game for fifty years now. We know what we're up against", like David Dalton states (2012: 327)

But many other times, "authenticity" cannot be just concluded from his word statements, but from the things he doesn't say. Dylan's inarticulateness is claimed by Allan Moore to be his "conventional sign of sincerity" (2005) and to argue that, he cites Simon Frith, "Pop songs celebrate not the articulate but the inarticulate and the evaluation of pop singers depends not on words but on sounds –on the noises around the words." He includes as such noises: people's, gasps, moans, laughs, cries... The poetics of inarticulateness participate in the resulting trust that people can have for the songwriter.

### **2.3.5. Bob Dylan and the Quest for the Ideal of Authenticity**

This philosophical stand is particularly important since the second half of the twentieth century, as it has been indicated by many folklorists (Taylor, 1991; Bendix, 1997; Keightley 2001, Shank 2002) when an extended group of society quested for bringing back the essence, the truth about the individual nature that had been forgotten in their contemporary society while it was displaced by the war, by capitalism, by urbanism,

etc. “The Port Huron Statement” (1962), the political manifesto of the north American student activism<sup>142</sup>, outlines the term “authenticity” in the following terms,

The goal of man and society should be human independence: a concern not with image or popularity but with finding a meaning in life that is personally authentic: a quality of mind not compulsively driven by a sense of powerlessness, nor one which unthinkingly adopts status values, nor one which represses all threats to its habits, but one which has full spontaneous access to present and past experiences, one which easily unites the fragmented parts of personal history, one which openly faces problems which are troubling and unresolved; one with an intuitive awareness of possibilities, an active sense of curiosity, an ability and willingness to learn.<sup>143</sup>

Regarding all these qualities, Bob Dylan –the artistic mask of the man Robert Allen Zimmerman– would be one of the leading figures of this movement towards “authenticity”, even if the term was evolving all through his career. This can be seen in the way he composed his finger-pointing songs, during the short period he belonged to the SDS (Students for the Democratic Society), expressing how "getting young meant, for Dylan at the close of 1963, getting real" (Yaffe, 2011: 6) Afterwards, his ultimate correlation came from deductive argumentation and adulthood. He would reject both and settle his music in the limits of rationality and imagination, where listeners feel the possibility of capturing the sense of the song just before accepting it would always be impossible and ultimately undecipherable by the common social and individual modes of apprehension. It was calling for a more intimate and emotional kind of identification. He represents in his music the values of the present experience through the emphasis on time and simultaneity that makes it "performative" and the values of past experiences, history and vernacular language. This double experience of recollection and adaptation to present times is perceived in his music and characterizes the essence of this philosophical ideal. Regina Bendix says, “The quest for authenticity is a peculiar longing, at once modern and anti-modern. It is oriented toward the recovery of an essence whose loss has been realized only through modernity and whose recovery is feasible only through methods and sentiments created in modernity.” (1997: 7-8) During the course of this thesis, I have been recurrently pointing to one special characteristic of Bob Dylan’s works, its paradoxical nature, that was always on the verge of two sides while conjuring two leading forces: tradition vs. popularity, past vs. present, convention vs. variable (Frye, 1957).

Keir Keightley observed there are “two complementary but distinct historical movements of the XVIIIth and XXth Centuries: Romanticism and Modernism” and

both "challenged the emergence of industrial, urban capitalism and both celebrated the author, artist or musician as a privileged representative of an authentic, individual self" (Keightley, 2001: 135-136). Depending on whether we have a modernist or romantic belief, the concept of authenticity changes the same way the idea we have of the artist changes too. Initially, Bob Dylan was regarded as a keeper of the folk status, at that moment he was viewed from the romantic point of view and was expected to be faithful to his belief in music apart from the industrial and commercial apparatus, as well as he showed his social commitment through his song's lyrics. However, his innovations are patent and in some occasions very extremist. The cohabitation of modernism and romanticism within the scope of his working career could be explained by David R. Shumway's theory that explained how Dylan "relied on primitive artistic forms as a source of authenticity" (2009: 117). What Shumway does not consider is the fact that Modernism, the literary movement at the start of the XXth Century –named this way because of its rupture with other movements– also exhibited a profound interest in primitive forms and folklorist apparitions as a way to embrace a natural harmony with the past. Bob Dylan did the same when at the core of postmodernism, he reunited both elements in his works. Thanks to this eternal dialectics that describes art's universal history, the term "authenticity" is rediscovered as a rock of cultural introspection.

However, should it be affirmed that the ideal of authenticity, like a pie recipe, must have the exact quantity of modernism and romanticism? What's more, has anyone found the ideal of authenticity? Because, as Charles Taylor remarked, "today many people feel *called* to do this, feel they ought to do this, feel their lives would be somehow wasted or unfulfilled if they didn't do it" (1991: 17) referring to the search of that ideal.

Was Bob Dylan, in any case, trying to find the ideal of authenticity through his music? And, what are the signs supporting such hypothesis? Some of those signs are in his naked narrations that treat of the matter of identity, social alienation, nostalgia and restrained anger, issues that are in direct relation with the quest for authenticity. For example, in his album *Blood on the Tracks* (1975), where human degradation seems at his highest. "Dylan is now looking at the quarrel of the self. The crowds have moved back off the stage of history; we are left with the solitary human, a single hair on the skin of the earth. Dylan speaks now for that single hair." (Hamill, 1974: para.10) Also in the fact that, apart from his evident two-sided proposition between romantic and modern values, he would also be eager of social commitment, what reductionists would

call a left-wing political position, in favor of civil rights movement and to denounce any intolerant attitude or acts of injustice (see Hurricane Carter's case). He was so self-determined to follow his own decisions that, in every position, he defended around social and political issues, he presumably observed the following mandate, "Don't follow leaders, watch for parking-meters" ("Subterranean Homesick Blues", 1965).

I interpreted his song "Mr. Tambourine Man" (1965) as another key to understand his search for the ideal of authentic. This song is part of the album *Bringin' It All Back Home*, where the artist starts looking more at his inner thoughts than at external events and social injustices. Nick Bromell noted once, as quoted by Shumway (2009: 114), that Dylan's songs before *Bringin' It All Back Home* "were 'liberal' because they were sung on behalf of others", but with this album, "the singer now understands himself to be denied the freedom he once portrayed as denied only to society's others, and the song's social critique combines surrealisms with more explicit charges" (Shumway, 2009: 114) This state of personal disappointment might be the cause of the fatigue consuming him, "my weariness amazes me I'm branded on my feet".

The social participation in this new venture started being not so evident, but the rise of more genuine and committed social spheres, fruit of the growth of existentialism and individualistic postures among the youth, seeded the ideal of authenticity in him and inspired such grandiloquent images. From my point of view, the tambourine man is nothing but a desired extension of the self, a monologue on what he wants to be in artistic as well as in social terms. In any case, as David R. Shumway explained it in his essay "Bob Dylan as cultural icon" in *The Cambridge Companion to Bob Dylan*, "Though it is sung as an appeal to the tambourine man, we might guess that Dylan imagines that he might play this role for his listeners, that he is Mr Tambourine Man" (2009: 113) and as both characters are equal selves, or the one is the self and the other is the wanted-self, then he is just a ragged clown behind who is rhyming words and laughing, spinning and swinging madly across the sun. The theme of individual freedom would be from that point on thoroughly explored by the singer songwriter, specially in the admissible ambivalence of that authentic figure who deals with matters of social awareness and, at the same time, acts according to his dogmas.

This quest was a social phenomenon studied by the Canadian philosopher Charles Taylor in his book *The Ethics of Authenticity* (1991). He explains how the origin of the word "authentic" as applied to a social and moral experience in the

Western society started in the decade of the 60s. The term had been carried from another influential book, *Sincerity and Authenticity* by Lionel Trilling (1972) where the author introduces a modern concept of society. Accordingly, “authenticity” refers to the application of personal and individual moral values. In Taylor’s own words, “everybody has his or her own "values" and about these, it is impossible to argue." According to this social conscience, "people are called upon to be true to themselves and to seek their own self-fulfillment." (1991: 13-14) The philosopher says it has been a topic of discussion since then, especially since it has detractors and followers.

Taylor goes further to explain how critics point to the worst disadvantage of "authenticity" as a moral value. As it relies so much on pure individualism, people become non-cooperative with their community and it reveals the possibility that self-fulfillment turns into a major self-centered mode, like "narcissism". This turn can give us radical views of the self, regardless of facts like history, God or tradition: "A radical anthropocentrism" (Taylor, 1991: 58). Sometimes history is totally centered around the idea of man actions, “Man gave name to all the animals, in the beginning, in the beginning” (1979) In fact, one of Charles Taylor’s principal aims in his study is to define the middle and ideal term of being and acting “authentically”, although he previously acknowledges that our society should put in common the limits of this term and ultimately, define it. He previously states that “the moral ideal behind self-fulfillment is that of being true to oneself, in a specifically modern understanding of that term” and that, as maintained by this modern understanding originated in the 1960s, “moral positions are not in any way grounded in reason or the nature of things but ever ultimately just adopted by each of us because we find ourselves drawn to them.” (1991: 15-18) Therefore, to be “authentic” is a consequence of being the master of one’s own life and living under one’s own premises; which is nonetheless, related to the existentialist philosophy. In essence,

(...) authenticity involves creation and construction as well as discovery, originality, and frequently opposition to the rules of society and even potentially to what we recognize as morality. But it is also true, as we saw, that it requires openness to horizons of significance (for otherwise, the creation loses the background that can save it from insignificance) and a self-definition in dialogue.  
(Taylor, 1991: 66)<sup>144</sup>

Any marked individualism makes society extremely absolutist regarding others, whereas Dylan’s songs relativize about almost every concept; starting with the idea of

“truth”. The mutability of such terms makes communication between people be basically based on sympathy and sensitivity. In other words, his only understanding is operated through emotions and empathy.

We cannot know for sure if Dylan is the master of his private life, but his music does certainly apply to the idealistic term of authenticity, and tries to set aside the idea of an individualistic society by bringing forward the lives of other people and making a diverse version of reality, a special kind of collage.

Also every time the artist from Minnesota acts differently than expected for a singer-songwriter, every time he frees himself from the credo of a specific community, namely, from any kind of labeling, he is acting "authentically". From a more general perspective, Dylan's own way of watching social conflicts or his understanding of outlaws and outsiders relies on the fact that he has already created his private morale. He composes his music aware of what's done in the past but trivializing, even ignoring what his contemporary audience would really like to hear. "Self-determining freedom demands that I break the hold of all such external impositions and decide for myself alone." (Taylor, 1991: 27).

Although apparently in vogue during the sixties this modern trend is still practiced today and it comes from the late eighteenth century, parallel to the ideas of Johann Gottfried Herder, also a literary critic who, as it is referred in Taylor's book, “put forward the idea that each of us has an original way of being human” He continues saying “there is a certain way of being human that is *my way*” (Taylor, 1991: 28-29).

I mentioned above that “authenticity” varied depending on the perspective we take. Of course, this happens with many sociological and philosophical perspectives, as with the artistic event, but it significantly occurs as a result of the dialogical nature of the term. In other words, in order to demonstrate its authenticity, the artist has to present his work to a receiver, someone that completes the exchange, who confirms the character of the artist's acts. As long as Dylan's songs are addressed to us, the making and sustaining of his identity are confirmed in our particular perception. As the founding study of Betsy Bowden expresses, “He is a singer-songwriter, a performing artist. The unit of his art, as collected and documented by his intended audience, is the live performance” (2001: 7). Trying to accomplish the audience's view of himself has been really hard and people's expectations made him suffer from a psychical exhaustion. In the footage of *Eat the Document* (1972) the second documentary directed by D. A. Pennebaker and edited Bob Dylan himself after the great success of *Don't*

*Look Back* (1967), the artist says “I think I’m gonna get me a new Bob Dylan next week, get me a new Bob Dylan and use him. Use the new Bob Dylan; see how long he lasts.”

Bob Dylan, as many other singers since the 1950s, acknowledged the importance of being whoever the public wanted you to be, but at a certain point of his maturity as an artist he would not reject his personality and he would surely yearn for his idea of being authentic.

### 2.3.5.1. The Electric Moment

From the moment he refused to belong to the folk community, arguing with Phil Ochs that “politics is bullshit. It’s all unreal. The only thing that’s real is inside you” (2002<sup>145</sup>) to the Newport Folk Festival 1965 rendition of “Maggie’s Farm” where he shouted “no, I ain't gonna work on Maggie's farm no more”, a modernist side of his artistic persona entered the scene. He sang it explicitly when at some point during his famous electric shift he was sung,

Well, I try my best  
To be just like I am  
But everybody wants you  
To be just like them  
(1965)

That symbolical moment is claimed by critics and scholars like one of the most important moments in rock history. Certainly, that “Maggie’s Farm” rendition blew people’s minds<sup>146</sup> and reconfigured the idea of the artist from an underlying romantic venue to a more modernist point of view. At first sight, he got rejected by all those cult music members, but then his decision has been interpreted as the author’s genius intuition and authentic personality. Why and how? Precisely because at that moment Bob Dylan showed unlimited ambitions and how keen he was on innovation and changing popular music perspectives. Ignoring the kind of authenticity that his public wanted him to prove. He had to escape objectification, as illustrated in the words of Ronnie Gilbert (member of The Weavers)’s introduction “You know him, he’s yours”, in the Folkways Festival. His attitude, in Keir Keighley's own words, showed his “commitment to radical innovation and experiment” and that was “especially evident in

the modernist belief that the true artist must keep moving forward, constantly reinventing him" (2001: 135-136).

On the opposite, his turn to rock electricity could be interpreted to be another evidence of his shift from commitment and social responsibility to individualism and self-fulfillment (Shank, 2002) This was a generalized critique this time coming from the folk community. Critiques were calling for a return of everything that made him unique and authentic in their eyes, that is why in the *Brisbane Courier* the headline read, "ADVICE TO DYLAN: STAY DYLAN" by urging him no to separate from their idea of the artist, from what was worth their money. Also, Robert Shelton (2011: 427) transcribes the this report in *Time Magazine* by the pioneer jazz critic Ralph J. Gleason, who cofounded *Rolling Stones*,

He is a dime-store philosopher, a drugstore cowboy, a men's room conversationalist...something faintly ridiculous about such a city bill, yet Dylan is the newest hero of an art that has made a fetish out of authenticity...At its very best, his voice sounds as if it were drifting over the walls of a tuberculosis sanitarium—but that's part of the charm...something unique to say, and he says it in...the best songs of their style since Woody Guthrie's...An atmosphere of ersatz surrounds him...  
(Gleason, 1963)

Note that the press blames him for being a "city bills", a term usually associated with folk culture that referred to any of those artists that sang folklore but had not learn it from an aural transmission. Thus, in the realm of folklorists, the implications of being "authentic" are completely different from those of rock. Folk's enemy in respects to music was technology, the major sign of modernity. Any aspect regarding technological advances and their use by music artists is considered a symptom of inauthenticity. For them, authenticity implied "the rejection of electric technology" (Starr and Waterman, 2006: 7) and Dylan were doing the opposite. The Kingston Trio and Joan Baez were allegedly called "city-billies", although, in the previous quote, Gleason attributed it to Dylan's performances as well. Gleason's critique is especially incongruous, for he continues saying he "has made a fetish out of authenticity", confirming he lives up to this idea. By assuming he was manipulating the term "authenticity", he states his greatest sign of individualism: the fact that he could have been consuming their folk music just to assimilate its aesthetics by foreseeing what was valued at that time, although, later, he would rather try to find his own language.

The way the folk community understood this term is still present today and it has experienced other crucial moments in the past. For example in the 90s, when live

acoustic shows were made popular again and fans just wanted to hear the voice of the author and his guitar. MTV's unplugged series belong to that trend. The critics of the database allmusic.com described Dylan's *Unplugged* album, released in 1995, saying "this one doesn't offer a noticeably different view of the artist's work. But then, Dylan has been unplugged for much of his career, anyway." (Ruhmann, n.d.) and he and his band would have been literally "unplugged" when the polemic event of the Newport Folk Festival took place. If the unplugged series are a symptom of the aim at authenticity, Bob Dylan not only participated of that trend –initiated back in the 90s– with eleven of his songs belonging to the period that went from 1965 to 1967, but ever since 1969, when he became the major figure of the bootleg recording industry<sup>147</sup>. The relation of these albums to the term of authenticity developed later in this section, is established when the concert or the live show becomes the principal context to check out the artist level of authenticity. With the insolent hunger of an admirer, some of his followers started recording illicitly the artist during these shows in order to deliver a market out of his legitimate place as a singer-songwriter.

Keightley distinguished between a romantic and modernist authenticity (2001: 137) He also proposed a table of distinctions between the two conceptions showing how both postures can be identified within the music scene. While it looks very tempting to say Bob Dylan is a Modernist, because he uses experimentation and has a changing identity, yet he would never stop referencing the work of other who came before him. This is not the only paradox the reader will find during the course of this thesis in relation to Bob Dylan. Bob Dylan seems to be always on the verge of two categories while refusing to be true to any of them. Author Koji Matsuda notes that "the more one expects from him, it seems, the more he escapes from one's expectations. If there is one thing that one can expect from Dylan, it may be that he is expected to be unexpected." (2011: 65)

The term "authenticity" has been regarded differently at certain points in history and depending on the point of view of the community or group. For an artist like Dylan, it must have been pretty hard to persist being defined as authentic, being so in the limits between the artistic and the entertainment realms. In the American movie *Begin Again* (2013) directed by John Carney, the protagonists discuss their individual conception of the term and put in question Dylan's authenticity,

- Give the name of just one artist that passes your authenticity test!

- Dylan

- Dylan! That is the most cultivated artist you could have thought of. Look at his hair, his sunglasses, he changes his look every decade!

Probably the major force of the term "authenticity" comes from the different points of view of the audience because they are the ones who would really worship their concept of the idol and fight for its maintenance even if that means taking some action. Notice the paradoxical must have been for Dylan to sell all the tickets for his concerts and after be noisily "booed" by the audience when they rejected their electric vs. the solo-acoustic set of the concert. "Sometimes the mass audience will get it right, sometimes not, but rock culture, having broken the connection between mass popularity and 'bad' music, nonetheless patrols popularity for inauthentic and therefore undeserved success." (Keightley, 2001: 132) According to this fact, rather than something only attributed to Dylan's personality, the degree of "authenticity" is measured by his maintenance of the kind of image he is likely to have. Bob Dylan is the identity of the artist when he looks himself in the public mirror. In other words, his public persona is a fruit of the various interpretations of the audience and his chosen musical identities. From the audience standpoint, Maxwell explains that "there seems to have been something intrinsic in his character that has been often been interpreted as prophetic, something transcending of him" that seemed to be coursing through him beyond his control. Also, "forces of nature pushing for expression by means of his individuality" (2014: 4461)

Meanwhile, from all the different voices and styles he explored (blues, folk, rock, gospel, jazz), "his true voice was all the voices at once" (Hedin, 2004: 14) All these voices and masks had been created by the artist, who, since the beginning of his career, started "telling wondrous stories about hoboing around the West, of touring with circuses and carnivals" (Shank, 2002: 106) and were generated too thanks to the fact that the audience has always added certain attributes to the author.

### **2.3.5.2. The Bootleg Series**

Starting to get recorded and compiled in 1991, *The Bootleg Series* are the musical gift that the Dylanphiles had been expecting since 1969 since the first bootleg copy was ever distributed. In 1969, the first rock bootleg LP ever published was one by Bob

Dylan, under the title of *The Great White Wonder* (GWW). Apparently, “One record consisted of the tracks from the long-rumored *Basement Tapes*, while the other one was largely folk covers taped live in 1961.” (Greene, 2011)<sup>148</sup> The appearance of this record goes parallel to the outstanding musical emergence of the young Bob Dylan after the motorcycle accident, together with its ultimate act of rebellion against purists and in favor of a new genre: folk-rock music. Clinton Heylin (1995: 42) remarks that,

(...) it was all bound up with the increasing mythology that circled around the skull of one Mr. Dylan. (...) In 1968 - despite the dramatic resurrection Dylan achieved with his first post-accident album, *John Wesley Harding* — people began to hanker for something closer to the 'old' Dylan (meaning the *Highway 61 Revisited/ Blonde On Blonde* Dylan).

The late authorized *Bootleg Series* that the label Columbia Records published were not but just a commercial strategy to defeat a surreptitious market of alternative recordings. While these were responding to a true need in the market, a fruit of that tendency of recording the artist in his different live shows for selling them afterward in a clandestine way, they were also navigating against an alternative stream of people who had a strong inclination to make illicit on-field recordings of the artist's concerts. That is one of the reasons why the Columbia *Bootleg Series* are not regarded as real bootlegs by the connoisseurs. David Yaffe, calls these aficionados call Bob Cats and say "they live for heading for another joint" meaning they have to experience live shows in the first person in order to be able to recognize the minimum changes in his music, “Anything spontaneous or altered is adored, scrutinized, perhaps tweeted.” (2011: 17) Admittedly, the different Columbia volumes have been offering Dylan’s audience several unknown facets of Bob Dylan at different times of his career: bad takes, outtakes, live shows, rare recordings, etc; although the original bootlegging is a surreptitious recording industry that took form in the late 40s in classical and jazz music events that few people could attend. Romantically speaking, it meant a revolution of the low classes against the high economic requisites that were associated with high culture. They “are the ultimate free-marketeers, giving fans what they want - and to hell with the wishes of the artist or record company” (Heylin, 1995: 1).

Bob Dylan’s live music became the first of a unnumbered series of other musicians to enter into this alternative music industry which was led by the bootleggers, unknown members of the audience carrying hidden tape recorders that allowed catching the essence of the show. After the show, these bootleggers would make enough copies

to be distributed among trustable group members or to be sold on the clandestine market. With all that, “a sub-industry in his bootleg tapes and records sprang up around the world” (Shelton, 2011: 47). That GWW<sup>149</sup> was “a motley collection of unreleased Bob Dylan recordings, culled primarily from home sessions in Minneapolis in 1961 and Woodstock in 1967”, as it was explained in the prologue of the major referent book on this topic, Clinton Heylin's *Bootleg: The Secret History of the other Recording Industry* (1994: 1).

This study includes a brief commentary on this alternative music business because I believe that, to a great extent, the bootleg industry is related to the audience's recognition of the artist's authenticity. And, how does that recognition take place? Well during his shows, of course as concerts and performances have been generally accepted as true providers of the excellence of that artist. As musicologist Greil Marcus explained,

it's true that all bootlegs came out in the absence of new music by Dylan, but I think their release was related not to the absence of his recordings, but to the absence of the man himself. We are dealing with myth, after all, and the more Dylan stays away the greater the weight attached to anything he's done.  
(2010: 12)

Many scholars and Dylan fans have wondered whether “Dylan's illicit recordings –bootlegs of live performances, studio outtakes, rehearsals and unreleased songs– ultimately prove, as now appears likely, his most vital, revelatory and enduring work” (Polito, 2004: 244-5) and if so, if these conform the music paradigm of his authenticity. From this principle, it can be followed that if this musical material is so valued, then all decisions with industrial tendencies are less “authentic”. Is that so? And, what has been Dylan's reaction to all this? Robert Polito (2004) remarks that unfortunately for the believers, if ever the listener goes to find a truer Dylan in the bootlegs he will find that Dylan, in truth, the man vanishes, like in the movie *I'm Not There* by Todd Haynes (2007).

Clinton Heylin (1995: 124) recalls that “Dylan once autographed an author's copy of a Dylan topography with the legend ‘Keep up the good work’”. The journalist from Rolling Stone Magazine, Andy Greene (2011) also evokes the moment Bob Dylan sang in 2001, “Some of these bootleggers, they make pretty good stuff”. Indeed, after 1976 record companies had to count on the artist to start a legal action against bootleggers and there have never been any quarrels registered between them.

According to legal prescriptions,

The counterfeiter and the pirate fail to pay the recording costs incurred by the record company, and they steal the profits which might otherwise accrue to the record company. Detriment to the artist results from inferior-quality recordings manufactured by the counterfeiter or pirate and from the non-payment of artists royalties. (Shemel and Krasilovsky, 2007: 93-4)

Even though most of these copies were on-the-set recordings of Dylan's performances, "Bootleggers were (and are, though no longer for the same reasons) notoriously vague about the sources of their material." (1995: 1) Heylin ends the prologue making an optimistic statement about bootlegs' existence.

I believe bootlegs have been a positive influence on the music. They have reminded fans that rock & roll is about 'the moment', that you might have to wade through static, pops, crackles, bad nights and worse tapes to find one clear moment, but no record company can capture each and every one worth preserving; that the record companies cannot lock music up in neat little boxes and say, 'This is what you may listen to.' Hopefully, the bootleggers have also freed an awful lot of music that the artists themselves might not have 'approved' for release. But then, never trust the artist, trust the tale. (Heylin, 1995: 3-4)

I add to these, bootlegs are precious documents that contributed to creating the aura of live performances. They also believed that the artist's authenticity got to be more relevant during his performances and the not only wanted to access the privilege of listening to these records but to analyze Dylan's renditions.

In the bootleg industry the term of authenticity was in the hands of his participants and admirers, but still "rock thus favors performers who overcome this division of labor and demonstrate an organic expressivity, through a unity of creation and communication, of origination and performance" (Keightley, 2001: 134)

Expert music journalists like Andrew Muir and Greil Marcus have observed the quality of several bootleg records. Specifically, Andy Greene, from *Rolling Stone Magazine*, commented that *Town Hall 4/12/63* "is far and away the best recording from this period of Dylan's career" (2001) The journalist makes a definitive list of the top Bob Dylan bootlegs, including the 1993 record in *The Supper Club*, a "tiny New York club" where "Dylan performed an acoustic gig that outshined the following year's MTV *Unplugged* by a huge margin".<sup>150</sup>

Well after the creation of his first bootleg record, the industry surely noticed

their popularity. Quickly, Bob Dylan became the booster of rock bootlegging, as it had begun in relation to jazz music. Both the artist, whose copyright laws were being manipulated, and the record company, which was not receiving any benefits derived from this alternative market, agreed that "the economics of bootleg production operated as the most obvious constraint on their mass-marketability" (Heylin, 1995: 39). However, they would not amend it until the 1990s when the record company decided to release the first three volumes of the current twelve. Their indirect popularity and their positive effect on the figure of the artist could be one of the reasons why Columbia ignored the problem at first instance. Indeed, all the volumes wore the name of that illicit enemy, the bootleg document. The reason why Columbia's head of production chose *The Bootleg Series* to name this kind of records could be based on the fact that it was a good marketing strategy, considering the associations that the expert members of Dylan's audience could make. Apparently, this action would redeem the industry and Dylan with the pressures coming from the audience. In a way, the audience's desire to get answers from the singer and his refusal to satisfy them might have encouraged them to find them by themselves, in his performances. The least they could ascertain was to what extent was he a good performer. Occasionally, the context could provide them an answer to some of their interrogations. The purity of its sound, his voice, the words as uttered directly to the audience, the emblems of American folk tradition and their vernacular expressivity all contributed to creating that sense of belonging to a community. His performances showed the relation between the artist and the man. Not only what his songs meant, but what was his way of being human that makes it *his* way (Taylor, 1991). They believed this was the way to access true facts. According to their philosophy, it was worthier relying on experiences than reason. Once they had arrived at that point of understanding, they had already recorded it and could evoke that feeling over and over again. At some point of Dylan's touring activity, even the band would ask for those records and use them during their rehearsals. This way, before their shows, they would unravel the mystery of their being booed (Heylin, 1995<sup>151</sup>).

Bootleggers targeted authenticity in the performing context as opposed to the studio records. The bootleg series released unscripted recordings that revealed what his fans were so eager to obtain, although the sound quality was very deficient sometimes. Dylan's producers should probably be proud of such an exceptional attraction for Bob Dylan's shows. It was indicative of his popularity in a restricted area of admirers, but what these albums ended up confirming was that the artist's uniqueness becomes more

visible and audible on stage. Like in *The Basement Tapes* newly edited copy, *The Bootleg Series Vol.11* (2014) what Greil Marcus considers an extraordinaire cultural phenomenon, “a map of an invisible world, a country of their own –where, for a few months, certain bedrock strains of American cultural language were restrained and reinvented” (2013: 116).

The bootleg industry developed more that sense of authenticity connected to independent labels, alternative music and non-commercial material that started back in the folk revival, as I mentioned above. The industry was divided between major labels, which controlled the great sums of money and tried always to determine what artist could be cost-effective, and the independent labels that “have often had to be more daring, searching out new talent, creating specialized niches and feeding new styles into the musical mainstream” (Starr and Waterman, 2006: 10) At some point in history, around the 50s and 60s, the majors acknowledge the popular demand of independent music and disguised themselves as good indie-music adventurers. “Some of the biggest record corporations –for example, Columbia Records– promoted themselves as specializing in countercultural music” (Starr and Waterman, 2006: 152).

The record companies which were raised as the “majors” after the postwar period and which fought against each other in the immediate “Battle of the Speeds” in search for the fastest music format, were RCA Victor, Columbia, Decca and “a new Los Angeles-based company, Capitol Records” (Starr and Waterman, 2006: 20-22) This fact contrasts the simultaneous strength that was popularly given to live performances and concerts, as the best way to understand the artist. On this behalf, Columbia added a collectible sense to these LPs –note the words “series and volume” that explicitly refer to a collection of his works–. This way, every potential buyer would feel compromised to obtain them all.

Bearing in mind that “the five most bootlegged artists remain The Beatles, Led Zeppelin, The Rolling Stones, Bob Dylan and Bruce Springsteen”, according to Heylin’s study (1995: 10), maybe the commonest characteristic of them all is their grade of authenticity. I agree with Grant Maxwell and belief that in relation to the other names, “Dylan is perhaps the artist who has most been able to maintain his mythical stature, even while explicitly denying that status, by constantly fostering an air of paradox.” (2014: 5218) Indeed, one of those relations between them is that most of those names were influenced by Bob Dylan as he intervened in several types of music genres and disciplines. Robert Shelton confirmed,

There is scarcely a popular music form (blues, country, topical, folk-rock, ballad, prayer, even a waltz) Dylan didn't infuse with new possibilities. A master-politician as well as influencer, he befriended and affected the Beatles, Peter, Paul and Mary, Joan Baez, the Band, the Byrds, Johnny Cash, and a roster of singer-writers often referred to as 'new Dylans.'  
(2011: 46)

### 2.3.5.3. The New Dylans

The echo of Dylan's authenticity was again felt when a new category of singer-songwriter was born. A new kind who includes all the mythical qualities of the artist, together with the different characters that had a direct influence in the poetic lyricism of this kind of songs.

Robert Shelton didn't like the name that was commonly given by the press to these artists. They were known as "the new Dylans" and this category covered a strategic use of his saleable authenticity, a guarantee to offer Dylan's great audience a further realm of expectations. Robert Shelton named many of these new poet-singers:

An inexact shorthand for an acoustic songwriter with the touch of a poet, it included, at one time or another, Eric Andersen, Janis Ian, Phil Ochs, Donovan, Simon and Garfunkel, Mark Knopfler, Loudon Wainwright III, John Prine, James Taylor, Carly Simon, Don McLean, Bruce Springsteen and Patti Smith  
(2011: 939)

However, David Yaffe, the music critic, considered Donovan as the first of the "new Dylans" (2011: 9) because he regarded the songwriter with the silent admiration that Dylan had for Guthrie.

All these singers, with better or worse success, tried to emulate to more or less extent Dylan's style (hairstyle included) and not every one of them but the great majority presented at least once, a cover of the artist. One of such interpreters was Nina Simone, who was acknowledged by the author on his comments as 2015 Musical Person of the Year, covering "Just Like Tom Thumbs' Blues", "I Shall Be Released" or "The Times They Are A-Changin'".<sup>152</sup>

Of course, there are some who exceeded this labeling, perhaps accomplishing the major task Dylan also gave way to self fulfillment and then, autonomy from their "father". A task that eventually, each of them accomplished but which gave a bigger

success to singers like David Bowie, who referred to his idol by writing a song to him, as Dylan had done previously with Woody Guthrie. In this, Bowie parodies Dylan's remark on Woody Guthrie, "hey, hey Woody Guthrie, I wrote you a song" but referring to Dylan's other self, "Oh, hear this Robert Zimmerman / I wrote a song for you". Where Dylan addresses a worldwide disappointment, "'Bout a funny ol' world that's a-comin' along", Bowie seems to have the intention of sharing a secret with the man behind the artist, "About a strange young man called Dylan". This secret is more like a warning about Dylan's powerful use of songs, the idea that "a couple of songs / From your old scrapbook / could send here home again". He is clearly alluding to Dylan's persuasive use of songs, an idea that will be studied more in depth in the next section. In the last verses, Bowie pledges Robert Zimmerman to tell Bob Dylan they've lost his poems,

So they're writing on the walls  
Give us back our unity  
Give us back our family  
You're every nation's refugee  
Don't leave us with their sanity

This idea of songs or poems having the special ability to make people join forces has already been described and will be mentioned again in this study as an elemental characteristic of his music: the idea that it generates a community, a universal agreement between its listeners.

It seemed songwriters were part of a league of extraordinary men mastering each other because Bowie reciprocated Dylan's song "Song to Woody" (1962) and sang "Song to Bob Dylan" (1971). While David Bowie was requiring Dylan to appear on the scene again –absorbed in his break of 1966 to 1974–, Dylan was paying a homage to his music referent Woody Guthrie who passed away in 1968.

One of his admirers was a consecrated artist who in his adulthood regarded Bob Dylan's talent as a promising index of folk and country's good health and future talents. Johnny Cash wrote in his autobiography that he "was deeply into folk music in the early 1960s," he confessed he listened "both the authentic songs from various periods and areas of American life and the new 'folk revival' songs of the time, so I took note of Bob Dylan as soon as the *Bob Dylan* album came out in early '62 and listened almost constantly to *The Freewheelin' Bob Dylan* in '63. I had a portable record player I'd take

along on the road, and I'd put on *Freewheelin'* backstage, then go out and do my show, then listen again as soon as I came off." (2007<sup>153</sup>)

Bob Dylan's talent at this respect, would be deemed like an inexplicable natural or mystical force, similar to those tales around artists' mystic powers that have its correspondent protagonist in each American music niche culture. Also the idea of coolness, "a quality that forms at the heart of the genre", is also applied to refer to a similar sense of the authentic persona and rock performance. To be cool is to show signs of an "affective authenticity" (Maxwell, 2014: 304), a character that was ignored during the pre-rock era. Such coolness wears the formidable self-consciousness of what being authentic means for the individual and how to attain it only through excellent performances and an impressive personality. Part of rock's exigencies in the decade of the sixties was for these songs and their interpreters to show signs of an intellectual force together with the inaccessible and sensitive character of the songwriter and leader. Observe the examples of Jim Morrison, leader of The Doors, David Bowie, Patti Smith, Paul McCartney and John Lennon's latest phase. Especially Jim Morrison, like Bob Dylan, reflected in his lyrics and performances the force of poetry and the residue of Greek tragedy and other mystical rituals on stage. He extended to his own body knowledge the idea of the mystical representation, overacting with his body what the voice was not completely able to express.

Similarly represented by the two leaders from The Beatles. They held a relation of natural symbiosis, during which "McCartney allowed Lennon to become a beacon of "truth" (...) whereas Lennon allowed McCartney to be a brilliant performer, composer, and promoter of both their music and the countercultural ethos that they represented." (Maxwell, 2014: 1022) In the following decade, authenticity and intellectuality would be represented by the names of Patti Smith, Iggy Pop, etc.

In fact, albeit the specific style of The Beatles, their encounter with the bard of Minnesota proved to be decisive for the band too. After their encounter in August 1964, "the group's newly charged spirit of experimentation was not limited to songwriting or to the instrumental arrangements of their songs. They also began experimenting with the medium itself, the technology of recording." (Maxwell, 2014: 2449) Apparently, their relationship with Bob Dylan was very much based on drug use, in order to experiment with physical and emotional responses, ultimately producing psychedelic sounds and surrealistic images.

Rubber Soul, along with Dylan's Bringing It All Back Home, was "the departure record", as Starr nominated it, performing a crucial turning point in the historical process from the postwar era to the emergent attitude of the sixties counterculture. These two records, perhaps more than any others, initiated the aesthetic possibilities that continue to inform Western culture almost a half-century later. (Maxwell, 2014: 2625)

John Lennon would confess that especially since he listened to Bob Dylan's music he'd start thinking about his own emotions. "instead of projecting myself into a situation, I would try to express what I felt about myself."<sup>154</sup>

The New York Times greeted Dylan with a January 28 editorial that paraphrased "Times Changing," concluding: "Every generation has its Dylan. The generation of the '60s was blessed with a singing poet to help fashion that mood. Some things went wrong, and change is always challenged by stagnation. But as long as Dylan sings, the spirit that moved the land a decade ago will be heard. (Shelton, 2011: 930)

Additionally, there were other celebrating figures in American popular music to whom the influence of Dylan had been very significant. For example Jimi Hendrix, who was said to start singing –he was just a guitar player– after hearing Dylan's voice when he understood he didn't need to be a virtuoso to express himself with an equal force. Dylan would celebrate this coincidence borrowing Hendrix guitar riff from his version of "All Along The Watchtower" (1968), as proven in his recorded performance in *Before The Flood*. This is something similar to what happened to Leonard Cohen. The Canadian author wasn't satisfied with his literary career and made it drift to the waters of American Folk music standards. He traveled to New York and there he met John Hammond, the Columbia Record producer who had just represented Dylan, and started following the steps of his admired singer.

Artists like Patti Smith or Lucinda Williams have honored the works of Dylan for being their direct referent. Lucinda Williams is quoted in David Yaffe (2011) declaring for a British journal, *Birmingham News* (2009), "I really decided to learn how to write great songs because of what I considered my vocal limitations. I decided I was going to be the female of Bob Dylan".

**'HAVING SOMETHING TO SAY'. THE RHETORIC OF COMMUNICATION  
AND REPETITIVE PERSUASSION**

In their truest moments, songs, like microbes  
—without intent; without brains— use people.

—Greil Marcus, *Bob Dylan by Greil Marcus: Writings 1968- 2010*

### 3.1. Introduction

This chapter of the thesis aspires to presenting the basis of a possible research combining Pragmatic studies with the significant context of performance for songs' aesthetic and rhetoric processing, as well as for their communicative strength.

The linguistic concept of Pragmatics deals with language, and language puts in relation the users and their surrounding circumstances of communication, being conscious that "communication" comes from the Latin word "communicare", which means "to share". That is why every communicative production implicates a shared context surrounding the actors of the event. The context of the song is the performance. Whether it is through **direct transmission** (in a concert or live show) or **indirect** (through a recorded version), the context of the song's performance articulates simultaneously signs, participants and other "paramusical" elements that take place (Tagg, 2013). The same as other communicative situations, while the artist performs a song, an action or series of actions are taking place simultaneously. The language acts, as in every direct communicative and some statements can change reality. In pragmatic studies there are known as **speech acts** (Austin, 1962) because they can carry out an action. And, not only that, they also imply a social act. Through them, the members of a particular community interact between each other.

Live shows, on the other hand, become a participatory process during which the expectations of the audience, along with the plans of the interpreter, are preconditioned regardless of what the musical instant will finally offer. John Scannell (2011) calls it a process of "reterritorialization", where the artist's interests crash against those of the audience. The music critic David Yaffe prevents us, "Go to a Dylan concert today and you will be prepared for what he will do, but not exactly how he will do it. (...) You may feel transformed; you may feel disappointed. He may feel the same way. But he reinvents his past to the point where it becomes his future" (2011: 18).

Despite this, for Phil Ochs, the singer-songwriter, "the audience's relationship to the singer is possibly the most direct and powerful I have ever witnessed"( Ochs, 2004: 60<sup>155</sup>) Dylan for his part has been skillfully balancing his own creative process with the audience's expectations by trying not to surrender to what they wanted; which means, avoiding any kind of answer involving meaning and understanding his songs. "Every vocal was a surprise. You couldn't predict what it would sound like. The song itself, the structure of the song, was barely a clue. The limits were there to be evaded." (Marcus,

2010: 18). Part of the resulting impact that his attitude causes among the audience has been translated into words by Dylan's scholars and critics in the section about Bob Dylan's performances, "Bob Dylan is exemplary: he has consistently alienated expectations with his myriad changes in artistic direction, throughout his long and esteemed career" (Scannell, 2011: 14).

I try to answer questions such as, could ever songs be compared to speech acts as the characteristics of these were defined in the well-known theory of J. L. Austin, *How To Do Things With Words* (1962). In this theory, Austin talks about certain common-speech structures whose function changes the "real", that is, they act over the discourse situation. According to him, there are certain utterances with performative qualities that produce a change in the way things are after speaking.

Music's inherent performativity gave me the starting point for this reflection on the pragmatics of song that aims at providing an answer about why the artist could have chosen singing instead of writing. I have called them song-acts to resemble the pragmatic terminology and to introduce them as part of the science of communication as a description of those songs' characteristic that makes them able to communicate and produce an effect in reality.

Previous studies have attended to the communicational power of performances and have revealed thorough explanations how normatively expressive it is. To the extent that in folklore traditions, it surges the research method of **cantometrics**, developed by Alan Lomax that studies patterns of systematic repetition that relate elements of every kind of folklore behaviour that seem to be able to feature social organization and a "taxonomy of expressive human communications style".<sup>156</sup>—They initial hypothesis of Alan Lomax and Victor Graver, the promoters of the idea, was that "the dominant values of societies fundamentally influence how their members sing, that this influence applies wherever folk song is found in its natural state; and that the world distribution of singing styles is patterned on the world distribution of human societies." They made the same connection between authenticity and singing, saying "Cantometrics is the study of (authentic) performance style, NOT songs per se." (Grauer, 2005).

Also, Nicholas Cook (2012) mentions the existence of a grammar of performance, "a conceptual paradigm that constructs process as subordinate to product." He adds that the discipline, coming from the nineteenth century was "an emulation of the status d methods of philology and literary scholarship, as a result of which the study

of musical texts came to be modeled on the study of literary ones.” All of these theoretical approaches confirm the academic need of describing a pragmatic theory around the literary and communicative contents of Dylan’s song performances. Especially since this quality of songs is taken as an advantage by the artist.

As pioneer theorist Ferdinand de Saussure suggested, “the structures of human language should be compared with these of the field in question”.<sup>157</sup>

(...) music is perhaps the non-linguistic field where linguistic models can most successfully be applied, which is surprising when one considers that music is one of the last fields towards which linguistics has reached out, after the structures of kinship, myth, fashion, the unconscious and biological, literary and cinematic structure.  
(Nattiez, 1973: 53)

Against other artistic discourses, songs produce a significant reaction in the audience and operate, among other things, thanks to figures of repetition and other rhetoric figures. Like in oral speech, these are used “to influence in any way any of the other participants” (Goffman, 1959: 15–16).

Repetition works at various levels of the reception and performance, giving a strong coherence to all this theory about the music performance that Bob Dylan used as a unique facilitator of literary communication. Greil Marcus (2010: 32) says that “(...) to hear his music and to hear his songs is to get some idea of what is going on and what is going to happen, in music and in music communication.” As he certainly went further in the use of motifs, music cadences and deep reflections about life and the forge of an authentic character. I believe all this helped his music become a landmark in pragmatic literature.

When we look at repetition and recurrence and their pragmatic force in songs, its strategic use becomes great sign of communicative awareness, “(...) the deliberate repetition powerfully signals intentionality, revealing to the external world the internal commitment of the participant.” (Margulis, 2014: 58). The latest cognitivist studies around music repetition have highlighted music as the major repetitious language. However, as recent studies have shown, “language’s role in singing remains a largely unexplored but necessary site of analysis if we are to understand the relationships between discursive fields like music and language in their embeddedness in cultural practices.” (Bickford, 2007: 466). Tyler Bickford is among the explorers of this issue. The author of the article “Music of Poetry and Poetry of Sound: Expressivity and Grammar in Vocal Performance” tries to put his notions of ethnomusicology in the

hands of linguistic and pragmatics, so long as he wants to “structure acts of speaking and singing as intelligible and interpretable utterances” (2007: 1).

According to my theory, the determinant pragmatic study of Austin (1962), *How To Do Things With Words?* should go like this, *How To Do Things With Songs?*, as if it tried to describe the communicative and interpersonal force of singing. In this case, and paraphrasing J. L. Austin, the story should go as follows and describe those cases and senses in which to *sing* something is to do something; or in which *by singing* or *in singing* something we are doing something (Austin, 1962: 12<sup>158</sup>). While Austin is centered in performative verbs this pragmatic study will use words in performing situations to observe their emotive and communicative force. The effects of this song acts can be persuasive or assertive, commissive, expressive, directive and rogative (Leech, 2005).

Of course, this study can only speculate the communicative success of his works, because, in order to complete a study like this, of which I only offer a brief suggestion, it should contrast a group of listeners' different responses to Dylan's artistic and communicative strategies. The only thing we can be sure of is that, "(...) for the fan there will always be a particular thrill about a live show. The special connection that you feel when you are in the same hall as the singer..." (Muir, 2013: 24).

### **3.2. The Rhetoric of Songs**

This section wants to argue in favor of songs as a major discourse for persuasive, assertive and emotional objectives. Because of its communicative as well as the rhetoric potential it must be studied in the scope of literary pragmatics, giving a special attention to the role that the figures of repetition play in Bob Dylan's songs. This study acknowledges that, first and foremost, the difference between written speeches and song speeches (Bowden, 2001; Ricks, 2004) as it is understood since the appearance of written documents in the XVth Century, is that song speech needs to be produced during a concrete fraction of time, while the other is just reproduced on paper. Music timing is the last opportunity to perceive its musicality and its message. That is why he must be so precise. Bickford gives a definition of a song very interesting in terms of pragmatics and ethnomusicology. Songs are a “site of expressive interaction between

system of aural meaning and form” (2007: 2).

Listening to music, apart from being pleasurable, has some points in common with living a communicative experience. The overextended senses offered by musicality precede its linguistic content, but still any conclusion about lyrics' interpretation is correspondingly led by a dialogical interchange, as Yuri Lotman, Desiderio Navarro and Manuel Cáceres explained, the Russian founder of cultural semiotics, "conscience without communication is impossible. In this sense it could be declared that dialogue precedes language and gives rise to it" (1960: 21-42). Popular songs only name the structure of that kind of discourse which recreates specific communicative situations and that served Bob Dylan exploring its past forms to give it a new context. He said once, about the reasons for composing "Song to Woody", "(...) I needed to sing it, so that's why I needed to write it because it hadn't been written" (Dylan, 1964<sup>159</sup>) This research gains an insight into the possibility that Dylan used popular songs' discourse instead of other literary or artistic languages because of song's perfect embodiment of the ancient "*ars rhetorica*" from the 4<sup>th</sup> Century BC. A theory developed to persuade people through the power of speech. The most famous texts were those of Aristotle and Quintilian. His trust in songs' performances in order to exploit the communicative force of this art and to serve as a cultural background between people gave its fruits since his first great success, the song "Blowin' In The Wind" (1962). This song was the first great example of how to use a naïf timbre and simple rhetorical questions with a depth of knowledge and social awareness.

After being answered about his use of songs to protest, the singer gives a broad answer that relates his singing to basic forthcoming needs, "Man, I don't write protest songs, I just react. I got all these thoughts inside me and I gotta say 'em. Most people can't say 'em. They keep it all inside. It's for these people I write my songs"<sup>160</sup> This fact about anticipating people's reception is what comes to play during his performances and it is what makes them interesting in terms of linguistic pragmatics. Not only that, "(...) musical performance provides an interesting framework for broader philosophical concerns about action; notably about intention, purposive-ness, skill, communication, and creativity" (Godlovitch, 1998: 1).

Except for its musical framework, the song speech is another kind of discourse, in as much as it can, 'project certain values and ideas which contribute to the (re) production of social life' (Fairclough, 2003: 184) In fact, songs, especially popular songs, want to replicate common speech and bring social life through a mimetic text.

The listener can find dialogues taking place during the reproduction of some Dylan's songs. These instants imitating real encounters, count as the prime level of the rhetoric of communication in Dylan's works. For example, in the song "Don't Fall Apart On Me Tonight", a love song included in the album *Infidels* (1983), he introduces some common language expressions like, "Just a minute before you leave, girl. Just a minute before you touch the door. What is it that you're trying to achieve, girl? Do you think we can talk about it some more?" The singer is explicitly imitating the beginning of a conversation. His straightforward language parallels such trustworthy statements as, "I ain't too good at conversation, girl" helping the audience realize that the song is, indeed, trying to dramatize a conversational situation and we play the role of the lover.

Bob Dylan has always tried not to deviate too much from those other speech forms, making of songs a different modality in the realm of communication. The typical constrained action accompanied by rhythm is compensated with the extended phrases he introduces and the reliance on music timing and rhythm into words (Hodge, 1985: 124). If songs are communicative is because they bring words into action. Dylan must have truly comprehended how satisfactory were music and performance as communicative and artistic channels. His collage technique must also be interpreted as communicative-driven as much as it "is about encounters. It is about bringing ideas into conversation with one another. Its advent in the twentieth century brought about the deconstruction of old barriers between language and art..." (Cran, 2014: 17). His songs changed the subject and use of the diverse musical pre-existing genres. Scaduto quotes a folk singer, Eric Andersen, saying about Bob Dylan that "he spoke in a common language, and he opened up the language of song a bit." (2001: 3432).

Right from the song's morphology, it can be seen how many rhetoric strategies take place. For example, the refrain or chorus helps to process and understand the major ideas, while the strophic structure<sup>161</sup>—helps to introduce a big linguistic content and it constitutes the most evident figure of repetition. He also points to the audience's attention and appeals to the oral storytelling tradition (morality plays included),

I once loved a girl, her skin it was bronze...  
("Ballad in Plain D", 1964)

"Come gather 'round friends  
And I'll tell you a tale"  
("North Country Blues", 1964)

Come mothers and fathers  
Throughout the land  
And don't criticize  
What you can't understand  
Your sons and your daughters  
Are beyond your command  
Your old road is rapidly agin'  
(“The Times They Are A-Changin’”, 1964)

The thing with Bob Dylan's songs is that a great part of them won the record of the longest songs in American popular music, expressing an infinite set of ideas in the structure of his songs.

On the one hand, the enlargement of his songs is what Philip Tagg called an "intensional syneresis", proper of popular music genres, but here extended to the habitual limits (2013: 272). Bob Dylan's songs enter the category of "macro duration" songs that go from six to thirty minutes long. This is not just a characteristic of his first albums, Dylan continued dilating on his witty descriptions, reflections and elaborations all through out his career, showing, again, an emphasis on linguistic content. "Like a Rolling Stone" (1965) became an unexpected breakthrough since such long songs were not successful on the radio. Thus, many radio stations refused such type of songs when they got them. However, it reached the second position in the US charts according to Billboard Hot 100. Besides their duration, songs with “an extended period of, say, 4 ½ or 5 bars instead of the usual 4 in a popular song can communicate something like ‘the words are important here and I’m going to fit them in even if it means spending a little extra time on them.’” (Tagg, 2013: 286-7) Dylan also made use of this resource in various songs as he experimented with the strophic format of blues and folk songs. For example, his first *Blonde On Blonde* (1965) success, “Rainy Day Women #12 & 35” is 12-bar blues, and “Blowin’ in the Wind” is a 16-bar strophic song that also hit the charts, although not in Dylan's version, but in the village lineup of Peter, Paul and Mary. Christine Mason states that “his innovations of this form are as remarkable as in his use of blues metaphors.” (2007: 210).

On the other hand, he exceeded the regular song-timing, as dictated by marketing issues, and although it allowed him introducing much more information, he should make very-well-structured songs or his ideas would not be processable. Here repetition helped him emphasizing ideas, persuading the listener, being understood, and having an emotional effect on the audience.

The most common figures of repetition he used so far, are those dealing with the

repetition of syllables and sounds and words, clauses or sentences and ideas.

In the repetition of sounds, the artist could be searching for rhythmic as well as prosodic results that make the message more attractive and impactful. As Philip Tagg states, "music is that form of interhuman communication in which humanly organized, non-verbal sound is perceived as vehiculating primarily affective (emotional) and/ or gestural (corporeal) patterns of cognition" (2002: 5) As he explains in the same text, the limits between song and speech are marked by the presence of sang words and the level of prosodic use that would justify their presence.

Tagg (2002) also observed that too much prosody could make the language's presence be justified only by its musicality and then, stop being recognized as speech. However, Dylan's balanced use of prosody, which, on the other hand, deal with rhythm, pitch, tempo, volume, stress –all musical terms– and all of them are an indispensable part of a theory of the paralinguistic rules of communication (Rothwell, 2013).

For example, Dylan repeats insistently the line "tell old bill" in the chorus of "This Evening So Soon" (2013<sup>162</sup>). We have also the example of the famous "lay lady lay" ("Lay Lady Lay", 1971). He produces a sense of violent alliteration or humorous assonance in verses like the following,

I got a woman, she's so mean  
She sticks my boots in the washing machine  
Sticks me with buckshot when I'm nude  
Puts bubblegum in my food  
She's funny, wants my money, calls me "honey"  
("I Shall Be Free No. 10", 1964)

Among the most commonly used, we can find the figure of alliteration, producing the same sound at the beginning of two or more stressed syllables, like in the line, "love is teasing, love is pleasing, love's not an evil thing" ("Sugar Baby", 2001) or in "the cat's in the well and the barn is full of bull" ("Cat's in the Well", 1990) All of them are useful practices for memorization as well.

The repetition of words or sentences to give a sense of rhythm, again, like in "Tight Connection to My Heart (Has Anybody Seen My Love)" (1985) where the singer repeats four times the question "Has anybody seen my love?" along with the iterative accompaniment of the backup singers<sup>163</sup>. Not only that, this type of repetition can also give cohesion to the song speech and remind the listener what are the important ideas, that is putting some emphasis. Something he can do with the figure of anaphora, that

repeats the same words at the beginning of each verse, lines or successive clauses. Like when he exhorts people, as if the song was a religious sermon, to question themselves about their spiritual inclination in “Are you Ready?” (1980), “Are you ready, Are you ready? / Are you ready, Are you ready? / Are your ready to meet Jesus?” or in “Ring Them Bells” (1989).

As long as we are dealing with the song’s structure, as strict as in any oral speech, we can speak of like Julia Kristeva’s concept of *pheno-song* (Szekely, 2006) as opposed to *geno-song* which is more related to its materiality. Later this name was used by Roland Barthes in his essay, “The grain of the voice” (2005). In the following excerpt, he explains what is a *pheno-song*,

(...) covers all the phenomena, all the features which belong to the structure of the language being sung, the rules of the genre, the coded form of the melisma, the composer’s idiolect, the style of the interpretation: in short, everything in the performance which is in the service of communication, representation, expression, everything which it is customary to talk about, which forms the tissue of cultural values (the matters of acknowledged texts, of fashions, of critical commentaries), which takes its bearing directly on the ideological alibis of a period (‘subjectivity’, ‘expressivity’, ‘dramaticism’, ‘personality’ of the artist).  
(Barthes, 2005: 182)

It is not important “at what it says, but the voluptuousness of its sound-signifiers” (Barthes, 2005: 182). In the next pages I have referred to this duality as the emotional and the persuasive communicative elements that make part of Dylan’s songs.

Dylan used to say, “I write the songs because I need something to sing. It’s the difference between the words on paper and the song. The song disappears into the air, the paper stays.” (2011<sup>164</sup>). Songs act, on the one hand, like the confessional territory of the artist, where he searches for his own identity. Dylan confessed in his *Chronicles Vol. 1* (2005) he was addressing his own self in most of his songs. However, in addressing himself, he was addressing others, so this confession supports my hypothesis that Dylan could have trusted songs’ communicative quality as a means to reach his listeners and to persuade them of certain ideas and standpoints. “Despite his gift of words and vision, he had to admit that the only way he could truly communicate was with his typewriter and his guitar.” (Shelton, 2011: 454).

Dylan replicates certain discursive attributes in order to give the audience the feeling that they are listening to a true story, even if it is the only song. Attributes, like repetition, that look as spontaneous as in our communicative exchanges. For example,

when he is referencing people in an inviting way “Come gather ‘round friends” (“North Country Blues”, 1964) or with his constant use of the interjections “Well” and “Oh”. Or when he makes use of vernacular expressions and the rhythm of speech. He even makes some word playing and introduces phrases and idioms just to make them unrecognizable, like in the great text of postmodernity, James Joyce’s *Ulysses* (1920). His use of common language expressions can be as startling as that famous “When the Ship Comes In” (1964) where the ship does not bring any fortune but the complete destruction of the world,

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  
 (“When The Ship Comes In”, 1964)

Or the transposed phrase of “My Back Pages” in which the listener finds a well-known expression, a familiar way of talking about the loss of time, here wittily transposed for, “Ah, but I was so much older then / I’m younger than that now” (1964)

The qualities of paralinguistics of communication also play an important role in song speeches. Part of the overall interpretation of the artist, these nonverbal indexes surround the context of the discourse and can be very useful “to envision intrapersonal communication occurring in the mind of the individual.” Professor Swati Johar adds, “Vocal qualities like prosody, stress, intonation, etc., beyond the basic verbal message that usually accompany speech constitute the paralinguistic properties and play an important role in communication.” (2015: 3). Bob Dylan has been representing a whole variety of moods and possible interpretations throughout the meaning of his paramusical elements, he trusted so much in spontaneity that even his studio albums reflect some of them, like laughing between songs, bad takes, demos and other accidents. Most of them have been published and can summon to the effect of the song speech, like the timbre of his voice, which has changed so much over the years.

### 3.3. The Song Speech Theory

In certain linguistic discourses, Austin's theory proved that there were certain statements such as, "I take you to be my wife", "The state accuses this man of murder"; in which the statement has a determinant result over reality. In other words, that the utterance acts over reality (1962): they become engaged, the man is accused and becomes a guilty man, surrendering to the legal consequences. However, Austin noted that performative statements, when used in the literary language –as these never imply truthiness– were infelicitous. Conscious that not all linguistic expressions are performative and bearing in mind that not every song employs these, I have employed another solution based in Van Dijk's *The Pragmatics of Literary Communication* (1987), who spoke about the idea of a macro pragmatic theory. I have tried to think about this theory applied to Dylan's performances by calling this unit a song speech.

I start from the premise that, like Simon Frith explained, songs should be considered more as "speech acts", rather than as poems, "We have to treat them in terms of the persuasive relationship set up between the singer and the listener. From this perspective, a song doesn't exist to convey the meaning of words; rather, the words exists to convey the meaning of the song" (1998: 166<sup>165</sup>)

In this case, if we analyze the series of performative verbs of each song and the dramatization or interpretation of the singer, we could understand their main illocution. In other words, the various performative verbs of a song speech make a leading illocution or an act of singing "which in itself constitutes the intended action"<sup>166</sup>. This can give us, among other interpretations, some ideas about the reason why Dylan chose the song speech better than any other mode of expression (except his incursion into writing poems and memories and his interest in painting).

If it was possible to understand something about the poetics of songs as derived from the song speech analysis this purpose would defy the barrier between communicative language and literary language. Especially now that Literature, depending on the type of context, is overrated in comparison with the still underestimated and extremely ample territory of popular songs.

There have been some scholars and researchers declaring the advantages of songs against other types of languages. As Philip Tagg (2013: 367) indicates, "singing is more tonal than talking" and the breaks it experiments between its phrases are longer to leave the listener some time for processing it. It can be better for displaying a certain

message because its patterns of accentuation create an obvious rhythm that helps decoding and memorizing it. Elizabeth Margulis cites the psycholinguistic study *Attraction and Social Coordination* by McGarva and Warner that says, “The preservation of the governing rhythm is considered essential to successful communication” (2003<sup>167</sup>) Well, rhythm is one of the most obvious resources of Dylan’s performances.

The series of illocutions that are adapted here to the song speech theory belong to Geoffrey Leech’s linguist studies. He presents an important categorization of performative verbs. These categories helped me contemplate songs in a new manner, far from the predictions of interpretation or the inquisitive search for biographical data. I discovered these categories at least can reveal his communicative target.

The leading verbal actions of the song following the categorization of verbs by Geoffrey Leech are, **assertive verbs** (affirm, allege, assert, forecast, predict, announce, insist, etc.) **directive verbs** (ask, beg, bid, command, demand, forbid, recommend, request, etc.) **commissive verbs** (offer, promise, swear, volunteer, vow, etc.) **expressive verbs** (apologize, commiserate, congratulate, pardon, thank, etc.) and **rogative verbs** (ask, inquire, query and question) (1983: 203-6). Finally, Leech (1983: 211) prevents us that his a table of predicates is divided into illocutionary and psychological predicates. The other four verbal actions in relation to psychological predicates are, **creditives** (believe, assume, etc.), **volitional** (wish be, willing, intend, be determined, etc.), **dubitative** (wonder, doubt, etc.) and **attitudinal** (forgive, be grateful, etc.) In Bob Dylan songs there are many rogative verbs, asking and inquiring the receiver for answers or for his involvement,

“Please, Missus Henry, Missus Henry, please!  
Please, Missus Henry, Missus Henry, please!  
I’m down on my knees  
An’ I ain’t got a dime  
 (“Please, Mrs. Henry” 1967)

His insistence might be due to the idea of moving the listener to reflection. It is important to add here that the classification not only applies to find that specific verb in its statements but their “sense” or as Leech explains it in his essay, “(...) illocutionary verbs are capable of polysemy and therefore that our classification is not so much a classification of verbs, as of verb SENSES.” (1983: 208) That is why the general verbal sense of the song “Abandoned Love” (1975) is also rogative, albeit it lacks each of the

expected verbs. It is implied through indirect inquiries and his frequent use of rhetorical questions, or questions whose answer we already know

I love to see you dress before the mirror  
Won't you let me in your room one time 'fore I finally disappear?  
(...)  
How long must I suffer such abuse  
Won't you let me see you smile one time before I turn you loose?  
(...)  
Take off your heavy makeup and your shawl  
Won't you descend from the throne, from where you sit?  
Let me feel your love one more time before I abandon it

The same kind of rhetorical questions can be found in a great majority of his works. In this case, the unanswered questions can imply a positive answer, especially since the verb "to let" means "not prevent or forbid" and Dylan puts a negative before it, "won't you let me see..." This way, the two negatives cancel each other and become a positive. On the other hand, if he repeats so many times the question, it is possible that he is scared his answer might be negative.<sup>168</sup>

His song speech use shows us what kind of motivations he had and to what extent the context of performance could help him reach his goal since this pragmatic dimension that I am applying to popular music studies "deals with communicative objectives more than with results" (Leech, 1983: 10).

From the point of view of the Pragmatic studies, this circumstance would formulate the rules under which Dylan's song act is considered appropriate in relation to its context (van Dijk, 1987) A song speech is considered appropriate when it has reached the particular and the universal audience by putting in practice some communicative rules like the relevancy of the topic, the referencing to the audience, following a coherent structure, addressing the people implicated in the facts he is relating, etc.

Teun van Dijk (1987) the linguist and theoretician, thought that no literary text could impose a certain attitude nor any obligation over the reader, but is that true of Dylan's music performances? The force of music has been proven all through our history. During the highest social movements, music and people's songs became the metaphorical engine for the union and communal identity. This is due to the fact that we tend to mystify the music experience and relate it to our vital memories. If that is so, music could have been a great influence that leads us to certain decisions, attitudes or

obligations. Bob Dylan's songs about the civil rights era made a lot of people understand the magnitude of all the daily menaces: the war, government's control, media, etc. Music certainly empowers the mind of the listener. Albeit driven to entertain the audience, songs also retell the truth of common people in a "Guthriesque" way.

The historian Eric Hobsbawm observed that the "song, however, has given him the courage of speech" (1964<sup>169</sup>) and it was right in as much as Bob Dylan, described as an introvert in his multitude biographies (Scaduto, 2001; Shelton, 2011; Epstein, 2011; etc) was socially confident when he was singing. I mean, Dylan had many reasons for choosing songs instead of written poetry for his artistic manifestations, among these reasons it was the fact that these messages received through his voice could be interpreted as truth, especially when it deals with Dylan's grain of voice (Barthes, 2005), which kills the myth of the faculty of the voice, fosters an attention to words and messages as well as his unconventional timbre facilitates an interactive exchange too.

In relation to keeping faithful to truth and reliability, there is a strong coherence in Bob Dylan. He also chose to express surrealist images and fragmented stories, but he expressed topical-songs themes and common life experiences in a plain and straight way and was always a zealot of truth. At least Dylan's main communicative results can be assertive or "quasi-assertive" (van Dijk, 1987) and procure a simultaneous change of conscience in the listener. Bruce Springsteen said about his own experience, at the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame induction ceremony (1988),

The first time that I heard Bob Dylan I was in the car with my mother, and we were listening to, I think, maybe WMCA, and on came that snare shot that sounded like somebody kicked open the door to your mind, from 'Like a Rolling Stone.'<sup>170</sup>

And Greil Marcus describes in his text "Where I Came In" his experience after watching "With God On Our Side" played live in 1963, saying, "From the way he sounded and the way he moved, you couldn't tell where he was from and where he'd been, or where he was going –though the way he moved and sang somehow made you want to know all those things." (2010: 13<sup>171</sup>)

The less favorable condition for a supposed assertive power associated with his performances would be the fact that a song only provoked in the listener a notion of appreciation (or liking) (van Dijk, 1987), which –as it has been shown in the chapter of the scribes of the show– at least implies a critique or value judgment, or a certain reaction all the same. In the most polemic eras of his music career, everybody executed

this judging trait. Young devotees in his UK tour 1965 claimed to be totally disappointed and they were convinced that the reasons that led the author to such act of betrayal that was moving to the rock genre, was for commercial interests. In fact, the audience actively participated, as it can be proven in his records<sup>172</sup>, during the show or in the available documentaries. They would either shout "Judas!" in between songs or boo him along with cheers and approbatory posters.<sup>173</sup>

On the contrary, if the song speech is just meant for entertainment or their assertive power is not so obvious, then at least we can distinguish a concrete action taking form during every live show where music and words certainly move us, affect us in one way or the other,

(...) almost any speech act is really the performance of several acts at once, distinguished by different aspects of the speaker's intention: there is the act of saying something; what one does in saying it, such as requesting or promising, and how one is trying to affect one's audience.<sup>174</sup>

### 3.4. Persuasive Communication in Dylan's Songs

Bob Dylan is a unique example of a singer who eventually causes people to notice more his poetry than his music. This idea is shared with Philip Tagg's next statement, "Sometimes the words of a song can interfere with your perception of it as music" (2013: 184) When words catch our attention, the communicative exchange has started. Apart from this, there are other elements, analyzed here that reveal a perlocutionary force in its songs, meaning they are intended to persuade people. The interpreter's aim to move his audience: either in aesthetic or communicative terms. Perlocutionary acts refer to those speech acts that produce an effect in the listener through their song speech, "such as persuading, convincing, scaring, enlightening, inspiring, or otherwise getting someone to do or realize something".<sup>175</sup>

Betsy Bowden in describing one of his performance of "Hard Rain" (1964) says, "At the beginning he is overwhelmed and confused, by the end he is using each landform to try to communicate with people" (2001: 16) Dylan makes use of songs' structure to experiment and he relies on their quality to access different levels of audience involvement, like when he violates the expectations of folkies in sake of obtaining a hybridity between folk and rock. Then, he is calling for our attention deliberately and pointing to the genres' facilities as if they were the mode of expression and their cultural intersubjective possibilities. He is an heir of blues music that "emerged as a culturally-specific communicative network" (Alonso, 2012: 202).

The bluesman is generally regarded a trickster for his earthly behavior, "as for his or her signifying command of language" (Alonso, 2012: 204). He is one of those creators who is capable of bringing new signifiers to heartfelt and visionary concepts. Dylan acknowledged this and he used his voice and his various interpretations to make the listener believe in the supposed honesty of his discourse, against the general fictional literary and musical reception. Like blues artists before him, who had to empower their cultural identity against the dominant one, he uses songs' realm to create a unique language too, inseparable from its action: the performance. Claudia Alonso Recarte continues referring to blues performances "a space that transcends the interest of the individual and appeals to the collectivity" (2012: 202).

One of the things the artist has to do is to connect with his audience is to be reliable and Dylan conquers that reliability with the quality of "authenticity". As Greil Marcus wrote in one of his reviews of Dylan's works, "The speech that issued from his

or her mouth was pure; the motive simply to tell the truth, was pure; and the performance made both the singer and listener into authentic beings, who could not lie because they could not want to” (2010: 198). That is why in choosing songs as another means to say something openly, he is performing his most authentic role. One that does not want to follow the aesthetics of the time, but who introduces some unusual messages into the most unusual of channels, through songs.

Besides their narrative quality, songs have rhetorical qualities that Geoffrey Leech’s *Principles of Pragmatics* (2005) categorized. The use of rhetoric strategies depends upon the effect the singer wants to produce in his audience. According to Leech, there are two kinds of rhetoric: the interpersonal and the textual rhetoric. The interpersonal rhetoric is a double fold event. The lead singer of the Irish band, U2, Bono explained it in his own words in the *Rolling Stone* magazine, “When the desire to communicate is met with equal and opposite urge not to compromise in order to communicate –when those two things are in perfect balance– is when everything happens with rock ‘n’ roll” (2011). In other words, the effect of rock ‘n’ roll is one of communication and distance between the artist charisma and mysterious messages and the audience.

Geoffrey Leech indicated (2005) that rhetoric is only secondarily devoted to public and more prepared uses of language, which includes live shows and recordable events. The performative dimension of songs turns them into public events. Leech (1983: 15) explains that rhetoric in the pragmatic context, "is the focus it places on a good-oriented speech situation, in which the speaker uses language in order to produce a particular effect in the mind of the hearer". As he says later, after distinguishing between an interpersonal rhetoric and a textual rhetoric comes the fact that –as this thesis will confirm– the meaning of the utterance and the correct functioning of those rhetoric strategies can only be diagnosed by the hearer, who will give the most likely interpretation. The hearer and researcher will try to elucidate what kind of problem the interpreter or speaker was trying to solve when he sang that way (Leech, 2005). For instance, the degree of repetition –the leading element of analysis– can be counted among all those strategies the interpreter makes use of to reach his audience and surprise them or convince them. Greil Marcus remarks,

There was a way in which he could turn a phrase, and suddenly you’d turn your head, as if someone had just slapped you in the back of the neck. There was a way in which he

would move and come out and you'd feel as if someone was questioning all the basic assumptions by which you lived your life.  
(2010:188)

Sometimes Dylan's messages are delivered as if he was talking. Dylan has lots of singing instants that resemble the action of speaking. His character leaves all the melodious instinct to music and he seems an old Burroughs playing his "spoken word" performances or Giorno poetry systems (1965) where poetry is connected to communication technology and other multimedia resources more proper of music performances.

One of the main examples of his use of repetition for persuasive reasons is his use of repeated questions, called **epimone** as in "Blowin' in the Wind" and "A Hard Rain's A-Gonna Fall" (1962) introduces the idea that will be developed next about the special use of questions and the consequences repetition can have in an interpretative and a communicative sense.

### 3.4.1. The Questions

Across the works of Bob Dylan, we can check the importance of deictic and referencing elements that point to the audience. One of the most relevant expressions around this topic is the questions. Shelton in his book *No Direction Home: The Life and Music of Bob Dylan* (2011), says "he asked the most probing questions." Oh, how can, how can you ask me again / It only brings me sorrow ("Boots of Spanish Leather", 1963-1964).

Questions play a major role in Dylan's discography and trigger a new connection between the singer and his songs, and the songs with the audience. Lots of questions invade the structure of his songs and provide a catalog of such kind of expressions. For example, in "Who Killed Davey Moore?" (1964-5), "the poet poses the question, as a refrain, to the referee, the crowd, the manager, the gamblers who bet on the fight, the sportswriter, and finally Ramos himself, the fighter 'whose fist / laid him low in a cloud of mist'" (2011: 21-2). Among these questions we can find the most polemic enigmas of his time, "Which side are you on?" ("Desolation Row", 1965) or questions that give the point of start to the lyric content, like in "Visions of Johanna" (1966), which is by itself the big interrogative of a lover. The most memorable

questions of his works are included in the chorus. Note the success of songs like "Sad-Eyed Lady of the Lowlands" (1966) or "Rolling Stone" (1965), of which the former is the most refined and indirect one, "My warehouse eyes, my Arabian drums / Should I leave them by your gate? Or, sad-eyed lady, should I wait?".

However, only some of these questions have a direct relation to pragmatics and in these questions, the figure of repetition has a determinant role. The moment we are being questioned for something repetitively, as I said above, can create an urge of answering back. But, what if that question didn't have any answer or the answer was so evident it does not need to be mentioned? In this case, the listener would be facing a rhetorical question.

A rhetorical question is asked just for effect or to lay emphasis on some point discussed when no real answer is expected. A rhetorical question may have an obvious answer but the questioner asks rhetorical questions to lay emphasis to the point. In literature, a rhetorical question is self-evident and used for style as an impressive persuasive device.<sup>176</sup>

Such questions only ask for attention and point to a certain issue or stress its importance, that is why I said at the beginning that they were in relation to deictic aims in the sung discourse that involve the listener in the musical action. This kind of questions can serve as one of the leading marks of Dylan's persuasive objective in various of his songs. Other authors have noted this characteristic (Robert Shelton, 1961; Bowden, 2001). The journalist and music critic Robert Shelton noted how his song "Blowin' In The Wind" is "pious or falsely innocent –isn't it obvious the whoever wrote 'Yes, 'n' how many seas must a white dove sail / Before she sleeps in the sand?' already knows the answer, assuming he, or anyone, can actually bring themselves to care about such a precious question?" (Shelton, 2015<sup>177</sup>).

If ever these questions had an answer, these would "come in strings of anaphoric images set in a repeated melodic phrase." (Epstein, 2011: 36) like in "Hard Rain" (*The Freewheelin' Bob Dylan*)

O where have you been my blue-eyed son?  
And where have you been my darling young one?

Answered back in the following lines of the song,

I've stumbled on the side of twelve misty mountains,  
I've walked and I've crawled on six crooked highways.

The English author Christopher Ricks also wondered about the possible effect that repetition could have in his works. He said, "How long can you go on saying the same thing? Say, assuring one. (...) You can issue this assurance a few times, but there is a point at which it wears out thin." (Ricks, 2004: 439-440) In this section I don't talk about assurances, rather I developed a series of conclusions from the obsessive use of a rhetorical question in the same song framework. I have observed that by doing that, the author is not just emphasizing the contents of that question but its rhetorical quality *per se*.

The pragmatic dilemma that follows is, how many times does a question have to repeat itself to constitute simultaneously the question and the answer? The songwriter himself wrote once in a poem that "*every question / if it's a truthful question / can be answered by askin' it*" (2014<sup>178</sup>) which lead me to think that the more you post a question, the easier the answer will come to the mind of all those who participate in the intercourse. Also, Robert Shelton, writing about the song "All Along The Watchtower" (1968) mentions that the question is the answer. "Dylan taunts us that meaning itself may be an illusion, something we can never grasp" (Shelton, 2011: 843) I would rather add that "answers" are unachievable, they are "blowin' in the wind". A fact that posits the conflict of existentialism.

Man, hip people are telling me where the answer is but oh I won't believe that. I still say it's in the wind and just like a restless piece of paper it's got to come down some time... But the only trouble is that no one picks up the answer when it comes down so not too many people get to see and know it... and then it flies away again.  
(Dylan, 2001)<sup>179</sup>

Sometimes the question is believed to confirm the problem. Of course, the most excessive question behind his discography belongs to "Blowin' in the Wind" (1963) a song that, perhaps due to its repetitiveness, immediately turn into an anthem and it rapidly reached, with other artists interpretations, the top charts of the world.

The question "How many (...) before (...)" is repeated nine times before the song reaches the end. In each of those rhetorical questions, the answer is said to be blowing in the wind, which entails that there is no answer or that the answer is neither rational –we can give no exact number to all of them–, nor able to be articulated, sang

or written. Perhaps it is only triggering the action against those situations, it is calling society to give that man –who walked down so many roads– what he deserves, or to prevent that mountain's survival "before it is washed to the sea".

Robert Shelton claimed that “the discovery of the hidden, or gradually emerging, inner self is a hallmark of the Romantic poet. Dylan has arrived at a major insight: the question can be the answer” (2011: 499).

The recurrent use of this type questions is usually accompanied by an implicit subversive and ironical tone in the rest of the song. He doesn't fear the directedness of the question, that is why he majorly used it provocatively during his political and socialist phase. That is why one of the most vigorous ones among this kind of songs, “Masters of War” (1963), also makes use of such questions. Sometimes the author asks for our permission, "Let me ask you one question", except he won't formulate it just once. In fact, the author mislead us, because there are three questions instead of one, “Is your money that good? Will it buy your forgiveness, do you think that it could?” Probably this preamble allows him emphasizing again the question that follows, as songs are not properly intonated during his singing. In other words, the request becomes a mark of the absent intonation of questions in the act of singing.

The three questions are immediately followed by his own apprehension of the problem –“I think you will find...”–. The author foresees the whole dialogue between him and his addressees, and here, compared to other songs, questions and answers are taken for granted, “How much do I know, to talk out of turn. You might say that I'm young, you might say I'm unlearned”. The key to certain of his guesses is that he sees through your eyes and he sees through your brain. A true statement born of his interpretive nature, his ability to lie, to put on a mask and construe the facts of the world.

The prior irrelevancy of such kind of answers makes questions emphasize the lyric images before the logos, emotions before reason. It all embraces an existentialist lesson, that we better find more answers in nature and in physical and emotional experiences out of our individual experience than in rationalism and the hypocrite morale of the world. Existentialism is a modern philosophy that believed any productive relation with the psyche and the exterior world had to start with the individual collection of experiences. It was also considered more like a literary phenomenon than a philosophical one<sup>180</sup>–, a fact that imbricates the different perspectives. “Dylan's voice

was filled with philosophy of the prophets, the mystics, bringing vividly down to modern terms what they had been reading in Zen and Hesse...” (Scaduto, 2001: 5703)  
The type of questions in “Blowin’ In The Wind” (1963) remind me of a rare and unreleased song –until 1990’s *Bootleg Series, vol. 1-3* came out–, “Only a Hobo” and this question,

Does it take much of a man to see his whole life go down  
To look up on the world from a hole in the ground  
To wait for your future like a horse that’s gone lame  
To lie in the gutter and die with no name?  
(Dylan, 1964)

The assertion of the individual is prior to the understanding of the world. At these respects, the song might be inviting us to make ourselves conscious of our responsibility. But men shouldn't consider these lyrics only to question moral thinking, rather like an urge to think in the term of “authenticity”, as it was analyzed previously in this research work. “(...) there remains the distinction between what I do “as” myself and as “anyone,” so in this sense existing is something at which I can succeed or fail. Authenticity—in German, *Eigentlichkeit*—names that attitude in which I engage in my projects *as my own (eigen)*” (Crowell, 2016: para.29) That reference study explains that we do something *authentically* whenever we decide to act for ourselves and out of any social imposition, except mine.

Out of individuality and still in the first phase of his work, Bob Dylan composes the song “A Hard Rain’s A-Gonna Fall” (1962). This song has been commonly interpreted as a cry for environmental urgency, but it truly is a chant around individualistic awareness, self-assuredness and the recognition of the illnesses of the world. This time he, the blue-eyed-boy, is the addressed one. “Oh, where have you been, my blue-eyed son? Oh, where have you been, my darling young one?” (echoing the words of the Anglo-Scottish border ballad “Lord Randall”) This time there is a long and detailed answer referring to the experiences he has overcome. If his answers were answered “ala Woody Guthrie”, he would sing “Hey boy, I’ve come a lot of ways (...) I seen a lot of things” (“Along In The Sun In The Rain”, 1972<sup>181</sup>).

During the only Bob Dylan concert that I ever witnessed, people started shouting with enthusiasm the leading refrain of “Like A Rolling Stone”, “How Does it Feel?” which is repeated twice before the next part of the question starts. Albeit the story that is told is not celebratory at all, a woman who derives her destiny to misery, the force of

the chorus and the implicatures derived from the question have turn its prior meaning, ascribing to her past attitude, into a shout of freedom and independence (Ricks, 2004: 183). This interpretation can be driven by context reasons because in the 60s young people's autonomy was romanticized and related with leaving your family behind and exploring the country. Of course, autonomy leads to self-fulfillment, in terms of individualism and learning from every experience people might endure. "Context determines what a passage ultimately is, and this on-the-one-hand obvious but on-the-other-hand surprising fact makes repetition a powerful example of the difference between surface content and meaning" (Margulis, 2014: 30).

Dylan also addresses the listener with titles like, "Whatcha Gonna Do" (2010<sup>182</sup>) Obviously, during the song, such a question is formulated again, at last twenty times more, following this structure, "Tell me what you're gonna do/ When the shadow comes under your door/ Tell me what you're gonna do/ When the shadow comes under your door/ O Lord! O Lord! /What shall you do?". The fast pace rhythm and the train –that subtle secondary topic in Dylan's songs–, like the sound of the harmonica, urge for an answer and move the listener to question himself about the end of his own life and the inevitable death. Only when the listener hears himself addressed as "lord" he understands that the song must come from the Negro spiritual tradition when these type of rituals and performances were offered to their Lord because of their sinful behaviour. "The original gospel song is aimed at making the sinner run to church because he's afraid of death" (Curnyn, 2014: para.20) This reviewer says 'original version' because there is another one in which Bob Dylan changes the way he sings the questions, stressing their regular communicative intonation. The reference to the absolute repentance of the sinner is recalled in the following questions too, especially in "Tell me what you're gonna do/ When you can play God no more?". Furthermore, there may be an intuition about what 'he', the 'lord', shall do in the future. He is the same "you" who "play(s) with my world like is your little toy" ("Master of War", 1963). There is a similar structure in this song and again, this is a song that principally wants to describe some people's actions in order to blame them for their abuse of power.

In 1964, with the album *The Time They Are A-Changin'*, the same sense of premonition is shown in the lyrics and the declamation of his voice. Take as an example the homonymous song where the singer sermonizes that our reality has been lately changing into a different one, "the first one now will later be last", "soon you'll be drenched to the bone", "there's a battle outside and it's raging". He says be prepared,

not only this is happening, but there are more changes to come, “the order is rapidly fading”. It resembles Woody Guthrie’s line “There’s a better world that’s a-coming”, from his song “Better World” (1939<sup>183</sup>). In the song he seems to predict, again, the hegemony of the senses against reason, the same argument about “Blowin’ In The Wind”’s suggested existentialism. In track nine we listen to “Ballad of Hollis Brown”, where such the question “Is there’s anyone that knows/ Is there anyone that cares?” appears as it is pointing to the audience and targeted at a forgotten humanism in our society. It is probably violating the principles of a relativist society, as it was formulated in *The Ethics of Authenticity* by Charles Taylor, saying that “people are called upon to be true to themselves and to seek their own self-fulfillment. What this consists of, each must, in the last instance, determine for him –or herself. No one else can or should try to dictate its content” (1991: 14). But he is doing it for the good of humanity. To restore the excessive individualism and consequently, giving a brief idea of how the idea of "authenticity" should be like. One that, at least, would not disregard social commitment, although he left the good cause for rock and roll.

His rhetorical questioning finds in politics and social lack of commitment its catalyst. The major part of these questions are found during his most political period (1963 and 1965) and they picture the torment that supposed witnessing the cold war strategies and the lack of social and civil politics in the U.S in addition to society's hypocrisy and the fact that the churches of different religions were unmindful about these problems. "You never ask questions/ when God's on your side" ("With God On Our Side", 1964) Christopher Ricks (2004) reflects upon this phenomenon and guesses it can grow out of his arresting accusations at the start of his career when he was pointing the finger at all the powers that be. His young perspective finds adulthood, in general, a deformed section of humanity who are guilty of such kind phenomena and this is why they were terribly addressed sometimes, “these create a threat that can be felt throughout the song” (2004, 416-7). For instance, at the Tom Paine Award ceremony, from the National Emergency Civil Liberties, he blamed them in his speech of acceptance in 1963, although he knows how to address someone friendly, as ironically as it can be, like in “What do you think of that my friend?” (“Oxford Town”, 1963)

### 3.5. Emotional Communication in Dylan's Songs

“There was something about the song...” says Gordon Friesen in 1963 introducing the paradigm of an artistic discourse that works differently than any other. Aesthetically, songs became his artistic manifesto, as, for him, these were the best artistic formats to connect with people, “music is the only thing that’s in tune with what’s happening. It’s not in book form, it’s not on the stage...It’s not the bomb that has to go, man, it’s not the museums” (Dylan, 2011<sup>184</sup>)

Sometimes, Dylan would use the LP’s liner notes to scheme part of his poetic vein. Like in the liner notes of his album *The Times They Are A-Changin’* (1963), where the author summarizes the differences between song and poem, and their mythic role in communication,

“so anything that ain’t got no end’s  
just gotta be poetry in one  
way or another”  
“yeah, but . . .”  
  
“an’ poetry makes me feel good”  
“but . . .”  
“an’ poetry makes me feel happy”  
“ok but . . .”  
“for the lack of a better word”  
“but what about the songs you sing on stage?”  
“they’re nothin’ but the unwindin’ of  
my happiness”  
(“11 Outlined Epitaphs” 1963)

This excerpt from Dylan's first published poetry develops an apparent dialogue with the self about the essential differences between the disciplines of poetry and song. I have used this quote here because it introduces the character that differentiates the speech functions of each text and introduces the idea that through its essential performativity, songs turn looser than other forms of oral literature.

In these lines, Dylan seemed to underscore the importance of his own kind of songs in relation to poetry –the code under which he is actually writing this text– by putting the title “Some Other Kind of Songs” to these published poems. This way, he inverted the problem of categorization and question the term “poetry”. With this statement he gives more importance to the ample category of songs and makes “poems” be dependent on songs’ leadership. In other words, the reader could infer from this title that songs include poems and not the opposite thing. Eventually, this argumentation

makes sense within the history of literature, because as Robert Shelton indicates, "In almost every culture, song is the oldest vehicle for poetry" (2011: 500). He continues explaining that oral literature, with musical accompaniment –taken for granted it is the oldest form of song– recounted any kind of stories, myths, and epics and it has been made either to entertain or to teach something or make other question reality.

Not only that, song was a renewed figure of speech at the start of the second half of the century, with all those ethnic genres –blues, ballads, topic songs–, mixing this spirit of renovation of the 1960s and attributing the idea of the bard, the singer and the poet as someone who is an outcast, a wanderer. This idea that was personified first by the Beat poets,

The folk movement knew what it had in Woody Guthrie. When beat poets of the 1950s took their poems into the San Francisco jazz haunt, the Cellar, Lawrence Ferlinghetti, Kenneth Rexroth, and, later, Allen Ginsberg, knew that poetry and music were natural bedfellows  
(Shelton, 2011: 502)

Exceptionally, like in many other studies about his career (Shelton 1986; Scobie, 2004; Maxwell, 2014), everything he did and is doing nowadays is considered an element of analysis, or as it was described by David Yaffe, "He is a text, yet he is still a moving target" (2011: 19). Anthony Scaduto, for his part, considered that Bob Dylan "used his guitar and harmonica –and, later, a rock band– to lend nuance to the poems, to end the divorce of music and poetry brought about by the printed page" (2001: 3432).

Other critics and writers before have described the communicative dimension of Dylan's songs. For example, Greil Marcus notes, while reviewing the song "Dark Eyes" (*Empire Burlesque*, 1985) that this song connects with the listener, "because here as a singer, as a voice, Dylan is talking to somebody. (...) What takes place, as he falls out of his crank prophet voice and drifts into a reverie, is a conversation" (2010: 123-4). Barthes study of music as a rich semiotic system establishes the basis for a pragmatics of popular songs and the case of Bob Dylan's music. Together with other gestural and corporeal terms, like the 'authenticity' of the artist, it will bring an important communicative dimension to this study too. In fact, Roland Barthes idea about the communicative dimension of songs was defined by the term "geno-song",

The geno-song is the singing and the speaking voice where significations germinate 'from within language and its materiality'; it forms a signifying play having to do with

communication, representation (of feelings), expression; it is the apex (or that depth) of production where the melody really works at the language –not at what it says, but the voluptuousness of its sound signifiers...  
(Szekely, 2006)

Bob Dylan, like postmodernist author William Burroughs, who was considered a late member of the Beat generation, suggested that the aerial quality of music was freer than written or fixed arts. Barry Miles (2014), Burroughs biographer, wonders about this question about “whether Burroughs was less a writer than a performer, adept at transforming his kinks into comedy.” And he adds that “he needed ‘receivers’, not readers, but an audience whose responses he could hear and see” (2014<sup>185</sup>). Burroughs aims at spoken poetry and the poetry systems, led by John Giorno, that ultimately made him a renovator of oral literature forms. This attitude had been preceded by Beat poets admiration of sound forms of music whose only commandment was improvisation, a force very much driven by the rhythm of thoughts. Among these manifestations, we can find **jazz poetry**, based on the rhythms and inherent improvisation of jazz music; **dub poetry**, whose origin is in the decade of the 70s continuing until the 90s and incorporated remixed recorded music and lastly, **open-mic readings**, that bridged the beats tradition with the Greenwich Village scene (Martínez Cantón, 2011). At the opposite side of these aesthetic doctrines was the inaugurator of deconstructionist Jacques Derrida, who wrote several essays strengthening the force of written literature as opposes to spoken forms: *Writing and Difference* (2010) and *Of Grammatology* (2016).

Initially, what Dylan intended by joining the folk tradition was “to produce a feeling of security for the listener by voicing the particular quality of a land and the life of its people” (Lomax, 1960: 15). Identification and the vernacular language is a pillar for Dylan's messages. However, he also makes a hermetic and cryptic use of language, because to communicate emotively is another way of **signifyin'** (according to Henry Louis Gates Jr. 1988) or imply several things simultaneously. Philip Tagg, the professor of musicology, focuses on, “the semiotics of music”, which “in the broadest sense of the term, deals with the relations between the sounds we call musical and what those sounds signify to those producing and hearing the sounds in specific sociocultural contexts” (2013: 145).

Signifying is triggered thanks to music simultaneity, because like the musicologist and semiotician Philip Tagg, declared, “(...) music and dance are

particularly suited to expressing the affective and corporeal identity of individuals and communities in relation to themselves, to each other and to their social, as well as physical surroundings” (2002: 2). Roger D. Abrahams as cited by Henry Louis Gates Jr., also stated that “signifying shows the monkey to be a trickster, signifyin’ being the language of trickery, that set of words or gestures achieving Hamlet’s ‘direction through indirection””(1988: 54). Bob Dylan, like most blues singers before him, played tricks through songs by adding something else to the natural and reliable correlation between the voice of the author and the fictional representation. Like the bluesman, he sang more and more about hectic feelings and oblique emotions hidden under symbolism and hermetic images that conveyed dreams and identity conflicts. Alan Lomax said that “the music speak for them without equivocation” (Lomax, 1960: 447), but I would rather say Dylan’s songs and his level of experimentation can be more hectic. Even though, as Alan Lomax adds later, “their symbolism became all the more evocative, cryptic and intense, communicating to all those who were oppressed the hopeful message that they would one day be free and their oppressors punished” (Lomax, 1960: 449-450). In fact, symbolism is used as “a form of commentary which employs double meanings, jokes and hidden references” (Eyerman & Jamison, 1998: 99). It allows the author to maintain his integrity as well as his cultural identity untouched while censorship existed.

Let’s observe the symbolic announcement under Dylan’s “All Along the Watchtower” (1968) in the threatening verse “Two riders were approaching the wind began to howl”. It could mean that the good and the evil are approaching, that the battle between the two governing countries of the world in the Cold War crisis, that it is the end of dialectical reason or the threat of apocalypse.

Regarding “symbolism”, it is important to add here Northop Frye’s definition of the term as it points directly to its signifying effect in the reader, “the word does not echo the thing, but other words and hence, the immediate impact symbolism makes on the reader is that of incantation, a harmony of sounds and the sense of growing richness of meaning unlimited by denotation.” (Frye, 2000: 81). The no conveyance of ideas and the artist identity is typical of songs. T. S. Eliot, theorist, and author, remarked the peculiarities of song as distinct from other literary genres saying, "While poetry attempts to convey something beyond what can be conveyed in prose rhythms, it remains, all the same, one person talking to another; and this is just as true of you sing it, for singing is another way of talking” (Eliot, 2007<sup>186</sup>).

Additionally, every song speech must fulfill the following two principles for the pragmatics of songs. The first principle must be that it is a **processable** discourse, or that it is presented in a manner which makes it easy for the listener to decode it in time, and the second condition that it includes **expressive and aesthetic** aspects of communication. Here repetition can both play a rhetorical role, and bring strategies that support the oral message and its decoding, while it can also be used for expressivity or aesthetic objectives, like rhythmic cadences and alliterative sounds. Because, “the emphasis of repetition has some rhetorical value such as surprising, impressing or arousing the interest of the addressee” (Leech, 2005: 69). Simon Firth confirmed the interpersonal force of his songs, and the particularities of their reception,

When people dream about Dylan—and most people do—they dream of him not as a lover but as a friend. If one of his skills has been to make his private concerns public, without being mawkish or self-concerned, another has been to let us make his public world, all the songs, private, relevant to our individual concerns...Dylan sounds like a nice guy again. Someone to talk to—about the world and about ourselves.<sup>187</sup>

Song's artistic discussion has its origin in the direct relation between the author of the song and its interpreter because, from that moment on, both figures become one, "impossible to think of them apart. We do not hear poetry set to music –we hear a song" (Kimball: 2006:1) And while this relation took place in the popular music realm, common listeners were able for the first time to “form mental images and experience emotions, or even tastes, smells and physical sensations” (Kimball, 2006: 1) Alex Ross states that music principally establishes the connection between the artist and the listener, even if we're talking about songs that have lyric content.

The poetical or literary content procures three perlocutionary effects on the listener, according to S. R. Levin (1976) based on Cicero's *Orator*. What the old pragmatic tradition defined as “docere, delectare et movere”; in English, to delight, to move emotionally and to be understood.

Schoenberg, the music composer, adds another one: a fourth effect –one that John Cage acknowledge too– according to which music should keep a critical function, perturbing the listener more than comforting or entertaining him (2010).<sup>188</sup>

Consequently, we have four main objectives of any good orator to what Alex Ross adds that “Dylan sharpens the meaning of the lyrics with the mechanics of music” (2010: 484) This idea would support my hypothesis that he's using songs strategically, acknowledging the positive effect it has at the level of communicative subjects. He, like

other entertainers, must have discovered the “formula” that worked in the context of performance for eliciting a desired response in the audience.

Referring to the application of Dylan’s songs to our lives, Greil Marcus has specified some of its implications. He declares,

Dylan’s songs can serve as metaphors, enriching our lives, giving us random insight into the myths we carry and the present we live, intensifying what we’ve known and leading us toward what we never looked for, while at the same time enforcing an emotional strength upon those perceptions by the power of music that moves with the words. (...) I think Dylan’s music is about possibilities rather than facts.  
(2010: 26)

Anthony Scaduto, one of Dylan biographers, claims, “He was the first mass media poet, the first poet of the jukeboxes, and he hit many hundreds of thousands in the mind and in the guts.” (2001: 5722) This idea is repeated again by Benjamin Hedin in his introduction to the theoretical selection *Studio A: Bob Dylan Reader* (2004: 2) where he cites Ned Rorem’s statement, “Song is the reincarnation of a poem which was destroyed in order to live again in music.”

Among the many figures of repetition he uses, let’s highlight the figure of the **diacope**, repeating a word with other words in between in order to express a deep feeling<sup>189</sup>, as in “So take heed, take heed of the western winds / take heed of the stormy weather” (“Boots of Spanish Leather”, 1963)

The **epiphora**, or repetition of the same word at the end of each clause, giving a sense of determination,

Well, I ain’t a-gonna grieve no more, no more  
Ain’t a-gonna grieve no more, no more  
Ain’t a-gonna grieve no more, no more  
And ain’t a-gonna grieve no more

A sense of determination complemented by the antithetic effect of repetition that immediately makes you grieve more and more. This is only one example of the many negative statements the can turn an obstinate determination into the opposite idea or meaning, like in "Outlaw Blues" and "Maggie's Farm" (1965).

Anaphoras and epistrophes like in “On a Night Like This” (1974) insisting on the significance of that specific moment, tracing a circularity around the precious instant that wants to be described,

On a night like this  
I can't get any sleep  
The air is so cold outside  
And the snow's so deep  
Build a fire, throw on logs  
And listen to it hiss  
And let it burn, burn, burn, burn  
On a night like this.

Or the relaxing refrain of “Shelter from the Storm” (1974), “Come in”, she said, “I’ll give you shelter from the storm” that is introduced some changes in “Visions of Johanna” (1965) pointing to the irreversibility or the impossibility to escape, as well as the obsession for something or someone.

Literary researcher Betsy Bowden, says, “his harmonica, more noticeable than in the blues, can make a choice either to break into word-length cluster that sound like English-language inflections or else to go its own instrumental way.” (2001: 67) And there are moments when we feel the harmonica is conveying all the emotional significance of the song. Like in his “Mr. Tambourine Man” harmonica solo during The Royal Albert Hall show (1966) where he had just been booed and hissed for playing the electric guitar. Most of the time the role of the harmonica is that of a break, a parenthesis, an instrumental bridge between two verses, but it also brings a sentimental force within. All this is the fruit of its role echoing the melody and words that have just been singing. There is an instant of common wonderment when we can hear his instrument against a silenced background as we wait for every sound modulation and every turn from low to high frequency and from high to low tones. Todd Haynes used this moment in *I’m Not There* (2007) during the closure, while he lets the spectators watch Dylan for the first and last time in the movie.

Dylan’s songs’ important literary and linguistic content has always been highly appreciated. At the celebration of the 70 birthday of the artist, there was an academic conference in U.K where the academic organizer Craig Savage (2011) observed no one except Dylan had given to the English language such an amount of memorable quotes since Rudyard Kipling.<sup>190</sup>

In theoretical terms, Dylan is using the **dramatic** modality of discourse, according to García Berrio and Teresa Hernández’s enumeration of the different perspectives and moods in the literary discourse (2004). Concerning this classification, the mood of every Dylan song would be due to the way each character speaks or acts through Dylan, the interpreter. This classification is based on Plato’s *Republic*, later

developed by Horacio and Quintilian, *Institutio Oratoria*. Songs, as new literary text, are derived from past strophic modalities like hymns and odes, both addressed to someone and shared for different contextual purposes as well as for their aesthetic quality. As Christopher Ricks remarked in his historic literary analysis, “for he has written very many songs, has sung them very variously and has lived thoroughly in the world of an art the nature of which is that it reaches its particular heights by not being "high art" (2004: 381).

### 3.6. Performance as the Ideal Communicative Context

If performances help to influence people is because these bring one of the commonest points between art and communication. For the first time in any artistic discourse, the artist stays in front of his audience and they share an aesthetic intercourse,

When an individual or performer plays the same part to the same audience on different occasions, a social relationship is likely to arise. Defining social role as the enactment of rights and duties attached to a given status, we can say that a social role will involve one or more parts and that each of these different parts may be presented by the performer on a series of occasions to the same kinds of audiences or to an audience of the same persons.

(Goffman, 1959: 15–16)

The intrinsic communicative force of any performance, which justifies this description, comes from the fact that, “the multiple mediations of sound and meaning in song have phenomenal resonance in their embodied practices of performance and reception” (Bickford, 2007: 446). To the extent that most performances, especially music performances, have an inherent repetition that allows them to be reproducible. In each performance, the performer can evoke the same kind of relation with his discourse or he or she can change it, which creates a sign of difference, independently of the fact that he often wanted to vary the lyrics, melody, or the music of his songs. The self-image of the voice can acquire different positions and play different roles in order to connect with his audience, but all that role-playing is the game of the trickster as he was identified by the critics and scholars in various moments of his career (Scobie, 2004; Hedin, 2004; Yaffe, 2011).

Now the standpoint is on Dylan’s works and performances, on the way he communicates his ideas musically, but keeping a real and valid discourse that looks like people’s communicative interchanges, “(...) the way I like to write is for it to come out the way I walk or talk” (2014<sup>191</sup>). For example, during the Washington march, where Dylan participated with some songs, and where he called for democratic units and equal rights for everyone, something must have changed in the minds of those who were listening. I think Dylan's protesting through the sung word is "the ultimate form of democratic speech" (Onyebadi, 2017: 110), and it certainly moved people and created a sense of community in the audience, who were heartened to remain active and to transform reality.

The communicative force inherent in any music performance implicates there would be strong intersubjective relations between the actors. In Bob Dylan's works, words in action are also as poems in action, because these make use of similar poetic functions, except these, are essentially oral.<sup>192</sup>—In his case, “poetry had returned to its performance roots and its spiritual bonding with music” (Paglia, 2016: para.1) Dylan’s lyrics and music picks up the thread of oral rituals that took place in the ancient times, when bards retold the mythical stories of their heroes and gods, bards like Homero, Virgilio or Dante Alighieri. In this sense, the poet Allen Ginsberg remarked in *Desire* (1976)’s liner notes that “songs become conscious poetry, the best you can say in total rhythm/ allowing for your speech to fall like your mother’s radio talk...”<sup>193</sup>

A communicative event is taking place during Dylan’s performances albeit there are only receivers or limited participants that can just shout and applause for confirming or expressing their agreement or disagreement with the speechmaker, orator or singer. That physicality of the event, the fact that the singer and his audience can be in front of each other, adds to it a stronger force.

Being dependent on the context, any changes on scene could change the apparent stability of lyrics and melody. This phenomenon is related to Bob Dylan since the beginning of his career (Hadju, 2001), but since then, strangest practices came about and his manias on scene started to appear. “He says almost nothing and never introduces his songs. He radically and continuously revises his interpretations in concert. The degree of re-composition can be so great that even a knowledgeable professional listener may not recognize them.” (Lubet, 2012: 50).

Although he explained to journalist Edna Gundersun (Muir, 2013: 58) that for him, talking to the audience doesn’t seem relevant and that it also breaks up his concentration to have to think about something to say, still the violation of such expected rules during any concert performance disturbs the audience overall experience and can be interpreted as another significant disregard of the rules that mechanize people’s understanding.

Dylan made absolutely no concession to hit-parade status. He commanded utter silence at his concerts. Even the noisy pop fans were stunned into silence by his words, the honesty of his performances. Bob consistently showed an endearing modesty. He wandered on stage with no sign of the ‘big star’ atmosphere we had come to expect from pop immortals.  
(Shelton, 2011: 631)

This getting the song right might not only be for inspirational reasons, but for communicative objectives. If you want that song to sound novel and generate a new perplexity in your listener, you must change its color, arrange it differently, like he did with the published version of "Highways 61" in the 1969 concert of The Isle of Wight. He played it live with The Band and turned the recognized rhythm and melody of the song that named this epic record. It sounds more like a rhythm and blues than a rock hit in the original album, and Dylan's voice accentuated this new mood. The same happens with the two versions of "Time Passes Slowly" and "Time Passes Slowly #1" that were included in the albums, *New Morning* (1970) and *Another Self Portrait* (2013) with radical structural differences, tempo and additional elements, like the "la la la" repeated in unison. Bob Dylan assumed very early: that one song won't ever be played identically to the next.

Stephen Scobie, the Canadian poetry scholar, recognized the differences between Bob Dylan's songs during his performances of the 1970s, especially to the drastic revisions he did on his song "Going, going, gone" and after analyzing the derived effect of these changes over meaning, he explains, "(...) sometimes also it is the result of a protracted effort to get the original impulse of the song right" (Scobie, 2004: 117) To increase this essay for comparative meanings, Bob Dylan included two versions of the same song in a number of albums. Ignoring the reason, it certainly gives a multifaceted vision of the song to his audience. Such is the case of "Forever Young", doubly recorded in *Planet Waves* (1974) or "Billy" 1, 4 and 7 in Bob Dylan's first soundtrack album for the homonym movie *Pat Garret and Billy the Kid*, directed by Sam Peckinpah, both released in 1973, apart from being played differently as well.

His performance in the movie *The Last Waltz* (1978), directed by Martin Scorsese, displayed a halfway version that is neither as sad and nostalgic as the first version of the album nor as rock-oriented as the second in the album. It starts with difficult adjustments between him and The Band, who were the leaders of the show, and Dylan's grave tone of voice. After the first chorus, it gains an increasing electric power –stressed by Robbie Robertson's solo guitar and by Bob Dylan's fiercer shouts. In essence, if the original record versions display two types of predicting qualities, one that fathoms the impossibility of keeping forever young –no matter what actions you take– and the other, the rock and roller, more akin to the idea that you could possibly win a youthful perennial quality if you always acted young and authentically. The verb "may" expresses all kind of grading possibilities, but also makes explicit the wish for that to

occur. In *The Last Waltz* concert, for example, the speech act is closer to a moral advice, recommending the audience to live according to his prerogatives and making that a special moment –as it was another mythical encounter with his most famous backing bands–, and ageless moment. He recommends the listener and so, he believes in the possibility of staying "forever young" depending on the individual volition. In one of his stanzas, he sings that such continual revitalization of music may be beneficial too for staying young.

May your heart always be joyful  
May your song always be sung  
(And) May you stay forever young  
(Dylan, 1973)

Respectively, at Oakland's Coliseum Arena (1988) he sings it more sympathetically, making slight changes in the melody and repeating stanzas with a natural ease –he plays "a capella"– as if it was remedying what we all did wrong in the past. That is why to the general advisory, this performance adds a sense of commiseration.<sup>194</sup>

Originally, "Performing arts frame and mark their presentations, underlining the fact that artistic behavior is "not for the first time" but enacted by trained persons who take the time to prepare and rehearse" (Schechner, 2013: 52). However, the play of the trickster figure who wants his performances to remain always fresh breaks to a certain extent the artificial intuition of the audience and offers a direct and reliable scent. "By endeavoring to keep the art of traditional performance separate from the supplementary craft of music recording, revivalist producers asserted a vision of authenticity and creative autonomy deliberately opposed to industrial mass culture" (Way and McKerrell, 2017: 203).

The rise of live festivals and concert shows during the 60s impulses a performance domination of the artistic world. Within the tradition poetry readings and theater, speaking, like singing, refers to echoing previous traditional music patterns, ideas, and stories. Accordingly, the singer represents the values of his performance and thus, he becomes authentic, charismatic and reliable. "More and more people showed up to see him because they were curious about what he might do. He could be relied upon to be authentic in the moment they were watching him" (Epstein, 2011: 547-8).

For the elaboration of a theory of singing pragmatics, we must bear in mind that "one does not signify something" through his performances, "rather, one signifies in some way" (Gates Jr. 1988: 54).

Around the second half of the XXth Century, popular music genres in the US pioneered an evolution of these expressive formats. This way, symptoms of communicative force started to be applied to popular music, especially in the regime of interpretation and performance, since that is the achievement of music, to be made real through performing it.

I believe Bob Dylan's emotive use of the song was, in a way, heartened by the augmented presence of blues imagery, motifs, and credo, like David Yaffe states (2011). However, Dylan must have acknowledged that "for the negro song is a natural part of life's activities" like Alan Lomax explains in the introduction to *Folk Songs of North America* (1960: 27) whereas, for the white, it became "a self-conscious moment of communication". But rather, flexibility was a playful element in Bob Dylan's performances too. An element that was present during his constant evolution and rearrangement philosophy. The evidence can be found on stage, in the constant reworking of his songs, an ultimate proof that his verses have always been flexible. After all, Bob Dylan's interpretative style resembles Lomax's narrators' voice premises. The ethnomusicologist says that "any attempt to sing 'expressively' and with 'good vocal technique' reduces the effectiveness of these pieces" (1960: 29). Even though Alan Lomax said that the white singer's reproduction is based on the memory of what they heard before, Bob Dylan always seemed to be conquering the black music use of performance, more flexible of verse and self-involved.

Certain pioneering singing modes in America, like topic songs, developed their structure and main characteristics by telling stories to the audience, sharing them and preserving them in the general conscience. Gordon Friesen makes a unrepeatable standpoint from which regard this discussion and the importance of songs in the introduction to the *Broadsides* record anthology of Folkways Records.

(...) topical songs as a means of telling a story, expressing one's opinion, and moving others to think about it is as old as man's time on earth. Songs and chants shared with straight narration the burden of carrying man's history down through successive generations until the great discovery of writing. After that, a banded-down verbal record was no longer necessary; but there was something about a song, the ability of the voice to stir with its projections of anger, sorrow, disgust, contempt, and many other moods, that could not be captured as well by mere words on paper.

(Friesen, 1963: 1)

Like topic songs before, Bob Dylan's larger songs would be making use of the favorable strophic structure and of songs' major mission, which is to reach a wider audience. Nicholas Cook quotes Stan Godlovitch's *Music Performance: A Philosophical Study* (1998) because the lecturer sees the story-telling practice as the best narrative mode to be used in musical performance. It puts the emphasis on presentation, skill, and communication and "this view of the relationship between works and performances puts the former in their proper musical place primarily as vehicles and opportunities for the latter in the larger business of making music." (2001)

As I mentioned before, in the words of Philip Tagg, there are different voice uses that stress the importance of lyrics over its musical accompaniment: metric chanting, recitative and "sprechgesang" (2004). All these modes of singing manifest the idiomatic quality of his technique, which relates it even more to a communicative field of reception. His biographer Anthony Scaduto calls these techniques "idiomatic pungencies",

(...) his skill at narrating a dramatic story rather than revising a headline, his ability to mimic the rhythms of natural speech in his verse, took him beyond all his contemporaries, made him a poet of the people –especially the young, the disoriented, the idealists, the activists believing they could build a new world.  
(2001: 3429)

The re-adaptation of poetic elements into popular music brings forward an important discussion in Dylan's conception of high culture and popular culture and how his songs mix both interests' for the sake of achieving a major impact worldwide. It is like the idea that Shelton summarizes next, "As Dylan, a poet of the electric age, entered millions of homes, poetry became once again a democratic, social art" (2011: 508). The essayist W. T. Lhamon calls this interest in pop culture "poplore" substituting folklore's aim at cult listeners. According to his idea,

A society that has no available folk—but still needs lore—produces poplore... Dylan's embrace of rock altered the course of American culture. This return to the on-going rhythms of popular culture has always been the hallmark of a new cultural era's beginning. Such a return occurred when literature, via the novel, turned in the eighteenth-century from the life of the aristocracy to the life of the middle class  
(Lhamon 2011: 513)<sup>195</sup>

For this and other reasons, Dylan's art is regarded as the middle genre between music expression and the lyric force that otherwise, would have remained dead between the pages of a book. His works founded an intermediate link between the Beats spoken poetic performances (the poetry systems) and a new literary and musical hybridized genre out of rock philosophy, which is equally crucial in the relation of music targeted at communicating something to its audience. Patti Smith, a lifelong follower of Dylan's music, said during a conversation with Robert Shelton in 1976, which he transcribed to *No Direction Home: The Life and Music of Bob Dylan*, that "The most beautiful thing about rock 'n' roll is it's an open art that allows you to be a megaphone to the universe. There's no place you can't communicate with rock" (2011: 939)

Fruit of this artistic renovation that his song has meant to art, there are a series of new relations between communication, intersubjectivity and aesthetics. Perhaps "conventional linguistic 'sense' is sacrificed in favor of an experimentation in the phoneme possibilities of sung speech" (Elliot, 2001: 3) although, as musicologist Carol Kimball indicates, "words have shapes, colors, and inflections. Words reverberate with energy, the intensity of that energy is due to the sound of each word and is bound up with the literal meaning. The totality of the mood of a poem is created by word sounds" (2013: 17). This fact is most evident in Dylan's occasional pronunciation. Whenever he wants to adapt linguistic content to music verses, whether syllables get longer, shorter or stressed, as during the performance of "It's Alright Ma, (I'm Only Bleeding)" in the Birmingham Town Hall, 1965, when he has to abridge the words by considering timing and rhythmic waves. Resulting from all that process, songs create a complex texture in which communication flows thanks to certain strategic uses of the medium

The act of communication through songs is made evident, for example, during the act of representation and when directing the message to an anonymous "you" that is the other. It is an "I-to-you" communication that emphasizes the importance of an exemplary listener for the correct processing of words, sound, and music. Tim Woods said that "All the effort of the post-Beat poets to introduce a new spoken poetry, of writing seeking the performance of the tongue and intersubjective communication, enacts this ethical attestation of the other" (2006: 464<sup>196</sup>).

The same way songs anticipate the presence of a listener or an audience, in the case of performances, they also contribute to re-confirm the presence of the interpreter, because the act of singing enacts the "grain of voice", as Roland Barthes called it (2005), which is the voice of the interpreter. Analogously, Dylan songs authenticate the

presence of the individual who struggles to find his own ethical values against the socially imposed morality, in which the voice of the poet is also fundamental, “What’s important is how the poet sings” (Kimball, 2013:19).

The song “It Ain’t Me Babe” (1964) echoes the other’s ideal concept of love and the masculine traits of the lover as opposed to his individuality.

You say you’re lookin’ for someone  
Never weak but always strong  
To protect you an’ defend you  
Whether you are right or wrong  
Someone to open each and every door  
But it ain’t me, babe  
No, no, no, it ain’t me, babe  
It ain’t me you’re lookin’ for, babe

Where Dylan’s lyrics bode a true discovery, there is likewise a sense of an imminent failure. It is both a failure of common communicative situations, like two lover’s interchange, like in the next example,

You say you love me  
And you’re thinkin’ of me  
But you know you could be wrong  
You say you told me  
That you wanna hold me  
But you know you’re not that strong  
(“Most Likely You Go Your Way And I’ll Go Mine”, 1966)

Where he wants to attest the other’s feelings and for that, he refers to failed communicative instances in the past; or it can be a more general disappointment provided that communication cannot always work satisfactorily.

This uncertainty is not only due to his instinctive secrecy but also to the acknowledgment that language is not exact and it can seldom reveal the important truths about reality. Like he ascertains in one of his favorite songs, "To Ramona" (1964), "... there's no use in tryin' / to deal with the dyin' / though I cannot explain that in lines." Among the feeling of failure, there is one especially relevant for this section. It is the failure of communication of which I present some examples,

The confusion I’m feelin’  
Ain’t no tongue can tell  
The words fill my head  
And fall to the floor

("With God on Our Side", 1964)

When everything I'm a-sayin'  
You can say it just as good  
You're right from your side  
I'm right from mine  
("One Too Many Mornings", 1964)

And the words that are used  
For to get the ship confused  
Will not be understood as they're spoken  
("When The Ship Comes In", 1964)

How much do I know  
To talk out of turn  
("Masters of War", 1964)

I'd forever talk to you  
But soon my words,  
They would turn into a meaningless ring.  
("To Ramona", 1964)

In the most extreme phenomenon of non communication, Dylan, who acknowledged his listeners attitude towards discovery, decides not to satisfy their desires by denying them an answer, "I see nothing to be gained with my explanation / There are no words that need to be said" ("Standing in the Doorway", 1997). Why is that? Robert Shelton included this commentary of Dylan in his book where the singer says, "If they can't understand my songs, they're missing something. If they can't understand pornographic ashtrays, green clocks, wet chairs, purple lamps, hostile states, charcoal...then they're missing something, too...It's all music, no more, no less." (Dylan, 2011<sup>197</sup>). He seems to trade on confusion by playing the possibilities of connotation. It must be kept in mind that, as Pete Hamill (1972) revealed in the liner notes he wrote for *Blood On The Tracks*,

(...) by leaving things out, he allows us the grand privilege of creating along with him. His song becomes our song because we live in those spaces. If we listen, if we work at it, we fill up the mystery, we expand and inhabit the work of art. It is the most democratic form of creation.<sup>198</sup>

Dylan's songs can imitate many communicative like discourses, lectures, lover's dialogue, letters, storytelling, etc. To do it effectively, the singer uses common oral language expressions, vernacular and colloquial language, as well as modes of talking while he sings.

But I can't respond  
To your sign language  
You're taking advantage  
Bringing me down  
Can't you make any sound?  
("Sign Language", 1976)

Also, he always assesses language interaction with brief commentaries likes, "You want to talk to me..." ("Tight Connection To Your Heart", 1985) After such indications, the listener feels the message more directly directed to a fictional someone that he or she can easily impersonate. There are more grim references to inadequate language use, like in "Seeing the Real You At Last" in the album *Empire Burlesque* (1985) when he sings, "Well, I'm gonna quit this baby talk now", referring to his childish lyrics.

He might use communicative references to demand something from the fictional and real listener, that immediately feels incorporated to the interpretation: "can you explain? (...) Answer me, baby, a casual look will do, just what in the world has come over you?" ("Something's Burning Baby", 1985).

If I can't help somebody  
With a word or a song  
If I can't show somebody  
They are travelin' wrong  
("Long Time Gone", 1963)

There are refrains too, devoted to represent his physic presence during the performance, "If you ever heard its sound or seen its blood-red broken frame, then you know my voice and you heard my name" (1963). The last part of the statement is repeated at the end of each verse in "Train A-Travelin'" a song published in the album *Broadside: Broadside Show & Sessions* that got recorded between 1962 and 1963. As he published them under the pseudonym Blind Boy Grunt, this statement is an ironic challenge to the listener and his big record company, whose contract ban him from recording with a third party. This material was against commercial music publications and so, most of these songs did not make it onto the official records.<sup>199</sup> In the same period, around 1963, he recorded a song "Ballad of Donald White" in which the first-person story of the criminal is combined with a loquacious commentary, "And these are my final words that you will ever hear", at the end of the first verse, when the

condemned man has just started his sung monologue. This sense of termination was repeated with an emphasis to communicative exhaustion in the song “‘Til I fell in love with you” from the album *Time Out Of Mind* (1997), where he complains, “Well, I’m tired of talking I’m tired of trying to explain / My attempts to please you were all in vain” Also, the verses of his official album *The Freewheelin’ Bob Dylan* (1963): “I’ll know my song well before I start singin’” (“A Hard Rain’s Gonna Fall”, 1962) and “our words were told, our songs were sung” (“Bob Dylan’s Dream” 1963).

Many people have highlighted Bob Dylan songs’ literary potential as inheritor of the previous tradition of poets like Allen Ginsberg, Jack Kerouac, bluesman like Leadbelly, and Woody Guthrie who already made their contribution to associate reciting with singing and to extend the main objective of poetry, which might be for its receiver to get immersed in “what has taken individual form” elevating the lyric poem to the status of something universal but ungraspable and always impossible to be completely understood (Adorno, 1991: 38).

Now they asked me to read a poem  
At the sorority sisters’ home  
I got knocked down and my head was swimmin’  
I wound up with the Dean of Women  
Yippee! I’m a poet ad I know it  
Hope I don’t blow it  
 (“I Shall Be Free No.10”, 1964)

Where he reaches the inevitable conclusion to which other poets before him arrived (Wallace Stevens, etc.) that “whitmanian” and “emersonian”<sup>200</sup> conclusion about the poetic self that “it has nothing to celebrate save its own possible glory”, as it was explained by Harold Bloom (1980: 159).

In comparison to other kind of languages, sang messages are freer than others, at least they procure “risk-free actions by providing socio-culturally regulated forms of potentially *risky* interaction between humans” (Tagg, 2002: 17). We can observe such risky statements in songs like “New Pony” (1978) where there is an explicit sexual invitation, particularly rid of any love residues,

Come over here pony, I, I wanna climb up one time on you  
Come over here pony, I, I wanna climb up one time on you  
Well, you’re so bad and nasty  
But I love you, yes I do

Correspondingly in the protest venue, where he proved to be extremely sardonic, there are plain instants of extreme violence, but one of the most evident and historic songs is the following,

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  
(“Masters of War”, 1963)

Part of that danger is felt in love matters. The artist fights the pains of love even by rejecting the ex-lover this way, I'm sick of love; I wish I'd never met you / I'm sick of love; I'm trying to forget you (“Love Sick”, 1997). And he also developed three-people complicated relationships that would be unthinkable in a common language intercourse. That is what happened in the microcosms of “Visions of Johanna” (1966) or in the execrative chorus of “Idiot Wind” (1974) where the voice directs cruel words to a direct “you” that must be him but could be us,

Idiot wind, blowing every time you move your mouth  
Blowing down the backroads headin' south  
Idiot wind, blowing every time you move your teeth  
You're an idiot, babe  
It's a wonder that you still know how to breathe

To conclude, this new artistic use of songs, resolved some of the preliminary intrigues of the so-called problem of describing the communicative side of a literary discourse for being non-truthful or regarded fictional. In the past, even Woody Guthrie had to give an answer to the same kind of poet allegiances that Dylan confirmed in the present,

I have a storm of words in me enough to write several hundred songs and that many books. I know that these words I hear are not my own private property... You may have been taught to call me a poet, but I am no more of a poet than you are... You are the poet and your everyday talk is our best poem by our best poet. All I am is just sort of a clerk and climate-taster, and my workshop is the sidewalk, your street and your field, your highway, and your buildings  
(Guthrie, 1967-8)<sup>201</sup>

That field-based poetry of Woody Guthrie-derived in Dylan's more introspective view of the world heartened by the urgency of developing a new means of expression.

### 3.7. Particular and Universal Languages

There are several paradoxes in the lyrics of Dylan's songs. These make part of his lyrics and reflect the way we speak by constituting universal linguistic features that play with equivocal meanings and rational implicatures. As it is displayed in the famous opening line of "With God on Our Side" (1963), "my name it is nothing / my age it means less" or in the following, "She knows there's no success like failure / And that failure's no success at all" ("Love Minus Zero, No Limit", 1965) However, one of the biggest paradoxes of his work stands apart from the poetic field, and it deals with the act of reception. I refer to the fact that albeit Dylan's music is intrinsically individualistic, it can reach worldwide audiences. Although Theodor Adorno (1991:38) attributed to the poetic discourse an "unrestrained individualization", music and performance hearten such a connection between its participants that extrapolates its influence.

I mentioned in previous chapters that any process of individualization was prior to understanding the moral frame of "authenticity", but Dylan's songs can also describe the essential movement of artistry, from the individual to the universal. Even though its potential individualization "has no say over whether the poem remains within the contingency of mere separate existence" (Adorno, 1991: 38) or if it makes a universal statement, instead, one thing that helps Dylan's songs completing its status of universality is that they do not show any particular ideology. Except, of course, that his songs present existential philosophy requirements in that these denote an emotionally appropriate, significant, purposive and responsible way of human life.<sup>202</sup> In fact, "Dylan uncovers everything in America, even the ugliest history set to the catchiest tune. There's no south and north anymore, just this weird, corrupt government where all that is left of America is kitschy debris." (Yaffe, 2011: 54) His biographer Anthony Scaduto says "(...) he took the specific and made it universal by finding its underlying meaning" (Scaduto, 2001: 3439)

Like Bob Dylan recognized, in a conversation with Sam Shepard, who accompanied him during the Rolling Thunder Tour (1975), "(...) you don't need to know the language when it's music. You understand the music no matter what language it's in. Like when I went down and heard that Tex-Mex border music –that sounded like the same music to me even though the language was different. It all sounds the same to me" (Shepard and Dylan, 2004:188). Bob Dylan means that as communication depends on the situation of the listener and the barrier of that linguistic knowledge, universality

in music sometimes works thanks to the musicality of its constituents. Whether these are linguistic or musical, these elements motivate different emotions. Most probably repetitive resources and recurrent patterns are determinate to give a non-English speaker a sense of internal musicality, but it could also facilitate another kind of concerns. "Music is a universal act of human conversation, and an identical act of conversation is happening in each place." (Kim, Kwang-Wu, 2001<sup>203</sup>). That is one of the reasons why, "Dylan is celebrated wherever there are human beings, from China to America –he knows how to touch people all over the world." (Nahun, 2011<sup>204</sup>).

If I had to answer Simon Firth's question about how is it that we like to listen to the same thing over and over, I would use the argument of another theorist included in the cognitivist book by Elizabeth Margulis (2014). The author in question is Thomas Turino (2008) and he claims that what attracts to repetitive reproduction is the link of music repetition with our memory. He describes, and this is what goes around the idea of the particular and the universal, two types of music performance: "presentational" where the role of producer and receiver is clearly distinguished and "participatory" where there is no clear distinction, such as in hootenannies celebrations or any other folk ritual connected to the different ethnicities in the U.S territory. Margulis explains around those two indicative kinds of performances, that "when elements of the participatory, such as repetition, occur in presentational styles, they don't ordinarily trigger overt participation, but they do elicit a kind of imagined, virtual participation that can serve to powerfully involve an audience" (2014: 11). Perhaps that is the musical quality that helps people from all over the world share the same kind of music and as Simon Frith wondered about, makes them want to listen to it more than once. Eventually, "presentational" performances can activate what William Blake would call, in the words of Betsy Bowden, "minute particulars", which are "the outward expression in this world of the eternal individualities of all things" (Damon, 1965: 280-1). The medieval and folklorist literature theorist Betsy Bowden adds that "we must listen carefully and ask for each separate performance as recorded, how does it feel?" (2001: 8).

Bob Dylan' case and historical transcendence are comparable to performers like Elvis, The Beatles, and other music phenomena. Not in market data<sup>205</sup>–, but in other universal merits, as it was explained by Grant Maxwell in his comparative study,

(...) the Beatles and Presley have both sold somewhere between six-hundred million and one billion records, while Dylan has sold about seventy million, no mean feat, but not quite concomitant with the extraordinarily high regard in which Dylan is almost universally held by his peers and his critics.

(Maxwell, 2014: 5177)

Erin McMullen and Jenny R. Saffran say that “music can and does often elicit strong, predictable emotional responses from people who may vary by culture” (2004: 298); but they also indicate that the nature of this relation must be studied by the cognitive scientist, and this study only presents the matter in question. The nature of these mappings from sound to response and the means of their construction can be of great interest to the cognitive scientist. Thus, a comparison of the two "meaning-systems," loosely defined, may be very instructive.

In Spain, Bob Dylan appeared for the first time when the magazine *Blanco y Negro* reported the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom on the 27th of August, 1963 where Bob Dylan sang three songs with artists like Joan Baez, Mahalia Jackson, Marian Anderson, Odetta and the trio Peter, Paul, and Mary. A year later both Joan Baez and Bob Dylan were the subjects of an article around their influencing philosophies over the youth. According to the national broadcasting company, *Rtve*, in July 1966 Dylan would also appear in the popular magazines, *Ondas* and *Triunfo*, where he became the cover protagonist.

At this point, the only thing that matters is how was it possible that a personality as elusive and complex, with such unfathomable foreign origin and language, became as important to our cultural acquisition. As it is explained in the article by Patricia Godes (2010), the first albums to be published in Spain were the short singles edited by the little discography Discophon, settled in Barcelona, that distributed CBS and Epic. The first four CDs cost only 100 pesetas (the previous coin to euros) and they were edited in the same form as France. When they edited *John Wesley Harding* and *Nashville Skyline* in 1968 and 1969 respectively, these two became number five in the Spanish hits list. Before that, Spanish versions of his songs had already reached high positions. For example, Queta & Teo's “No més ho sap se vent” (1964)<sup>206</sup>, Grup de Folk's “Escoltalho en el vent” (1967), “La Noia del Pais del Nord” (1967-8), etc. Heretofore, the famous singers Joaquín Sabina “El Hombre que Puso Nombre a los Animales”<sup>207</sup>, Kiko Veneno “Memphis Blues Again” (1995) y Nacho Vegas “Un Simple Giro del Destino” (n.d.) made other popular cover versions. Critic and scholar Christopher Ricks (2009)

commented on the importance of other languages covers in enriching Dylan's perspectives and, of course, particularizing the universal experience of his music. These weren't just translations but culturally diverse revisions of his messages. Both cultural and linguistic facts constitute the most direct barriers to his music reception in other cultures, and still, Spanish society has always been able to understand certain imbricate images and feeling in his music, evocative tones, and moods that made him achieve a great impact and notoriety.

Dylan wouldn't visit our country until summer 1984 when he came to Madrid for a live show. Years later, in 2007, he would receive the Príncipe de Asturias Prize, one of the most distinguished awards of the country, as a recognition for his important contribution to the arts. His ultimate universal achievement has been the Nobel prize of Literature on December 10, 2016.

**THE SKY CRACKED ITS POEMS IN NAKED WONDER. AESTHETIC AND  
POETIC KINDS OF REPETITION**

Repetition, in short, is the life blood of music

—Kofi Agawu, *Representing African Music*

#### 4.1. Introduction

The act of repetition is as natural as life. If our days are matched by monotony, so are life's essential circles. As nihilist philosopher Soren Kierkegaard put it, "every generation begins again from the beginning... No generation has learned how to love from another, no generation at any other point than the beginning and no subsequent generation has a shorter task than the generation that preceded it."(2006)<sup>208</sup> Apart from being present in the cyclist daily life, repetition means the *routines* within which rock music lives, according to Lawrence Grossberg (2006<sup>209</sup>). The more the music style accepts them as a restricting framework, the more individual practitioners try to transgress it. However, these transgressor vanguards, who foresee the transformations of each music genre, incorporated an ethnic tradition like the Afro-American music styles –coming from their African antecessors–. While the black music influence was increasingly incorporated into the American popular music, so was Dylan's style adopting a new style but framed in the music echo and repetitive rites of all native and ethnic styles of America as well. It would all end up configuring a collage of different referents as defended by some theorists (Ran, 2014; Gray, 2006). In fact, Rona Cran remarks that, "the heightened subjectivity and acknowledgement of the quotidian as a constituent of high art made the collage practice an ideal mechanism for Dylan" (2014: 291) not just for his multiple characters but to make both forces, the traditional and the vanguard, live together.

This part of the study is devoted to the significant part that repetition plays from the possible perspectives of the aesthetic experience. While previous sections included a commentary about the direct influence of this figure in communication and confirming the idea of the artist's authenticity, this section is completely devoted to the description of both musematic and linguistic repetition, the two leading sources of meaning during the process of musical reception. That is, it tries to reflect on how it works from the moment we reproduce that song, while we are processing it, up to the analysis of its structure. It goes from sound exposure to the aesthetic and signifying processing that the suggestive power of Dylan's music has to bring about.

As famous rock music critic and performer Richard Meltzer stated in his classic book *The Aesthetics of Rock*, "(...) today, after a music of paradigmatic "disorder" has

become historically prominent, a music with a high degree of regularity, particularly one whose regularity becomes ultimately monotonous repetition, is even more radical” (1987: 117) Meltzer’s statement concerns Dylan’s music, specially in those cases when monotony becomes a principle of innovation where “change is so vital”. It is another excuse for revisiting Dylan’s artistic panorama using a word, “revisited”, that the artist used too, perhaps acknowledging that it mean what music theorizer David R. Shumway explains at this point,

Revisited implies return maybe rediscovery and also something like their opposite –a second, harder look at early hopes for “fortune or fame”? Or even those sickening “repetitions” from “Queen Jane Approximately” that Dylan would revisit again on *Blonde on Blonde* (another repetition) as “Stuck inside of Mobile with the Memphis blues again” (2009: 14)

On behalf of what I think is a characteristic usage of the figures of repetition and another way of considering the typically “Dylanesque” elements of his music, I share the same argumentation as Elizabeth H. Margulis in her cognitive study *On Repeat: How Music Plays the Mind* where she states that “in score repetitions are traces of a compositional act, artifacts of a composer’s conscious or unconscious choice to use repetitive structures in her work” (2014: 55).

This task implies applying the poststructuralist approach to the art of songs that would allow me speaking, not only of the different types of repetition I have previously distinguished but also approaching a theory of songs' act of aesthetic reception and the influence of repetition at different levels of that process. In contemporary music, it is easy to observe the multi-layered types of repetition and how these act on every layer differently and with a different suggestive power.

From a more macro-structural level of description to a microstructural or textual level, repetition enters both the act of creation (the poetics) and reception (the aesthetics). Like in Spanish structuralism, (García Berrio, 1989), this work regards the music analysis like a double layered task, not just form and content but the exterior and interior dimensions of the discourse, because this discourse is meant to be ultimately performed. Regardless of a relation of dichotomies or dialectical reason in music, there are a series of dimensions that need to be divided in order to be studied, although they are considered parts of the same significant unit, the song.

From the macro-structural level or in connection to the more immediate and superficial elements of the listening experience, repetition accounts as the experience of reproduction, imitation or influence during the creative process, together with such recurrent rituals during his performances that help maintaining the authenticity of the artist. Whereas at the microstructural level –referred to as “internal” by García Berrio (2006)– these figures are related to musical cadence, alliteration, anaphora, lexical fields and other symptoms of repetition like themes, motifs, topoi, etc.

Firstly, the field of repetition in songs' analysis must be considered from two main standpoints: from a wider perspective or in a macro-structural level of scrutiny, music is **reproducible**. This implies that a sense of repetition is inseparable from the basic definition of music because we can only listen to a certain piece of music if it is sung or played again. I am referring to repetition in terms of a recurrent exposure to the stimulus, or the result of the industrialization of music that took place since tape recording and phonographic technologies were introduced of course, but also to its memorial power: anything that would "replay" the discourse. Elizabeth Margulis explains that "every time we recollect a musical performance it's to a certain extent a replay. The link between memory and repetition pulls us into repeated music and invites us to inhabit it." (2014: 11) Once technological advances allowed us recollecting that feeling of the moment, we got the figure of the recording. Will Straw says that "the recording serves as a form of 'extrasomatic memory' (memory stored outside the body), preserving music in material artifacts which outlast the moments in which that music was performed." (2001: 58)

From a **structural** level of analysis, repetition configures the basic structure of songs –understood as products that are to be consumed by the majority of the population. I am referring to elements such as refrains, chorus, codas, hooks, bridging passages, etc. This type of repetition can be analyzed both from the point of view of music (musematic repetition) and discourse (discursive repetition) where the microstructural level repetition is an integrant part of the linguistic and poetic contents of the “sung text” (Nunes et al. 2015: 188<sup>210</sup>). Richard Middleton describes another classification with two similar levels of analysis: the level of signifiers or **intratextual** repetition, and repetition at the level of the song or **intertextual** repetition as introduced in his chapter “Memories Are Made of This: On the Subjects of Repetition” (2006: 141)

This study will make use of a simplified version of this one, initially based in the different stages of music reception.

Apart from offering a new perspective of Dylan's music, I hope it will discover new things like the secret of his universal success, because, apparently, "(...) more repetitive (fluent) songs are more likely to debut in the top 40 and thus be embraced by consumers much faster... (Nunes et al. 2015: 189)

## 4.2. The Aesthetics of Repetition

As it was mentioned above, repetition stands as an act, a performance of the representation that has been lost. For all that, if it was not for the recording and reproducing technology, once it has finished there is no possibility of going back to that mythical time. In Freud's terms, "it is a symbolic structure created through its relation with the Real" (2006)<sup>211</sup> It is the principle of signification and as such, it also derives from performance's interplay between the unconscious and the Real.

Yet, every represented piece of music and each new performance are independent of the original and they offer a different version of the Real each time, still, today, live performances typically act as a simulation of the original version, the versions previously heard by the listener. That is why every performance offers something new, which is something Lacan had already predicted in *The four fundamental concepts* (1979). In this sense, repetition is not something required by the aesthetic representation, rather it represents the symbol itself. Derrida also adhered to this line of thought and connected repetition with the notion of *difference*, "the displaced and equivocal passage of one different thing to another"(...) "Repetition of difference as the economic detour which the element of the same, always aims at coming back to the pleasure of the presence that has been deferred by (conscious or unconscious) calculation" (Derrida, 1991: 61–79)

Gilles Deleuze (1994) distinguished between "true" and "brute" repetition, saying the former is "repetition of difference". This idea insists on what I have just mentioned about readapting new forms of repetition as a contingent way of being different and original. It has been mentioned repetitively as well, that Dylan's music/literary works and his use of repetition go intimately connected to the topoi of transgression versus conformity (Middleton, 2006) And if it is a repetition of difference it can capture the attention of the listener and act as a communicative facilitator (Middleton, 2006) and a "chain of sympathy" according to Michael Taussig (1993)<sup>212</sup>, like I said in the previous chapter. Elizabeth Margulis' cognitivist study added that "repetition detection can be a useful methodology to investigate perceptual units: the segments of music that listeners treat as individual entities" (2014: 39)

Principally, an act of music repetition confronts memory by enhancing vivid mental associations from aural perception and lyric processing. Nevertheless, there is a major critique of repetition coming from the Western culture, that perceives popular

music like “the music that does the same again, over and over” (Middleton, 2006: 141) It took place after the recording technology and systems had been established. On account of these technological advances, the art of replication was installed at the core of the industrial music production and so, it was seen as a commercial and reproduction strategy, ignorant of the artistic process.

Nevertheless, the musical quality of songs can also be determined by an aesthetic repetition (Rahn, 1993) and one of the benefits that this kind of repetition can bring “is an ease of processing referred to processing fluency” (Nunes et al. 2015: 188) The artist makes of such an element a useful instrument to reify a passage or “to set it apart from the surrounding context as a thing to be mused on...” (Margulis, 2014: 43)

There is an internal harmony between music and words in Bob Dylan’s performances. This is partly provided by such structural and aesthetic element as repetition and recurrence. The use of this element strengthens the communicative and emotional relation with music. Music, according to Elizabeth Margulis, “is the canonical domain of repetition, and when we reinterpret another domain to emphasize its repetitiveness we are in fact, examining a quasi-musical aspect of that domain” (2014: 4) In other words, if a certain statement or word is repeated incessantly, language stands for musicality. Because music or musicality is the quality of anything which starts sounding different than other common and indiscrete sounds the moment it appears. Like Elizabeth Margulis said before, "The simple act of repetition can serve as a quasi-musical element of musicalization" (2014: para.1) Any element, included language, will serve Dylan’s songs as a way to express musicality first, and poetic semantics later. Unpredictably, repetition boosts different affective responses in its participants as well. Many cognitivist studies nowadays (Margulis, 2014; Lubet, 2012) tried to guess what kind of responses his music enhances. Also, the American musicologist Alex Ross (2010) pondered about the way Bob Dylan keeps us interested. He concluded it is majorly through repetition along with the changes that take place between the first repetition and the last one. His refrains are just a simple statement that stays ringing in our minds like a bell.

Repetition gave a mythical quality to epic moments in Dylan's music career. Like the moment he went electric playing "Maggie's Farm" really loud and he and the Band played "the insistence, intensity and sheer volume of the repetitive three-note bass line" (Maxwell, 2014: 42). At that precise moment in history, repetition helped to introduce everybody to rock 'n' roll's electric presence in the history of popular music. It

meant an aesthetic break with the antecedent tradition. His most transgressor act was the most significant and it was characterized for borrowing rock electrified patterns, as well as repeating a set of signs that were recognized as rock 'n' roll.

Repetition is a key rhetorical, structural and poetical element that helps construct and perceive a relation of “semas” and “musemas” (Tagg, 2013; Middleton, 2006) connecting the participants of a performance in a significant and communicative basis.

Repetition, during music performances, is also responsible for creating a propitious atmosphere in concerts, provided that it is an invitation for people to join tapping, dancing and singing in unison. About the participatory power of repetition in music, Elizabeth Margulis and the cognition lab at the University of Arkansas have much to say, “it’s notable that musical situations that expressly call for broad involvement generally feature even more repetition – think of the number of times a church responsorial calls on the congregation to sing a single phrase back.” (2014: para.9) In Negro’s spiritual music, whose origins are in African religious rituals, there is this tendency of call-and-response music that gave way to other musical genres, like gospel and working songs in which music was shared by anybody who was present (Lornell, 2012). Indeed, their music helped construe the Negro identity in the middle of the powerful American white mid-class society. This attribute of repetitive music plays a “social and biological role in the creation of interpersonal cohesion” (Margulis 2014: 6) Also, when Kip Lornell explains in his study all the different types of secular songs and gospel, he writes, “repetition is one of the keys to the success of camp meeting songs, for this strategy serves to reinforce the fervor and message as well as the lyrics. This type of thematic recombination adheres on an emotional level similar to that of the blues.” (2012: 128) Camp meeting songs were spiritual singing expressions of the south that persisted through the XIX th Century and derived from psalmody.

The fact that repetitive music puts everybody and every element in harmony can create a shared moment, a special atmosphere, between the assistants. In that sense, repetition in music means learning the words, learning the musical gesture and keeping control over the listening experience. For example, by force of repetition, some listeners put on their music and turn the volume higher whenever the song reaches its climax. This occurs because song repetition enhances a different kind of consciousness in the audience, producing narrative as well as participatory effects that create an intimacy and a sense of collectivity with every song. Margulis summarizes this idea saying that "when elements of the participatory, such as repetition, occur in presentational styles,

they don't ordinarily trigger overt participation, but they do elicit a kind of imagined, virtual participation that can serve to powerfully involve the audience" (2014: 11)

### 4.3. Recording and Reproduction

As Walter Benjamin explained once (1955: 217), "In principle, a work of art has always been reproducible. Man-made artifacts could always be imitated by men. (...) Mechanical reproduction of a work of art, however, represents something new." As long as that piece of music wants to be played again, it is reproduced, no matter through what kind of media or way. The apparent immateriality of music and its inexistence – subsequent to its performance– was overcome by recording those excellent moments and allowing people to reproduce their experience their own way. In consequence, music became a product managed by an industry and going through marketing processes that more often than not, imposed their own regulations. Theodor Adorno and Horkheimer referred to this quality as the quality of the symbol (2007). If it is constantly repeated and its meaning is inexhaustible then, it is a symbol and this quality shows its true content. Symbolic repetition makes some songs become a great paradigm of a specific time period and the cultural values and ideas of that time. Dylan's use of aesthetic repetition differs from the mannerist reproduction of the mass media, but Bob Dylan used his performances –in the studio or outside– to make his personal ritual. He avoided any rehearsal and played it just a few times before the version was finished (Shelton, 2011; Scaduto, 2001). The different series of recordings of the same song were always different, as it was proved in the discarded versions that make up *The Bootleg Series Vol. 12: The Cutting Edge*. All the different versions he recorded show to what extent songs' meaning and form were inexhaustible. This way, the artist was confirming their symbolic quality and their malleable character.

Recording technology, for its part, helped spread the results of a music session as a stable version of a song. An instant that gets perpetuated forever and that won't be repeated unless the listener, who is now in control, presses the "Play" button. And all of this has been made possible thanks to the supporting technological system,

The audible sound caused proximately by a computer comes immediately from an amplified playback system, just like the sound from a CD. Computer music is not performed; it is played back. The music exists on file as a decodable magnetic pattern. One processes the code through a sequencer program. The code, which is the ultimate source of the sound, can be created, accessed and made meaningful only via a program. (Godlovitch, 1998: 100)

Once this technological equipment was available to the general population, music reproduction guaranteed a democratic access to music, a fact that broke away the academic differentiation between high and low culture. In the words of Simon Frith “Recording (...) allowed the mass distribution of repetitive listening of the particularities of a specific performance.” (2001: 31) Indeed, song’s particularities were made eternal at the recording session. The fact that they became eternal is justified by their dependability in the process of reproduction, that is, of repetition. The possibility of reproducing a song as many times as possible allowed it being more easily accessible to be comprehended and to access the lyrics’ meaning.

From the point of view of cultural manifestations, the acts of musical production and reproduction implicate a repetition in itself, an act of recognition. It goes parallel to what in Dylan’s career has resulted in a vast quantity of rare and unreleased tracks. These have been appearing parallel to his studio albums in the Bootleg Series collection that began back in 1991<sup>213</sup> and has not finished yet.

Similarly, recognition –as provided by music reproduction– enables us to learn his music and then, gaining some kind of indirect control over the song. This is similar to controlling the natural flux of time and as other musicologists have seen before (García, 2005 and Leydon, 2002) it can imply the physical body. We know we cannot access to what is going to happen to most degrees, but at least we know for certain what follows that riff and that harmonica introduction. In essence, while processing music we are fully aware of how time moves before us as music helps us gaining conscience of, what Husserl called “the original temporal field” in his phenomenology of time conscience (1991). The listener is conscious of the most elemental border between what is not now anymore and what is not now yet, as expressed by the German philosopher. Such perceptive moment of time consciousness has its three steps, very clear in music processing: primal impressions (occurring now), retentions (or ‘primary memories’) and protentions (future-oriented impressions).<sup>214</sup> A phenomenon like this could make us become musical subjects who gain more control over the songs the more they participate in them or are driven by them subconsciously. As Elizabeth Margulis observed,

(...) part of what makes us feel that we’re a musical subject rather than a musical object is that we are endlessly listening ahead, such that the sounds seem almost to execute our volition, after the fact. This sense of super expressive voice (see Juslin, 2011) can be

pleasurable in and of itself. (...) Repetition, I would argue, encourages embodiment. And this embodiment contributes to musical pleasure.

(2014: 12)

This control was justified, again, by some technological advances that increased to the extent that, “eventually, ‘downloadable’ music converted listeners themselves into artists, blurring irrevocably the boundaries between song and simple reception and recomposition.” (Brooks, 2006: 341) The technology of reproduction produced a personal experience of music, a particularization of the signifying process such as it is described by the musicologist Greil Marcus (2006: 18-9),

(...) enough of the song roots itself into your memory that you can play back to yourself at any time. (...) because they’re built like commercials, with cues that tell a listener what inevitably follows from whatever she just heard even before she has registered that she has heard it. (...)

(Marcus, 2006: 18-9)

However, this kind of music repetition that is the fruit of mechanical reproduction can have its negative effects too. In the modern world and with the growing presence of music in our daily living, the constant reproduction of a song can give way to uninterested listening or uninteresting contexts where music become only a "rumor", as Simon Frith explained (2001). This phenomenon, fruit of the excessive way of consuming music back in the mid-sixties, was so indispensable –as Umberto Eco explained– that a few generations after, people won't be able to perceive that practice anymore. Here we are, decades after that, and the consume is still worse. The excess of massive musical reproduction systems (cell phones, laptops, clocks, tablets, mp3 devices, etc) has increased notably our use of music in multiple situations, making of our listening preferences a leading premise. Note the way we are able to access an infinite amount of playlists in Spotify or put up our favorite songs in a music playlist. Digital reproduction, downloads, and social network have given us the opportunity to access more data, faster and easier.

Anyone who was really aware of these kind of negative effects that musical reproduction can somewhat produce, would try to develop a certain commitment to offering authentic music and most important of all, fresh performances during which the audience could be surprised one more time, which is what Dylan was very worried to do –as it has been insisted along this work–. It could be comprehensible that the singer, in

this case, Bob Dylan, could feel responsible if, at some point, popular music and its distribution exhausted the essence of his songs. That is why it would be his responsibility to present each song as different each time.

Bob Dylan symbolically refers to his own cadence exhaustion when he addresses Queen Jane saying, “(...) when all the clowns that you have commission/ Have died in battle or in vain/ And you’re sick of all this repetition” (*Queen Jane Approximately*, 1965) That moment of *ad nauseam*, when the listener stops paying attention to the song’s significance and as a consequence of that the aesthetic and rhetoric effects are not successful, is avoided by turning undecipherable in his concerts. This amputation eliminates the memorial and nostalgic drive of music, ignoring that “when we rehear familiar repertoire, vivid memories arise.” (Margulis, 2014: 10)

In the genuine style of Bob Dylan’s music, there is one decisive technologic change that allowed him to reach the maximum song duration. In 1948 “Columbia Records introduced the 12-inch long-playing disc.” (Starr and Waterman, 2006: 22) That disc played at more speed than its predecessor and so, could accommodate more than twenty minutes of music on each side. Bob Dylan would have never produced such long songs as “Sad-Eyed Lady of The Lowlands” (1966), “Gates of Eden” (1964) or “Hurricane” (1975) –only the former lasts 11 minutes and 22 seconds– if it wasn’t for this technological progress. Record companies had restricted the length of a song for volume problems before doing it for marketing reasons –apparently, they are not commercially efficient. The truth is, except for a few cases, “in the 50s and early 60s little creative use was made of this additional real estate –most rock ‘n’ roll era-LP’s consisted of a few hit singles, interposed with a lot of less carefully produced filler”, as it was explained by Starr and Waterman in their referential study *American Popular Music* (2006: 184). So, the technological advance cannot justify Dylan’s creativity, but it certainly opened new possibilities for him.

Songwriters and performers increasingly tailored their output to fit the new medium. The three-minute single remained the standard into the 1960s when the availability of microgroove recording and improved mastering techniques enabled recording artists to increase the elaboration of their recordings. The breakthrough came with Bob Dylan’s ‘Like A Rolling Stone’<sup>215</sup>

Indeed, nobody at that time seemed to be thinking about making such long songs. There is a great sense of “ahead of times” within his music that has been influencing the following generations of musicians all around the world and it is not

only due to those advances of the industry but to its sense of place and its meditating music. Despite the so-called inhuman “plugging” technology and amplification systems that act as unfeeling mediators (Théberge, 2001), “The industry has a significant role to play in that culture”, –in the sense that it makes sound reproduction available to be played– “but it doesn’t control it and, indeed, has constantly to respond to changes within it.” (Frith, 2001: 26)

#### **4.3.1. Brief History of Music Technological Advances**

With the advent of recording technology, music records became the key element of the industry. It represented a benefit for all the actors of the industry and allowed to develop more technology parallel to the discovery of a complex net of artists. While these conceded everyone the opportunity for enjoying their favorite musical artists, records became an easy to operate and an important commercial product. Original tape recordings were first distributed on radio programs, in which MC’s lead the audience towards this or that musical taste. Record manipulation by radio music shows establishes the first relation between basic repetitive reproduction and its result in the listener. Apparently, record companies would take advantage of the radio’s big role, because the more we listen to a certain musical piece or song, the quicker we can finding it pleasing; as some cognitivist studies confirmed recently (Margulis 2014: 9) In this sense, repetition or over exposure –in radio channels and other media– would have been used by the industry as a way to manipulate listeners.<sup>216</sup>

This study has spoken about bootlegs above, yet it is important to highlight that when dealing with the reproduction possibilities that the recording market made possible, like those non-professional and quasi-illegal copies of Bob Dylan’s gems, they were also the protectors of the artist’s authenticity. To put it another way, these copies warrant the uniqueness of each performing rite, even if the bootleg market constituted another alternative business.

#### 4.4. Musical Repetition

Like Betsy Bowden, I maintain that “a listener who relaxes into music and aurally experienced words has understood the song without straining to interpret such phrases precisely.” (Bowden, 2001: 39) Other theorists from the field of ethnomusicology have remarked the same fact about the special kind of reception involving songs and performances and how it is impossible to expect the same successive interpretation on the part of its receiver than in other kinds of artistic messages. Like Will Straw maintains,

We consume music as we do films or television programs, for meaning and satisfaction, but the distinctiveness of music comes from the lines of connection linking out acts of consumption over time. These lines of connection map our evolving relationships to peer group unity and individual exploration. They show our shifting propensities for choices which confirm our social identities others which (deliberately or not) transgress these.  
(Straw, 2001: 73)

“Simultaneity” is the key term to understand the kind of process that music calls for, and in Dylan’s music both forces balance and act coordinately. For instance, repetition facilitates the linguistic processing in Bob Dylan’s works where a “linear development of imagery is not needed for artistic coherence” (Bowden, 2001: 41).

Like Betsy Bowden said, in her pioneer study around Bob Dylan’s performances, “Music keeps time” (Bowden, 2001: 60). She meant it holds regular beats, and I would add its phrases and cadences always remind the listener of how time is passing. This is an emotional consequence of music performance which, like any other “passage of music (...) cannot be labeled with a predictable discursive meaning” (Bowden, 2001: 60) only transcribing the effect that music cadences produce in the listener, only with the adjective (Barthes, 2005).

When music maintains a monotonous cadence it can be due to an intent to put force in lyrics content because, “in many cases, words are designed to be one of the most immediately accessible parts of the song” (Starr and Waterman, 2006: 4) For example, in most of his “protest songs”, when he deliberately needs the length of those repetitive patterns to retell a true story –like that of Hattie Carroll<sup>217</sup>, or in any of those long narrative sequences– Dylan deliberately echoes most primitive forms of singing, derived from topic songs and the following talkin’ blues style that Woody Guthrie and others before him made so popular. Also in relation to Woody Guthrie, as the critic

Robert Shelton (2011: 266) points out, “Song to Woody,” is “suspensefully built to keep attention focused on each new line.” Some researchers and musicological studies have affirmed that there exists an important effect of repetition over musical consumers, in as much as repetition helps immersion in music and so, concentrating on the lyrics. “When you hear something as music, you aren’t so much listening *to* as listening *along with*” (Margulis, 2014: para.8). This way, forms like the “groove” help the interpreter introduce intensive contents of lyrics. Grooves imitate the cycles of the vinyl record as “they consist of one or more rhythm patterns lasting, as single units, no longer than the extended present usually just a couple of seconds, but those patterns have to be repeated several times before they constitute grooves” (Tagg, 2013: 296). Bob Dylan’s songs show groovy cadences and create the same derived feeling on the listener, due to their repetitive framework (Middleton, 1990).

In his songs, we can find, more recently than not, a clear tendency towards including simple patterns of music produced with guitar chords and harmonica on his first period and later played by a rock band. Every music section is repeated as a loop creating that symbolic circularity of music’s framing role<sup>218</sup>. However, it should always be kept in mind that the overall feeling is what counts and no language (music or words) should be exclusively serving the other. “One distinctive joy of musical listening comes from a kind of procedural immersion rather than a more declarative understanding. Repetition is an important element that encourages this kind of attending” (Margulis, 2014: 69).

Repetitive patterns have been proved to be musically attractive for the audience, “(...) we expect songs that are lyrically more repetitive (for instance, by repeating the chorus more often) and thus more fluent, to be generally preferred and adopted more quickly and broadly in the marketplace” as it was claimed by Joseph C. Nunes (2015: 188). Whenever we encounter recurrent patterns or phrases, these can either get fixed to our brains, like earworms –so typical of that “catchy” type of songs whose repetitive verses make listeners remember them unconsciously– or we can experience, as it has been named by cognitivist specialist Severance and Washburn, (1907), “semantic satiation” or “verbal satiation”. It is the “loss of the signified concept from the signifier (visual or acoustic)” as it has been defined by David McNeill in *Gesture and Thought*, (2005). Elizabeth Margulis adds that “repeated viewings, utterances or hearings of the same word cause it to seem to degenerate into nonsense. Not just any nonsense but a

nonsense in which the semantics vanish and are replaced by a sort of super-salience of the component parts –letters, phonemes, syllables” (2014: 17).

Musical repetition is responsible for creating a propitious atmosphere in concerts, provided that it is an invitation for people to join tapping, dancing and singing in unison. About the participatory power of repetition in music, Elizabeth Margulis and the cognition lab at the University of Arkansas have much to say because, “(...) it’s notable that musical situations that expressly call for broad involvement generally feature even more repetition – think of the number of times a church responsorial calls on the congregation to sing a single phrase back.” (2014: para.9) This attribute of repetitive music plays a “social and biological role in the creation of interpersonal cohesion” (Margulis 2014: 6) as it has been previously mentioned.

In Negro’s spiritual music, whose origins are in African religious rituals, there is this tendency of call-and-response music that gave way to other musical genres, like gospel and working songs, in which music was shared by anybody who was present (Lornell, 2012). Indeed, their music helped construe the Negro identity in the middle of the powerful American white middle-class society.

At the same time, it is inherent to music and makes songs able to reach worldwide audiences, because it is a universal figure, as derived from the multiple contrastive and comparative studies in anthropology and ethnomusicology. Elizabeth Margulis echoes Bruno Nettles discoveries in her work saying, “The ethnomusicologist Bruno Nettl at the University of Illinois counts repetitiveness among the few musical universals known to characterize music the world over” (Margulis, 2014).

Some of the different types of repetition that are to be found in music, according to Starr and Waterman, are, “the riff, a repeated pattern designed to generate rhythmic momentum; hook, a memorable music phrase or riff; and groove, a term that evokes the channeled flow of “swinging” or “funky” (...) rhythms” (2006: 4) “Riff” is the commonest and more rock-driven name for the musical cadence or “ostinato”, a word from Italian origin in relation to the western classical music tradition. In the following sections, we will comment further about this element.

Stephen Rings (2013), who makes a comparative research of the different performances of “It’s Alright Ma’ (I’m Only Bleeding)” (1964), gives the definition of a short element in music, “tattoo”, working as a musical refrain. He reports Walter Everett's definition of the term, "a short, one-phrase unit that may reappear as if to bring the song back into focus, perhaps to call the attention to the following verse or, if the

verse had functioned as the song's introduction, to make it seem as if we are off to a fresh start"<sup>219</sup> Dylan's tattoos often accompany the refrain momentum, when the artist is reminding us or calling our attention to the main idea both musically and linguistically. Note all those refrain structures where the only identical idea is a short phrase at the end of each stanza. Like in "Tangled Up In Blue" (1975) where the interpreter ends up every stanza with two distinguished music phrases while conducting the exemplary acoustic guitar chords that make it so unique. This song's tattoos might seem blue, but the guitar riff sounds lively and triumphing. The song recollects the pieces of past memories like when he discovered an Italian poet that "glowed like burnin' coal, pourin' off every page" when he found his first job and the definitive split. Yet the voice expresses no sadness or regrets and, at the end, he seems to accept their situation, "But me, I'm still on the road heading for another joint" and heading for another tune, the same old tune. Depending on the realm of music in which we situate ourselves, repetition has a more or less direct appearance. In the past it was considered a characteristic of poor music or music for the masses that did not appeal to exquisite tastes of the high culture (Adorno, 1990<sup>220</sup>). However, there are other more traditional types of music which carry repetition like their most constitutive part. If we look into popular music today, we can guess to what degree these compositions depend on repetition and to what structural, as well as aesthetic purposes, do they apply. "Music's function is obviously not to convey information, and its repetitive nature seems to be bound up with this other function – a function that might best be described as aesthetic" (Margulis, 2014: 14).

Richard Meltzer (1987), the rock critic who pioneered the essayist description of rock 'n' roll's deep meaning, counted on repetition and music changes as an important axis of this kind of music. It is important for Dylan's music to harmonize with the audience's emotions. To reach harmony at this level implies, as Meltzer explains (1987: 232-3) "a minimal common denominator between one's spirit flow and that of the music". Also, these characteristics must be "inertially present even in the standard orgiastic experience of fused personal-music flow."

Regarding repetition, it is more probable that the author acknowledged the kind of effect it could make, as he is a tunesmith. He knows how to use an instrument and produce an inseparable feeling between the musician and the instrument. Indeed, through his music playing, we learn the instrument is not just "a machine with respected rules and demands, but an added part of the body, which amplifies human expression and is spoken through, not played" (Middleton, 1972: 45).

Prove of his conscious use of repetition we have is the observation of the authors of *All His Songs*, Margotin and Guesdon (2015), who maintain that everytime he wants to make a deeper kind of song he prefers to use the triple meter (3/4). This is applicable to such songs of his first period as "Chimes Of Freedom" (1964), "Masters Of War" (1964), "A Hard Rain's Gonna Fall" (1962) and "The Times They Are A-Changin'" (1964) (2015: 2385). They also noted how many times the artist recycles his own creations to be used as a template for following songs. That is what happened with "Motorpsycho Nightmare" (1964) and the succeeding "Bob Dylan's 115<sup>th</sup> Dream" (1965) (2015: 2454)

Clive James points to *Blood On The Tracks* (1975) hypnotic use of repetition, especially musical. Any listener, regardless of their music knowledge, can perceive the monotonous cadences in most Dylan's songs. Averagely, a small set of chords is played while the singer interprets the words. Usually, his voice and mode of singing will stress the overall monotony by trying to make it easier for his listeners to process every message, every section. On the contrary, sections are pretty clear, except for a few exceptions, and the interpreter makes sure they are distinguishable from each other. It is been repeated many times, since he said it back in 1978, the definition he gave to his sound in *Blonde On Blonde* (1966), "a thin wild mercury sound" which he felt the most satisfying.<sup>221</sup>

#### **4.4.1. Song's Structure**

Popular forms aren't but the response to the demands of a general audience and because traditional types of music have been living for a long time among most listeners, such popular forms of music have been modeled or adapted from the oldest generations of music. From the point of view of the American territory, the songs that the English people carry with them to the new world became the oldest tradition of their music history. Bob Dylan learned the way a song should be structured by listening over and over again to people like Hank Williams whose poetic lyrics were able to appeal to the general public too, but the most decisive stimulus came from *The Three Penny Opera*, a musical by Kurt Weill and Bertolt Brecht that included the song "Pirate Jenny",

(...) it was the form, the free verse association, the structure and disregard for the

known certainty of melodic patterns to make it seriously matter, give it its cutting edge. It also had the ideal chorus for the lyrics. I wanted to figure out how to manipulate and control this particular structure and form which I knew was Rock Music Studies 65 the key that gave "Pirate Jenny" its resilience and outrageous power. (Dylan, 2004: 274-6<sup>222</sup>)

When people in England started composing ballads, to which Bob Dylan owns a great part of his works, they introduced the **strophic form** into the song tradition as this repeating structure allowed them retelling "historical events or personal tragedies" within the melody (Starr and Waterman, 2006). Besides their inherent repetitive structure, Starr and Waterman pointed that, "composers of ballads often added a catchy chorus, a repeated melody with a fixed text inserted between verses." (2006: 11-12) Consider the most used form of song's structure in the American popular song panorama and in the ballad genre: the AABA form or "thirty-two-bar form"<sup>223</sup>—is the most common rhyming scheme.

The principles behind this formal strategy seem obvious enough: state an effective musical idea to "hook" the listener, restate it (usually with new words) in order to fix it in the listener's mind, then sustain attention with a deviation from the established pattern and conclude with the gratifying return of the new familiar basic idea. (Starr and Waterman, 2006: 29)

The most common song format in modern popular music is verse, pre-chorus, chorus, verse, pre-chorus, chorus, bridge, verse, and chorus. Strictly speaking, this is the repetitive basis for allowing listeners, public and audiences to process song's rhetorical, poetical and communicational format. However, Dylan has made his own variations and sometimes he omits an essential part, such as the chorus, to introduce a pre-chorus and afterwards leave a blank space, an inertia that leaves a feeling of dissatisfaction and incompleteness: like in, "Absolutely Sweet Marie" (1965) or "Visions Of Johanna" (1965). Other songs, like "Corrina, Corrina" (1964), whose structure is verse-bridge-verse, give a feeling of innocence and tenderness and reflect upon the inmate value of a song, "I've got a bird that whistles / I got a bird that sings". He made another combination when in "Disease Of Conceit" (1989), for example, where he gives priority to the refrain lines by putting them in the first term of the preceding stanza. Then the refrain functions more like a preamble than an echo.

During the first period of his career, there are mostly non-chorus songs. This element is basically substituted by a refrain that can be situated in a myriad of places. For instance, in "Honey Just Allow Me One More Chance" (1963) the refrain is the first

element of the song, followed by the verse, pre-refrain, refrain and verse, pre-refrain, refrain and verse, without any bridge section in between. "I Shall Be Released" goes straight from the pre-chorus lines to the chorus and back to the pre-chorus lines three times, and "You're Gonna Make Me Lonesome When You Go" (1974) has two bridges to break the monotony every three verses.

Then we have riffs, "a short repeated phrase, frequently played over changing chords or harmonies or used as a background to a solo improvisation" (Margotin and Guesdon, 2015: 15276). Bob Dylan explained there is no time in his music for solos, but that makes it the more important when, occasionally, we can listen to one of those grooves<sup>224</sup>. Their structure resembles that of other genres like jazz or the popular "vamp" that serves to introduce one section from another. In this case, it has always facilitated the access to song's lyric content, especially to processing what the singer has immediately sang before the riff arrives. According to Jelly Roll Morton, 'A **riff** functions as "something that gives any orchestra a great background", by which Morton means "what you would call a foundation", "something you could walk on".<sup>225</sup>

These music sections can act as bridges or bring us to the end of the song, a coherent farewell. These recuperate the main essence of the melody while they are used to improvise as well and they can be as repetitive as any other section, verse or sound and go after each new significant linguistic unit as if riffs were playing a highlighting role, like in "All I Really Want to Do" (1964). In Dylan's most epic songs, which include large sections of lyrics and where timing is a restriction, these music fragments become smaller and less noticeable.

Riffs in Dylan's music are firstly lead by the harmonica. His excellence modulation of the instrument makes it his ally, his partner. Especially during the first years of his career, his harmonica was the third member of a band where Dylan's leading voice and the guitar were the other two. During my analysis, I have remarked the meaningful response that the harmonica seems to give sometimes to the singer as if it was another communicative participant who is often given the opportunity to speak. This is most evident in "To Ramona" (1964). When the singer says "though I cannot explain that in lines" then the harmonica makes its well-timed appearance. Later, many other instruments have occupied the place of the harmonica, starting with the guitar (electric, pedal steel guitar, or the classic nylon-string one), the piano, the violin, or the whole band formation.<sup>226</sup>

Piano riffs make part of the renovated sound of the album *Bringing It All Back Home* (1965). Although it is initially combined with the harmonica, it would be played solo too, in the famous “Ballad Of A Thin Man” (1965) or in *John Wesley Hardin’s* themes “Dear Landlord” and “Down Along The Cove” (1967) a premonition of the following “Day Of The Locusts”, “Time Passes Slowly” and “If Dogs Run Free” (1970).<sup>227</sup> Among the more representative riffs, there should be included the most explosive ones in “Tombstone Blues” (1965) with Mike Bloomfield’s electric guitar, a shock juxtaposed to the sepulchral references; the iconic “Stuck Inside Of Mobile With The Memphis Blues Again” (1965) and “I Want You” from *Blonde On Blonde* (1965<sup>228</sup>). Years afterward we can hear the expert guitarist Mark Knopfler in themes like "Precious Angel" (*Street Legal*, 1979) and Danny Kortchmar, who played second lead guitar in “Trouble” (*Shot of Love*, 1981) or Mick Taylor playing lithe slide guitar in “Union Sundown” (*Infidels*, 1983)

The harmonica seems to reveal all the lover's pain in "You're A Big Girl Now" (1974) and by that time, there is an eagerly awaited return to the acoustic sound of this period. Of course, violin riffs were very special. They represented another milestone in Dylan's instrumentation. For example, in the castigating song "Hurricane" and all throughout the album *Desire* (1975), they give the album a bohemian quality that would later be explored in the fantastic Rolling Thunder Tour.

Margotin and Guesdon highlighted, “Percy’s Song” and “Standing On The Highway”’s “hypnotic riff on his guitar in open D tuning to take to the road” (2015: 2658) I would rather single out the piano riffs in “Heart Of Mine” (1981) only present in the original record version (*Shot of Love*) and substituted by the usual electric set in the live version (*Biograph*), the moment when “alas!” the harmonica sounds again – after a long time–, in his song “Dark Eyes” (*Empire Burlesque*, 1985), and we feel that sudden emotion of going back to his origins. After listening to so much synth-pop and mainstream rock in this album, this song is an oasis or a music treat. Another moment of the memorable riff is the one protagonist by the acoustic guitar of "Tangled Up In Blue", *The Bootleg Series 1-3* (1990). Finally, I would also add the compelling concert riff of “A Hard Rain’s A-Gonna Fall” released in *The Bootleg Series vol. 7 The Rolling Thunder Tour*.

#### 4.4.2. Roots Music

Within each different song, there is another kind of repetition that acts like a literary intertextuality, only this is represented by music. Repetition works here as an echo: both at the level of literariness and in the musical score. In this section I will just explain music scores that replicate other music styles like blues, rock, country, ballad, talking' blues, topic song, minstrels, etc. Tyler Bickford, ethnomusicologist, explains that “Dylan’s oral constriction is not only ‘ungrammatical’, it is intertextual, and Dylan’s vocal performance is as much a complex and changing index of genres of American vernacular music, as it is an elegant play on the grammatical expectations of standard English.” (2007: 464)

In this sense, the idea of repeating is interrelated with an ever-present rhetoric of revisiting past music styles and traditions and that it was made explicit in his album *Highway 61 Revisited* (1965). Bob Dylan’s songs revive that joyful feeling of being American by reproducing a song as another means of consuming past memories. Yet he represented it at the limit of contradiction as, “He was telling those who were listening, a story they already knew, but in a manner that made the story new –that made the familiar unstable, and the comforts of familiarity unsure.” (Marcus, 2006: 18-9)

There are other repetitive artifacts (melodies, themes, motifs, verses), which belong to pre-existing forms in American traditional music constituting an echo of the past. Bob Dylan always wished to represent his own culture. Its past and its values were so powerful that he had to “repeat” existing modes and elements in order to make his music belong to them. In fact, his ambitions towards the American popular music tradition provided his music with a good commencement, a musical rhetoric and a pertinence, along with a shared vernacular. It seems like a very simple thing, but it is the essence of the concept “grain of voice” as described by Roland Barthes, “the materiality of the body speaking its mother tongue; perhaps the letter, almost certainly *significance*” (Barthes, 1990: 251<sup>229</sup>) At least this might be applicable to any U.S citizen, regardless of race and social community, whose lives were always accompanied by their tradition, “(...) the psychologist Carlos Pereira and his colleagues at the University of Helsinki demonstrated that our brains show more activity in their emotional regions when the music we are listening to is familiar, regardless of whether or not we actually *like* it” (Margulis, 2014: para.18). This process is known by the name of “recontextualization” and it is similar to intertextuality in literature, meaning the

process of putting a given element in a different context than the one it is related to. So, in all those times when Dylan introduced any referential music element in his songs, as well as when he chose to include “Not Fade Away” by Buddy Holly and Norman Petty<sup>230</sup> in one of his concerts, he was re-contextualizing them (Margulis, 2014).

This manifest use of repetition refers to music’s powerful emotive power and, in that sense, it is more like a “gimmick”, “a musical phrase or sound effect designed to attract the attention of the listener” (Margotin and Guesdon, 2015: 15239-15240). The only thing that is at stake is the element of memory, a Nietzschean “eternal return” paradigm. Elements such as “the teleological journey of the soul, together with ritual structures marking its passages, metamorphosed into the secular dreams, memories, and self-constructions of contemporary experience (...) the tedium of their never-ending repetition” (Middleton, 2006: 171-2) give us an idea of how essential it is the perpetual vitality of repetition in any cultural manifestation.

Repetition here is another way of saying “cover version” and depends on the so-called “anxiety of influence” that Harold Bloom talked about (1973). As Deleuze stated (referring to Hume), “repetition changes nothing in the object repeated, but does change something in the mind which contemplates it” (2014<sup>231</sup>). This kind of “sound effect of symmetry and completion” has been described by Catherine Mason in her article “*The Low Hum in Syllables and Meters*”: *Blues Poetics in Bob Dylan’s Verbal Art* (2007: 200) saying it “provides a familiarity of sound that satisfies the ear as well as satisfying that part of the human mind that would ordinarily look to language for meaning”.

#### **4.4.3. Oral Repetition**

In between the force of musicality and the meaning of words, we have the sound of words as another aesthetical mediator. When the meaning of each linguistic sign becomes unimportant and its presence is only justified by sound, we have the prosodic effect. The human voice, unlike any other instrument, produces a melody out of the distinct units of the English language. This prosodic use of the language can be so extreme as to free the sound from its logos. In both cases, repetition is a major figure for the poetical production, especially for Bob Dylan, who helped to increase “lyrical fluency” to its uttermost extreme without making it lose its artistic integrity and constructing a significant experience (Nunes et al. 2015).

Aurality, in contrast to other processing events such as reading, implies a total time awareness as “sounds succeed each other and the listener is challenged to take them in, one by one and construct their relationship.” (Perloff, 1999: 251)

Bob Dylan is clearly fond of its vernacular language and how it sounds, producing repetitive motifs that were so characteristic of his music, like the shortenings of the words, the slang voiced and unvoiced sounds, etc. He states that he usually read the pages aloud as he liked the sound of the words.<sup>232</sup> With the sound of his voice, Dylan brings to his performances the whole tradition of American music in order to create a sense of community. His own culture along with the melodies it pointed to, his lyrics, the way he tries to reproduce the mood, voice, and slang of other singers like Woody Guthrie, Jack Elliot or Hank Williams, all these components show his particular way of revisiting tradition or echoing the past. Slang is a linguistic form of showing more proclivity to be "inherently transitory" in the scope of the English language, according to Christopher Ricks (2002: 425).

Every user of language, whatever his or her politics, is engaged not only in conversation but in conservation. (...) But the *extent* to which the conservative interest within predominates varies greatly from one society to another. It predominates more in Britain and in British English than in American and American English.  
(Ricks, 2002: 425)

Dylan makes witty remarks out of the American vernacular language and also escapes from simple rhyming and the inherent sounds of its mother tongue sometimes by putting emphasis on plosive sounds, muttering or making comic voice variations. The melody and prosody of words are strong linguistic characteristics that Bob Dylan exploits. The recognition of natural inherent sounds in language is what lead Roland Barthes to describe the elements of “noise”<sup>233</sup> and “speech-to-song illusion” (2007: 122) when meaning and communication are mediated by the quality of how the language sounds. From this point of view, Bob Dylan could have been exploring the questions around the origin of the sound and be looking for instances of sound in natural speech. In this sense, we can appreciate cases of assonance and consonance producing both cacophonous instances and pleasurable ones.

Cognitivist theories have also analyzed these phenomena when we grow conscious of the musicality of discourse and words. Any perceivable “noise” or inherent melodious element in language can make us be conscious of the natural sounds of language. The

same happens when we perceive a repetitive or monotonous input so much in relation to songs. Prosody goes parallel to Dylan's use of songs not just aesthetically, but to play an important rhetoric role, albeit it is often hard to discern whether he is just trying to persuade us of some excellent idea or just delighting us with all its force.

Sounds can be used with an emphatic role. For instance, Epstein explained how it worked in his song "Only A Pawn in Their Game" (*The Times They Are A-Changin'*, 1963-4), "You didn't need to know how well alliteration had served those lines. Blood never sounded redder or a trigger finger more lethal. Dylan's enunciation of the plosive consonants made the words leap into three dimensions." (2011: 40-1) In fact, the use of alliteration in the Old English tradition goes back to the years a.d. 597, before the arrival of Roman Christianity (Niles, 1999)

Bob Dylan himself confirmed the presence of that type of voiced repetition when he talked about the song "Everything is broken" (1989), "(the song) was made up of quick choppy strokes. The semantic meaning is all in the sounds of the words. The lyrics are your dance partner. It works on such mechanical level" (2005: 172-3)

Also, aural experiences, "which include the immense richness of language as well as musical and natural sound, are the most effective means of triggering visual images", as it is affirmed by the important British critic and theater producer Martin Esslin.<sup>234</sup>

#### 4.5. The Poetics of Repetition

Poetics<sup>235</sup> in Dylan is an important issue, offers a complex disguise, because words –in Dylan’s music– can play two paradoxical roles. On the one hand, word’s “senses have been stripped” (*Mr. Tambourine Man*, 1965) or their multiple connotations make them unreachable. Even in his most polemic years (1965-1967) when he abandoned the folk idiom, and with millions of detractors raging against his intrusive song style and his apparent drift to commercialism, his songs got richer lyrics and denser messages without losing their attractive quality, part of which resulted from a singular use of repetition.

In the American music tradition as well as in the poetic and literary world there have been distinct uses of repetition. The man is a colonizer of language expression. Like Bob Dylan, there is always another territory not yet explored where humans can send their words. Words, then, are a good tool for colonization and repetition makes it finally possible. As he used to say, "Man Gave Names to All the Animals" (1979), "in the beginning, in the beginning". His use of repetition will mainly accompany the enigma of how he did use songs as his object of art, how through its messages and their lyricism he was able to bring poetry back to the popular realm.

Ideas come and go after the natural rhythm of music and Dylan stands there in front of us incarnating his ultimate role. He voices the spirit of the poet and communicator acknowledging the too-stable nature of written words against the inquiring and surrealistic lyrics of his songs.<sup>236</sup>

For example, repetition can make a verse like, have a double significance,

Lay down your weary tune, lay down  
Lay down the sound you strum  
And Rest Yourself ‘neath the strength of strings  
No voice can hope to hum  
("Lay Down Your Weary Tune", 1964, 1965)

One of the meanings comes from the effect of the alliterative /l/ and the iambic meter, borrowed from the romantic tradition, while the other comes from its harmonious and persuasive repetition that can be interpreted as an invitation to take a rest –as singers were rambling around– or to surrender to oblivion as “no voice can hope to hum”. Christopher Ricks, who pioneered the study of Dylan’s songs as poetry, wrote that, there is a certain comedy in a song that starts saying that it is time to stop (Ricks,

2004) In fact, the concatenation of chords summed to the “lay down, lay down” invitation which he repeats a third time more at the start of his performance in Carnegie Hall (2013) makes us want to know more, because, “a phrase that might have sounded arbitrary the first time might come to sound purposefully shaped and communicative the second” (Margulis, 2014: para.12). Finally, this invitation, which is also an apostrophe that points in direction to the audience could be warning us that the truth, the meaning, rests beneath the strength of strings, that is, under the musical entity that constitutes this into a song.

In the given example repetition works harmoniously, but the effects of repetition can be antithetic too, that is why Lidov (2004: 29) remarks that it creates “a hypnotic continuity”.

One of the more basic element of repetition in songs poetic structure is rhyme. The correspondence of sound between words usually found at the end of each verse. This is another way of repeating the same sound or using prosody to make his words more suggestive and embellishing. Rhyme demonstrates that in songs, musematic and linguistic elements are interrelated between each other and the one frames the other reciprocally. It functions more or less like the blues technique known as “stop-time” that prolongs the first eight bars of a sixteen bar blues (instead of the standard twelve bar blues), during which the beat is suspended, to focus people’s attention on the singer’s voice (Starr and Waterman 2006: 42). This recognizable pattern puts the musical accompaniment in service of the voice and words of its interpreter adding some suspense to the whole.

In Dylan's patterns of rhyming, we can mostly find consonant rhymes, although there is assonant rhyming too. Their rhyming schemes are varied. From the typical ABBA or the ABCB scheme (“Blind Willie McTell”, 1983) to an AAAB structure –not so common–,

Got no place to hide, got no coat  
I’m on the rollin’ river in a jerkin’ boat  
Tryin’ to read a note somebody wrote  
About dignity  
 (“Dignity”, 1989)

Rhyme can join inconceivable elements together, like in “Angelina” (1981) that rhymes with “Argentina”,

Oh, Angelina. Oh Angelina  
There’s a black Mercedes rollin’ through the combat zone  
Your servants are half dead, you’re down to the bone  
Tell me, tell me, where would you like to be overthrown  
Maybe down in Jerusalem or Argentina?

Or the song “Romance in Durango” (1975), where it seems to be over-elaborated,

The way is long but the end is near  
Already the fiesta has begun  
The face of God will appear  
With His serpent eyes of obsidian

This usually happens whenever he mentions the names of some exotic places, like in “You’re Gonna Make Me Lonesome When You Go” (1974) “I’ll look for you in old Honolulu / San Francisco, Ashtabula”. In other cases, Bob Dylan makes whatever is possible to pronounce them short or in an ambiguously way so that there is no doubt about their rhyming.

He is been compared to hip hop rhyming for such schemes as this AAAABBCC in “Maybe Someday”, where the monotonous tempo drives us towards his ultimate desire,

Maybe someday you’ll remember what you felt  
When there was blood in the moon in the cotton belt  
When both of us, baby, were going through some sort of a rest  
Neither one of us could do what we do best  
I should have known better, baby, I should have called your bluff  
I guess I was too off the handle, not sentimental enough  
Maybe someday, you’ll believe me when I say  
That I wanted you baby, in every kind of way.  
(1986)

There is repetition, of course, related to the line of thought or the more recurrent themes and topoi he explores in his works. Right from his first albums, there are a lot of repeated obsessions that would still be present all through his career. These symptoms of repetition give an overall cohesion to his songs and sustain the possibility of describing a Bob Dylan cannon after his most genuine songs. For example, in the most frequent archetypes in his lyrics, that are so connected to symbolism (Fye, 1957) or, in

the words of literary critic Northrop Frye “possessing the ability to communicate in time and space respectively” (2000: 108) which is what any popular art does. The subtle familiarity of these concrete concert of ideas and images produces an effect of security and familiarity in the listener, yet we often feel lost in similes and multiple connotations.

Some of these topoi constitute the most visited myths of his music. Indeed, while “myth is an art of implicit metaphorical identity” (Frye, 2000: 136), some of these myths were directly put in relation to Bob Dylan, the man himself, by critics, scholars and aficionados (Scobie, 2004; Dalton, 1976; Yaffe, 2011; Marcus, 2006; McCombe, 2011; Heylin, 2009; Gray, 2000)

Robert Shelton, who was present during all those years during which his inspiration was invincible, reflected in the question of his themes and said, “his roadmaps pointed toward three aesthetic and philosophical concepts: exploration of the grotesque and the absurd in art; existentialism; dreams and hallucinations as mirrors of consciousness” (1986: 586)

#### **4.5.1. Levels of Repetition**

Firstly, there are two main types of repetition applicable to any object of art. These two are **conceptual** and **exact** repetition, based in cognitive psychology in relation to linguistic memory (Giora, 2003<sup>237</sup>). I based their application to psychology into musical reception, but I also changed it drastically and used both of this types in my analysis. Here, **conceptual** repetition refers to a kind of repetition based on ideas, themes or mental concepts that would constitute an overall view of the artist's works, like that of "authenticity" which is articulated on the basis of other exact repetitions as well. This kind of conceptual idea is not immediately perceived by the listener, but recovered after being processed and, to a certain extent, it makes part of every conceivable form of art. Like any other artistic manifestation, Dylan's songs unequivocally have aspects reproducing things of the past, but they certainly have their own kind of language, one “composed of mythical, allegorical, folktale, biblical, racing form, comic book, underworld slang...” (Dalton, 2012: 109)

Conversely, **exact** repetition is produced and made effective during singing. It includes linguistic, musical and gestural effects. All of whom amplify the memorization

of his songs making them identifiable and predictable. They seek to produce either aesthetic rhetoric or poetic effects on the audience. For instance, musical harmonious cadences can help listeners perceive and reflect upon the song's message, as I mentioned above (Margulis, 2014; Straw, 2001). They can also be emphatic or have the sole aim of delivering a smart concept to the audience, especially those abstract concepts or emotions that cannot be easily defined in words.

Recall the verse about Hattie Carroll and her children, never sitting once at the head of the table, not even speaking to those at the table, just cleaning up all the food from the table –the table, the table, Dylan's rendering of that element of oppression which is deadening monotony.  
(Wilentz, 2010: 100)

Stephen Scobie analyses "Visions Of Johanna" (1966) the first recorded song of the album *Blonde On Blonde*. He insists on the idea that as long as it is notoriously difficult to describe a vision, the most poetic form to make them present in the song is to try to hammer them into our heads by "re-creating the condition in which this vision took place." He continues explaining that this is why the song becomes circular and self-reflexive, because "the visions describe the conditions of their own taking place. What it is that the visions of Johanna tell you? They tell you that Johanna is not here." (Scobie, 2004: 206) She is not here, at least until those visions of Johanna "are now all that remains" and the song finishes.

Music consumption and its provider, the music industry, base most of his success on **exact** repetition, since marketing techniques and pleasure are granted through repeating the same structures and phrases. The exact amount of listening repetitions is provided by the recording industry with the idea of making music a market good, whereas during a live concert, the awaited rendition takes place and the song's repetitive patterns are more or less transformed and the independent experience is separated so that now it can provide an event of collective consciousness and cultural identification (Straw, 2001).

Repetition helps to make evident the idea of materiality that characterizes any language. That idea of artifice is intrinsic to the creating process. It gives the language its double fold nature since its materiality makes it usable and functional to express abstract concepts and ideas; but, at the same time, it is evident that silences are an effective way to express the most exalted feelings. Deconstruction theories of language help explaining this idea about reaching meaning through language use and how it

mediates in our contact with the world. That gap between the word and the world will never get filled (*Postmodern American Fiction: A Norton Anthology*, 1998). Words and the materiality of other texts (discourses, speeches, popular songs) can be used in favor of various other meanings that won't be unequivocal, such as gestures. Gestures are barely unpredictable and they provide infinite senses free of any fixed interpretation. However, gestures can be repeated too, constituting their own reasoned system of meaning. This idea helps me introducing the three main forms of repetition and iteration in songs: musematic, discursive and poetic. The former includes the role of music patterns<sup>238</sup>; the second is made up of rhetorical elements and the third one includes repetitions at the literary level. While Richard Middleton's "Memories are made of this: On the subjects of repetition" only mentions the first two categories, I have added the third one as an isolated kind of meaningful source with a different linguistic aim. Other common divisions of songs, like Eric Clark's (2007) views songs from a subject-position analysis and differentiates between "technique" and "content". In Allan F. Moore words, content "refers particularly to the realm of the lyrics, while 'technique' in principle refers to all other constitutive aspects of a song"<sup>239</sup> On the one hand, the repetitive patterns strategy allowed me connecting both technique and content, on the other hand, the treatment of the former is merely superficial and based on his gestural components, that is, in the emotionally derived consequences of listening to Dylan's music.

#### **4.5.2. Figures of Repetition**

Although we are referring now to linguistic repetition, in songs there is barely any limit between both languages, and there is no limit at all for a singer. That is why Bob Dylan makes a sardonic play with anti-academicism in the following stanza,

Of course, you're gonna think this song is a riff  
I know you're gonna think this song is just a riff  
Unless you've been inside a tunnel  
And fell down 69, 70 feet over a barber-wire fence.  
(Dylan, "Sitting On a Barbed Wire Fence")

Like in this example, one of the most repeated figures of repetition is that of **anaphora**. Constituting the word or statement which is repeated at the beginning or end of a new clause or verse, anaphora is a classic use of repetition and it is among the most evident. It brights in Dylan with calculated precision and a certain variety, despite its limitation. It can transmit the inebriety of a repetition like "Rainy Day Women #12 & 35" (1965) or characterized the catchy tune of "Everything Is Broken" (1989). It made the question of "Blowin' in the Wind" get wasted until "2X2" (1990) reintroduced it again,

How many paths did they try and fail?  
How many of their brothers and sisters lingered in jail?  
How many poison did they inhale?  
How many black cats crossed the trail?

Anaphora can even dress up and pretend that she is not there, like in every initial verse out of the three stanzas of the song "One Of Us Must Know (Sooner or Later)" (1965) where it is more the identical structure of the statement than an exact repetition what plays with our senses,

I didn't mean...  
I couldn't see...  
I didn't realize...  
I couldn't see...

There is another figure known as **epanalepsis**<sup>240</sup>—that repeats the same words at the beginning and end of a verse with a character of emphasis. Dylan uses it, for example in "You Angel You" (1973) The duplicated reference makes it more important to the referee, leaving no doubts about this allusion. The lover wants to extremize the communicative intercourse between them, otherwise, he could never pledge for her love, as he wants "more and more and more".

There are some cases of **anadiplosis** and internal assonance, as well as **anapest** or repetition of "I don't" in the following fragment from "Most Of The Time" (1989) that comes as a culmination of all his "negative capability"<sup>241</sup> or his acceptance of misery and doubts and love uncertainties in the sake of a true and genuine artistic message that does not strive for a logical understanding,

I don't cheat on myself, I don't run and **hide**  
**Hide** from the feelings that are buried inside  
I don't compromise and I don't pretend  
I don't even care if I ever see her again  
Most of the time  
(1989)

Another significant use of **anapaest** takes place in the verses, "We live in a political world" introducing each stanza in "Political World" (1989) Although this was nothing compared to "All The Tired Horses" (1970) which is a complete repetition, an obstinate statement, an echo that is self-reflexive because it goes back to its own meaning. In other words, the horses are tired because of their incessant repetition. The same way, any symbol which is repeated in time constitutes an **allegory**, and that is what happens to the wind. One of the most inspiring elements of nature in Dylan's poetic resources, it is rarely vilified and gives more strength to the ideas of freedom, independence, pleasure, stimulus, soul, etc. "The wind, it whispers to the buckeye trees in rhyme" ("Highlands", 2000), is usually associated with a meaning of freedom, of nonreflexive behavior and spontaneity, even if the other things are going wrong, The storms are raging on the rollin' sea

And on the highway of regret  
The winds of change are blowin' wild and free  
You ain't see nothing like me yet  
("Make You Feel My Love", 2000)

In relation to the wind, although this time with a damaging and apocalyptic weather changes, recur during his career because, "Sometimes it's just plain stupid / To get into any kind of wind" ("Floater", 2001). Almost any weather change in his songs – storms, floods or hurricanes– are used as historical allegories (Denning, 2009: 39) That means both terms of comparison have been known to exist for a long time in our history, which means it is often read in terms of its original signification (Bloomfield, 1972). Allegories, according to Morton W. Bloomfield are closely connected to other texts and they are constantly insisting in the idea that the past is relevant. For instance, there is a well known relation among Dylan's metaphors and symbols and French symbolism, or William Blake<sup>242</sup>, the Beats, etc. Besides that, he echoes all the grammar of old songs and blues music as read through his performances.

Among the elements of that grammar, we can find the seducing woman, terrible and threatening, like that of "Honest With Me" ("Love & Theft", 2001) where "some of

these women the just give me the creeps" when he is trying to do what's right. A woman that brings to music the Adamic myth, biblical Adam and Eve, or the representation of a man who is lead to misfortune by a woman. "I'm getting' up in the morning –I believe I'll dust my broom / Keeping away from the women / I'm givin' them lots of room" ("High Water (For Charlie Patton)", 2001) Also in the awarded theme "Things Have Changed" (2000) he sings, "There's a woman in my lap and she's drinking champagne / Got white skin, got assassin's eyes".

In Dylan's songs, there are repeated **allusions** to characters or people (queens, ladies, etc) who compose a whole cosmogony, mostly based on card games, poker, literary characters and a mystical astrology. The most carnivalesque of all these scenes takes place in songs like "Stuck Inside of Mobile With the Memphis Blues Again" (1966), "Desolation Row" (1965) where "Everybody is making love or else expecting rain". The allusions sum to the incessant imagery he evoked with each verse, especially in the surreal lyrics of some of his songs, a trend that reached its height in the album *Blonde On Blonde* (1966)

Whether it is through internal rhyme, patterns of rhythm or any other kind of repetition, "when language is being repetitive, in other words, language is being musical" (Margulis, 2014: 162-3). See the lines of "Emotionally Yours" as indicated in the Spanish version of the book *Lyrics 1962- 2001* (2004)<sup>243</sup>, Come baby, rock me, come baby lock me into the shadows of your heart / Come baby, teach me, come baby, reach me, let the music start (1985).

With an assonant rhyming and a rhythmic structure, "Subterranean Homesick Blues" (1965) is among the few Dylan songs you can dance. It includes asyndeton, or an enumeration of statements only joined by a comma, without any conjunction. This increases the speed of the discourse and helps to time it to a fast meter. This feeling is underlined by the repeated use of short verbal forms in the imperative tense, that bring a lot of action to a short space of time.

Try hard, get barred,  
Get back, write braille  
Get jailed, jump bail  
Join the army if you fail  
(1965)

Rhythm can come in the form of homophones, another prosodic effect that confers language on the musicality of another instrument. Like in "I Pity the Poor Immigrant" (1967), when the words "tears, eats, hears" impulse rhythm in the company of the anaphoric "Whose".

### **4.5.3. Repeated Terms or Concepts**

The main idea of this section is, on the one hand, to discriminate, between the different repetitive modes or figures from a broader study of the most repeated elements in his works and, on the other hand, to offer one possible interpretation of his songs in view of the repeated signs. To put it another way, repeatability is the signifying element and we have to understand its signification.

For instance, one of the ideas derived from repetition, as it was explained above, was that of authenticity. In the way his music articulates the term of authenticity we can see a network of repeated elements that play an essential role in the configuration of that philosophy. This complex network of ideas, themes, models, and myths have been so iterative throughout his works that they have built on the concept of authenticity, along with other important concepts and significant emotions. Stephen Rings defines the term "articulation" as a central concept for the cultural studies field and says it "provides a useful heuristic for the study of his music, drawing attention not only to its syncretic nature but also to the ways in which that syncretism animates and reconfigures a range of socially mediated meanings" (2013). In order to do this, it is important to consider the multiple elements that have been recurrently appearing in Dylan's lyrics.

#### **4.5.3.1. Intertextual Repetition or Resonance**

Repetition in Dylan's songs stands both for discursive references to other peoples' lines and an entangled web of allusions, as well as music evocations of other kinds of styles, especially since the author practiced a collage-like technique to compose his lyrics.

One of the main resources of Bob Dylan's linguistic repetition is **resonance**. There are Bob Dylan phrases, some of his most common lexical statements that resonate to previously heard phrases in his works or to other people's works. This kind

of expressions once they have been adapted and selected by Dylan, they resonate in his particular symbolic world and it can be material that,

“(…) enters the song in the form of what might be called embedded quotation or allusion, requiring extraction by listener or reader on the basis of knowledge external to the texts. This is in fact typical of Dylan’s writing method in general, much the same applying, for instance, to his extensive use of biblical quotation.”  
(Rollason, 2009: 51)

The idea of intertextuality –coined by Julia Kristeva– comes from her consideration of the “literary word” as “an intersection of textual surfaces, rather than a point (a fixed meaning), as a dialogue between several writings” (1977: 65)<sup>244</sup> But, why is it taken as a repetitive element? the reader will be wondering. This study tries to include any symptom of repetition involved in the genre of songs, their creation, production, and reception. The idea of this research is that in as much as intertextuality uses the performed song to bring to life several other texts, it is repeating something of what they said, reproducing it, citing it and giving it a new signification.

Apart from strict intertextuality, Dylan seems to perceive the little and almost unobservable gaps between his language use and common language use, which makes him an astute language user that modifies structures in order to transgress the familiarity with certain phrases or idiomatic statements. The critic and scholar Christopher Ricks studied this facet of the artist, in both his referential title Bob Dylan’s *Visions of Sin* (2004) and the chapter included in *The Force of Poetry* (1984) where he observed how, “the cliché has been altered, and we are alerted to its clichéness, seeing the words from a new perspective, a different point of view, and seeing penetratingly through them” (Ricks, 1984: 140). Some of these tricks are double negatives, wordplay, paradoxes, etc. Most commonly he takes extracts and fragments from other artistic discourses, “his method is sonic collage. Drawing on overheard conversations, newspaper stories, imagery, dialogue from movies, he “jots down little phrases and things” and sets them to the music of the ordinary speech” (Dalton, 2012: 34). They are references that call for attention or point to an external element that is used as a meaningful sign or an illustration of the idea of his song’s message.

In Dylan's works, there is an indirect or more subtle intertextuality and a more direct one during which the evidence is clear, as some agents and text explorers have determined. I will mention some of them, in relation to the example given, making special emphasis in their importance for the area of cultural studies. For all this I will

use other previous studies that have already find multitude of intertextual references (Margotin and Guesdon, 2015; Carrera, 2012; Heylin, 2009).

Dylan would not only cite literary texts but cinema, sociology, philosophy, etc. Part of this is due to the fact that he likes pointing to his referent works as a self-taught erudite. In fact, it would be a topic to develop on its own, due to the impressive amount of references he accumulates. Part of these cohesive references living in his works works as relevant arguments to communicate a specific idea. This research would rather describe the manifested artistic quality behind his use of such a kind of repetition better than providing the exact quotes or names of the works that got directly addressed in his works. Intertextuality acts in music like another extraordinary source to identify his works from a theoretical point of view and describing the richness of his text. However, it is directly related to issues like the limits of “plagiarism” and the unavoidable fact that art is always an influence (Harold Bloom, 1973) or as Jon Pareles observes <sup>245</sup>—that “all art, not just folk art, involves conversations with the past (...) Pretending to an utterly pristine originality is not just impossible, it is itself the basest kind of fakery” (2010).

As Stephen Scobie said in his study of this interweaved aspect of his masks, characters and morphing self-titled *Alias Bob Dylan Revisited*, “Dylan’s identity is this equivocal relation to tradition. His originality lies in his quotations. The songs are his lexicon, and, like them, his own existence stretches back ‘time out of mind’” (2004: 296).

Like his other colleagues musicians during the folk revival, he identified “these popular cultural forms from detective thrillers to high, lonesome ballads” (Wilentz, 2010: 19) and like them, he infused them with a second opportunity. Adding not only a “revolutionary élan”, as Sean Wilentz maintains, but rather the stamp of his contemporaries and his detachment from every exterior influence. For instance, Sean Wilentz traces his direct influences as far back as to arrive at Aaron Copland, “whose orchestral work raises some of the same conundrums Dylan's songs do –about art and politics, simplicity and difficulty, compromise and genius, love and theft” (2010: 25).

In addition, every intertextual detail describes an echoing of internalized conventions, signs and symbols that are related in some way to the lyric content of a particular song and the desired effects it wanted to produce in the listener. From this perspective, it incorporates and adapts existing texts and discourses that keep a semiotic or aesthetic resemblance.

Bob Dylan has always been in the limit between influence and copy, another big polemic theme in the history of arts. Sometimes critics have not understood it and it has

been regarded differently depending on the moment. The fact that it is a popular music manifestation has not been of any help. It reminded me the particular case of authors like Shakespeare, who also rewrote the traditional myths and fables of the Greek classic tragedies, learning how to combine the forces of influence and direct citation, by using them for their own individualization. “Shakespeare had as much to free himself from the old morality plays as to adapt them. He felt free to discard many aspects of them altogether and use others in ways their authors could never have imagined.” (Greenblatt, 2004: 36).

Most authors have defended his originality and arranging capacities versus his plagiaristic creativity (Shelton 2011, Wilentz 2010) and have mentioned the great abuses from the part of the folk community and several critics towards Bob Dylan's compositions. He was not a plagiarist, rather he tended to pick old songs and rearrange them, write new lyrics for them –like Woody Guthrie and Blind Willie McTell would do–. This remaking process would sum up to the following modifications that took place during their performance so that there would never be a stable text and ultimately he would become a cover artist of his own music. “By the end of 1963, the folk scene was bitterly divided over whether Dylan was a song cribber or a composer working in the accepted tradition of building new songs on the skeletal remains of old folk songs” (Shelton, 2011: 384) As Shelton indicates later in his book, adaptation and influence are as old as composition. They are indispensable steps to the student, the amateur artist and the evolving technique of any consecrated artist too.<sup>246</sup>–For his part, Sean Wilentz states,

He has been a minstrel, or has worked on the same tradition as the minstrels (a tradition that includes vaudevilles as well as the southern songsters performers) (...) copying other people's mannerisms and melodies and lyrics and utterly transforming them and making them his own.  
(Wilentz, 2010: 169)

In a way his reworking over other's works is a declaration of love, “he steals what he loves and he loves what he steals” (Wilentz, 2010:181). In fact, some living referred authors took his stealing with dignity and proudness, like it happened with the release of “*Love & Theft*” (2001) The author Junichi Saga of *Confessions of a Yakuza*, a novel of 1991, declared he was really dignified by discovering his book had been cited in Dylan's album. The experienced words of the ethnomusicologist Charles Seeger, father of Pete Seeger, as cited in *No Direction Home* connect this idea to folk music,

Conscious and unconscious appropriation, borrowing, adapting, plagiarizing and plain stealing...always have been part and parcel of the process of artistic creation. The attempt to make sense out of copyright law reaches its limit in folk song. For here is the illustration par excellence of the Law of Plagiarism. The folk song is, by definition, and, as far as we can tell, by reality, entirely a product of plagiarism.  
(2011: 386)

The different appropriations that Dylan made for his songs permeated through their structure because he had all a long tradition within the development of folk and popular music forms in the United States. For example, he listened to negro spirituals –that gained a lot of popularity around the 1940s– and he sang about the same themes and topics, like death, destiny, rage against social injustices, etc. We must bear in mind that spirituals have been an essential part of the folk culture for at least 150 years (Lornell, 2012) After that, he would share themes and preoccupations with typical Afro-American singing like blues, ragtime, work songs or jazz.

In the Blind Lemon Jefferson's title "See That My Grave Is kept Clean" (released in 1927), which was covered in Dylan's first album, we can check there is a direct correspondence with the line "There's one kind of favor I'll ask to you" and the following "Just-a one kind of favor I ask you" of "Honey, Just Allow Me One More Chance" (1963) by Bob Dylan.

Repeating themes, symbols or references that explicitly belong to a previous work or artistic discourse has always been present in Dylan's work. The most common associations between Dylan works and the texts he includes come from the Bible, American literature, and English poetry, but he has also put much attention to cinema, oral tradition, and popular speeches.

One of the direct authors he thinks about and mentions explicitly is Shakespeare. Margotin and Guesdon (2015) point to "Highway 61 Revisited" because it includes a direct "extravagant allusion" to the English author's *Twelfth Night* (1602), although this is not the only Shakespearian element in his works. In *The Basement Tapes* (1975) the song "Lo and Behold!" includes a quote directly taken from *Antony and Cleopatra* (1606), "Get me out of here, my dear man" and "Count up to thirty" referring to the death of both characters in 30 BCE, according to Margotin and Guesdon (2015:5381) He also mentions the English playwright in the long "Stuck Inside of Mobile with the Memphis Blues" (1966), when he sings, "Well, Shakespeare, he's in the alley/ With his

pointed shoes and his pearls”, and the alliterative relation between the terms ‘shoes’ and ‘pearls’ with ‘Shakespeare’ makes it even more powerful.

Another writer he alluded to was James Baldwin, the Afro-American activist, novelist, playwright, poet, and critic. Dylan's version of a traditional song, which is among the outtakes of his album *Self Portrait* (1970) paraphrased the title of one of his stories, “This Evening So Soon”.

Also in “Just Like Tom Thumb’s Blues” the authors of *Bob Dylan: All The Songs* (2015) give us an advance of the multiple correlative readings of his works.

The lyrics have some reference to the novel *Under the Volcano* (1947) by Malcolm Lowry and to the film *Touch of Evil* (1958) by Orson Welles. The song has the same black and murky atmosphere. It also integrates some literary references to Edgar Allan Poe’s novel *The Murderers in the Rue Morgue* and to Jack Kerouac’s semi-autobiographical novel *Desolation Angels*, which deals with loneliness and madness and from which the line “Up on Housing Project Hill” is drawn. (Margotin and Guesdon, 2015: 4162)

Author David R. Shumway wrote once that “Dylan’s high-culture borrowings and allusions are literary rather than musical. While the musical range shows the influence of virtually every sort of American popular music, he found this material more than sufficient for his purposes.” (2009: 117) For instance, it is quite predictable that when he made the soundtrack for Peckinpah’s movie *Pat Garret & Billy the Kid* (1973), he would make some references to the content of the movie. What was not so much expected is the transcendence that the initial words on “Knockin’ On Heaven’s Door” –a direct loan from the movie– would have in the popular music panorama, triggered by the sales of this song, which rapidly reached number 12 and 14 on the US and UK charts and which is still covered by multitude of artists worldwide. Its constant music pattern makes it, in the words of Clynton Heylin, “an exercise in splendid simplicity” (2009: 434).

One of his albums with a major quantity of intertextuality can be found in “*Love & Theft*” (2001) and *Modern Times*, based in Henry Timrod’s poetry (Yaffe, 2011). The former goes compulsorily hyphenated because it was a direct quote from Eric Lott’s title<sup>247</sup>. It presents random passages from *Confessions of a Jakuza* by Junichi Saga and a direct reference from Howard Hawks’ movie *The Big Sleep* (1946), starring Humphrey Bogart and Lauren Bacall, “There’s some people that / You don’t forget / Even though you’ve only seen ‘em on time or two”.

David Yaffe (2011) counts many other unquestionable references from Bing Crosby to Led Zeppelin, Charlie Patton, and The Brönte sisters. He calls them *allusions* to differentiate them from plagiarism and they refer to a chorale of sources that intervened in his creative work.

Another explicit reference is that of “Every Grain of Sand”, from the album *Shot of Love* (1975), it was directly taken from William Blake’s “Auguries of Innocence”, where the first verses say, “To see a World in a Grain of Sand/ And a Heaven in a Wild Flower/ Hold Infinity in the palm of your hand/ And Eternity in an hour”.<sup>248</sup>

The search for intertextuality has become an intricate work of analysis that, like interpretation, bases its fundament in the resemblance of both texts. The extensive works around this topic make us wonder how much of Bob Dylan was original or if the author himself acknowledged that for being truly "original" did not mean creating out of the blue, but to recognize the debt to the arcane code of his tradition as well as other important texts around him. At least that was "the cult of authenticity that dominated the folk scene that Dylan entered in 1961" (2011: 104) and it ultimately constituted his personality.

#### 4.5.3.2. Narrative Repetition

Whenever the singer uses songs to narrate a story, the apparently limited structure of the new medium can allow him, in terms of repetition, to put more emphasis on certain ideas that summarize the most significant moments of the story. It can include a moral too echoing a long story telling tradition where the singer acts like a model or a priest performing certain rites and duties among the devotees.

Narration, for him, must have meant something really important as he went beyond the borders of the duration of the well-liked song. Why shall he take such risk? Why shall his company take the risk of not selling any album? It is all a matter of authenticity, again. According to Crowell's *Existentialism* (2015), “the measure of an authentic life lies in the integrity of a narrative, that to be a self is to constitute a story in which a kind of wholeness prevails, to be the author of oneself as a unique individual”.

When he did not want to serve as a model or be compared with a prophet, he chose other characters (types, archetypes or myths) to play their role. In fact, he did choose a certain kind of characters who appeared more frequently in his songs: rambler,

outlaws, gambler, hobos, etc. The artist is so directly involved with them that in many cases it is hard to separate the character and the voice. He took their side and faced the other side singing about their symbolical distance,

You're right from your side  
I'm right from mine  
We're both just one too many mornings  
An' a thousand miles behind.  
("One Too Many Mornings" 1964)

He dresses like them, he speaks like them and tries to configure their ethics of behavior. Robert Palmer says this involvement between archetypes and singer is almost an act of heroism and he describes the character of the blues singer in a relevant way for any discussion around Bob Dylan, "Only a man who understands his worth and believes in his freedom sings as if nothing else matters" (1981: 75).

The common setting for all these legendary men that inspire him so much, is at the crossroads, like Robert Johnson, in a lonely road somewhere: the most visited and revisited spot of his oral tradition.

The trail is dusty  
And my road it might be rough  
But the better roads are waiting  
And boys it ain't far off  
("Paths of Victory", 1964)

Provided that the narrative line has always suggested in the western tradition a line, the road has many symptomatic points in common with narrations. The road's design is also the narrative's design and starting from that assumption, the shape will determine our reaction and emotions. Just as the sempiternity of the road, that looks boundless, brings the repetitive and monotonous feel that music is providing at the same time, it also implies disorientation –when needed–, farewells, outer/outlying perspectives of the world, fast-tempo moving images, circularity or the idea of destiny and end.

As expressed in "Standing On The Highway" (1962), there are always two roads leading opposite destinies, "One road is goin' to the bright lights, the other's goin' down to my grave". Described like in Dante's classical epic tradition that, for its part, echoes the Greco-Latin images of hell and heaven, and was later followed by many other great writers, like Rimbaud, or in Afro-American's image of the crossroads, the

decisive moment in which the character has to choose between one of the two routes is useful to authenticate his charisma and willpower,

To "take the road" to escape a monotonous daily routine or to start a new life is a recurring theme in American popular music. Dylan expresses this theme and repeats the same hypnotic riff on his guitar in open D tuning (capo on the sixth fret) to take to the road while wondering if his girlfriend knows where he is.  
(Margotin and Guesdon, 2015: 2658)

During his first period and with the cultivation of topic songs and talking songs, the main narratives are tall tales, unbelievable but retold as if they were based on true facts. They were unbelievable principally because of his use of exaggerated elements with a comical or satirical intention. Of course, this exaggeration can come from the repetition or insistent presence of one of the values or recounted facts, like in "Changing Of the Guards" (1978),

The cold-blooded moon  
The captain waits above the celebration  
Sending his thoughts to a beloved maid  
Whose ebony face is beyond communication  
The captain is down but still believing that his love will be repaid

They shaved her head  
She was torn between Jupiter and Apollo  
A messenger arrived with a black nightingale  
I seen her on the stairs and I couldn't help but follow  
Follow her down past the fountain where they lifted her veil  
(1978)

Where he tells a fantastic story both influenced by elements from Tarot and mystic Gods and Myths. There are plenty of improbable passages and missions before arriving at the lover's tranquility. Then, it describes an odyssey like Homer's,

Dylan is like Homer in another significant way. His anonymous sources in the deep history of folk and blues mirror the influences of the ancient poet, who may or may not have been one writer, but who doubtlessly drew together the Greek myths to form *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey*. No, Dylan isn't a writer of literary books. But perhaps no living artist has shaped the American soul, or plumbed its depths, as profoundly as Bob Dylan. And what's literature for if not that?  
(Morgan Teicher, 2016: para.12)

In many a Dylan song narrative there are recurrent metalinguistic comments. It seems Dylan is producing an auto-referential kind of language that makes a movement of return, a come-back to the language itself and to the code of the song. It functions like a prolepsis, a commentary beforehand about what is about to happen next. It also makes references to the act of saying something through singing as if, like Roland Barthes used to say, the only way to avoid the code's vomiting and boring quality was creating an alternative code. This code would superimpose a different textual layer ironizing the other code, reflecting about it from the distance (1970).

He has used several times the description of another visual scene or work of art, what is called "ekphrasis"<sup>249</sup>. He did so in "Jokerman", "Visions of Johanna", "When I Paint My Masterpiece", etc. Part of this is due to his enthusiasm for oil painting, another expressive language he cultivated, guided by the painter Raeben in the 1970s (Bell, 2012) and which distinguish the way he looked at the world and how did he translated this look into the poetics of song. "All of these poems are verbal responses to nonverbal images –language rising to the bait, unable to resist the challenge to spell out in words what the painter has left implicit" (Scobie, 2004: 334). One example of his pictorial technique –or his particular vision– is the way he establishes a comparative between a gazing around and listening to a melody,

I gazed down in the river's mirror  
And watched its winding strum  
The water smooth run like a hymn  
And like a harp did hum.  
(“Lay Down Your Weary Tune”, 1964-5<sup>250</sup>)

He often uses the method of dialogue or “dialogism” (Bajtin, 1986) that opens the possibilities of the formal texture of dialogues and raises them to their greatest expressive category. Paradoxically all these voices are not but represented by the same voice and the polyphony is eliminated, but he interprets all the characters in a curious decoded way that can be perceived as another eventual expression of control over his works. It also comes to represent how much interested he is in masquerading and being able to act like many people at once. For example, “Tangled Up In Blue” (1974) is performed from different perspectives, with different voices offering a simultaneous collage-view different experiences of the narrated story, “about three people who were in love with each other, all at the same time”. (1978: para.5)<sup>251</sup>

There is some kind of sequential repetition in his narratives when the singer supposedly attempts to experiment with synchronized events. This supposed function of complete apprehension of the instant, so poetic, is part of his musical manifesto. This strategy is felt in his blues song "Ballad Of Hollis Brown" (*The Times They Are A-Changin'*, 1963) where the author reproduces as the crucial/epic moment when Hollis Brown, a farmer with a depressing mode of living, is detained by a sudden call in the wilderness. The call comes from a coyote, a species that is original from the north and central America and which is depicted in the American folklore as the trickster figure (Scobie, 2004). The entry of "coyote" in the English version of the Wikipedia indicates that "(...) the coyote acts as a picaresque hero which rebels against social convention through deception and humor".<sup>252</sup>—Well, Hollis Brown is just about to shot the coyote and, as a result, he murders as well the pre-Aztec deity by relegating it to the vile and untrustworthy animal that it became when the Europeans dominated the wild territories of North-America when the Europeans arrived. That moment he is about to shot is reproduced by the singer making the following verse "your eyes fix on the shotgun" two times: one in one stanza and the other in the following stanza, in dissimilar verses, stressing the ungovernable desire of killing the coyote that crosses the poor man's mind.

His wretched attitude is the perfect way to represent human stupidity against other nature's creatures.

Way out in the wilderness  
 A cold coyote calls  
 Way out in the wilderness  
 A cold coyote calls  
**Your eyes fix on the shotgun**  
 That's hangin' on the wall

Your brain is a-bleedin'  
 And your legs can't seem to stand  
 Your brain is a-bleedin'  
 And your legs can't seem to stand  
**Your eyes fix on the shotgun**  
 That you're holdin' in your hand  
 ("Ballad of Hollis Brown", 1963)

#### 4.5.3.3. Mythical Repetition

The etymological meaning of “myth” is story, narration, as philosopher María Noel Lapoujade (2009) wrote in her article “Mito e Imaginación a partir de la poética de Gaston Bachelard”. She continues explaining that the myth is a fundamental tale about the atemporal origins of those events occurring in an imprecise time, when the cosmic events, upon which that culture is inscribed, were born.

In the area of song, as in any other narration, there is a whole body of tales, stories and characters whose perils are part of an “American ethos of expression” (Marcus, 2010: 389). That is why the idea of myth is directly related to songs, like Bob Dylan’s music would confirm in the words of author David Dalton, “In Dylan’s mythology, the song is the singer, and it’s hard to say which generates which” (2012: 83-4). The richness of that element was one of the things that had an impact on Dylan’s active creativity as he pointed once, “Folk music is the only music where it isn’t simple. It’s weird, man, full of legend, myth, Bible and ghosts. I’ve never written anything hard to understand, not in my head anyway, and nothing as far out as some of the old songs. They were out of sight.”<sup>253</sup>

Apart from the fictional characters that circled around his poetry, Dylan also used songs to tell the stories of common people that suffered unjust critics and denounces. Not as detachable from his other folk fellows, who only referred to their society, but also attending to popular demands, Dylan uses the language of common people and speaks about popular characters and real stories, bringing "a philosophical melancholy into pop music" (Dalton, 2012: 95). His songs constitute his main attempt at reaching true facts and being truly direct and understated in his messages. As Suze Rotolo defined them, "true songs are not just newspaper stories rewritten in rhyme; they speak to the human conditioning. That makes them timeless" (2009: 90). Also, Dylan himself said about his songs that "lyrically they worked on some kind of supernatural level and they made their own sense. You didn't have to make your own sense out of it."<sup>254</sup>

There is a major figure that restates myth’s inner quality of repetition and that is the myth of eternal return, not to be confused with Nietzsche's (2002), comes from Mircea Eliade (2005)'s application of the idea of myth and religious will as a come back to the mythical time.

According to Mircea Eliade, the mythologist, myths narrate things that happened in a prior and essential time, the fabulous time of the "beginnings" (2009: 13-4) He adds that with the myths "we go back to the creations of supernatural beings. We no longer live in our daily time, we penetrate a transfigured, auroral world occupied by the presence of these supernatural beings. Myths do not rely just on mythological event celebration, but on their repetition" (2009: 25). All those old tales that Scottish and Irish ballads told, as well as western fiction stories, were renamed under both the white and the black vernacular tradition. Dylan used these names and their stories to configure his a stable identification of the artist with the character. This is why the presence of some myths is directly related to the actions or themes portrayed in his music and to their articulation. Reiteration of the signs, the figures, and their stories makes them gain a mythical status. "Anytime musical creation consists first of all in conjuring up in us a *certain past*", said Gabriel Marcel (1961<sup>255</sup>). In Dylan's works, it sometimes calls our attention how the singer gets entangled in a web of mythological transcendence that needs to explore, as he seemed to have captured –albeit called by Catholicism officially in the 1980s– the advantages of a complex mythological corpus in modern art and living. He never wants to demystify anything, alluding to Coyle and Cohen's (2009: 149) statement, except for getting hold of a multitude of other identities in order to interpret them during his performances.

"My eyes danced a circle," says Dylan in his song "Eternal Circle" recaptures this feeling of eternal return or recurrence attached to music performance. The song recounts the different time stances during song playing, "But the song it was long and I'd only begun (...) And there was more to be sung (...) And it was far to the end (...) And it had to get done (...) And began the next song" Like songs, myths confirm their existence infinitely in perpetuity. Perhaps that is why the "epos"<sup>256</sup> of all those traditional songs stayed until Bob Dylan, who, acknowledging this phenomenon decided to contribute enriching it with his own contributions. The solidity of traditional songs made Dylan rest his religious anxieties in the circling and enduring character of myths and tradition, and maybe that is why he said, "Those old songs are my lexicon and my prayer book. (...) You can find my philosophy in those old songs. I believe in a God of time and space, but if people ask me about that, my impulse is to point them back towards those songs."<sup>257</sup>

#### 4.5.3.3.1. The Bible

Besides, Benjamin Hedin notes that "Dylan refers often to the Bible in his lyrics. Mostly this is done in literary ways as a source of imagery or to underscore a theme –that keep the overall tone of a song secular" (2004: 147) I would add that these references establish a permanent relation with the present time of the song and a web of past traditions and world wide history. In fact, Dylan is a good reader of history and the Bible and its references add some spirituality to many a mundane theme. Ever since he started writing the lyrics, not only arranging popular songs, he introduced a sense of spirituality. Also, the form of his texts would be shaped according to sermons or a prophetic speech. Note the enumeration of people the chimes are flashing for in "Chimes of Freedom" (1964) or the beginning of "When the Ship Comes In" (1963),

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

That sense of spirituality liberates these quotes from simple declarations so that the nexus between songs and mysticism, that magical quality of the myth, is made evident in his songs especially since myths in his songs are answer-providers. Their sole presence has something to say about the standpoint of individualism and the existential credo that results of the signifying implications of the diegetic text (a text that as opposed to mimesis –which he followed in some songs– prefers to create his own laws copying real events) Sometimes these references obey to his admiration to other authors who included a strong mysticism within their poems, like William Blake or Kerouac, with the Buddhist precepts. For example, in "Gates of Eden" (1964), Dylan is addressing both Blake's *The Gates of Paradise* (1908) and a series of Old Testament books, like Ezequiel 31, 18, where the Bible mentions the trees of Eden (Carrera, 2011). Only through diegesis, the artist wins the ideal of authenticity that he copied from other traditions.

In his album *John Wesley Harding* (1967) there is a special connection with the mystic themes, apart from the obvious references during the Catholic period. Note some titles, like "Dear Landlord" or the eloquent morals behind "The Ballad of Frankie Lee and

Juda Priest" flirting with the sacred mysteries, and which includes a line like this, "For sixteen nights and days he raved / But on the seventeenth he burst..." addressing the language of the scriptures.

Years after that the Catholic period would fill up his songs with explicit references to Christ and passages of the Bible, but I would rather point to his more subtle ones, like in this evocation of the Genesis in his album *Blood on the Tracks* (1974),

‘Twas another lifetime, one of toil and blood  
When blackness was a virtue and the road was full of mud  
I came in from the wilderness, a creature void of form  
“Come in”, she said, “I’ll give you shelter from the storm”  
 (“Shelter from the Storm”, 1974)

#### **4.5.3.3.2. Blackness**

For instance, one of the most reiterative ideas is that of “blackness” and everything leading to Afro American culture. "The various iconic personae fashioned by Bob Dylan would not be possible without black America, and his work –blues, civil right anthems, gospel songs, and more– repeatedly acknowledged this fact" (Yaffe, 2011: 61). In fact Yaffe in *Bob Dylan Like a Complete Unknown* (2011) believes that the author is always exploring this facet while singing in such legendary venues as the Apollo Theatre where he played in 2004 after having been popularized for being “the venue where African American discourse is taken to the people” (Yaffe, 2011: 59). Lastly, the singer has devoted a whole series of paintings to New Orleans in his collection “Bob Dylan: The New Orleans Series” presented at the opening of the New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Festival<sup>258</sup>–and during his most recent tour (next summer 2016) he and his band will be supported –as it was announced previously– by the gospel singer Mavis Staples. All to demonstrate he is still connected to negritude and the celebration of this identification all through his career.

Like Eric Lott says, and it's directly applicable to Dylan, "Every time you hear an expansive white man drop into his version of black English, you're witnessing minstrelsy's unconscious return"<sup>259</sup>–Dylan felt so inspired by Lott’s book “Love & Theft: The Racial Unconscious of Blackface Minstrelsy" (1992) that he reused that title

to his album in 2001, along with his Rolling Thunder whitening up transposition, that made a direct allusion to that musical and theatrical tradition.

Other scholars have analyzed Bob Dylan's ultimate ever-present linkage to minstrelsy in many different ways. For example, the author Barry Shank says, "This effort at personal transformation, whereby a young white male attempts to remake himself through performing black music, is the classic trope of the great American tradition of blackface minstrelsy" (2002: 104). In fact, remaking –like revisiting instances, copying and echoing– is another repetitive feature within Dylan's musical terrain, "let the echo decide if I was right or wrong" ("Silvio", 1988).

#### 4.5.3.3.3. The Lonesome Bird

One of the myths he takes up, again and again, is that of the lonesome bird. In various themes and different periods of his career, Dylan compares either the singer-songwriter with this mythical element derived from the siren mythology of Greek origin or with their migratory and lonesome state, similar to bluesmen and other travelin' songsters. It seems to be directly connected to his persona as well, or the characters that seem to have a certain connection with him, like "Jokerman" (1983), "Jokerman dance to the nightingale tune / Bird fly high by the light of the moon / Oh, oh, oh, Jokerman"

Also Orpheus, the legendary poet, prophet and musician, was put in relation to birds, "While with his songs, Orpheus, the bard of Thrace, allured the trees, the savage animals, and even the insensate rocks, to follow him" (Ovid, *Metamorphoses* II.I<sup>260</sup>). Albeit Orpheus would later be recognized for being one of those Dantesque figures who went to the underworld and came back, he was the prime mythic figure that established the correspondence of the singer with the bird. In Dylan's works like "Corrina, Corrina" (1962), the bird is mentioned in association with the characteristics of the singer, "I got a bird that whistles, I got a bird that sings". The best association he makes in his discography with this figure is in that solitary moment of reflection and melancholy in "You're A Big Girl Now" (1975),

Bird on the horizon, sittin' on a fence  
He's singin' his song for me at his own expense  
And I'm just like that bird, oh, oh  
Singin' just for you

I hope that you can hear  
Hear me singin' through these tears

Also in “Gates Of Eden” (1965) where his excuse for using songs is compared to bird’s chant, “And I try to harmonize with songs/ the lonesome sparrow sings” Not only the singer is related to the lonely bird, but also entertainers, like “Lenny Bruce” (to whom he dedicated a song in 1981), “Blind Willie McTell” (1983) whom he compared with the hoot owl singing, or the man of the moon who “went home and the river went dry / Let the bird sing, let the bird fly” (“Under The Red Sky”, 1990). Songsters and entertainers have always been a recurrent figure in his songs on behalf of their archetypal importance in American culture, “In a country without a past, entertainers are our psyche guides through the wilderness. Songs are part of the American DNA.” (Dalton, 2012: 2)

#### **4.5.3.3.4. The Outlaw**

Strangely, the ultimate mythical fusion of the singer with a myth takes place with the outlaw man, one figure that most bluesmen made true. Like Lead-Belly, a two-time murderer, many other bluesmen developed in prison their first musical identity. Attracted to these individual experiences, Dylan would often give voice to their situations and he often put on their shoes, being particularly obsessed with Afro-American minstrelsy –a different kind of song mixed with opera and dancing.

Bob Dylan portrays a series of injustices and outlaw testimonies for the reiterative importance of being "authentic" as opposed to politicians and professors, who are simply unable to catch upon true things, for as long as there are acts of injustice, there will be outlaws and mesias to assist us, as folklorist Graham Seal (2009) explains.

The outlaw (Dalton, 2012), the trickster (Scobie, 2004), the sinner (Ricks, 2004), the youngster, the cynical, etc; these are only some of the many characters associated with Dylan, who are somewhat related to the myth of the outlaw too. “Whether in history or Myth, the outlaw hero mantle most likely will become attached to those who play some level of wit, style or sympathy that distinguishes them from the common criminal, or simply from the crowd.” (Seal, 2009: 73) All these characters were also put in common with the typology of Robin Hood by Graham Seal (2009) and in Dylan gives it a turn and sings about “Einstein disguised as Robin Hood” in “Desolation Row”

(1965) among a cluster of other archetypes that seemed to have been forgotten by contemporary society.

Like in “the maxim from Mark Twain at the beginning of *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, a book cribbed for *Chronicles, Vol. 1*” that says it “should certainly apply to anything in rock and roll, an art form based on artifice, one that romanticizes the outlaw and banishes the scholar” (Yaffe, 2004: 123), Dylan shows an increasing inclination to depict this character in his performances, probably due to a direct identification with the loner hero, a major topoi in the American fiction. “His name was Will O’Conley and he gambled all his life. He had twenty-seven children, yet he never had a wife” (“Rambling, Gambling Willie”, 1962-5)

Fruit of this sympathy for them, Dylan makes an ample catalogue of ramblers, tricksters, and criminals: John Hardy, Billy the Kid, Lenny Bruce, “Joey”, also known as Joe “Crazy” the king of the streets in *Desire* (1976), “Gypsy Lou” (1962), Belle Star, Frankie, who murder her husband, “Jack-A-Roe” (1993), etc. “The figure in the Dylan songs that reverberate most powerfully (as opposed to the charming but less compelling songs celebrating domestic bliss) is the Rambler, the Gambler, the Outlaw” (Yaffe, 2011: 49).

The author David Dalton associates all characters into this typology and says in Dylan's works they all mean the same. "To Dylan, all these types –hillbilly, outlaw, rebel, cowboy, outsider– were all really the same character. Arthur Rimbaud = Jesse James = Walt Whitman = Hank Williams = James Dean = Jack Kerouac = Joey Gallo. In a series of American folklore equations, he realigned the American inheritances and invented the cowboy angel hipster" (2012: 66). Coming from an old historic and narrative tradition of the American culture and touching different artistic disciplines; music, cinema, where western gamblers and killers were continuously heroized, and literature; the outlaw is one of those constant elements in Dylan's heterogeneous career. Indeed, the artist reached such a mania with this type of characters before he played this role in the movie *Pat Garret and Billy the Kid* (1973). A member of the movie production remembered, “the script was already written when Bob came to see me in my apartment on the Lower East side of New York... He said that he had always related to Billy the Kid as if he was some kind of reincarnation; it was clear that he was obsessed with the Billy the Kid myth...”<sup>261</sup> (Wurlitzer, 2015<sup>262</sup>). Many years after that, he would star in *Masked & Anonymous* (2003), another movie where the iconography of the western-fiction world is ever present.

The Spanish specialist in American literature, Cándido Pérez Gallego, described this type of character in his essay *El Héroe Solitario en la Novela Americana or The Lone Hero in the American Novel* (1967) and he pointed to the values of romanticism, nostalgia, alienism and even narcissism that distinguish him. Like in “John Wesley Harding” (1968),

He trav'led with a gun in ev'ry hand  
All along this countryside  
He opened many a door  
But he was never known  
To hurt an honest man

Robert Shelton also addressed Dylan's tendency to portray this kind of heroes when reviewing the long-awaited album *John Wesley Harding* (1967). He said, “the alienated have all gone to register with Dylan, who treats them with considerably more compassion and understanding than they might get from our harsh and judgemental society” (Shelton, 1968<sup>263</sup>). Actually, this myth constitutes a complex map of the self in search of the ideal figure of authenticity. “There’s somebody set to grab me anywhere that I might be / and wherever you might look tonight, you might get a glimpse of me” (“Wanted Man”, 1969<sup>264</sup>).

Yaffe counts that Dylan's setup are usually inspired by the cowboy territories, “The country I come from is called the Midwest” (“With God On Our Side”, 1963) evoking “an imaginary region inspired by his teenage readings of Guthrie's *Bound for Glory* and John Steinbeck's *Grapes of Wrath*” (Yaffe, 2011: 67). The most stable element articulating the ever present tramp is the road, “The highway is for gamblers, better use your sense” (“It's All Over Now Baby Blue”).<sup>265</sup> –Dylan's gambling experience covered all of his career being the highway one of the most permanent figures of his work. Remember Billy, the Kid permanent gambling and the refrain saying “Billy, you're so far away from home” (“Billy 4”, *Pat Garret and Billy The Kid* 1972).

Well, once I was rather prosperous  
There was nothing I did lack  
I had fourteen-karat gold in my mouth  
And silk upon my back  
But I did not trust my brother  
I carried him to blame  
Which led me to my fatal doom  
To wander off in sham

(...)

Kind ladies and kind gentlemen  
Soon I will be gone  
But let me just warn you all  
Before I do pass on  
Stay free from petty jealousies  
Live by no man's code  
And hold your judgement for yourself  
**Least you wind up this road.**  
("I'm A Lonesome Hobo" 1968)

Yet, what is the origin of the road's mythic? Blues expert Robert Palmer explained it: "At the time (blues origins), railroads were both the lifeline of the nation and an institution with considerable mythic significance. Southern black tended to ascribe personal characteristics to certain trains" (1981: 152).

Greil Marcus also appeals to the road's sense in the story of songs in America and he parallels the open and familiar road to revisiting traditional music genres and a popular cliché. He says any song about the road now should resist the cliché and surprise the listener with something else. Any repetition in relation to the road seems to build a sense of continual escapism and so, reiterating on the idea of the outsider who never settles except for a short period of time, or the outlaw, who never worries searching for his fortune where he is less known. The road also insists in the idea of the time that Kierkegaard and other **existentialist** represented. Indeed, trains make part of their mythological imaginary. Dylan includes this in various songs ("It Takes A Lot To Laugh, It Takes A Train To Laugh") echoing "the character of the brakeman –an image also found in Appalachian music." (Margotin and Guesdon, 2015: 3941). In the use of the myth for representing a universal series of concepts, he also applies the myth for his individual freedom. When he personalizes the myth to such an extent he is transferring his own vision to this one and creating another figure, like Jokerman, the Jack of Hearts, John Wesley Harding, Mr. Tambourine Man, or the Man in the Long Black Coat, "Somebody said from the Bible he'd quote / There was dust on the man / In the long black coat" (1989). All these fictional characters represented his goal: the idea of an authentic being. Jokerman is a song and dance man, like Bob Dylan, defined himself in an interview (1965<sup>266</sup>), he is Adam, Hermes –one that never answers his questions–, etc.

#### 4.5.3.3.5. The Hobo

This is a place that connected his music with the American vagabond, or the hobo, a figure derived from the myth of the outlaw but with other characteristics.

(...) this is a key figure in early twentieth century American society. He appears as the vagabond or tramp, traveling by train throughout America and offering his services to farms to earn money to survive. An example is the hobo in the 1958 novel *The Dharma Bums* by Jack Kerouac.”

(Margotin and Guesdon, 2015: 6168)

For Bob Dylan, he is in relation with the ultimate bluesmen that traveled around the country and all those singer-songwriters and folklore explorers who devoted their time to collect their precious musical memory. David R. Shumway points, "I'm not sure how much this specific image of ruthlessness attached itself to Dylan at the time, but all rock stars benefited from the presumption that they were not tied down to a place or family or other mundane obligations" (2009: 115). Their alienation provides them with an excellent standpoint and a creative mind free of the general day-to-day demands. So is the character he portrays in "Jokerman" and "Mr. Tambourine Man", personifications of an ideal he is been constantly pursuing. In view of the character's essential connection with Dylan's philosophy, the scholar Jonathan Lethem has even stated that this song "is unimaginable without the context of his previous works" and that it is "deepened by its explicit continuity with Dylan's oeuvre-in-progress" (2009: 162) what confirms my theory that there is an underlying self-assessment matching the repetitive myths and images of his works.

To conclude, the lyric content of Dylan's songs celebrates other mythological subjects and collective archetypes too, like the phantom of the opera, the jack of hearts, the queen of spades, etc. Through them, the artist is introducing part of his personal imaginary world.

#### 4.5.3.4. Thematic Repetition

I have called it "thematic" for it refers to repetitions regarding motifs and themes that make Dylan's songs so singular. Of course, all along his extending career, there are

multiple themes which obsess him and from which we could trace a map or a cannon of the artist's works, but here I will only inquire into some of them, by way of example. I chosen them considering their level of recurrence, but I have also taken some which are somewhat related to the most repeated ones, like the following theme: the grotesque, also a constitution of elements of the same character, which the journalist and music critic Robert Shelton related to Dylan's *Blonde on Blonde* (1965).<sup>267</sup>

He maintains that "from life's cruel parade, he enlarged, distorted, shaped, and misshaped a host of unsettling demons, spirits, devils, and malignant muses" (2011: 587) After, he takes a definition of the grotesque as written in the manual *The Grotesque in Art and Literature* by Wolfgang Kayser (1933). In relation to the grotesque, Dylan's works would rather reflect a fear of life more than of death, although this idea would be well hidden from the general apprehension of his lyrics,

Well, they sent for the ambulance  
And one was sent  
Somebody got lucky  
But it was an accident  
Now I'm pledging my time to you  
Hopin' you'll come through, too  
("Pledging My Time", 1965)

Where he seems to be ingeniously pledging for death to come, as time was passing so slow that a certain idleness had conquered him.

It all seems so well timed  
An' here I sit so patiently  
Waiting to find out what price  
You have to pay to get out of  
Going through all these things twice  
("Stuck Inside of Mobile With The Memphis Blues Again" 1965)

Following this interpretation, the place called Mobile would become a metaphor for decay and lifelessness: an antecedent of a hell on the earth.

Another mannerist topic is that of identity. He would apparently lose his identity while dividing himself in multiple characters, but this point of view is mistaken because the fragmented forms of music composition are indirectly referring to the individual. He seems to be always in the middle of a quest around the myths, "but perhaps he always looks for the same thing in a lot of people, and always end up contemplating the mirror of his self" (Shelton, 2011: 943). In fact, all these characters and myths help him find

his individual balanced standpoint, as introduced by Charles Taylor's *The Ethics of Authenticity* (1991). His multiple personalities can be intrinsic to the idea of relativism that the individual conscience brings about, "Well, anybody can be just like me, obviously / But then, now again, not too many can be like you, fortunately" ("Absolutely Sweet Marie", 1965).

This paradox shows how certain individuals develop not easily reproducible characteristics. Here, his lover, is related to this kind of uniqueness, but isn't this the same goal Bob Dylan is always trying to reach? The problem against this pure concept of being true to oneself is that as long as songs are reproducible –in terms of mechanism, as referred in the previous point– the individual becomes also reproducible, repeated, and then, too many people can be like him, unfortunately. At least two can, the double figure of the self or "doppelgänger", "I fought with my twin, that enemy within / 'til both of us fell by the way" ("Where Are You Tonight?", 1978).

To illustrate this, note the series of images invoked in "Sad-Eyed Lady of the Lowlands" (1965) showing his proclivity for fragmentation. It is a special kind of fragmentation derived from the series of images that are invoked here, but it doesn't include any demonic aspects of the world,

With your childhood flames on your midnight rug  
And your Spanish manners and your mother's drugs  
And your cowboy mouth and your curfew plugs  
(...)  
With your holy medallion which your fingertips fold  
And your saintlike face and your ghostlike soul  
("Sad Eyed Lady of The Lowlands", 1965)

All this "polysyndeton"–enumeration with an excess of coordinating conjunctions– of attribute after attribute leads us to one rhetorical question, "Oh, who among them do you think could destroy you?" Talking about identity, who is the question referring to? Who could destroy her? If this question did not come immediately after such big numbering of metaphoric and embellished attributes, I would never have thought about the attributes in question. As there is no other menacing element, the attributes, as separated things, are both her virtues and her vices. In other words, this woman is more than the sum of her parts but, of course, with such a sum of characteristics nobody, nothing, could ever destroy her.

Related to the previous motif, another persistent theme in his discography is

existentialism. Robert Shelton indicates that “if we take existentialism out of the seminar and onto the highway, we can find compass points throughout Dylan’s 1965–66 work” (2011: 590). I would rather say this accompanies him for the whole of his career, thus far. In fact, during his Nobel acceptance speech, despite the fact that he did not attend the ceremony, he acknowledged a curious list of prizewinning authors, considering that at least three of them (Kipling, Shaw, Albert Camus) are directly related to existentialism and have been interpreted as existentialist or pro-existentialist ideas in literature.<sup>268</sup>

Shelton’s *No Direction Home: The Life and Music of Bob Dylan* (2011) gives a brief understanding of the term “existentialism” including the following entry of *The Reader’s Encyclopedia*,<sup>269</sup>—“Thus man must create a human morality in the absence of any known predetermined absolute values. Honesty with oneself is perhaps the major value common to existentialist thinking...” (2011: 590). There is a constant obsession with the truth, with being truthful to oneself and writing true things in his songs that are directly related to this idea. In “Nothing Was Delivered” (1967) he declares singing, “And I tell this truth to you / Not out of spite or anger / But simply because it’s true” And in his early protest hit “Gates Of Eden” (1965) he says, “At times I think there are no words / But these to tell what’s true / And there are no truths outside the Gates of Eden.” The obsession is such, it seems that, as Robert Shelton explained, “Dylan was also engaged in an anguished search for honesty amid an awareness of death and despair, to which one does not succumb.” (Shelton, 2011: 591) The above said supports the continuous presence of the philosophical maxims that characterize Existentialism, as it was maintained in the chapter about “Authenticity”.<sup>270</sup>

Love can be the most important theme of Dylan's music, although it takes many forms and tones. Love is represented as genteel, platonic, sacred, melancholic, etc. This type of melancholic love is said to have its origin in the ballad music tradition from where he takes the courtship standpoint, at least at the start of his career (“Girl From The North Country”, “Don't Think Twice It's Alright”, “To Ramona”) Alan Lomax calls it “careless love” and defines it in his anthology *The Folk songs of North America in the English language* (1960: 17-8), “Love, they say, means sorrow, invites betrayal, leads to long separation and brings true lovers to the grave.” Bob Dylan never moved away from the romantic idea of an eternal love or that life has no sense without love, but his love songs started to describe more complex relationships of confusing feelings among many people at once, where characters are seldom depicted as fortunately loved

in return. He would combine these two types of love themes (gentle and passionate) all through his discography and if ever the company of the lover was ached for, it was during the night, the most melancholic and sensual moment ("Lay, Lady, Lay", "One More Night", 1969) Night represents the most metaphysical and corporeal moment of the day, its importance is celebrated in Dylan, song after song, as it gives rise to true emotions, ("On A Night Like This", 1973) This is a significant moment for the recognition of the importance of love issues. Like when he points to the listener saying,

Love is all there is, it makes the world go 'round  
Love and only love, it can't be denied  
No matter what you think about it  
You just won't be able to do without it  
Take a tip from one who's tried

In the course of its lyrics, someone is looking at the loved one with a hurting but a suitable distance from where the painful reality is more easily overcome and from where every precious detail of the other person is exalted. Note the successive comparatives of "Love Minus Zero, No Limit" (1965),

My love she speaks like silence,  
(...)  
My love she laughs like the flowers,  
(...)  
My love she's like some raven

The lover's voice stands out of the reign of his Queen and lady, where she does not want to let him go in and where she feels safe, "I can take him to your house but I can't unlock it / You see, you forgot to leave me with the key". Then, from that point of view he becomes a spectator of his love story, "And now I stand here lookin' you're your yellow railroad / in the ruins of your balcony" ("Absolutely Sweet Marie", 1965) The haughtiness of that abusive woman who drives him mad is especially felt in the series of love stories of the 1965 albums ("Just Like A Woman", "Leopard-Skin Pill-Box Hat", "Visions Of Johanna") where the redundant topoi of the posh woman that belongs to an upper class and his consequently complex of Prufrock,<sup>271</sup>—are better perceived.

Careless love is also the most damaging one. Taken from blues music tradition, it speaks of abandonment and heartbreak, "I don't know what I'm gonna do / I was all right 'til I fell in love with you" ("Til I Fell In Love With You", 2000) This kind of

love can be the most contradictory, although it is hurting you, you do not want to escape from it, “I’m sick of love, but I’m in the thick of it / This kind of love I’m so sick of it” (“Love Sick”, 1997)

Love can also change his direction and point to Jesus Christ willing to reach an intimate and glorious path to resurrection. This love’s transmutation would last during the whole religious period 1979 to 1983 and it would be described many times (“Saving Grace”, 1979; “Every Grain of Sand” 1981; “You Changed My Life”, 1981)

Albeit having been studied from the point of view of politics, most Dylan's songs are apolitical statements that free the individual from being subjected to this or that political ideology. His intents to personalize his music style can be taken as a manifest in favor of freedom and against any symptoms of control. This is why “Dylan’s explorations of his struggle to break free, to use the force of his will to reach a greater meaning in his life” (Scaduto, 1991: 10) can be taken as significant acts of revelry and politic repulse. This attitude holds a specific meaning in the American society. It stands for the concepts of "Enlightenment" –that emphasized reason and individualism against tradition– after gaining a particular insight of the reality and the self, and “transcendentalism” as opposed to rationalism. Transcendentalism consists in reminding people of the importance of nature and freedom as opposed to other minor illusions of society. Heir of Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henry David Thoreau, Margaret Fuller and Walt Whitman, he is an example of how people should not rely very much upon in society's rules and institutions, as well as in their way of comprehending the world. In most of his songs, "Dylan is saying that we must all break out of society's straitjacket." (Scaduto, 2001: 6184) More often than not, our rationalistic minds can lead us to wrong or incomplete interpretations, but according to transcendentalism, it is better to examine our personal standpoint than embracing prescribed regulations and unproven ethics. The singer is always yearning for the idea that there are infinite possibilities of understanding, as many as individuals, and so, there is not a unique answer to his songs either. It would never correspond another individual to give you the clue.<sup>272</sup>

A question in your nerves is lit  
Yet you know there is no answer fit  
To satisfy, insure you not to quit  
To keep in your mind and not forget  
That it is not her or she or them or it  
That you belong to.

(“It’s Alright Ma (I’m Only Bleeding)”, 1965)

In *Another Side Of Bob Dylan* (1964), the fourth album of Bob Dylan, Anthony Scaduto says that the songwriter “mounts an attack on the tyranny of the logic and morality that nails man to a cross: the dictatorship of the rational order of time and space, of science and reason, a civilization that is “binding with briars my joy and desires”, as Blake expressed it.” (2001: 6107) Another trace of this point of view came with the introduction of Thomas Paine in his song “As I Went Out One Morning” (*John Wesley Harding*, 1967). The liberation idealist is a radical intellectual and founder of the United States and coincidentally, he died in Greenwich Village, New York City, around a hundred and fifty years before Dylan arrived at The Big City<sup>273</sup>.

#### 4.5.3.4.1. The Title Song

One of the most basic consequences of repetition is that it captures our attention. It does so because perhaps there is something that he wants us to unveil, like the following titles of his first period, showing a recurrent trend to make these three elements appear: *Talking*; *Bob Dylan’s* and *Ballad*. Repetition establishes a direct connection between them, for example in titles like *Bob Dylan’s New Orleans Rag*, *Bob Dylan’s Blues*, *Bob Dylan’s Dream* where the artist gets directly involve. Then, he becomes another actor, a character, and a myth, as he establishes a relation between Bob Dylan and the authentic rambler and gambler who's never done wrong.<sup>274</sup>

Bob-Dylan-titled songs seemed to recount his own experiences as a young artist seeking for self-determination, “I dreamed a dream that made me sad/ Concerning myself and the first few friends I have” (“Bob Dylan’s Dream”, 1963) Most of these experience appear as very brief "zeitgeist" experiences that are recounted only to give the listener a good advice:

So, if you’re travelin’ down  
Louisiana way  
And you feel kinda lonesome  
And you need a place to stay  
Man, you’re better off  
In your misery  
Than to tackle that lady

At one-oh-three  
(*Bob Dylan's New Orleans Rag*, 1962)

A year later this song served us all as a model of disrepute behavior:

Well, lookit here buddy  
You want to be like me  
Pull-out your six-shooter  
And rob every bank you can see  
Tell the judge I said it was all right  
Yes!  
(*Bob Dylan's Blues*, 1963)

In “Bob Dylan’s New Orleans Rag” (1963) he uses topic song formula and makes a concrete reference to this genre as they were typically based on newspaper contents. With the word ‘rag’ he means a poor quality source of information –making it less reliable then– and distancing himself from the direct correspondence between the leading voice and his persona,

I hummed a little tune  
And I shuffled my feet  
And I started walkin’ backwards  
Down that broad street

Additionally, except for *Bringing It All Back Home* (1965), three out of the five titles of the albums included in this period bear the name of the artist, *Bob Dylan* (1962), *The Freewheelin’ Bob Dylan* (1963) and *Another Side Of Bob Dylan* (1964)

Shelton (2011: 369) explains, “I submit there is a touch of vanity in the inclusion of two songs bearing his name” but I would rather take it as a comic and humorous play. Even if “Bob Dylan’s Dream” is the most serious of all, expressing his nostalgia for the times when “our words were told, our songs were sung”, the rest are coded using comical stories and imaginative relations like his encounter with Captain Arab during the discovery of America –in “Bob Dylan’s 115th Dream”– or the call for my self-esteem in a crazy capitalist society in “Bob Dylan’s Blues” where the voice plays the part of a robber. Dylan sings it most amusing, making voices and showing a sardonic mood. “Bob Dylan’s 115<sup>th</sup> Dream”, for its part, shows a brilliant skill for telling the dramatic perils that the amateur sailor came through, by using also metalinguistic references. Note the following lines, “Don’t even ask me how”, “It came

up tails. It rhymed with sails” where the artist reflects upon the text as an artifice and channel of communication.

Then we have the songs that make explicit their genre, exploring a long tradition of songs in the American popular music history that did the same. Starting with those of *Talking*, very similar to Woody Guthrie’s works like, “Talking Centralia” (1996<sup>275</sup>), “Talking Columbia” (1961<sup>276</sup>), “Talking Dust Bowl Blues” (1960<sup>277</sup>), “Talking Fishing Blues” (1961<sup>278</sup>) and followed by all those blue-marked tracks, like “Poor Boy Blues” (1962), “Hero Blues” (1963) and finally, a series that referred to the Big City, “Talkin’ New York”, borrowed from “Talkin’ Subway”<sup>279</sup> and “My New York City”<sup>280</sup> by Woody Guthrie they all echoed that past.

These kinds of songs recounted true facts, but Dylan added a sense of involvement that made us feel it was directly experienced. The album *Bob Dylan*, (1961) included the song "Talkin' John Birch Paranoid Blues" that sang about two recognized events that appeared in the news. The author's representation of his own self as the one who underwent these experiences makes them more surprising and extraordinary. At the end of "Talking Bear Mountain Picnic Massacre Blues", the singer/interpreter says, most colloquially,

Feelin' like I climbed outa m' casket  
I grabbed back hold of m' picnic basket  
Took the wife 'n' kids 'n' started home  
Wishin' I'd never got up that morn  
(1962)

He was being consistent with the traditional use of these songs since these were devoted to themes of labor and protest. They were endowed to the topic-song tradition, which was borrowed from the British, retelling –as objectively as possible– a particular event that had been previously reported in the news. So, a common characteristic of all these "Talkin' ..." songs of the first album by Bob Dylan seemed to be related to procuring some reliability to his name in the area of folk music where other artists became spokespersons of their society. Also, they all showed his eagerness for plain melodies that gave it a monotonous role, only to accompany the lyrics. There is a common sense of satire in all these songs too. This is confirmed in "Talkin' John Birch Paranoid Blues", where the same celebratory interjections appear, "Yippee!" "Yee-Hoo" "Look Out Commies!"

Woody Guthrie, for his part, must have developed this genre from the gospel choir singing where the preacher man started reciting more than singing some verses before the rest of the choir joined him. Where Guthrie sang, “Everybody I seen on the streets/ Was all a-running down in a hole in the ground” (“Talking Subway”, 1961); Dylan would sing, “People goin’ down to the ground/ Buildings goin’ up to the sky” (“Talking New York”, 1962), where he also cites the acceptance of his sound in music clubs and bars at Greenwich Village, the bohemian point of encounter in the 1960s. He could also be referring to his agreement with Columbia Records, from a rather casual way, and Hammond’s plea for his authenticity and personality.

Well I got a harmonica job, begun to play  
Blowin’ my lungs for a dollar a day  
I blowed inside out and upside down  
The man there said he loved m’ sound

Then there are a set of songs that point to blues forms including another intriguing reference in the title. See this “Poor Boy Blues” (1962) that speaks on behalf of any unheard voices who cry help to their society civilians. It was recorded also in the first period (1961) but remained unreleased until 2010, when *The Bootleg Series Vol. 9: The Witmark Demos* was published. The lyrics post a question “Can’t ya hear me cryin’?”, implying he is the one who is doing and singing that cryin’, which makes him more committed to the denounced problem. What’s more, Dylan would “repeat” this song’s title in 2001, when “Po’ Boy” appears on the album *Love and Theft*: “Poor boy—where you been? / I already tol’ you—won’t tell you again”. Here, changing the standpoint, he describes the situation of many a poor family in the United States, a Guthriesque epopee of survival, what proves he has never been as distant from these topics,

Poor boy in a red hot town  
Out beyond the twinklin’ stars  
Ridin’ first-class trains—making the rounds  
Tryin’ to keep from fallin’ between the cars  
(2001)

The way he describes these facts, it can also be an oxymoron, implying a certain idea of success and then, being limited to the cry for sad and misadventures in the standard blues code. That’s what happens in “Hero Blues” (1962). As awkward as it

may be, the song reveals the protagonist more as a self-confessed anti-hero and it also seems an unfortunate story, because blues stories could never be more promising.

## **CONCLUSION**

Broken words never meant to be spoken

Everything is broken

—Dylan, *Everything Is Broken*

Bob Dylan's art represents a real theoretical challenge. Regarded as a total artist, the question has always been, how could his art be analyzed or translated into words? This unresolved question and the fact that his works culminate in the act of performance have aroused the interest of critics and scholars from different disciplines. In the last years, a general trend demanded that the only way to approach a true analysis was through his performances, a moment when all the expressive signs come into contact with the audience, who will ultimately try to make sense of the overall experience. But, how can a text describe all these signs and disciplines without considering them just as poems or music? Essentially, the goal of this thesis was to answer this question, providing a reconsideration of songs as a distinct artistic discourse that has restored its original place in literature by partaking of the music field as well.

Previously treated as poems or regarded as part of a music score, what this thesis wanted to show is how songs, especially Bob Dylan's songs, have to be looked at from different perspectives and disciplines and that this could be done by following the different areas in which an element such as repetition works. This research shows how an exploration like this helps to enrich the vision of an art that Dylan exploited to its utmost. As it has been shown, he must have developed the art of songs because he was searching the most appropriate perspective and compared to other disciplines, songs offered him their inherent communicative potential while he incorporated to a specific tradition of music he had always admired, whose solid stories were part of the American imagery. In fact, songs manifold nature was compared to plays more than poems by the music scholar Simon Frith (2004: 203) who added that "song words work as speech and speech acts, bearing meaning not just semantically, but also as structures of sound that are direct signs of emotion and marks of character". This study followed this reasoning by outlining a theory of pragmatic literature based on the idea that songs could finally stand as the missing link between common language speech and literary speech and this could work as the genesis of a new pragmatics of literature that would take the fact that voice of the singer-songwriter includes a strong reliable and trustworthy potential as its new paradigm. This worked assumed that on behalf of this characteristic, that songs are more reliable than other literary discourses, the process of reception and becomes a different one. One which disserves neither a specific musicological nor a literary standpoint, but to put a lot of emphasis on how music is shared and how the author and the listener create and perceive all those repetitive strategies in order to extract a message. Thanks to that, the singer-songwriter Bob Dylan achieves a historical

aspiration: making literature be part of an oral event again. As Sean Wilentz, one of his biographers suggested, "he had thereby completed (according to Ginsberg himself) a merger of poetry and song that Ezra Pound had foreseen as modernism's future" (Wilentz, 2010: 56<sup>281</sup>). For him, songs had substituted his enthusiasm for stories, tales, the founding texts of the literary tradition. Just after mentioning the number of authors he was reading without exhaustion before discovering of folksong, he mentions that for him, "the folksinger could sing songs like an entire book, but only in a few verses" (2005: 39).

After exploring Dylan's works, I think it must be assumed that his songs are the expression of the postmodern disposition towards hybridity, a term often associated with post-colonialism and the effect of migrant literary voices, but that is also connected to the continuing conflict of identity. From this perspective, songs incorporate the "old" and the "modern" traditions the same way they cross the boundaries between "written" and "oral" discourses –the lifelong paradoxes of Bob Dylan's oeuvre. Other Postmodern authors, like Thomas Pynchon, played with the categories of reality and fiction, representing this kind of ambiguous term, this middle terms that defies Aristotle's law of the excluded middle: A law that claims there is no middle ground between a true and a false concept.<sup>282</sup>—Well beyond this rule applied to logics, Bob Dylan's middle term art is given to dissolve the borders between dialectic concepts like tradition vs. popularity, past vs. present, real vs. fiction, convention vs. variable (Frye, 1957).

In the past, native oral literature, folk literature or "orature" referred to all those pre-literate traditions that used epics, proverbs and folk music to tell the memorial stories of their own tradition. Developed as stories of common people and about slavery and hard work in the ethnic folklore, some of these became popular and remained at the heart of the American history. Among these memorial storylines, there were many of them that survived by being transmitted generation after generation. This cyclical revival brought stable myths and archetypes to their society that were kept in the form of songs: a great medium of transmission. Songs were easy to remember, kept people united and refreshed their memories with anecdotes and messages. Hence, these messages would get more complex and represent a political party or ideology. At that precise moment in history, which this dissertation recovers, Bob Dylan witnessed how the New Left, composed of the majority of his folk peers, was promoting a change of conscience in their society and as for how they used songs in order to persuade and hearten people to fight and rage against unjust governmental decisions. The songwriter

witnessed the rise of folk discourses and their renovated appreciation among the men of culture. Young university students initiated the folk revival in the 1940s and by the time Dylan arrived in New York there was already a great community around this venue. Thus, when he arrived in New York, apart from searching for his unique music style –as it has been largely commented in the thesis– he also put into practice the rhetoric of persuasion and the immanent code of cultural heritage. As John D. Niles points, this kind of literature “is composed with a firm and confident technique, as if it were already mature by the time it was written down” (1999: 1). This thesis demonstrated how remarkable Dylan’s style is, especially evident in the way it reproduces the feel of this folk “orature” and its different forms, and in the application of an identifiable music score to capture people’s imagination and ultimately introduce his idiosyncrasies and obstinate ideas. These ideas not only dealt with the political faction of society, the civil rights movements or the laborers and the New Deal. As it has been shown above, the sooner Dylan’s music started to allude existentialism, virtuosity, the development of a personal conscience, the materialism of capitalism, time’s passing by, apocalypses, human relationships, freedom; the more interesting his songs are from the point of view of arts as a cultural source of knowledge. From that moment on, the complexity of his themes has been supported by strict rhyming schemes he has always used, and by an innovative singing mode that did not go unnoticed. As Bob Dylan argued, “In a distant past all poetry was sung or tunefully recited, poets were rhapsodist, bards, troubadours; ‘lyrics’ comes from ‘lyre’” (2016<sup>283</sup>).

In the beginning, Bob Dylan was another member of the revival folk scene, a young apprentice who thought of arranging and emulating ethnic music tradition and the innovative rock music scene. His style was always moving, always in constant motion. Like the stone that keeps rolling ever after, his music is still today a theme of controversy and disputation.

Well my road might be rocky  
The stones might cut my face  
But some folks ain’t got no road at all  
They gotta stand in the same old place  
Hey, hey, so I guess I’m doing fine.  
 (“Guess I’m Doing Fine”, 1963)

Dylan’s songs offered a great panoramic of the American culture notwithstanding the development of a lyric and distinct style owing to the fact that, as

Richard Bauman states, with every kind of storytelling, “we explore one of the most fundamental and potent foundations of our existence as social beings” (1999<sup>284</sup>).

Back in the ancient Greece, Homer was considered an author of historical fiction, which means he referred to historical events although he added a lot of invention and lyrical elaboration to the text. This dichotomy caused a great problem to the people who followed his stories as they were not able to differentiate between truth and fiction (Kim, 2010). Michael Gray noted that the difference between Dylan’s song “Brownsville Girl” (1986) and the movie it mentions (*The Gunfighter*, 1950 with Gregory Peck) is that “the song keeps its eye on the difficult matter of what’s real and what’s not, and on the invisible passageways that slip us between the real and the fictional, all the time” (Gray, 2006: 96).

As it has been comprehensively commented in this research, one of Dylan’s favorite topics in relation to history and literature is the idea of truth. This idea connects him to the romantic idea that ‘Beauty is truth, truth is beauty’ that John Keats included in his poem "Ode on a Grecian Urn".<sup>285</sup>—Surprisingly, this classic poem of the English Romanticism shares meaningful coincidences with Dylan’s works in general and with “Mr. Tambourine Man” in particular and I want to mention them here as a corollary of the paper because I have observed that these coincidences between the two texts summarize, to some extent, the principal points treated in this thesis.

Firstly, the voice speaks to a historian and musician who tells ancient stories. Like the classic "aedo" Homer, who told the epic poems of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, the one referred to in the Ode is questioned about the content of his stories. He is asked about elements of his music like it has been extensively done with Dylan’s works as well. It says, “What men or gods are these? What maidens loth? / What mad pursuit? What struggle to escape? / What pipes and timbrels? What wild ecstasy?”

Although Dylan’s song does not enunciate any question, a classic rhetoric strategy in his music, the voice numbers the different emotions caused by the music’s influence or stimulus, “Take me on a trip upon your magic swirling ship / My senses have been stripped” Like in Dylan’s “Mr. Tambourine Man” (1965) the musician is persuaded to play, “play on”; “play that song for me” in Dylan’s song. The voice argues that without his songs “the ancient empty street's too dead for dreaming" wherein Keats’ poem, the voice says, “little town; thy streets for evermore / Will silent be”. Both are insisting on the idea of relieving songs that alleviate our restlessness as the voice is not sleepy, is “unwearied” as Keats’ poem states or Dylan’s “I’m not sleepy and there is no

place I'm going to". Folk songs are eternal, "when old generation shall this generation waste, / Thou shalt remain, in midst of other woe", recites Keats's poem, and, as I have mentioned before, tradition and modernity are one of the main themes of Dylan's music. According to the songwriter, songs can take you,

(...) disappearin' through the smoke rings of my mind  
Down the foggy ruins of time, far past the frozen leaves  
The haunted, frightened trees, out to the windy beach  
Far from the twisted reach of crazy sorrow  
(“Mr. Tambourine Man”, 1965)

Or there, “beneath the trees”, as mentioned in Keats's poem, from 1820. Indeed, the evidence of song's advantageous connotations and meaningful signs, equally described in both texts, has also been made evident in this thesis, together with the idea that Bob Dylan acknowledged the great impact of oral literature and felt the need to explore storytelling as a medium for reaching his audience. This comparative is just one of the multiple points in common between the romantic period and Keats' aphorism of "beauty is truth and truth is beauty" whose ultimate result is the idea of authenticity in Dylan's works. An idea not only bringing the romantic idealism back but also existentialism. In fact, Keats reflects upon his own existence and is a clear exponent of the literary application of existentialist ideas, all of which is summarized in Dylan's concept of authenticity.

His permanent aim towards sincere messages instead of commercial discourses reveals his aspiration to communicate through songs. I believe that the audience also regards his messages as reliable and authentic because, as it has been shown, his lyrics are intimately bound to a compromise belief in spontaneous and genuine messages. At the same time, his songs encourage people to look for answers, in a way I have never seen before in a literary discourse. That explains the reason behind the great number of readings around his work and the effort of the so-called “Dylanologists” to find a true answer. Perhaps that quest for truth is inspired or motivated by the same quest between the author and his idea of configuring an ethics of authenticity, as described by Charles Taylor (1991). Part of this philosophy would rest upon a unique process of individuation, following a comprehensive net of myths and archetypes with whom he identified. These fictional and real characters, mostly misfits and outlaw heroes, had been taken from an alternative American history, blues mythology, the literature he

read, the movies he saw and any kind of text which deserved being replicated in pursuit of this ideal. As it can be followed by his lyrics, Dylan never regarded the outlaw as evil, rather he tended to romanticize them and picture them as heroes. As opposed to the popular opinion, they became admired rebels who personified the real sense of autonomy and individualism that Dylan constantly addressed. He made them the true paradigm of an ethical ideal that could never get solved in theory (Trilling, 1972; Taylor, 1991; Bendix, 1997). Sean Wilentz (2010) insisted in this idea about Dylan's romance with the archetype and its stories, whereas I have argued in favor of a process of self-identification that occasionally drove the author to create other great fictional tricksters and outlaws based on them, like Jokerman, Mr. Tambourine Man, Jack of Diamonds, etc.

To sum up, authenticity, like repetition, gave coherence to all his musical production too, from the studio albums, the way he recorded them, his performances on stage, the bootlegging activity and how it cohabited with his official production, etc. It all seemed to exist as a means to examine his genuine power over the contemporary music scene.

As well as in the beginnings of English poetry, Bob Dylan rapidly made use of the inherited forms of English oral and musical tradition, while he introduced enough arguments and images to capture our attention. He took up biblical motifs, characters from an older world, the conventional stories about the monarchs, etc; but he saturated these with symbolism, metaphors, emblems, prosody and other aesthetics and poetic uses of language. From his beginnings at McDougal Street, in Greenwich Village music clubs, Dylan always understood that songs' main objective was to be performed face-to-face, "what comes out in my music is a call to action." (Dylan, 2001: 6-7) While he was among all these performers in the 1960s, sharing scenarios and music festivals, he envisioned song's ability to project a memory of the past to the present day problems and a future universal resonance. "Most of the other performers tried to put themselves across, rather than the song, but I didn't care about doing that. With me, it was about putting the song across" (Dylan, 2005: 18). In line with this argument, his songs are able to create a temporal connection between its participants, what Carl Gustav Jung designated as "synchronicity", more relevant than the term "synchronism" inasmuch as the former refers to events that coincide in the same temporal coordinate with no casual coincidence behind its cause, but a meaningful coincidence. In this sense, in Dylan's performances, there is a meaningful meeting of two temporal consciences and a

revealing context of communication. This thesis gave a multitude of hypothesis, all hinging on the element of repetition and authenticity on how he achieved it. A point where the last cognitive studies around music reception have been revealing.

If we take the language of the past, the old songs he modified to include in his discography and performances, he then acts like a cultural mediator; whereas if we take the present innovations, the author announces an ideal future, similar to his own artistic and personal objective about being authentic or behaving authentically, which he incorporated in his own language as well. Therefore, intertextuality or echo –as it has been named in this thesis– is an interesting form of repetition that helped to produce the synchronicity above mentioned as it comes into play during the music reception. In this sense, “the recognition that the creation of literary texts depends in significant part on the alignment of texts to prior texts and the anticipation of future texts has drawn critical –and ideological– attention to this reflexive dimension of discursive practice.” (Bauman, 2004: 13)

The expressive power of every iterative element is also conducted in the final performance, along with music phrases that constitute simple and reiterative melodies. Essentially because his songs were made real when being played in front of the audience. In fact, there is nothing like a passive reception in Bob Dylan’s performances. Everybody acts, the audience, the author, the critic, etc. This is the secret of the intersubjective abilities they stimulate in the audience,

All these hours there was no tellin’ what was bound to happen  
Never, never could the greatest prophetizer ever guess it,  
There was no such thing as an audience  
There was no such thing as performers  
Everybody did something  
And had something t’ say about something  
(Dylan, 1963<sup>286</sup>)

Finally, as it has been shown, Dylan’s use of repetition contrasts with his tendency to revise his own material in each concert. It is a fundamental process to keep his songs natural and convincing, for him and for the audience. The thesis came into contact here with a theoretical paradox, for as long as repetition became a standard of popular music songs, his renounce to replicate his own songs, made his music be different, a simulation of the original and, consequently, something new. An aspect that

I relate to diverse theoretical concepts, like that of "repetition of difference" (Derrida, 2010).

Although during this exploration I have studied various books that analyze a certain aspect of his work, a period or his multiple personalities, this work proves there are common points between all these. Despite breaking conventions and exploring the possibilities of songs, there are elements of cohesion, whose recurrence is very clarifying. This would prove that Dylan is not as transformative as he is said to be. His music follows a thematic progression and there are some constants, as they have been reported here, that he never abandoned.

## **APPENDIX**

## 6.1. RESUMEN EN ESPAÑOL

### **Introducción:**

La presente disertación explora la figura de la repetición y el concepto de la autenticidad en las canciones de Bob Dylan. Consideradas elementos esenciales para describir el renovado uso que el artista norteamericano hace de las formas populares y tradicionales de la música Americana, sus canciones ponen en cuestión, al igual que harían los recitales de poesía de la generación Beat, la hegemonía de la palabra escrita en el discurso literario. Aunque siempre se haya descrito a Dylan como un miembro crucial de la escena popular Americana, por las resonancias venidas de muchos de sus géneros y por su clara renovación del estilo del canta-autor, recientemente ha sido galardonado con el Nobel de Literatura debido, en parte, a su restauración del lenguaje poético y literario en la recepción musical y la oralidad.

Esta tesis trata de situarse a medio camino entre el lenguaje literario y musical de las canciones de Dylan, apelando a la convivencia de otros muchos lenguajes en el análisis de este tipo de discursos. Para ello, se centra más en describir los procesos poético –referido a la composición de las canciones– y estético –su recepción y la mediación de estrategias comunicativas entre ambos participantes. Debido a esto, he reflexionado sobre los dos momentos de interacción y en cómo cambian sendos modos de reproducción y recepción en cada canción. Refiriéndome, claro está, a la reproducción musical o la performance como un echo inherentemente repetitivo y constitutivo del haber musical.

Se parte del reconocimiento de las canciones de Bob Dylan como textos de distinta naturaleza a otras manifestaciones artísticas, que contienen varios tipos de lenguajes ejecutados en sincronía. Uno de estos lenguajes es el de la comunicación o el uso pragmático y retórico de la lengua, que el cantautor usa de un modo novedoso para lograr sus objetivos comunicativos y un mejor procesamiento de sus mensajes. Como se decía entre su círculo de conocidos, Dylan siempre ha sido más bien huraño e introvertido en el trato personal, pero elocuente en lo que se refiere a salmodiar las historias de sus canciones.

Otros lenguajes destacados son el musical, el lingüístico, el lenguaje escénico y el literario, cuyos signos componen la canción y la actuación como producto final.

Por otro lado, y una vez realizado el recorrido por su obra, se percibe la influencia de una cualidad que aparece repetidas veces en la obra de Bob Dylan, ya sea como resultado de uno de sus mensajes, de una asociación con los conceptos venidos las tradiciones folk y rock del país, del concepto de artista que implanta el canta-autor, los temas que aborda en su obra, o las decisiones que toma en escena. Esta cualidad es la autenticidad, venida de la filosofía existencialista y de aquellos autores que hicieron populares términos como la virtud, la responsabilidad, el individualismo, la moral, etc. Así mismo esta cualidad está relacionada y así aparecerá en muchas instancias poéticas de Bob Dylan, con los movimientos literarios del Romanticismo y el Trascendentalismo.

### **La historia y trabajos de un canta-autor:**

Esta tesis coloca a Bob Dylan en una tradición de canta-autores, género prolijo en la cultura de los EEUU, desde donde conocer el punto de partida y una de las facetas de la propuesta de Dylan. Así mismo, sus canciones constan de un elemento de resonancia que evoca, como si se tratara de un eco, el carácter más distinguible de todos aquellos textos que le precedieron. Tanto en el mundo de la música folk como en otras muchas disciplinas artísticas estos textos componen el síntoma de intertextualidad, un tipo de repetición que se abordará en último lugar en el área de la repetición estética. La intertextualidad retoma tanto estructuras como ritmos de otros autores clásicos, igual que en el caso de las letras de lyricistas como Woody Guthrie, Hank Williams, Mike Seeger, Charly Patton, Leadbelly, etc.

Tras colocar a Bob Dylan en la trayectoria de los canta-autores se establece, casi de manera subconsciente, el primero de los paralelismos entre el cantante y un arquetipo de autenticidad avalado por los hombres que fundaron las ideas bohemia y comprometidas tan ligadas al canta autor. Antes de ver cuáles son los otros y por qué todos ellos tiene muchas cosas en común, se revisa el movimiento de recuperación de la escena tradicional a la que Dylan se integra poco después de llegar a Nueva York, una comunidad de cantantes e intérpretes que usan el material folk como fuente de inspiración en tanto que, a través de este, retoman los emblemas de la ideología de izquierdas, el liberalismo y las medidas democráticas. Estos también depositan su fe en el hombre y la mujer humildes y los valores que promuevan la naturalidad y la

espontaneidad de sus actos. Es el momento de la recuperación etnomusical de toda fuente poseedora de rasgos únicos, momento en el cual los arqueólogos del sonido acuden a la fuente primera para la configuración de los sonidos de América. Este interés choca con los de la música comercial y por lo tanto desde la comunidad folk se rechaza a esta última, igual que rehúsan de cualquier medio de difusión relacionado con la industria musical. Los canales de difusión serán muy distintos ya que se promueven formas más simples, con a penas arreglos de sonido, en las que la voz del cantante y la fuerza de su mensaje tengan toda la fuerza que necesitan, sin haber sido disfrazados.

El elemento de mayor fuerza por aquel entonces es el escenario, donde se recupera la memoria de las tradiciones como gesto de un compromiso ideológico y artístico. Iniciado en la década de los 40, el “folk revival” seguirá fortaleciéndose pasada la década de los 60, unido a los movimientos contraculturales iniciados en las universidades y a las manifestaciones pro-derechos civiles. Dylan comparte muchos aspectos en común con esta comunidad y algunos de estos rasgos, como podrá verse en esta tesis, no le abandonarán jamás y se esforzará por continuar con la tarea de re-contextualización de muchos géneros de la tradición musical Americana, como la canción “minstrel”, “talkin’ blues”, “topic songs”, el blues, las baladas, las canciones infantiles, el rock ‘n’ roll, el góspel, etc.

El recorrido por su discografía oficial sirve para observar los rasgos más recurrentes de cada uno de sus álbumes, como son, a nivel temático, el viaje como síntoma de libertad y la autonomía, la nostalgia, los cambios climáticos, la carretera, el amor, el tiempo, el Catolicismo, el conflicto de identidad, etc; y, a nivel formal, el uso de la lengua vernácula, su armónica, la variación de temas clásicos, las cadencias musicales monótonas, la estructura blues, etc. Se apreciarán más fácilmente los diferentes periodos en los que la mayoría de la crítica prefiere asumir el análisis de su obra, periodos que, sin embargo, contrastan con el deseo de este trabajo de investigación por unir rasgos comunes a toda su obra. Aunque estos periodos de su carrera queden a la sombra de los cambios de perspectiva, hasta del aspecto físico del autor, también han tenido que ver con una verdadera ruptura en su discurso artístico, tal y como ocurrió durante el periodo católico, en el que la usual temática se adapta a la devoción y el afianzamiento de la fe. Esto quiere decir que, aunque pone en práctica los mismos recursos expresivos –apelando al estilo góspel– el autor transforma el amor gentil y cortés de sus canciones en un amor devoto y fervoroso que se ocupa por ambos

lados de animar a la audiencia a prepararse para la llegada del salvador y de responder a las críticas de los incrédulos.

### **La importancia de las actuaciones y el papel de la autenticidad:**

Tras el resumen contextual, la tesis se refiere al conflicto que suscita la búsqueda de una fuente a la hora de analizar las canciones, así como al hecho de enfrentarse a la justificada importancia que tiene la actuación en este tipo de aproximaciones. Esto es debido a que sólo en ese instante se puede hablar de una realidad concreta de la canción que, por mudable que sea, por otro lado se vuelve intangible. Por eso este capítulo se dedica a reunir fuentes concretas sobre las características de las actuaciones, en parte fruto del auge que los estudios de música y cultura populares han experimentado en el seno del ámbito académico.

Principalmente el dogma artístico del canta-autor se sustenta en la fidelidad al momento de la escena. Este hecho se trasladada inclusive a sus grabaciones en estudio, donde Dylan realiza un ritual similar, durante el cual procura a penas repetir la misma canción más de un limitado número de veces para no vaciarlas de su significado. También prefiere dejar plasmada la veracidad del sonido, como si fuera escuchado por primera vez y ser fiel a la autenticidad de sus canciones, en contra del hastío de lo predecible y las consecuencias que esto tiene para la recepción musical. Por su parte, el espectador, estará deseoso de entrar en contacto con lo conocido, sin faltarle referentes y recursos para identificar una canción. El desacuerdo entre ambas expectativas sobre la escena, tanto la del espectador como la del autor Bob Dylan provoca un extrañamiento y una desorientación musical a los aficionados que en ocasiones se ha interpretado de un modo positivo y en otras no. Por otro lado, los expertos en sociología y ciencia cognitiva se preguntan qué fenómeno puede resultar de la metamorfosis de sus canciones.

A falta de un estudio sobre las opiniones y emociones que se provocan en la audiencia, por no tratarse del objetivo principal de esta investigación, la argumentación continúa con los escritos del show. Se trata de críticos y musicólogos que traducen el momento de la actuación desde el punto de vista de la audiencia y que lo hacen a través de elaboraciones muy completas y evocadoras, prueba de que no sólo el adjetivo, como decía Philip Tagg (2013) puede traducir esas sensaciones. Entre algunos de estos

escribas se encuentra Greil Marcus, apoderado crítico de Bob Dylan que escribió algunas reseñas históricas sobre sus álbumes, así como la crónica completa del *The Basement Tapes* (1975).

La mayoría de la crítica acuerda en dividir la carrera escénica de Bob Dylan en varias épocas. Del mismo modo, este trabajo resume los caracteres más esenciales de sus cuatro periodos en escena. Estos comienzan con la escena del Greenwich Village, en todos esos bares y clubs de Nueva York donde una creciente oleada escénica y artística le arrastró hasta escenarios cada vez más grandes. Actualmente se encuentra en una gira interminable o “Never Ending Tour”, como se ha acordado en llamar popularmente a su incesante actividad, durante 29 años, en escenarios de todo el mundo. En el transcurso de estos años ha pasado por escenarios de todo el mundo, donde fans exigentes examinan cada uno de sus momentos. Algunos llegaban a ser grabados de manera ilícita para compartir o comercializar en el mercado de “bootleggers”, una enigmática respuesta de la audiencia acerca de su supuesta autenticidad, tal y como se analiza en la sección del mismo nombre. En sólo una de esas ocasiones la grabación la realizaron ellos, los propios protagonistas, Bob Dylan y The Band, durante el célebre hiato que Dylan vivió casi recluso en Woodstock, Nueva York y se titularon *The Basement Tapes* (1975).

Tal y como queda explicado en la sección de las actuaciones, Bob Dylan se rebela contra las exigencias y expectativas que tiene ser “auténtico” de acuerdo con el colectivo folk y hasta con su propio público. Para ello se esfuerza por actuar sólo bajo su criterio –base del individualismo que él mismo defiende en sus canciones–. Es entonces cuando los momentos más polémicos de su carrera tienen lugar, debido, en parte, al desacuerdo entre sus propios intereses y los de la audiencia. Uno de aquellos momentos fue la conocida controversia eléctrica (“the electric controversy”) que tuvo lugar en el Festival de Newport de 1965 cuando Dylan decidió usar instrumentación eléctrica sobre una canción explícitamente dirigida al público y que sin duda ponía fin a su periodo folk (“Maggie’s Farm”, 1965) No se debía solo a la nueva indumentaria del cantante, ni a su banda de rock, sino a una ruptura temática, formal y experimental que se hizo presente en todas sus canciones entre 1965 y 1966.

Además de tomar rasgos del rock, también irá adquiriendo una actitud cada vez más blues, tomada de la escena afroamericana tal y como mantiene David Yaffe (2011). Algunos de los rasgos que hacen únicos sus conciertos son tratados aparte y completados con el análisis de una canción en escena que servirá para ilustrar cada una

de esas características. De este modo, destacan el sonido, la estructura del show, las sorpresas y su apariencia física.

La autenticidad, así mismo, revelará conclusiones cruciales no sólo sobre las actuaciones de Bob Dylan, que cambian con cada escenario, sino sobre los conceptos de originalidad, verdad y pragmática literaria o esa sección del conocimiento lingüístico que compara el uso del habla común y el literario. Esta cualidad filosófica y moral sirve de nexo entre las secciones colindantes: las actuaciones musicales de Bob Dylan por un lado, y por otro, las ideas que este estudio introduce sobre la posibilidad de configurar una pragmática de la canción que comprenda los potenciales rasgos comunicativos y literarios de este tipo de texto.

### **La retórica de la comunicación y la persuasión por medio de la repetición:**

El echo de que las canciones estén enmarcadas por la música no es inconveniente, sino una ventaja que les procura un poder intersubjetivo e inmemorial. Entre otros aspectos, la música provoca la atención de los asistentes y hace que el mensaje se pueda procesar de manera óptima, tal y como indican los últimos estudios cognitivos sobre la recepción musical. Además estos últimos estudios han desvelado que efectivamente el oyente encuentra placentera la repetición musical (Margulis, 2014) Todo lo cual, se suma al hecho de que nos encontremos frente a frente con el canta-autor, autor e intérprete del mensaje, que procura una relación directa entre ambos participantes. Por último, también está la tendencia de Bob Dylan por presentarnos una poética de la comunicación en la que se incluyen diálogos, preguntas directas, juegos y alusiones a una posible comunicación fallida, elementos metalingüísticos, deixis, retórica, etc. La repetición sirve como eje de exploración para detectar patrones tan interesantes como el de las preguntas retóricas. Estas presentan una interesante rareza pragmática fruto de su repetida aparición en las canciones, sobre todo en sus primeros años de carrera, y a su monótona interacción en el seno mismo de la canción. De pronto me parece que Dylan y el oyente han llegado a un acuerdo. Si alguna de ellas se repite lo suficiente, entonces esta termina contestándose a sí misma. Claro, el enigma es otra pregunta sin respuesta lógica, más bien instintiva: ¿cuántas veces hay que repetir una pregunta para que esta se conteste a sí misma?

Por supuesto, esa no es la única cuestión pragmática que se desarrolla en esta sección. La mayor propuesta es la comparativa entre las canciones de Bob Dylan y la

teoría de los actos del habla de J. L. Austin (1962), así como los actos ilocutivos del habla (Van Dijk, 1985; Leech, 1983). A partir de estas propuestas teóricas se puede valorar el tipo de actos que realizan las palabras del discurso cantado, si acaso son persuasivas, comisivas, expresivas, directivas, o rogativas. Originalmente, esta comparativa surge del concepto de “confianza” que va ligado a los mensajes de Dylan y a la recepción de su discurso. Aspectos como la voz del autor, su autenticidad, su naturalidad y los recursos comunicativos ya mencionados ponen a Dylan más cerca de su público que en otro lenguaje artístico y negocian la supuesta “realidad” o “verdad” de lo que enuncian. Mientras que otros textos literarios no podían ser considerados comunicativos por el contenido ficcional que los caracteriza, y que los hace conscientemente engañosos –concepto contrario al fin comunicativo–, las canciones de Bob Dylan, sin embargo, juegan con la realidad y la ficción planteando reflexiones sencillas. También relatan anécdotas contadas en lengua vernácula, lo que proporciona un alto grado de confianza que las hace ser valoradas como ciertas o veraces. Esta pragmática es tan solo fruto de un método de contraste entre lenguajes que quizá tengan naturalezas distintas. Por eso destaco el intento de arqueólogos del sonido por describir una serie de patrones idiomáticos en las variables musicales tradicionales, como se hizo en el pasado con el método llamado “cantometrics”, que desarrolló Alan Lomax, el etnomusicólogo americano.

Más adelante el estudio se centra en escribir la naturaleza de la retórica de la repetición, relacionada con el campo de la comunicación o pragmática. Es decir, el papel que juegan las figuras de repetición en la persuasión o aquellos recursos persuasivos más recurrentes. Si se tiene en cuenta que el tiempo y espacio rítmico es un componente que añade dificultad a la tendencia del cantante por condensar grandes mensajes en poco espacio y tiempo, entonces ¿qué decir de aquellos momentos en los que el intérprete decida desperdiciar algo de ese tiempo para reiterar una idea, un sonido, una frase? Estas instancias son lo suficientemente interesantes y constituyen, en el caso que ahora nos ocupa, un ejemplo del uso del lenguaje cantado. Algunos de estos recursos persuasivos, propios del lenguaje combatiente de la contracultura de los años 60, son más evidentes en sus primeros discos. En ellos solía hablarnos como a una gran comunidad, una masa, en términos más generales, mientras que en adelante se dirige a un interlocutor más personalizado a quien le reprocha, invita y admira a un mismo tiempo. La estructura estrófica y rítmica de sus canciones, aunque parezca usada a su antojo, le permite, en cambio, adaptar sus mensajes a un inteligente uso retórico,

introduciendo un puente o riff donde la melodía precisaba una pausa o una cesura entre contenidos diferenciados, por ejemplo. La tecnología, por su parte, le permitió encerrar mensajes más complejos, llegando a producir canciones de hasta el triple de duración de una canción estándar.

La tesis establece una diferencia entre el momento en que nos referimos a la estructura inteligente o eficiente de la canción, conocido como el plano de la “pheno-song” y el de la canción que se materializa, o que se actúa, la “geno-song”, que introdujeron en sus escritos sobre música Julia Kristeva (2006) y Roland Barthes (1977).

Antes de pasar al uso poético de las figuras de repetición, he decidido incluir un comentario sobre el uso emotivo del lenguaje comunicativo en tanto a que hay ciertas ocurrencias que se dan con cierta frecuencia, ya que al igual que los recursos de los que se sirve la poesía, estos también pretenden emocionar al oyente, llamar su atención. La tradición poética modernista ya había dado sus primeros pasos hacia la recuperación del sonido en el discurso poético y los llamados “beatnicks” realizaban recitales poéticos que después acabaron convirtiéndose en espectáculos musicales como los “poetry systems”, el “jazz poetry” o el “spoken song” de William Burroughs. Todos ellos probarían el poder significativo que tenía esta función del lenguaje en el entorno de la escenificación. Algunos de ellos reconocerían el valor de la propuesta de Bob Dylan en este sentido (Allen Ginsberg). Relacionado con el origen del mito del embaucador, el “trickster” como lo definiría Scobie (2004) y con Yoruba, de la teoría Africano-Americana para la interpretación de lo “significativo” –diferente de los signos impuestos por la cultura occidental– este uso del lenguaje, que ya destacó el crítico literario Christopher Ricks (2004) en su estudio, hace uso de los dobles significados, de las frases hechas, los juegos de palabras, la paradoja o el simbolismo.

La tesis sigue el patrón de expectativas respecto al lenguaje de la canción que propone los estudios de Tyler Bickford (2007). En estos se exigía que fueran tres los principios de obligado cumplimiento para una canción: que fuera procesable, expresiva y estética. Estos principios han guiado el proceso de análisis de la repetición a un nivel micro estructural o en la raíz de la “pheno-song”, es decir, en la composición de un texto lírico. No sin olvidar que en el caso de Bob Dylan también hay que hablar de una modalidad del discurso más dramática, en cuanto que él también es un actor que interpreta multitud de personajes en escena. Precisamente, este estudio volverá a referirse a la escena en lo referente al contexto de un acto comunicativo y la repercusión

que tiene incluir un lenguaje y unos recursos formales tan preciosistas y propios de la alta cultura en un género musical popular o más propio de la baja cultura. Finalmente, estos dos términos nos llevan a discutir sobre el lenguaje particular y universal y a proponer el caso de España como ejemplo de difusión de su obra y de su rápido éxito a pesar de la barrera idiomática y cultural que nos separa.

### **Estética y poética de la repetición:**

En el último capítulo de esta disertación se extraen los elementos más importantes de la estética y poética de la repetición en el discurso cantado. A este nivel, toda una serie de figuras literarias relacionadas con la creación de un lenguaje artístico entran en acción. Se vuelve a insistir sobre el aspecto transgresor de la repetición que contrasta con las ideas que suscita a priori. Y es que, tal y como se señala, cuanto más acostumbrado se está a convivir con la repetición y los ciclos vitales, más rápido se aprende a experimentar en el medio. Tras extenderse explicando los tipos de repetición más íntimamente relacionados con el afán comunicativo característico de las canciones de Bob Dylan, este capítulo vuelve sobre aspectos musicales y lingüísticos, si bien los que más se desarrollan son estos últimos, debido a que la autora carece de los conocimientos técnicos musicales que serían necesarios para evaluar los otros.

Esta investigación revisa la obra de Bob Dylan, anotando todos los aspectos estructurales, estéticos y hasta poéticos que se detectan. Después puede fácilmente volver sobre ellos y reflejar en el texto la tendencia del cantante a usar esta u otra figura, dependiendo de para qué sirva cada una de ellas. Ya en el análisis, se distingue primero entre repetición exacta y repetición conceptual para así poder comprender la división entre figuras y temas o términos repetidos.

Primero se explican algunas de las figuras literarias o recursos literarios más conocidos en relación con la idea de repetición. Algunos de estos son la anáfora, la anadiplosis, el anapesto, las alegorías, que surgen de la repetida asociación entre un concepto y su imagen, alusiones, etc. Cada elemento se acompaña de ejemplos, o más bien, los ejemplos se asocian a alguno de los recursos nombrados.

Segundo, se analizan los términos o conceptos repetidos, que son menos apreciables en lo formal y que, por tanto, aluden a una repetición más conceptual. En esta categoría nos encontramos con ideas, temas, mitos, motivos, que son recurrentes y

hasta significativos en relación a algunas de las hipótesis planteadas en secciones anteriores, como es la idea de constituir un ideal de autenticidad en su obra: aspecto que puede seguirse de la recurrencia de cierto tipo de arquetipos y mitos protagonistas, entre los que se encuentra el mito de Robin Hood, el fuera de ley heroico, que personifica la autonomía y el carácter únicos valiéndose de un inofensivo modo de cuestionar el orden establecido e incluso el significado de lo que esa sociedad dicta como ético. A través de estos personajes, entre los que se cuentan algunos de raíz más tradicional, otros históricos y por último los inventados, Dylan plantea su particular idea de la justicia en contra posición con la idea de lo social o sus odas a la libertad.

También entre los términos y conceptos repetidos, la tesis debe referirse de manera más concreta, aunque haya sido un tema que aparecía constantemente en el estudio de su obra, a la intertextualidad, que bien puede ser más explícita e incluso copia exacta del otro texto aludido y origen de muchísimas especulaciones a lo largo de su carrera, o más oculta e implícita, sobre cuya relación el crítico debe tan solo especular.

### **Conclusiones:**

La búsqueda de las repeticiones sin duda accede a un conocimiento del procedimiento creativo. Gracias a la recurrencia, se intuyen algunas de las idiosincrasias del autor, de su gusto por determinados efectos y de su tendencia subconsciente o no, no importa, por repetir ciertas obsesiones, filias, o manías estéticas y discursivas que hacen singular su texto. Algunos de estos aspectos se introducen aquí a modo de conclusión, aunque junto a estos también deba mencionarse que gracias a la crítica y estudios encontrados respecto al efecto de la repetición en la recepción de las canciones, sobretodo en los estudios cognitivos, también se ha llegado a conclusiones muy interesantes desde el punto de vista estético. Inclusive, a plantear un posible punto de partida para el estudio de la pragmática literaria en las canciones populares, algo que ya ha sido estudiado en algunos artículos académicos.

Entre las revelaciones poéticas, o que resumen el hacer creativo del autor, basándonos en el concepto de la repetición, podemos contar con el término de “verdad”. En relación directa con el ideal de autenticidad, ya que el autor parece perseguir una respuesta a lo largo de su obra, la verdad está a su vez tomada, tal y como se ve en el

capítulo dos de la tesis, de las filosofías y textos literarios existencialistas. Estos ponen la vista en el trascendentalismo americano y el romanticismo Inglés. Al compartir esta cualidad se establecen claros paralelismos entre algunas canciones de Dylan y los aforismos teóricos que plantearon, entre otros, Samuel T. Coleridge “suspensión de la incredulidad” (1817). Este enunciado designa al fenómeno de encontrarse siempre en un punto de inflexión en medio de la dialéctica del discurso literario. Según este supuesto, creer y confiar están reñidos con la reflexión lógica y son precisos para el disfrute artístico. Igualmente, las reflexiones y versos de las canciones de Dylan guardan cierto paralelismo con la asociación entre la verdad y la belleza del poeta John Keats. Este aspecto se deduce de la comparativa entre el poema “Ode on a Grecian Urn” (Keats, 1820) y la canción “Mr. Tambourine Man” (Dylan, 1965).

Por otro lado, el autor también tiene tendencia a presentar personajes de ficción basados en la mitología del Robin Hood o el héroe fuera de la ley, un arquetipo que forma parte de la cultura americana, pero que Dylan desarrolla con mayor visión, para plantear lo que quizá sea un modelo del ideal de autenticidad tal y como lo explicaba Charles Taylor en su estudio de 1998.

Para terminar, baste insistir en la idea que la canción debe encontrar un acomodo teórico ahora que las disciplinas de los estudios de cultura popular y música popular se han extendido más en el mundo académico. Deben aprovecharse, así mismo, la red de disciplinas que esta categoría estética envuelve, sobretodo en el uso que Bob Dylan hace de la misma. La ruptura que el canta-autor americano provocó, sigue estando patente en el ámbito de la cultura y desde hace unos años sigue haciéndonos cuestionar el modo en que entendemos la música y la poesía, el lenguaje comunicativo y el literario. Sus uso efectista y refinado de la canción continúa en funcionamiento y se perpetúa como los ciclos de un canto erosionado al que la corriente arrastra no sólo a través del territorio americano, sino por todo el mundo.

## **6.2. SUMMARY**

### **Introduction**

The present dissertation explores the figure of repetition and the concept of authenticity as meaningful elements of Bob Dylan's renovated use of songs like distinctive artistic discourses. Albeit described as a member of the American popular music scene, he has been lately awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature due to his restoration of the poetical and the literary in the realm of music processing and the oral tradition.

However, literature is not the sole discipline and language Bob Dylan's songs bring forward. The language of communication, or a middle term use of songs as discourses, makes them a great support for Dylan's communicative objectives. On the one hand, the musical frame provides them with a great intersubjective power. On the other hand, lyrics imitate and refer to language intercourse, and the voice of the interpreter is related to the voice of the author –a distinct coincidence of songwriters. All these facts add to the way he uses the code of authenticity as understood in the folk community, in the existentialist philosophy, the era of rock 'n' roll and the 60s countercultural movements. This aspect of his works help to improve the reliability of his song's discourse as it is explained in this investigation, and it gives Bob Dylan's voice a special reliability which could be the reason why his discourses have a lot of pressure meaning something, illuminating people's minds, because the singer-songwriter is more compromised with his speech than any other artist.

### **Summary and Objectives**

Structurally, the thesis presents four main chapters that attempt to look at Bob Dylan's songs and the role of repetition as a figure and common component of the various disciplines within the act of music processing. Each of these chapters covers a progressive exploration of his songs: The first chapter reviews the historical origin of the community of singer-songwriters and their importance for the constitution of the American culture. It also situates Bob Dylan within that tradition and makes a succinct review of each of his studio albums in order to outline some of his recurrent and cohesive ideas. The second chapter defends the context of performance, or the artist on the scene, as the most significant moment of reception and analyses the articulation of

his authenticity not only at the level of performance but as a core nexus in this proposal. Authenticity is principally evident in Dylan's ritual efforts to maintain the essence of his songs in the area of massive music consumption, but it also talks about Bob Dylan's personal philosophy as he explored the term in search for its ideal application in his contemporary society. The third chapter includes the effect of repetition at the level of song's communicative discourses or the rhetoric aim of Dylan's songs and it also gives the starting point for a renovated reflection upon the theory of pragmatic literature in view of Dylan's innovative employment of this genre. Finally, the fourth and last chapter provides some details and examples about the aesthetic and poetic use of repetition, as seen in the lyrical composition of his songs.

This study believes that taking repetition as a conducting element, the analysis of Dylan's songs and performances can prove to be very fruitful, in as much as the analysis describes the natural levels of reception and the elements that interact with the aesthetic process. Repetition functions both at the level of music and linguistic content, principally. In the field of music, the issue of repetition is connected to the important adaptation of the figure of ostinato into the riff or refrain, who added a certain well-known groove to blues and rock 'n' roll. An element previously underestimated in the Western canon of music, repetition worked as an arresting strategy and rhythmic supplier in the popular music realm where Dylan used it most intelligently to formulate a limitless structure of storytelling and a catchy harmonious message. "I needed to learn how to telescope things, ideas. Things were too big to see all at once, like all the books in the library –everything laying around on all the tables. You might be able to put it all into one paragraph or into one verse of a song if you could get it right" (Dylan, 2005: 61). In the linguistic side of song's content, repetition was a figure of speech, a prosodic effect a rhythmic scheme and a structural element of the discourse.

For its part, authenticity is another integrating term of Dylan's career. It puts into contact different levels of reception, his cultural values, the role of expectations in the artistic intercourse and several other signs like themes and myths that make his works part of a coherent whole, in opposition to the popular belief that Dylan is a transvestite artist whose identity and objectives have been constantly changing.

Initially ignorant of the poetic elements that the figure of repetition would reveal, this work wanted to show to what extent that figure, so present in Bob Dylan's works, could be a decisive element in terms of song reception. If it was successful providing a good access to song's conveyed meanings or if there was an evident and

strategic use of music patterns, prosody and rhythm that, according to some late cognitive studies, enabled a better way of processing songs, especially when there is a lyric content such as Dylan's. What's more, I wanted to explore how Bob Dylan makes a poetics of communication by adding metafictional elements, testing the channel, interacting, referencing the audience, posing questions, etc. He also includes multiple dialogic situations that engage us, listeners, in a conversation with the traditional, the symbolic, the real and the fictional signs that live together in his music. The proof of this overt plan that the artist may have regarding artistic communication is that Bob Dylan himself confessed his worries around these issues in his *Chronicles Vol.1* (2005). The artist observes that music consumption and the three-minute song do not allow a good attention span in the listener, at least not as long as in those operas and symphonies where the length of the piece is not an obstacle, on the contrary. That is why this research also includes a brief pragmatic analysis that expounds the possibility of an analysis of songs as speech acts (Austin, 1962). Yet, linguistics and pragmatics have been scarcely studied and these are not very common in Dylan's bibliography, so I suggest "somebody better investigate soon" ("Oxford Town" 1963) because it is a well-known fact that his songs behave very similar to the way we speak in normal life, as Elizabeth D. Kuhn (1999) demonstrated by using blues songs in a pragmatic sense. The author speaks about a sense of 'realness' while experiencing blues songs. Similarly, this study suggests the idea of 'reliability' as related to Bob Dylan's songs. Like she did before, this study compares songs with the speech act theory and the illocutionary force studies by Searl and Van Dijk.

Finally, in the understanding of repetition and its effect in Bob Dylan's songs, many other factors get into contact with the author and the listener. Both paralinguistic components that refer to every nonlexical elements that have an important role to play in communication, as well as "paramusical fields of connotation" (Tagg, 2013) are commented in this study in the form of sociological aspects such as, the appearance of the artist, technology, the cover of his albums, documentary sources, mass media, the music industry, bootleggers, etc. All these create a tapestry of connections that contribute disambiguating the emotional experience of music and its difficulty of getting recorded in words, a problem that has been profoundly explored in Bob Dylan's bibliography and about which I have defended the position of music critics and their reviews. These "scribes of the show", as I have called them, wrote about the truest and most direct experience of sound they got after being present at his concerts and shows.

They are different from the so-called “Dylanologists” (Kinney, 2014) since they contribute translating the act of reception. Where “Dylanologists” arbitrate several sources of investigation spying on every biographical or meaningful data around Bob Dylan, these “scribes” make a great intellectual effort formulating the emotional drive of his music, a temporal and ephemeral moment of mystic glow. Apart from that all of them have offered interesting studies on the singer-songwriter and the long-lasting influence of his works in the history of arts and popular culture.

This thesis includes a multimedia corpus of music and performances added to the bibliographic resources, among which I have included *Bob Dylan Lyrics 1962-2001*, most concretely, the bilingual version carried by Miguel Izquierdo and José Moreno with notes by Alessandro Carrera. This book, along with the resources of the official website [bobdylan.com](http://bobdylan.com) by Sony music entertainment have been the most revised along with the studio albums and other music resources by Bob Dylan, found mainly in the music service system of Spotify and the video-sharing platform Youtube.

## **Conclusions**

In the light of his performances and the impossibility of approaching this event through words, this study has tried to make sense of the overall experience and explore in depth the fundamental roles that repetition and the different kinds of repetition play in songs’ poetic and aesthetic experiences. As a result, this thesis maintains a bilateral position regarding the analysis of songs either as poems or as music and recognizes them as a distinct artistic discourse. A discourse that has been brought back to its original place in oral literature by partaking of the popular and traditional music fields at the same time.

The line of work of this thesis re-contextualized Bob Dylan in a long tradition of songsters in America, because he provided songs’ incursion into the field of oral storytelling by maintaining alive the spirit of their collective imaginary. His works are shown to maintain constant and repetitive themes as well as forms in the section devoted to his discography, which denies the extended believe that his production is as changing as his persona. Then, this study developed various important and salient ideas around his performances and the patent authenticity that radiates in his themes, his characters, and concealed references. Authenticity would not only make an important

part of his thematic richness. As this study has shown, it also plays a fundamental part in the interactive process of music reception during which the voice and charisma of the author and interpreter play a fundamental role. These ideas have been supported by the works of scholars in the field of Popular Music studies, Cognitive studies and Cultural Studies, among others. Together with a careful selection of the types of repetitive symptoms in Dylan's music, the idea of the author's aim for authenticity culminated in the enunciation of certain hypothetical ideas around Dylan's principal preoccupations, a key term on the problem of categorization and analysis of his music's ungraspable nature. Repetition, for its part, has been analyzed from all the different levels of influence of this artistic field. Songs have shown how intricate their different levels of analysis are: from an exterior form or a sound framework to an interior form composed of figures of speech, poetic resources, etc.

Both figures, repetition, and authenticity, contribute to creating a wider perspective of Dylan's songs around which many other ideas and relations have been appropriately concluded in this study. Some of these ideas, like the way Dylan regarded the aspect of truth, the importance of spontaneity and synchronicity, the postmodern term of hybridity, the universality of his discourse, the ancient resonance of other discourses, etc; compose the revolutionary proposal of Dylan's songs as unparalleled discourses and their distinct category in the art world.

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<sup>1</sup> “We live today in the Age of Information and Communication because electric media instantly and constantly create a total field of interacting events in which all men participate” (McLuhan 1964: 248)

<sup>2</sup> Transcribed from GBS #3 booklet

<sup>3</sup> As cited in Epstein, 2011: 190-1

<sup>4</sup> Rapp, 2010. <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/aristotle-rhetoric/#4.1>

<sup>5</sup> Top-down, and bottom-up analysis belong to the theories of communication and they define the way to access to any system of information in a scientific study whatsoever.

<sup>6</sup> As cited by Marshall, 2009: 103

<sup>7</sup> As cited in Robert Shelton, 2011: 728

<sup>8</sup> The NET is the name that fans and critics gave to the touring activity of Bob Dylan from 1988 onwards.

<sup>9</sup> There is a seminar book with the same title *Who Is That Man?: In Search of the Real Bob Dylan* written by David Dalton that introduces the evident impossibility of accessing a true answer with respect to this philosophical approach: “(...) the idea that I could get to the bottom of the Dylan mystery by asking you to unriddle your own enigma was hopeless.” (2012: IX)

<sup>10</sup> When you enter phrases into the Google Books Ngram Viewer, it displays a graph showing how those phrases have occurred in a corpus of books (e.g., "British English", "English Fiction", "French") over the selected years. (About Ngram Viewer, 2013)

<sup>11</sup> As the development of this musical genre is especially prominent after the second World War and considering this is a brief outline, I will not include previous years observation.

<sup>12</sup> *Spin*, Vol 1 N° 8 New York: Spin Media LLC December 1985: 39

<sup>13</sup> Later, the *Broadside* gave name to a sheet magazine where Bob Dylan published many of his songs in written format. It was also the name of diverse sound releases in which Dylan participated too, but with his pseudonyms: Blind Boy Grunt and Ramblin' Jack Elliott.

<sup>14</sup> Also in the 1960s, the group The Byrds, in the words of Lornell's study, “recorded “John Riley”, about a soldier who returns from war in disguise so that he can test his love's fidelity” (2012: 89)

<sup>15</sup> “Upbeat” is an unaccented beat preceding an accented. “Offbeat” is an accent that does not coincide with the beat (New Oxford American Dictionary)

<sup>16</sup> All this is available at <https://www.loc.gov/audio/collections/>

<sup>17</sup> The music that some of these artists recorded before the crisis was recovered by Folkways Records and included afterward in the famous *Anthology of American Folk Music*.

<sup>18</sup> As cited in Michael Gray, 2008: 12

<sup>19</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Folk\\_music](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Folk_music) , last retrieved on 26 February, 2017.

<sup>20</sup> In his *Studies in Musicology, 1935-1975* Charles Seeger includes a chapter titled: “Speech, Music and Speech about Music” (Berkeley: University of California Press 1977, p. 16-31)

<sup>21</sup> As cited in Erik Lornell 2012, p. 293 from Tracy Shwartz interview with Moses Asch 1971.

<sup>22</sup> As he was quoted in Gran Maxwell's book *How Does It Feel?: Elvis Presley, The Beatles, Bob Dylan and the Philosophy of Rock And Roll* (2014: 2737)

<sup>23</sup> Bob Dylan covered with Joan Baez off-stage in a hotel room (according to D. A. Pennebaker's documentary "Don't Look Back" 1967)

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- <sup>24</sup> Wikipedia.org, “Leon Payne”. Last retrieved on 20/09/2016 12:38
- <sup>25</sup> Note the Works of Beat writer Jack Kerouac, road movies like *The Wild One* (1953), starred by Marlon Brando, or Dennis Hopper’s *Easy Rider* (1969).
- <sup>26</sup> See payola polemic on page 40
- <sup>27</sup> As cited in Erik Lornell 2012, p. 311
- <sup>28</sup> As cited in Erik Lornell 2012, p. 311
- <sup>29</sup> Wikipedia “Topical Song” entry, last retrieved 12/01/14
- <sup>30</sup> The Newport Folkways Festival was one of the many music festival that the thirties revivalist period had spread all around the country. Representing the spirit of this trend, Sarah Gertrude Knott said one of the reasons for this festival fever, could have been the extended sense of nationalism, a kind of *zeitgeist* of the typically American culture (Donaldson, 2011)
- <sup>31</sup> Sean Wilentz “Wood at 100” Conference and concert held at Brooklyn College September 22, 2012 [available online] [www.bodylan.com](http://www.bodylan.com), last retrieved 28/05/2013
- <sup>32</sup> Jump music refers to an amalgam of blues songs that lead to rhythm ‘n’ blues following hits.
- <sup>33</sup> David K. Dunaway interview with Bess Lomax Hawes (6 May 1977), p. 66 as cited in Donaldson, 2011: 136.
- <sup>34</sup> Seeger interviewed by *Pop Chronicles* 1968, as cited in Wikipedia: “The Weavers”, 22/02/2016 12:57.
- <sup>35</sup> Reproduced in Olf Björner’s website <http://bjorner.com> last retrieved, 14/04/16
- <sup>36</sup> Peter, Paul & Mary: *In The Wind* sleeve notes © 1963 Warner Bros. Records
- <sup>37</sup> I think that is one of the main errors that the critics and Dylan interpreters make. They connect the interpretation of different voices in the lyrics with the unequivocal voice of the singer who interprets them. Why could we expect the actor to interpret his own life on scene? The actor just brings us something of his –his body language, manners, et, and even that may change too– but the rest is the character’s one creation and revelatory presence. Being so, the terms found are only translatable within the context of the whole interpretation.
- <sup>38</sup> Especially around Chapter 3: Talking Greenwich Village Blues (pp. 216- 300)
- <sup>39</sup> As cited in Alonso, Claudia 2012: 206
- <sup>40</sup> As cited in Anthony Scaduto, 2001: 5374
- <sup>41</sup> Big Pink was the name they gave to the propriety they had in Woodstock where those private meetings and performances were recorded.
- <sup>42</sup> New Oxford American Dictionary (“freewheeling”).
- <sup>43</sup> The New Oxford American Dictionary “district attorney” (DA).
- <sup>44</sup> As cited in Scaduto, 2001: 4582.
- <sup>45</sup> Among the theories around the title *Blonde on Blonde* (most probably resulted from his acronym name) there is one by Margotin and Guesdon that postulates it is perhaps “a riff on Brecht on Brecht, a play by German playwright Bertolt Brecht performed in the United States at that time” (2015: 4399)
- <sup>46</sup> It must be indicated that a “blonde moment” is a pejorative figure referring to the stereotyping tendency of thinking about blondes like lacking any intelligence.

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<sup>47</sup> According to the New American Oxford Dictionary, the term blonde would have been substituted by a generalization of the masculine form "blond", especially in American English. After using the neutral form, anytime the feminine is used it might have an offensive sense.

<sup>48</sup> As cited by Cran, *Collage in the Twentieth-Century Art, Literature, and Culture: Joseph Cornell, Frank O'Hara, and Bob Dylan*. 2014, Surrey, England: Ashgate.

<sup>49</sup> Rona Cran uses Dylan's own words in an interview by Paul J. Robbins in California, 1965. Originally printed in two parts in The Los Angeles Free Press, 17 and 24 September 1965 (see Arthur, *Every Mind Polluting Word*, 114, <http://content.yudu.com/Library/A1plqd/BobDylanEveryMindPol/resources/765.htm> last retrieved on 28 February, 2017.

<sup>50</sup> The bracketing is mine.

<sup>51</sup> Read more about this point in the section around repetition in communication and rhetorical questions in p. 278 of this study.

<sup>52</sup> As cited in Anthony Scaduto, 2001: 4568

<sup>53</sup> What these albums have in common is their use of previously existing songs in order to make a cover version. Such cover version, in Dylan's discography, could mean more than that –as I suggest in this point–. At least in his case, it can be clearly perceived the process of subjectivization he accomplished.

<sup>54</sup> Being Elijah a messenger of the Messiah, he is connected to the classic grecolatine god, Hermes, so related to Dylan (see Scobie, 2004). Another alleged poet "who, by opportunism, refused to tell the truth" (Margotin and Guesdon, 2015: 6223)

<sup>55</sup> As it is documented in Jon Dolan's article "Inside Bob Dylan's 'Blonde on Blonde': Rock's First Great Double Album" *Rolling Stone* <http://rollingstone.com> May 16, 2016, retrieved May 30, 2016, 13:06

<sup>56</sup> The official transcription of his *Lyrics (1962- 2001)* was accomplished by the publishing company Simon & Schuster, 2004 and was later translated for the Spanish edition by Miguel Izquierdo and José Moreno for Global Rhythm in 2007. Even if they transcribed his words into a "new light can shine on me", I still can listen "life" instead of "light". In fact, "a new light" can also work as a symbol of a "new life" a reincarnation a Godly second chance.

<sup>57</sup> "In his memoir, *Chronicles*, Dylan was assumed to be referring to *Blood on the Tracks* when he wrote: "I would even record an entire album based on Chekhov short stories. Critics thought it was autobiographical – that was fine." (Willman, "Dylan's Bloody Best Album: 40 facts about the 40-Year-Old Blood On The Tracks", [rollingstone.com](http://rollingstone.com) January 21, 2015)

<sup>58</sup> Essay from the original back cover of *Blood On The Tracks* (1975) as reproduced in <http://bobboots.com>, last retrieved on 23/03/2017

<sup>59</sup> Midler, B. (1976). *Songs For The New Depression*. New York: Atlantic Recording Corporation.

<sup>60</sup> As cited Margotin and Guesdon (2015: 5494)

<sup>61</sup> As cited in Margotin and Guesdon, 2015: 9278

<sup>62</sup> Note that "Isis" has been also interpreted as an allegory of the singer's mother Beatrice

<sup>63</sup> Steve King and The Echelons. (1962). *Stan Is Her Name/ Long Lonely Road*. [Single]. U.S: Mercury.

<sup>64</sup> Loder, Kurt "Bob Dylan: Saved" *Rolling Stone* September 18, 1980 (available online [rollingstone.com](http://rollingstone.com))

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<sup>65</sup> Goldmine Staff (February 19, 2009). "Bob Dylan gets religion in the 'gospel years'". *Goldmine*. Retrieved September 11, 2009 as cited in Wikipedia.org, retrieved October 28, 2016.

<sup>66</sup> He would recover the symbol of the magnolia in 2009 (*Together Trough Life*) in the song "If You Ever Go to Houston" where he sings, "Last time I saw her / Was at the Magnolia Hotel"

<sup>67</sup> This study will return to the question of rhetoric questions in the part that deals with repetition and its types, p. 278.

<sup>68</sup> More recently he is making the most of his mature voice who turned him into a multifaceted crooner from Daniel Lanois' productions (*Oh Mercy*, 1988 and *Time Out of Mind*, 1997) to his more recent cover versions of Sinatra's songs (*Shadows in the Night*, 2015).

<sup>69</sup> In fact, the singer extracts the lines "I heard the news today oh boy!" from The Beatles big hit "A Day In The Life", referring to the moment he knew about the assassination.

<sup>70</sup> As cited in Robert Shelton, 2011, p. 1025.

<sup>71</sup> T. J. Clarke, *Image of the People: Gustav Courbet and the 1848 Revolution* (1973; Princeton; N.J. 1982). As cited in Lott, 2013.

<sup>72</sup> The brackets are mine

<sup>73</sup> See page 271, about the Song Speech Theory

<sup>74</sup> As cited in Epstein 2011: 309

<sup>75</sup> As cited in Margotin and Guedon, 2015: 6116

<sup>76</sup> As cited in Shelton, 2011.

<sup>77</sup> As cited in Scaduto, 2001: 2855-6

<sup>78</sup> Richard Schechner numbers the following functions warning the reader these bear no hierarchy as it depends on the performer's main intention. The functions are: "1 to entertain, 2 to create beauty, 3 to mark or change identity, 4 to make or foster community, 5 to heal 6 to teach or persuade 7 to deal with the sacred and the demonic". He adds, "few if any performances accomplish all these functions , but many performances emphasize more then one." (2013: 46)

<sup>79</sup> Harpo, S. I'm A King Bee. (1957). [Interpreted by The Rolling Stones] In *The Rolling Stones*. London: The Decca Record Company Limited. (1964).

<sup>80</sup> Walter, L. (1955). My Babe. [Written by Willie Dixon] In *The Best of Little Walter*. Chicago: Arc Music. (2015).

<sup>81</sup> Walter, L. & Waters, M. (1958). Walkin' On. [W. Dixon, Bass; G. Hunter, Drums; L. Tacker, Guitar; O. Spann, Piano]. In *The Essential Little Walter*. Chicago: MCA Records, Inc. (1993).

<sup>82</sup> As cited in Muir, 2013

<sup>83</sup> The book in which this term was published, is Genette, G. (1997). *Palimpsests : literature in the second degree*. Lincoln; London: University of Nebraska Press.

<sup>84</sup> Watch the video <https://youtu.be/zbLdlwYXRY>

<sup>85</sup> This theoretical concept, born out of Louis Gates pioneering studies about performance in American theory of literature, named an alternative mode of apprehending music performance, regardless of the dominant model. "Signifyin(g)" substituted the term of "meaning" and "interpretation" for a different understanding of the non-epistemological ideas of the Afro-American artistic manifestations. "Signifyin(g)" is originally present in the words of his creator, Henry Louis Gates, but also in other music

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theoreticians (Middleton 2009). This theory aimed at explaining better the volatile and gestural elements that constitute the simultaneous act of performing a song, “Whatever determinations are in play, the popular music comes to us through the effects of sounds, words, and words about sounds: in short, through the work of the signifier” (Middleton 2009: 256) Being the element of performance the core unit of his analysis, Henry Louis Gates’ 1988-book gives also a great importance to elements such as the grain of the voice, the venue, the instrumentation, the costumes and the charisma of the author –here analysed under the concept of “authenticity”–, all of them para-musical in as much as they stand around the musical event and affect its reception.

<sup>86</sup> See page 152 about Godlovitch’s statements.

<sup>87</sup> Mostly in Youtube

<sup>88</sup> The Jimi Hendrix Experience. All Along the Watchtower. (1968). In *Electric Ladyland*. New York: Warner Bros. Inc.

<sup>89</sup> As cited by Epstein, 2011: 262.

<sup>90</sup> zimmermanlive. (October 29, 2014). Bob Dylan - I Believe In You (Live 1980). As retrieved from [https://youtu.be/g\\_N-\\_Fc-cGY](https://youtu.be/g_N-_Fc-cGY).

Keith Gubitz. (December 8, 2010). Bob Dylan 1980-04-20 Toronto Elite Series 040 a MASSIVE upgrade, must have! As retrieved from [https://youtu.be/C0J3Y5s\\_kfo](https://youtu.be/C0J3Y5s_kfo)

<sup>91</sup> The members of this choir “four black female back-up singers” (Muir, 2013: 13)

<sup>92</sup> According to Judith Butler as cited in Middleton, 2006: 137

<sup>93</sup> As cited in Muir, 2013: 117

<sup>94</sup> Dylan as cited by Scannell, 2011: 11

<sup>95</sup> Cave, Nick Interview with Toby Litt for “The 100 Greatest Dylan Songs” *Mojo*, September 2005 as cited in Margotin and Guesdon, 2015: 15377

<sup>96</sup> As cited in Scaduto, 2001: 5633

<sup>97</sup> As cited in Shelton, 2011: 269

<sup>98</sup> It loses the (g) to avoid complex relations with any of the two sides: White-western standard or Negro standard. Also, the losing (g) is characteristic of gerund processes in Dylan's titles and vernacular forms of English. This way it characterizes him directly.

<sup>99</sup> Daily Telegraph, November 10, 1965, as cited in David Yaffe (2011: 1)

<sup>100</sup> Bowie, D. (1971). Song for Bob Dylan. In *Hunky Dory*. London: RCA Ltd.

<sup>101</sup> There are sound recordings, like “Bob Dylan - Mississippi -walkin' thru the leaves, falling from the trees, feelin' like a stranger” (2016, October 12) Retrieved from <https://youtu.be/hKUu-zN7fxQ>

<sup>102</sup> Epstein adds later on that, “the manner of Bob Dylan’s performance, his strumming, metrically ambiguous, searching; his trancelike state, and the rambling length of the composition suggested a raga-like improvisation.” (2011: 26)

<sup>103</sup> Listen to it here <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FpfVYTC4mIE>

<sup>104</sup> Song available at Youtube.com <https://youtu.be/1InCcT909h8> , last retrieved 06/02/2017

<sup>105</sup> Retrieved from The Poetry Foundation.

<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poetrymagazine/poems/detail/44212#poem>

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- <sup>106</sup> As it was recorded and included on the album *The Bootleg Series Vol 4: Bob Dylan Live 1966* (Columbia Records, 1998) also known as The Royal Albert Hall Concert.
- <sup>107</sup> As cited in Hedin 2004: 203
- <sup>108</sup> The word comes from “phonograph”, also known as “gramophone”, which was the first apparatus that was used to reproduce a recorded sound. It was invented by Thomas Edison in 1877. Thanks to its widespread use, the phonograph record was the most popular device through the XXth century. It must be regarded that Bob Dylan's record company, Columbia Records, derived from the union of the two big pioneers of the phonograph commercialization, ten years after Edison's discovery: The Volta Graphophone Company and the American Graphophone (Schoenherr, Steven. (2005). *Recording Technology History: Charles Sumner Tainter and the Graphophone*. History Department of University of San Diego)
- <sup>109</sup> Dylan's interview by Mikal Gilmore (2003). [rollingstone.com](http://www.rollingstone.com)
- <sup>110</sup> As indicated in Scaduto's biography of Bob Dylan
- <sup>111</sup> As cited in Heylin, 2009: 19
- <sup>112</sup> As cited by Dalton, 2012: 103
- <sup>113</sup> Walter Benjamin, “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction” in *Illuminations*, ed. Hannah Arendt, trans. Harry Zhon (New York: Harcourt Base and World, 1968) pp. 219-53 As cited in William Brooks 2006: 348.
- <sup>114</sup> The data belongs to the official site: “albums”, [bobdylan.com](http://www.bobdylan.com).
- <sup>115</sup> As cited in Robert Shelton, 2011: 773
- <sup>116</sup> Recently a definitive version of the tapes has been completed with The Bootleg Version number 11: The Basement Tapes Complete in 2014. The first version proved incomplete as it was confessed by rock critics Greil Marcus and Sid Griffin in their writings and bootleg cataloging. That is why this late version was necessary.
- <sup>117</sup> As cited in the article: Bob Dylan made honorary member of the US Arts Academy. (2013 May 23). *BBC News*. Retrieved from <http://www.bbc.com/news/entertainment-arts-22567117>
- <sup>118</sup> According to the *New Oxford American Dictionary*
- <sup>119</sup> “The essence of regionalism was therefore, an idea of place both in the literal sense as a geographically defined location, and in a figurative sense as characterized by the people who lived there: in their patterns of daily life, the history of their shared traditions, and in the ways they viewed themselves as belonging to a community that was simultaneously a part of the nation and still culturally distinct.” (Donaldson, 2011: 41)
- <sup>120</sup> In his Nobel acceptance speech, which is one of his last official declaration, the artist declares his major literary influences. He says, "From an early age, I've been familiar with and reading and absorbing the works of those who were deemed worthy of such a distinction: Kipling, Shaw, Thomas Mann, Pearl Buck, Albert Camus, Hemingway. These giants of literature whose works are taught in the schoolroom, housed in libraries around the world and spoken of in reverent tones have always made a deep impression. That I now join the names on such a list is truly beyond words." (Dec 10, 2016)
- <sup>121</sup> As explained by Josh Rahn in <http://www.online-literature.com/periods/existentialism.php> last retrieved, 17/08/16 12:22

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122 According to Chris Willman's article Dylan confessed that during "a 1985 interview with Cameron Crowe that accompanied the *Biograph* boxed set" On (2015). Dylan's Bloody-Best Album: 40 Facts About the 40-Year-Old 'Blood on the Tracks. Retrieved from <http://rollingstone.com>

<sup>123</sup> Nietzsche, F. (1979) *Philosophy and Truth: Selections from Nietzsche's Notebooks of the early 1870s*. New Jersey: Humanities Press, as cited by Karl Konrad, C. 2010: 59-60

<sup>124</sup> The parenthesis are mine.

<sup>125</sup> Liner notes to The New World Singers self-titled album (1963) Atlantic Records. CD

<sup>126</sup> As cited in Grant Maxwell, 2014: 3156

<sup>127</sup> See McCombe, John. (September 22, 2011).

<sup>128</sup> Page 356

<sup>129</sup> She won a Globe Award for her interpretation of Dylan's hallucinogen years.

<sup>130</sup> Watch ArtisanNewsService (2007)

<sup>131</sup> As cited in Robert Shelton (2011: 950)

<sup>132</sup> He continues saying, "(...) Like 'authenticity', the word 'author' is etymologically related to the 'self'. If the rock Musicians' 'self' is not involved in originating the text she or he performs, rock believes that self is more likely to be corrupted or alienated (and that, in turn, the listener's sense of self may be diminished)" (Keightley, 2001: 133-134)

<sup>133</sup> Auto ethnography. (n.d.). On *Wikipedia*. Retrieved on 05/04/2016

<sup>134</sup> Lord Jim is Conrad's homonym novel's main character (1900). He embodies the impossibility to maintain the high marine morality and its code of honor when he jumped off the board of the ship he captained.

<sup>135</sup> Plato, *Laches, or Courage* (380 B.C.E) [available online] <http://classics.mit.edu/Plato/laches.html>, last retrieved 12/06/2016

<sup>136</sup> See Kramer, J. (2002). The Nature and Origins of Musical Postmodernism. On Lochhead, J. And Aunder, J. (Ed.), *Postmodern Music/Postmodern Thought*. New York: Routledge. 13–26.

<sup>137</sup> A commentary taken from McNabb's (2007) "The Paradox of Empathy"

<sup>138</sup> Transcription of Dylan's message to the E.E.L.C. (1963) Following this negligible speech, Bob Dylan sent a letter/ poem to the E.E.L.C to explain why he did speak like that. I include the following fragment as it has a direct relation to being oneself, and his ideal of being authentic. On Michael Goldberg <http://dayofthecrazy-wild.com> last retrieved 22/03/2017

I should've remembered  
"I am BOB DYLAN an I dont have t speak  
I dont have t say nothin if I dont wanna"  
but  
I didn't remember....

<sup>139</sup> As cited in bobbydylan.com (1991)

<sup>140</sup> U.K issue only, which has six more songs than the US

<sup>141</sup> As cited in Liner Notes. On *The Freewheelin' Bob Dylan* (1964) and in Ricks, C. 2004: 78

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<sup>142</sup> One of the members of the group SDS (Students for a Democratic Society), Tom Hayden, from the University of Michigan, wrote it with the help of other members. It became one of “the earliest embodiments of the feelings of the new movement of young people which began in the sixties.”

According to the statement itself (1964: 2).

<sup>143</sup> As cited in Shank, B. 2002: 97

<sup>144</sup> I have eliminated the numbers between brackets that the author used in the original to present the ideas more clearly.

<sup>145</sup> As cited in Shank, 2002: 116 and recounted in Scaduto, 2001

<sup>146</sup> We have access to that performance through the different multimedia databases. I have recently check out the following source whose audiovisual quality is satisfactory: <https://vimeo.com/91430129> (retrieved, 27/01/16 11:47).

<sup>147</sup> The origin of this word is explained in Heylin's book too (1995: 6) . It explains that Bootleg albums were the ones that surged from an illegal recording act. They were so-called after the old tendency of hiding alcohol in the boots during the period of its prohibition and because the person who makes this records must wear the recording machine, which was quite small by then: "the late forties saw a widespread availability of reel-to-reel tape recorders which were becoming increasingly compact and inexpensive" (Heylin, 1995: 30) This idea is developed in page 249.

<sup>148</sup> Greene, A. (2011). <http://www.rollingstone.com/music/news/the-10-best-bob-dylan-bootlegs-20110511> retrieved, 04/04/16.

<sup>149</sup> The acronym stands for *Great White Wonder*, Dylan’s first bootleg LP that was released in 1969.

<sup>150</sup> Today, most of these bootleg records, albeit difficult to buy, have been made available on the multimedia site youtube.com or in the following sites: All Dylan A Bob Dylan Blog <<http://alldylan.com>> and the pioneer site <<http://bjorner.com>> that completes any needed information about concerts’ set lists and other data.

<sup>151</sup> That bootleg tape was The Royal Albert Tape (1966) that in 1988 became the second Dylan bootleg CD, according to Heylin (1995: 76)

<sup>152</sup> "I used to cross paths with her in New York City at the Village Gate nightclub. These were the artists I looked up to. She recorded some of my songs that she learned directly from me. She was an overwhelming artist. Piano player and singer. Very strong woman, very outspoken and dynamite to see perform. That she was recording my songs validated for me everything I was about." (Dylan as cited in Mansfield, 2015)

<sup>153</sup> As cited in Springer, 2012.

<sup>154</sup> As cited in Maxwell, 2014: 5006.

<sup>155</sup> Phil Ochs in his *Broadside* interview in 1976 as cited by Benjamin Hedin 2004: 60

<sup>156</sup> “song measurements” in Wikipedia.org retrieved on 04/12/2014, 20:59

<sup>157</sup> Nattiez, 1973: 53

<sup>158</sup> Note that I have substituted “say” and “sayin” for “sing” and “singing”.

<sup>159</sup> As cited in Margotin and Guesdon, 2015: 595

<sup>160</sup> As cited in Anthony Scaduto, 2001: 3769

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<sup>161</sup> A strophic form is one in which the musical sections repeat over and over throughout the duration of the song, while the lyrics change; the vast majority of folk and folk rock songs fit into this form, as do most of the examples below. The way in which the music varies within each strophe (verse) varies from song to song, as demonstrated below.

<sup>162</sup> Curiously, this song, originally titled “Tell old Bill” and dating from 1927 by Bob Gibson is here arranged by Bob Dylan and “given another name”. The artist titles it with the verse “This Evening So Soon” recalling James Baldwin short story titled “This Morning, This Evening So Soon” (1960) It is “a well-known story from *Going To Meet the Man*, adds a more distanced but equally universal and transcendent perspective on the African-American urban experience. It does so by juxtaposing the United States with France and New York with Paris. Both stories reflect Baldwin's own struggle to find his voice and himself and to be heard. Hearing himself at the most authentic level and honestly expressing that to others—connecting the delight and the angst of black experiences to blacks and to nonblacks alike—became the controlling purpose of his art.” (“This Morning, This Evening, So Soon by James Baldwin, 1965.” Reference Guide to Short Fiction. Retrieved March 05, 2017 from Encyclopedia.com: <http://www.encyclopedia.com/arts/encyclopedias-almanacs-transcripts-and-maps/morning-evening-so-soon-james-baldwin-1965>)

<sup>163</sup> Curiously this song also includes a commentary around communicative impossibility, a constant theme in his music, as it has been said above. “You want to talk to me / Go ahead and talk / Whatever you got to say to me / Won't come as any shock” (“Tight Connection to My Heart”, 1985)

<sup>164</sup> As cited in Shelton, 2011, p. 836.

<sup>165</sup> Frith, Simon *Performing Rites*. Oxford University Press, 1998. As cited in Lee Marshall, 2009: 103-4

<sup>166</sup> The definition of “illocution” in the New Oxford American Dictionary.

<sup>167</sup> As cited by Margulis, 2014: 41

<sup>168</sup> The use of double negatives is non-standard and so, it deliberately breaks the rules of regular communication, this deliberate violation of the communicative principles is rhetoric strategy in itself that captures the listener's attention according to Cambridge Dictionaries Online

<http://dictionary.cambridge.org/es/gramatica/gramatica-britanica/double-negatives-and-usage> Breaking these rules is another way of signifyin', playing the role of the trickster who uses language equivocally.

<sup>169</sup> As cited in Thomson, (2016)

<sup>170</sup> Transcribed from a video file that was retrieved from [https://youtu.be/SRu66l3QI\\_U](https://youtu.be/SRu66l3QI_U)

<sup>171</sup> Text included in *Bob Dylan by Greil Marcus: Writings 1968- 2010*. Vol. 1. N.p.: Public Affairs, 2010. Print.

<sup>172</sup> *The Bootleg Series Vol. 4: Bob Dylan Live 1966 The Royal Albert Hall Concert* (1998) Columbia Records.

<sup>173</sup> As it is shown in *No Direction Home: Bob Dylan* the documentary of Martin Scorsese, 2005 Paramount Pictures.

<sup>174</sup> Kent Bach's *Routledge Encyclopaedia of Philosophy* “Speech Acts”:

<http://online.sfsu.edu/kbach/spchacts.html>

<sup>175</sup> “Perlocutionary Acts”, Wikipedia.org retrieved on 27/02/2016

<sup>176</sup> The definition comes from the LiteraryDevices Editors. (2017). Rhetorical Question. Retrieved

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November 4, 2014, from <https://literarydevices.net/rhetorical-question/>

<sup>177</sup> As cited in Margotin and Guesdon, J-M. (2015). *Bob Dylan All The Songs: The Story Behind Every Track*. Retrieved from <https://www.amazon.es/Bob-Dylan-All-Songs-English-ebook/dp/B014DUSJU0>

<sup>178</sup> Dylan interviewed by Curnyn, S. (2007). “When death comes creepin’ (whatcha gonna do?)” – Bob Dylan and a few good questions” *cinchreview.org* Retrived from <http://www.cinchreview.com/when-death-comes-creepin-whatcha-gonna-do-bob-dylan/13396/>

<sup>179</sup> For *Sing Out Magazine*, as cited by Scaduto, 2001: 3003

<sup>180</sup> Crowell, (2016). The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy  
<https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/existentialism/>

<sup>181</sup> Along In The Sun In The Rain. (1940s). In *Buffalo Skinners: The Asch Recordings, Vol. 4* . Woody Guthrie Publications, Inc. (BMI). (2000).

<sup>182</sup> This song was not officially released until *The Bootleg Series Vol. 9 The Whitmark Demos* (2010). There was a second versión published in the limited collection of CDs *50th Anniversary Collection* Both are alternate takes of the times *The Freewheelin’ Bob Dylan* was published (1963)

<sup>183</sup> Better World. (1939). In *Asch Recordings, Vol. 3: Hard Travelin’*. New York: Asch Recordings, Vol. 3: Hard Travelin’.

<sup>184</sup> As cited in Robert Shelton (2011: 466).

<sup>185</sup> As cited by Peter Conrad, 2014.

<sup>186</sup> As cited in Bickford, 2007.

<sup>187</sup> As cited in Shelton, 2011: 1001

<sup>188</sup> Actually, Schoenberg said, “Intellegibility in music seems to be imposible without repetition” (Margulis, 2014:5) As cited in Ross, A. 2010

<sup>189</sup> As explained in Silva Rhetoricae. Retrieved from <http://rhetoric.byu.edu>

<sup>190</sup> As cited in “Bob Dylan at 70” by Topping and Llewellyn Smith, *The Guardian*.

<sup>191</sup> As cited in Maxwell, 2014: 3048

<sup>192</sup> "Poetic" in is, in the terms of Benedetto Croce (1866-1952), an additional and differential quality over the neutrally literary and a term which is carried to its original aural attributes.

<sup>193</sup> As cited in Stephen Scobie, 2004: 207

<sup>194</sup> Both performances are available online: [youtube.com](https://www.youtube.com) retrieved on March 2016

<sup>195</sup> As cited in Shelton 2011: 513

<sup>196</sup> By ethical he must mean “virtuous”, which stresses the unique capacity that songs have to address someone, their second party, the listener.

<sup>197</sup> As cited in Shelton, 2011:582

<sup>198</sup> These notes have not published until the launch of *Blood On The Tracks: The Songbook* (1995)

<sup>199</sup> “(...) half a dozen of these songs actually came out on the compilation albums *Broadside Ballads*, Vol. 1 and *Broadside Reunion*, with Dylan using the pseudonym *Blind Boy Grunt* to avoid contractual problems, although those anthologies are hard to find now” (Unterberger, R. (n.d.). *Broadside: AllMusic* review. *AllMusic*. Retrieved from <http://www.allmusic.com/album/broadside-mw0001057406>)

<sup>200</sup> Relative to the names of Whitman and Emerson.

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- <sup>201</sup> Woody Guthrie. (1967–68). *Sing Out!* 17 (6). (December/January). Reprinted in *Born to Win* as cited in Shelton, 2011: 469
- <sup>202</sup> According to the New American Oxford Dictionary (“authenticity”).
- <sup>203</sup> As cited by Alex Ross, 2001.
- <sup>204</sup> As cited by Topping and Llewellyn Smith, 2011.
- <sup>205</sup> Because Elvis and The Beatles sales outnumber those of Dylan.
- <sup>206</sup> They played this song, the first Spanish version of Bob Dylan, in their first album.
- <sup>207</sup> Sabina never published this song. It was played at a concert in 1986 as it can it is shown the following video <https://youtu.be/eSBn4uZvBnU>
- <sup>208</sup> Søren Kierkegaard, *Fear and Trembling* trans. Robert Payne (1843, London: Oxford University Press, 1939) as cited by Richard Middleton, 2006: 176
- <sup>209</sup> as cited in Richard Middleton, 2006: 180
- <sup>210</sup> The rhetorical power of the discursive kind has already been mentioned in the section of Communication (page 264)
- <sup>211</sup> Freud, “Beyond the Pleasure Principle,” 1991 As cited by Richard Middleton, 2006, p. 186
- <sup>212</sup> Taussig, Mimesis, and Alterity, 1993, xix as cited in Richard Middleton 2006: 170
- <sup>213</sup> "Bob Dylan: The Bootleg Series 1-3 Rare and Unreleased 1961-1999" Columbia
- <sup>214</sup> As cited in Dainton, B. (2016) available online in URL = <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2014/entries/consciousness-temporal/>.
- <sup>215</sup> In *Wikipedia*. Retrieved February 13, 2014, from [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Single\\_\(music\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Single_(music))
- <sup>216</sup> As it was discovered in the Payola scandal in 1960s.
- <sup>217</sup> The Carroll case was something he read about in the newspaper, on August 29<sup>th</sup>, 1963. Hattie Carroll was a black servant who died after the rich farmer William Zantzinger had hit her with a cane. This wasn't the last time he picked up stories from the newspaper: John Birch Blues, A Pawn in the Game, Hurricane, etc; are all songs based on real stories that meant something to the author.
- <sup>218</sup> This idea goes further when the choir or the backup singers provide exact repetitions of one or various significant lines, like Dylan incorporated in the decade of the 1970s.
- <sup>219</sup> Everett, Walter. 2004. Making Sense of Rock's Tonal Systems. *Music Theory Online* 10, (4) As cited by Stephen Rings (2013)
- <sup>220</sup> Adorno, “Form of the Phonograph Record,” 1990c, 58 as cited in Middleton, *Voicing the Popular: On the Subjects of Popular Music* (2006) New York, London: Routledge, p. 146
- <sup>221</sup> Dylan, B. (1974) “Bob Dylan: The Playboy Interviews”
- <sup>222</sup> As cited in Brian Lloyd (2014) “The Form is the Message: Bob Dylan and the 1960s”
- <sup>223</sup> Wikipedia.org “AABA form”: “commonly found in Tin Pan Alley songs and other type of American popular music, especially in the first half of the twentieth century” Also the popular form of chorus is usually called “**quaternary** because it usually consists of four phrases” (Benward & Saker (2003), p. 317-18) .
- <sup>224</sup> As mentioned in Margotin and Guesdon, 2015: 14439
- <sup>225</sup> As cited in Gates Jr. 1988: 105

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<sup>226</sup> There are even sax riffs, but these do not work very satisfactorily albeit they give the song “a medieval color” (Margotin and Guesdon, 2015: 9751)

<sup>227</sup> The album *New Morning* (1970) also includes a peculiar variation in his songs with the track "The Man In Me". Instead of leaving transitions for the instrumental riff, there is an amusing and inviting "la, la, la, la" that gave the song a trendy appearance.

<sup>228</sup> *Blonde on Blonde* (the title) is said to be “a riff on Brecht on Brecht, a play by the German playwright performed in the United States at that time” (Margotin and Guesdon, 2015: 4401)

<sup>229</sup> Frith, S. (Ed.) *On Record: Rock, Pop and the Written Word* (1990) New York: Routledge, p. 251

<sup>230</sup> Which he did in 138 times, according to Litovitz, Marchese, and Reilly, D. “Breaking down Bob Dylan’s Longstanding Love of Cover Songs” *vulture.com* (available online) It also includes a quote by Bob Dylan (1991) in which the artist explains that there are sufficient songs in their music history to cover, "As a matter of fact, if nobody wrote any songs from this day on, the world ain't gonna suffer for it. Nobody cares. There are enough songs for people to listen to if they want to listen to songs. For every man, woman, and child on earth, they could be sent, probably, each of them, a hundred records, and never be repeated. There are enough songs. Unless someone's gonna come along with a pure heart and has something to say. That's a different story. But as far as songwriting, any idiot could do it. If you see me do it, any idiot could do it. [*Laughs.*] It's just not that difficult of a thing.”

<sup>231</sup> As cited in Margulis, Elizabeth Hellmuth. *On Repeat: How Music Plays the Mind*. (2014)

<sup>232</sup> As cited in Maxwell, 2014: 3129

<sup>233</sup> In particular, the concept of “noise” –not just as sound but as concentrated information– is related to postmodern chaos due to the infinite meanings and the multiple references it contains. It makes the message so undetermined that it is hard for the interpreter to choose between this or that idea. The same happens with his songs and the infinite possibilities they enhance under their apparently simple melodic structures.

<sup>234</sup> As cited in Marjorie Perloff “The silence that is not silence: Acoustic art in Samuel Beckett’s *Embers*”

<sup>235</sup> Note that this thesis refers to Poetics like the science that studies arts and literature. As long as songs make use of words, those words and their discursive means can easily get into the realm of literature. In literature, many other discourses join forces in the sake of an emotional understanding more than a specific rationale.

<sup>236</sup> He was always a great communicator, although his interlocutor changes. Like it happened during his catholic period. Even though he would never get an answer back from his public, he directs his words to God, to an angel, to Christ.

<sup>237</sup> Rachel Giora, professor of linguistics in the University of Tel Aviv writes about psycholinguistics and neurolinguistics in her title *On Our Mind: Salience, Context, and Figurative Language* 2003, Oxford: O.U.P and she refers to the article Roediger & Challis, B.H. (1992) “Effects of exact repetition and conceptual repetition on free recall and primed word-fragment completion” from the *Journal of Experimental Psychology, Learning, Memory, and Cognition* 18, 3-14

<sup>238</sup> This study has presented some of these in the section The Aesthetics of Repetition in Bob Dylan’s music as inscribed in the context of music reproduction and the consequences of this (page 320)

<sup>239</sup> As cited in Moore, Allan F. "The Persona Environment Relation in Recorded Song." (2005)

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<sup>240</sup> "Silva Rhetoricae" (rhetoric.byu.edu)

<sup>241</sup> A phrase that the John Keats used in a letter of correspondence to his brother in order to describe the following situation, "I had not a dispute but a disquisition with Dilke upon various subjects; several things dove-tailed in my mind, and at once it struck me what quality went to form a Man of Achievement, especially in Literature, and which Shakespeare possessed so enormously—I mean Negative Capability, that is, when a man is capable of being in uncertainties, mysteries, doubts, without any irritable reaching after fact and reason" (Keats, John (1899). *The Complete Poetical Works and Letters of John Keats, Cambridge Edition*. Houghton, Mifflin and Company. p. 277 as cited in Wikipedia.org "Negative Capability")

<sup>242</sup> William Blake's "Leaves of Grass" is echoed here: "Well, the leaves a rustlin' in the wood – thing are fallin' off of the shelf" ("Lonesome Day Blues", 2001)

<sup>243</sup> *Bob Dylan: Letras* Manuel Izquierdo y José Moreno, (Trans.) Barcelona: Global Rhythm Press, 2011

<sup>244</sup> "Word, Dialogue and the Novel" *Desire in Language: A Semiotic Approach to Literature and Art*. Leon S. Roudiez (Ed. ) Thomas Gora et al. (Trans.) New York: Columbia UP (1977) 64-91 As cited in Maria Jesús Martínez Alfaro, "Intertextuality: Origins and Development of the Concept" *Atlantis* Vol. 18 No. 1 / 2 (June-December 1996)

<sup>245</sup> As cited in Wilentz, 2010: 197

<sup>246</sup> In *The Anxiety of Influence: A Theory of Poetry* (1997), the scholar Harold Bloom explains how inspiration is driven by previous artists and important predecessors. "Poetic Influence--when it involves two strong, authentic poets--always proceeds by a misreading of the prior poet, an act of creative correction that is actually and necessarily a misinterpretation. The history of fruitful poetic influence, which is to say the main traditions of Western poetry since the Renaissance, is a history of anxiety and self-saving caricature of distortion, of perverse, willful revisionism without which modern poetry as such could not exist." (1997: 30) As it is explained by Bloom, this aspect and its good poetic craft can make an author authentic.

<sup>247</sup> Lott, E. *Love & Theft: Blackface Minstrelsy and the American Working Class* (2013) New York: Oxford University Press

<sup>248</sup> As cited in Margotin and Guesdon, 2015: 10791

<sup>249</sup> "Description" in Greek. An ekphrastic poem is a vivid description of a scene or, more commonly, a work of art. Through the imaginative act of narrating and reflecting on the "action" of a painting or sculpture, the poet may amplify and expand its meaning. (Poetry Foundation, last retrieved 31/03/2017 from <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/resources/learning/glossary-terms/detail/ekphrasis>)

<sup>250</sup> Released in *Biograph* (1985) New York: Columbia.

<sup>251</sup> As cited in Østrem, Eyolf. (n.d.) "Tangled Up In Tangled Up In Blue" about what Dylan said during a concert in Seattle, 1978.

<sup>252</sup> Retrieved from <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Coyote> (31/03/2017)

<sup>253</sup> Bob Dylan Interview by Nora Ephron & Susan Edmiston (1965) as cited in Sean Wilentz, 2010: 138

<sup>254</sup> As cited in David Dalton, 2012: 100.

<sup>255</sup> Marcel, Gabriel "Bergsonism in Music" in *Reflection on Art*, ed. Suzanne K. Langer, Oxford University Press, New York 1961, p. 147 As cited in Meltzer's *Aesthetics of Rock* (1970: 121)

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<sup>256</sup> From the Latin meaning history, word, poem.

<sup>257</sup> As cited in Yaffe, D. 2004: 114

<sup>258</sup> As explained in *The New Orleans Advocate* April 20, 2016, retrieved 30/04/2016

<sup>259</sup> As cited in Yaffe, 2011: 88 (Lott, 5)

<sup>260</sup> Retrieved from [http://perseus.uchicago.edu/perseus-  
cgi/citequery3.pl?dbname=PerseusLatinTexts&getid=1&query=Ov.%20Met.%2011.1](http://perseus.uchicago.edu/perseus/cgi/citequery3.pl?dbname=PerseusLatinTexts&getid=1&query=Ov.%20Met.%2011.1)

<sup>261</sup> Jacobs, Rodger "Rudy Wurlitzer, Bob Dylan, Bloody Sam, and the Jordano Del Muerto." *Pop Matters*, July 30, 2009.

<sup>262</sup> As cited in Margotin and Guesdon, 2015: 8056

<sup>263</sup> My hypothesis is that Dylan never stopped exploring this myth because it proved convenient for his search of the ideal of authenticity –as he developed it from the Existentialist philosophy and the folk revival. Based in the Beat pioneers, who were writers without limits, criminality, and immorality –as considered by the puritanism of the American society, were his main attraction. All these characters would bring him the opportunity to investigate another point of view, another identity:

(...) the "principles and values" that folk music portrayed were "archaic" because, in folk's general focus on liminal figures from American frontiers, the "outlaw woman, super thugs, demon lovers and gospel truths", and the "Stagger Lees, Pretty Polly and John Henrys" Dylan found a window into predominantly pre-modern epistemologies, persisting well into modernity in the forgotten borderlands and on the rural routes of America.

(McKenna, T. "The Archaic Revival" as cited in Maxwell, 2014: 3279)

<sup>264</sup> A bootleg dating from 1988 by allmusic.com

<sup>265</sup> This element alludes to his restless aspirations and translates his images to a typical American setting, like that of the Beat poetry and fiction that came before him.

<sup>266</sup> San Francisco Press Conference (Dec. 1965) in "Bob Dylan: San Francisco Press Conference (Dec. 1965) 1/6" <https://youtu.be/DcPoZZVm3Dk> last retrieved on 18 March 2017.

<sup>267</sup> The music critic also listed a number of themes that "have long absorbed him: apocalypse, personal or societal; identity; the hero's quest for love; knowledge; redemption; liberation." (Shelton, 2011: 991)

<sup>268</sup> Dylan declared, "Kipling, Shaw, Thomas Mann, Pearl Buck, Albert Camus, Hemingway. These giants of literature whose works are taught in the schoolroom, housed in libraries around the world and spoken of in reverent tones have always made a deep impression. That I now join the names on such a list is truly beyond words" as cited by Green, "Read Bob Dylan's Nobel Prize in Literature Banquet Speech"

RollingStone Dec 10, 2016, [rollingstone.com](http://rollingstone.com) (available online)

<sup>269</sup> Edited by W R Benet, © 1965 by Thomas Y Crowell Company

<sup>270</sup> Page 213.

<sup>271</sup> J. Alfred Prufrock the protagonist of the decadent love poem by T. S. Eliot, "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" (1915)

<sup>272</sup> Dylan himself is quoted in Scaduto's biography explicitly saying, "people shouldn't look to me for answers" (1973: 6816)

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- <sup>273</sup> Thomas Paine (1738- 1809) One of the various nicknames of the city, a reference to the city's predominance in arts, politics, finance and media. (Wikipedia.com)
- <sup>274</sup> All these referents would disappear from his discography very soon because as soon as he was abandoning the folk revival movement, these were less and less frequent to see. The last ones were "Bob Dylan's 115<sup>th</sup> Dream" and "Outlaw Blues", both belonging to 1965 *Bringing It All Back Home*.
- <sup>275</sup> Guthrie, W. (1947). Talking Centralia. In *Long Ways to Travel The Unreleased Folkways Masters, 1944-1949*. Washington: Smithsonian Folkways Recordings. (1995).
- <sup>276</sup> ---. (1963). Talking Columbia. In *Asch Recordings, Vol. 3: Hard Travelin'*. Washington: Smithsonian Folkways Recordings. (1999).
- <sup>277</sup> ---. (1960). Talking Dust Bowl Blues. In *Dust Bowl Ballads*. Washington: Smithsonian Folkways Recordings. (2004).
- <sup>278</sup> ---. (). Talking Fishing Blues. (1961). In *Asch Recordings, Vol. 1: This Land Is Your Land*. Washington: Smithsonian Folkways Recordings. (1999).
- <sup>279</sup> Woody Guthrie. Talkin' Subway. (1961). In *Woody Guthrie's American Song [Original Cast]* Woody Guthrie Publications, Inc. & TRO-Ludlow Music, Inc. (BMI) (1996).
- <sup>280</sup> New York City. In *My Name is New York*. (1947). [Nora Guthrie and other artists] New York: Woody Guthrie Publications, Inc. & Shake Sugaree (2014).
- <sup>281</sup> Michael Alexander wrote about, "how profoundly Pound wished to reclaim for poetry areas which the lyric tradition lost to the novel in the nineteenth century—areas of social, public, and cultural life" in (1981) *The Poetic Achievement of Ezra Pound* Los Angeles: California University Press, p. 121 (as cited in poetryfoundation.org "Ezra Pound")
- <sup>282</sup> As explained in "The Law of Excluded Middle" on The Stanford University. An Introduction to Philosophy, last retrieved 21/03/2017 from <https://web.stanford.edu/~bobonich/glances%20ahead/IV.excluded.middle.html>
- <sup>283</sup> As cited in Orr, 2017.
- <sup>284</sup> As cited by Niles, 1999: 4
- <sup>285</sup> Keats, J. "Ode on a Grecian Urn" retrieved from <https://www.poetryfoundation.org> 23/03/2017
- <sup>286</sup> In Dyan' Liner Notes (1963)