

BOB DYLAN

INTRODUCTION



- Bob Dylan is one of the most influential singer-songwriters of the 20th century whose career began in the early 1960s with songs that were about social and political issues
- He was born Robert Allen Zimmerman on May 24, 1941, in Duluth, Minnesota
- He took his pseudonym from the Welsh poet Dylan Thomas
- He was awarded the 2016 Nobel Prize in Literature 'for having created new poetic expressions within the great American song tradition'.

SONGS' THEMES



- Travelling
- Dreams and the supernatural
- Death
- Ignorance
- The simple truth
- War
- Religion



TRAVELLING



Many of his songs are about highways, the open road, making stops at unfamiliar towns, and the feeling of relying on one's luck.

- *Well, I'm standin' on a highway
tryin' to bum a ride, tryin' to bum a ride
tryin' to bum a ride.*

“Standind on the Highway” 1962

- *Well, I been gamblin' so long
Lord, I ain't got much more to lose.*

“Down the Highway” 1963



DREAMS AND THE SUPERNATURAL



- Dylan often uses occasional dreams or nightmares; as well as supernatural situations in order to represent a distressed or dreamlike reality
- Some of these songs tend to get comically absurd until one realizes Dylan's sad commentary on the social horror is surrounding him.

*• While riding on a train goin' west
I fell asleep for to take my rest
I dreamed a dream that made me sad
Concerning myself and the first few friends I had.
“Bob Dylan's Dream” 1963*



DEATH



- Dylan often sings of death and graveyards which is his way to present the sorrow of the ages.
- In his songs men ask for death before their time, but sometimes death is unexpected and bizarre like in “Pretty Polly” (1968).

*He pierced her in the heart and lifeblood did run
He pierced her in the heart and lifeblood did flow
Deep in her grave Pretty Polly did go.*



IGNORANCE



- When Dylan sings about people he means ignorant people, hostile people, people who march, people who kill, but most of all people who turn their head when reality faces them.

- *There's a-mighty many people all millin' all around
They'll kick you when you're up
and knock you when you're down.*

“Hard Times in New York Town” 1965



THE SIMPLE TRUTH



- With Dylan, the solution to humanity's problems is always right in front of us, and ignorance sometimes is the only thing keeping us away from it.

- *Yes, 'n' how many times can a man turn his head,
Pretending he just doesn't see?*

The answer, my friend, is blowin' in the wind,

The answer in blowin' in the wind.

“Blowin' in the Wind” 1962



WAR



In his songs, Dylan represents his changing time and anti-war movements.

“Masters of War” is an attack on warfare industry and its leaders of the army, responsible for the death of a lot of soldiers.

*You fasten the triggers
For the others to fire
Then you set back and watch
When the death count gets higher
You hide in your mansion
As young people's blood
Flows out their bodies
And is buried in the mud*



RELIGION



Born a Jew, but he declared as a born-again Christian in 1979, Dylan has often dealt with spiritual and religious matters. In an interview he said: *“I don’t adhere to rabbis, preachers, evangelists, all of that. I’ve learned more from the songs than I’ve learned from any of this kind of entity.”*

*Sometimed I feel so low-down and disgusted
Can't help but wonder what's happenin' to my companions
Are they lost or are they found?
Have they counted the cost it'll take to bring down
All the earthly principles they're gonna have to abandon
There's a slow, slow train comin' up around the bend.
“Slow train comin'” 1979*



DIFFERENT GENRE OF MUSIC



Inspired by Little Richard, Woody Guthrie, Robert Johnson, and Hank Williams, Dylan has amplified and personalized different musical genres from folk, blues, and country to gospel, rock and roll, even jazz. Dylan can play different musical instruments: the guitar, the keyboards, and the harmonica, too.



ARE BOB DYLAN'S SONGS POEMS?



- His songs can be considered poems or ballads because there is a particular meaning through the use of figures of speech.
- Some Dylanologists would agree that lyrics, in order to be classified as poetry, have to affect people's hearts and minds.
- His lyrics are about important themes such as war, civil rights, human dignity, love and death.



TECHNICAL DEVICES



- Metaphor:

Your old road is rapidly agin “The Times They Are A-Changin”

- Anaphora:

You that build all the guns/You that build the death planes
“Masters of War”

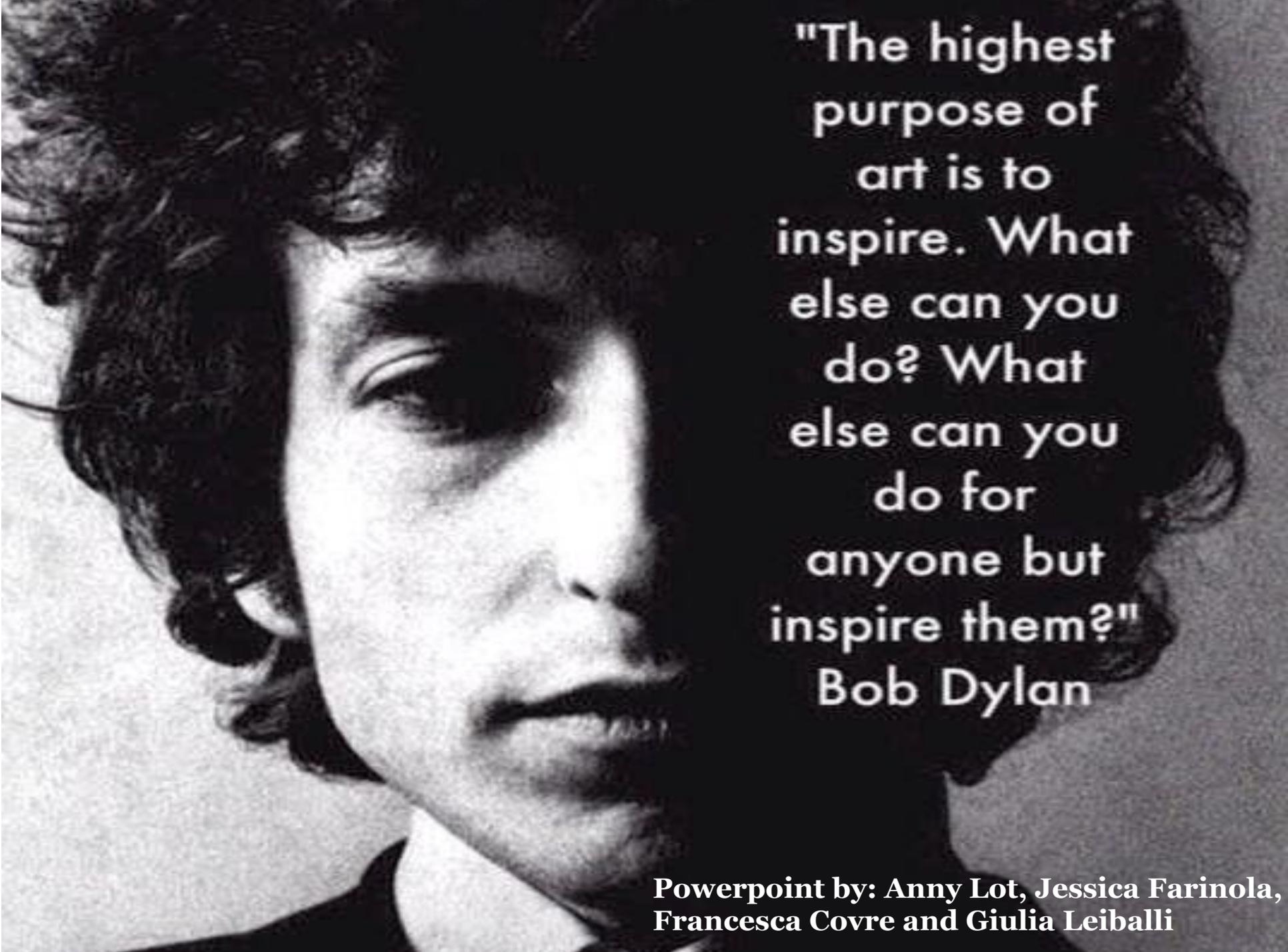
- Alliteration and Rhyme:

Darkness at the break of noon/Shadows even the silver spoon
“It's Alright Ma, I'm Only Bleeding”

- Simile:

“Like a Rolling Stone”



A black and white close-up portrait of Bob Dylan, looking slightly to the right. The lighting is dramatic, with strong shadows on the right side of his face. The background is dark and out of focus.

"The highest
purpose of
art is to
inspire. What
else can you
do? What
else can you
do for
anyone but
inspire them?"
Bob Dylan

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