

Southern New Hampshire University

Dylan and Mailer - The Times Are Still A-Changin'

Stephen Pelzer

LIT-515-Q1605 20th Century American Literature 23TW1

Professor Julie O'Connor-Colvin

30 October 2023

Thesis: In comparing Norman Mailer's essay *The White Negro* (first published in 1957) and three songs by Bob Dylan: *Blowin' in the Wind*, *A Hard Rain's A-Gonna Fall* (both first released in 1963), and *The Times They Are a-Changin'* (first released in 1964), to evaluate whether Mailer's essay or Dylan's songs had the lasting impact in conveying the message of a need for cultural and systemic change, it is the works of Dylan which have most endured: thanks to the nature of the communication (music), the accessibility of the message (they are easily remembered and are "portable"), and their ability to impact a mass audience, extending their influence.

To fully understand the impact that Norman Mailer and Bob Dylan had on the Beat generation and throughout history, it is helpful to understand the following:

1. The social and political environment in the United States that helped give rise to the Beat movement.
2. Real life in the mid-1950s to mid-1960s as compared to the fantasy life that was shown in popular media at the time.
3. Who Norman Mailer was and a description of his body of work.
4. Who Bob Dylan is and a description of his body of work.
5. How over six decades later, the works of both authors examined in this paper have withstood the viewpoint of history.

The United States in the post-War years

In 2017, the lesser-known Broadway musical "Bandstand" told the story of a group of returning soldiers facing readjusting to civilian life; they all had suffered different war-related traumas.

The opening song, "Just Like it was Before" expresses their need to return to something representing normal, and the harsh reality that now "normal" must be redefined.

“We’re on a winning streak,
and it’ll stay that way.
We’re on an everlasting holiday.
And any bad news you can just ignore...
That’s what they tell me.
Why not believe it?
They want illusion and they achieve it.
We all relive the past,
we never want to leave it.
The world is ending.
And we’re pretending.” (Oberacker and Taylor 8:07)

The total number of fatalities suffered by the United States exceeded three-hundred thousand with nearly six-hundred thousand wounded. There were also three-hundred seventy-eight thousand workers in war-related industries who suffered a permanent partial disability, with more than seventy-five thousand Americans killed or permanently disabled while working in those industries. (Jennings) When WWII ended and the surviving soldiers returned home, a majority of the United States population wanted to be optimistic about the future, and they did not want to hear about anything negative. They felt they had been traumatized enough from both WWII and the Great Depression earlier and wanted to try to escape in some way. “The postwar world also presented Americans with a number of problems and issues. Flushed with their success against Germany and Japan in 1945, most Americans initially viewed their place in the postwar world with optimism and confidence. But within two years of the end of the war, new challenges and perceived threats had arisen to erode that confidence. By 1948, a new form of international tension had emerged-Cold War-between the United States and its allies and the Soviet Union and its allies. In the next 20 years, the Cold War spawned many tensions between the two

superpowers abroad and fears of Communist subversion gripped domestic politics at home.” (Library of Congress) Instead of facing the reality that the world was changing fast, and nothing was going to stay the same, a majority of Americans wished to ignore that reality and create their own. This reality was characterized by materialism, refusal to question the government, and an almost frantic depiction of an idealized lifestyle.

Life in the 50's and 60s and depictions in media

If there was one thing that defined the 1950s, it was television. For the first time, an image of America appeared in living rooms. The perfect family were the Cleavers from “Leave it to Beaver”. According to shows like this we lived in a land of opportunity which showcased ordinary Americans winning thousands on game shows. Hazel the maid prepared dinner. The musical *Bye Bye Birdie* even describes watching the Ed Sullivan show as a sacred experience in a number called “Hymn for a Sunday Evening”. But television also brought the harsh realities of the real world by showing the working poor in *The Honeymooners*, prejudice in *The Twilight Zone*, and the impact of greed on ordinary people in the Quiz Show scandal. The refusal to question the government was “eroded” when Edward R. Murrow, in a live broadcast, tore down Senator Joseph McCarthy’s efforts to control people with the fear of communism around every corner. There were two worlds existing in this time: the fantasy world where everything was presented as perfect and the ideal way to live contrasting with the real world where there were many problems.

The anger and confusion which was part of the reality of the post-war years was shown in a number of films. Some veterans returned from the war as adrenaline junkies, forming auto racing and motorcycle clubs. Films like “*The Wild One*” showed motorcycle riders taking over a small town. The Broadway musical and later film “*West Side Story*” faced head-on some of the

harsh realities of being young in America, the problems of early life in the 50s, and racism. The groundbreaking drama “Rebel Without a Cause” starring James Dean, who passed away in a car crash before its release, told the story about disillusioned teens in the 1950s from their perspective. The movie shows how the three main characters are disillusioned by the ideals of their times, the feeling that their parents do not understand them, and the feeling that they can only rely on each other, even forming an alternative family consisting of other teens. The teens exhibit thrill-seeking behavior (including drag racing) and alienation from mainstream society because as James Dean put it in an anguished scream, “you’re tearing me apart.” Perhaps better than any other movie, it explains what it felt like to be young in the post-WWII and Cold War years.

Jack Kerouac once said in *On the Road*, “My whole wretched life swam before my weary eyes, and I realized no matter what you do, it’s bound to be a waste of time in the end, so you might as well go mad.” (Kerouac) The prime beliefs of the Beat generation were shaped by “the historic events that began with America’s dropping the atomic bomb on Japan to bring World War II to an end, and the political ramifications of the ensuing Cold War and wave of anti-Communist hysteria that followed in the United States in the late 1940s and the 1950s.” (Charters xvi-xvii) Even though the country had just gotten through WWII, the Korean War was already gearing up to be the next war machine to claim the lives of young men and bring the survivors home traumatized or even worse. The members of the Beat generation sought solutions, but also sought escapism into a “live for today” mentality. Reflecting back on what Jack Kerouac said, he meant that at some point your life will flash before your eyes, and once people realize how meaningless it is, the only options are to “live for today” or do something about it.

Enter the writers of the Beat generation. Jack Kerouac is said to have coined the term “Beat generation” in his work *On the Road*, and the Beat writers covered a wide range of concerns of younger adults and older teens in the 50’s and early 60s. Allen Ginsberg wrote his piece “Howl” as an angry outcry against a destructive and abusive society which was taking the lives of the next generation. William S. Burroughs wrote about drug culture in his novel *Naked Lunch*, again lamenting the damage and loss. Lawrence Ferlinghetti asserted that art should be accessible by everybody in a new egalitarianism – the War would have made more sense if society equality was increased. Gary Snyder’s poetry was heavily influenced by Zen Buddhism, a sign of a search for better answers to the problems of the present and the damage of the past. Gregory Corso was described by Ginsberg as “an awakener of youth” – he was one writer who could have been setting the stage for Bob Dylan. Dylan wrote many songs that talked about the world as it was then and how it could change for the better. His lyrics seemed to take into account all of the problems identified by many other Beat writers and suggest a plan of action.

Norman Mailer: Rebel Inventing a Cause

Singular among the Beat writers, Norman Mailer was perhaps the most difficult to sum up. Norman Mailer often used a form of journalism called New Journalism, “combining the imaginative subjectivity of literature with the more objective qualities of journalism.” He also coined the term “hipster”, urging people to educate themselves about the issues rather than automatically adopt a radical manifesto simply because it was trendy. Ironically, that is exactly what Mailer did in writing his 1957 piece “The White Negro”. Mailer was, to put it mildly, complicated. “[N]o career in our literature has been at once so brilliant, varied, controversial, public, prolific, and misunderstood.” (Lennon) commenting on the *American Masters* profile of Norman Mailer, J. Michael Lennon compares Mailer to Edgar Allan Poe as someone both

celebrated and reviled. Mailer had invented his own narrative form and reported on six presidential campaigns. The fascinating thing about Mailer is that sometimes, his admirers and his critics are the same person, depending on the work they are reading. “Words have no power to impress the mind without the exquisite horror of their reality.” (Poe) Norman Mailer’s reality had its own horrors.

Mailer’s horrors included service in the South Pacific starting in 1944. His experiences inspired his first novel, *The Naked and the Dead*, and some critics ranked it among the best war novels ever written. His second novel was the exact opposite. The title was *Barbary Shore*, which told the struggle between capitalism and socialism. Whereas everybody loved his first novel, everybody hated his second. If the phrase identity crisis ever applied to anybody, it was Norman Mailer. For much of the 50s, he drifted and was either frequently drunk or stoned, and often both. He also affected a number of odd accents including British, Irish, gangster, and Texan. “At different points in his life Mr. Mailer was a prodigious drinker and drug taker, a womanizer, a devoted family man, a would-be politician who ran for mayor of New York, a “feuder and short-fused brawler, who with the slightest provocation would happily engage in head-butting, arm wrestling and punch-throwing.” (McGrath) He was not just Everyman – he was Everyone all at the same time.

Mailer easily could have fit into any motorcycle gang of the 50s or even been an older member of the Jets from *West Side Story*. How he developed (or went backward) from being the favorite child of an intellectual Jewish couple to the frantic writer who seriously wounded his second wife with a penknife to the dozen other personalities he tried throughout his life might have been the result of his brief war experience, the substances he experimented with, or from someone or something he kept to himself. It is impossible to know for sure.

It is known, however, that in 1957 at age 34, he seemed to be a “rebel without a cause”, part of a group of writers staring at a society tearing itself apart. His reaction to this was to write “The White Negro”. By this point in his life, he had already founded *The Village Voice* and began developing his style, which McGrath described as “a Greenwich Village of existentialism, which argued that the truly with-it, blacks and jazz musicians especially, led more authentic lives and enjoyed better orgasms.” (McGrath) It was an epic opus for what reality should be – the Gospel according to Norman.

Norman Mailer also won the Pulitzer Prize twice: first in 1969 for *The Armies of the Night*, which was about an anti-Vietnam War rally in which protestors marched on the Pentagon. Mailer was part of that same protest march. In the book the Mailer character was drunk during the protest day. In real life, he was arrested during the protest, and drunk during the press conference. The book reviews the motivations for the United States presence in Vietnam and presents the war as a capitalist plot to make money and infiltrate the American culture with technology as well as providing Christian America with an excuse to demonstrate pity. He won the Pulitzer a second time in 1980 for *The Executioner's Song*, which was based on the execution of Gary Gilmore, who lived the type of lifestyle Mailer emphasized as existentialist and flat, without emotions, and even without intention. There is not even a last plea for life or sense of experiencing anything. Gilmore's last words before his execution were “let's do it;” as if it was a day like any other. The first novel was a plea to save people from the experiences of the next war – the prior war had scarred Mailer and shaped him and the experiences that made him decide to write “The White Negro”. *The Executioner's Song* is about a person who lived like he suggested in “The White Negro” and therefore ended up empty. His two prize-winning novels turned “The White Negro” full circle.

When Marlon Brando was asked in his early movie *The Wild One* what he was rebelling against, he answered, “Whaddaya got?” In its nine-thousand words, “The White Negro” “tapped into an aspect of American society-the growing alienation of white Americans from the dominant sociological and cultural trends-that few writers at the time had recognized.” (Dreier) It was also “about the efforts of some white ‘hipsters’ to appropriate Black culture and style.” (Dreier) When Mailer first described the term “hipster”, he talked about how many felt a growing sense of alienation and opposition to white middle class conformist America. He called it a version of existentialism attempting to cope with how irrational, violent, and soul-killingly destructive post-war America was, disgusted that the Holocaust and concentration camps can happen in “advanced society.” This stance was also used as a coping mechanism with the impending threat of atomic war. Mailer felt the solution was a new existentialism, as exemplified by the Negro. “Mailer wrote that Black Americans had to deal with the worst aspects of American society every day, especially violence, poverty, and overt discrimination by cops, employers, banks, the media, and other institutions. By embracing some aspects of Black urban culture-including jazz, marijuana, language, and what would later be called “cool”-white hipsters were saying that they didn’t buy into the dominant cultural and/or political conformity of the period, including consumerism, suburbanization, the Cold War, TV culture, dull public schools, and large factory-like universities.” (Dreier)

Bob Dylan’ Rebel Promoting a Cause

If any quote sums up Bob Dylan, it is this one: “You’re going to die. You’re going to be dead. It could be 20 years, it could be tomorrow, anytime. So am I. I mean, we’re just going to be gone. The world’s going to go on without us. All right now. You do your job in the face of that, and how seriously you take yourself you decide for yourself.” This shows that unlike Norman

Mailer, Bob Dylan was not a self-important person. Mailer's work indicates a sense of desperation for attention and recognition, while Dylan's work indicates a sense of impact and becoming one with his work. Mailer was one of Dylan's major detractors, once saying, "if Dylans's a poet, I'm a basketball player." Robert Shelton is the New York Times reporter who discovered Dylan in a Greenwich Village coffee house in 1961, describing him as "a cross between a choir boy and a beatnik."

Bob Dylan was born in 1941, too young to be a baby boomer but a full eighteen years younger than Norman Mailer. He admired Little Richard, Elvis Presley, and especially Woody Guthrie. Guthrie was hospitalized in New York when Dylan arrived in the city, and Dylan visited him regularly at the hospital. Dylan began performing in coffee houses and folk clubs in the village, writing songs at an astonishing pace, including a tribute to Guthrie titled, "Song to Woody." He was recognized as a new talent after a *New York Times* review – Dylan was only 21.

The three songs by Dylan mentioned in this paper were very early in his career. "Blowin' in the Wind" and "A Hard Rain's A-Gonna Fall" were both first released on his 1963 album *The Freewheelin' Bob Dylan* and his next album *The Times They Are A-Changin'*, containing the title song, was released in 1964. All three songs were vital to the Civil Rights and anti-war movements; these three significant songs were completed by the time Dylan was only twenty-three. They were only the first songs in a body of work which reflected Bob Dylan's lifelong commitment to addressing issues through the poetry of music.

Dylan felt that his music was the most important part of his life. One particular section in "Blowin' in the Wind" asks,

Yes, and how many times can a man turn his head
and pretend that he just doesn't see?

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

Dylan did not turn his head; he wrote about everything. His “instinctive ability to be in tune with his times” (Dreier) propelled him to fame just when teenage culture was ready “for more than functional dance music or the quiddities of romance.” (Dreier) During the 60s, Dylan grew increasingly frustrated with what he regarded as “pious sloganeering and doctrinaire leftist politics of the folk milieu.” (Sisario) He had done a number of “protest” songs before he wrote the main three as well – each of them shining a light on the need for real change. He wrote “The Ballad of Emmett Till”, about the teenage African American boy killed in Mississippi for whistling at a white woman; “Talkin’ John Birch Society Blues” poked fun at the right-wing organization; “Let Me Die in My Footsteps” critiques the hysteria of the Cold War; “Oxford Town” addresses the riots surrounding James Meredith becoming the first black student admitted to the University of Mississippi; and “Paths of Victory” talked about the Civil Rights marches. In 1963, he also wrote “The Lonesome Death of Hattie Carroll”, about the death of a black barmaid early that year at the hands of a wealthy white man; “Who Killed Davey Moore”, about the black boxer who died after a very brutal match; “Talkin’ World War III Blues” about the threat of nuclear annihilation; and “Masters of War”, which serves as a protest against the arms race. There was a great deal happening, and Dylan marked all of the events with his guitar and his vocals.

Much, if not all, of his subsequent life and career was a reaction to the pressures of 1965 and 1966, a great story tying with the James Dean myth of “flaring, doomed youth.” (Savage) Readers may also want to look at his life from then until the present, especially his large body of work during the 21st century, where he became “an avatar of reflective old age.” (Savage) This

shows that Dylan and his work are not timeless, but instead they belong to and are relevant in every era. It remains a living body of work.

Was Bob Dylan born at the right time, or would he have been a force for change in any time? That question may not have an answer, but it is obvious that in the 60s, he was indeed a powerful force for change, and this continues into the present-and the first three most successful songs of his early career were an essential part of that. In the over forty years since the iconic movie line “may the Force be with you” was first spoken, Dylan became his own Force: for change, awareness, reflection, and any reaction except for the apathy and “live for the moment” mindset which “The White Negro” suggested as the way to cope. Instead, his coping mechanism was to sing-and singing is rarely done alone.

Participation events – like marches and speech gatherings – were where Dylan’s music truly had a massive influence on other artists during the Civil Rights movement as well. “Blowin’ in the Wind” was sung by Peter Yarrow during the march from Selma to Montgomery and by Peter, Paul, and Mary at the Lincoln Memorial during the march on Washington, right before Martin Luther King Jr. delivered his famous “I Have a Dream” speech. At the same event, Dylan was there singing “The Times They Are A-Changin.” With these songs combined with his body of work about specific events and people affected by the struggle for equal rights in the 60s, he was not only a voice of the Civil Rights movement, but an inspiration for many other artists – quite an extraordinary achievement for a man only in his 20s.

Dylan, “choir boy and beatnick,” has constantly looked for ways to live the philosophy he put in his music to not only complain about the need for social change, but to do what every person can do to create that change. This mindset goes beyond the Civil Rights movement to include other causes that need champions. During his participation in the “We Are the World”

Live Aid recording, he suggested that American farmers be included in the benefits raised, possibly as a tribute to his idol Woody Guthrie). In response to this, Willie Nelson started Farm Aid, which has raised seventy million dollars since 1985. Surprisingly, he also released a Christmas album in 2009 titled “Christmas in the Heart”. That year, the proceeds from it fed 1.4 million families for the holidays. He has since pledged all the proceeds to organizations helping the homeless. The album has sold over sixty thousand copies to date. (Gill)

In 2016, Dylan became the first singer-songwriter to win the Nobel Prize for Literature, and the first American to win the award since Toni Morrison in 1993. The Swedish Academy says that he “has the status of an icon” and “his influence on contemporary music is profound.” (Sennero and Scrutton) Member Per Wastberg called him “probably the greatest living poet” (Sennero and Scrutton) and actually hoped Dylan’s Nobel lecture would be a concert. Writers including Stephen King, Joyce Carol Oates and Salman Rushdie celebrated Dylan as “the brilliant inheritor of the bardic tradition.” (Sisario, Alter, Chan). One person who never agreed with the press about Dylan’s impact however, was novelist Norman Mailer, who countered: “If Dylan’s a poet, I’m a basketball player.” (Sennero and Scrutton) Other critics include novelists Rabih Alameddine and Jodi Picoult and the websites *Pitchfork* and *Vice*.

Sara Danius, Permanent Secretary of the Nobel Academy, told a news conference there was “great unity” in deciding to give him the prize, even saying “the times they are a-changing, perhaps”. (Sisario, Alter, Chan) When Dylan won the award, it “dramatically redefined the boundaries of literature, setting off a debate about whether song lyrics have the same artistic value as poetry or novels.” (Sisario, Alter, Chan) Dylan had often put literary allusions into his music and cited the influence of poetry in his lyrics, referencing people like Arthur Rimbaud, Paul Verlaine, and Ezra Pound. He published his own poetry and prose as well, including his

1971 collection “Tarantula” and his memoir “Chronicles: Volume One” published in 2004. His collected lyrics from 1961-2012 were also published in late 2016 by Simon & Schuster.

For a long time, literary scholars debated whether Dylan’s lyrics could stand on their own as poetry, and a volume of academic work was devoted to parsing his music. In its 2006 edition, *The Oxford Book of American Poetry* included his song “Desolation Row”, and in 2009, Cambridge University Press released “*The Cambridge Companion to Bob Dylan*”, further cementing his reputation as a “brilliant literary stylist.” (Sisario, Alter, Chan) Former United States poet laureate Billy Collins argued Dylan deserved to not only be recognized as a songwriter, but a poet as well. “Most song lyrics don’t really hold up without the music, and they aren’t supposed to. Bob Dylan is in the 2 percent club of songwriters whose lyrics are interesting on the page even without the harmonica and the guitar and his very distinctive voice. I think he does qualify as poetry,” (Sisario, Alter, Chan) By giving the Nobel Prize to Dylan, the academy may also be recognizing the gap has closed between what is considered high art and creative forms that are more commercial. David Hajdu, music critic for *The Nation* who wrote extensively about Dylan and his contemporaries, says the old categories of high and low art have been collapsing for a long time and Dylan’s win makes it official.

In prior years, writers and publishers have grumbled how often the prize goes to obscure writers with clear political messages over more popular figures. By choosing someone so famous and so outside established literary traditions, however, the academy swung far into the other direction, giving prestige to a popular artist with plenty of prestige already. This is not the first time the academy stretched the definition of literature. In 1953, Winston Churchill received the prize as recognition of the literary qualities of his political speeches and, in the words of the academy, “brilliant oratory in defending exalted human values.” (Sisario, Alter, Chan) In 2015,

the prize was awarded to the Belarussian journalist Svetlana Alexievich. In an article about Dylan in the New York Review of Books published in 2010, Dylan was “increasingly frustrated with what he came to regard as the pious sloganeering and doctrinaire leftist politics of the folk milieu” and started writing “a kind of visionary nonsense verse, in which the rough, ribald, lawless America of the country’s traditional folk music collided with a surreal ensemble of characters from history, literature, legend, the Bible, and many other places besides.” (Sisario, Alter, Chan)

Mailer and Dylan: the opinion of history

Why is it that Mailer’s concepts from “The White Negro” have not endured while Bob Dylan’s lyrics have become an anthem for change in America? Maybe Dylan himself said it best,

“Come writers and critics
 Who prophesize with your pen
 And keep your eyes wide
 The chance won’t come again
 And don’t speak too soon
 For the wheel’s still in spin
 And there’s no tellin’ who
 That it’s namin’
 For the loser now
 Will be later to win
 For the times they are a-changin’” (Dylan)

According to Matthew Clair, who wrote about Norman Mailer and his fellow writer James Baldwin “for Mailer, life was a competition.” (Clair) He “felt superior in many ways (in comparison to much of the world, but not necessarily in comparison to one another – at least not in the beginning of their relationship). They were talented writers how lusted after fame. Perhaps this is where things fell apart. For Mailer, life was a competition.” (Clair) Mailer was constantly reinventing himself with accents and extreme experiences and it could be seen as bids to get attention. He could not grasp that the world was changing. (Clair) After “The White Negro”, he moved on to other works, always needing to be seen as essential to a movement – any movement. “The sour truth is that I am imprisoned with a perception which will settle for nothing less than making a revolution in the consciousness of our time.” (Kimball quoting Norman Mailer, *Advertisements for Myself*) No matter the concept, Mailer wanted credit for inventing it. In inventing the culture that he “promoted” in “The White Negro”, he floated an idea which, by the time of the Civil Rights movement, was ridiculously outdated. When blacks were struggling for equality among whites in society, Mailer was claiming that blacks were inherently prone to violence, focused on sex, and living only for the moment, and that whites would be happier if they did the same. That may be an interesting concept to debate but it can not be the basis an equality-centered movement is based. What Mailer was saying would have worked just as well for opponents of equal rights for blacks because of how they were portrayed and the fear of including them would inspire whites to the things Mailer described in “The White Negro”: action without consequences; hair-trigger violence; and resorting to sex rather than logic. The expiration date for this idea came when immaculately dressed Rosa Parks folded her white gloved hands and politely decided to give up her seat to a white man on a city bus.

While Mailer's words advocated "getting hip" to the darker side, Dylan's message was an inclusive force of light. "Dylan's songs, such as 'Blowin' in the Wind', 'The Times They Are a-Changin'', 'Subterranean Homesick Blues' and 'Like a Rolling Stone', captured a spirit of rebellion, dissent and independence." (Sennero and Scrutton) Long after the publicity of Mailer's shock value essay become boring, Bob Dylan's message expanded, and Dylan himself refused to have these songs treated as gimmicks reflecting the times in which they were written. Other artists found the message enduring, being recorded by people as varied as Joan Baez, Stevie Wonder, and Bruce Springsteen. Dylan himself was never limited to songs for his message. He used whatever tools he had to reach people and to inspire action. In "A Change is Gonna Come", Dylan sang about how his inspiration came from a wide variety of places and that he was crafting a universal message:

"I'm listening to Billy Joe Shaver

And I'm reading James Joyce

Some people they tell me

I've got the blood of the land in my voice" (Dylan)

While people bled during the Civil Rights movement and tried to save the blood of soldiers when they protested the Vietnam War, they were inspired by and sung these songs by Bob Dylan. This is what it truly means to be relevant and relating to all times and their stories. That is the true definition of "hip".

The job of the Beat generation was to look at the world the way it really was; to reject the fantasy image that was shown on television; and to reject the fear mongering that Senator McCarthy was feeding with the Red Scare. If there was a viewpoint that they rejected, it was

from a popular film during the war years, *The Wizard of Oz*. When people were told to blindly trust and “pay no attention to the man behind the curtain”, both Mailer and Dylan pulled back that curtain and exposed the world, but while Mailer’s work “The White Negro” was an epic lament about reality, Dylan’s work was an action plan to change that reality.

Throughout this paper, all the quotations have sent a message about the importance of art in encouraging people to see the world, but not to see it with fear. When Dylan won his Nobel, he said, “A poem is a naked person...some people say that I am a poet.” It is this exposure of his soul that is why Dylan’s work has become more significant over time than Mailer’s work because while Dylan always opened his soul for other people to see, even Norman Mailer did not know who Norman Mailer was.

Mailer held the attention of the world in 1959 when he published “The White Negro” and twice more when he published his two Pulitzer-winning works. Dylan, on the other hand, held the attention of the world every minute, and every time another performer sang his works and every time a marcher remembered his words, and that is why even in changing times, his works endure. While “the times they are a-changin’”, Bob Dylan’s works still belong. In his memoir “Chronicles: Volume One”, Dylan himself said, “Some people seem to fade away but when they are truly gone it’s like they didn’t fade away at all.”

Works Cited

Ahmed, Saeed. “Bob Dylan songs that changed the course of history (an incomplete list)”. *CNN Entertainment*, 13 October 2016, [Bob Dylan songs that changed the course of history \(an incomplete list\): CNN](#). Accessed 13 October 2023.

“Bob Dylan: No Direction Home.” *American Masters*. Dir. Martin Scorsese. PBS, 27 September 2005. Accessed 13 October 2023.

Clair, Matthew. "A Very Complex Thing: The Battleground between James Baldwin and Norman Mailer." *The Diverse Arts Project*, 10 July 2012, [The battleground between james baldwin and norman mailer: harvard.edu](#). Accessed 13 October 2023.

Connelly, Joe and Mosher, Bob (Creators). *Leave it to Beaver (TV Show)*. Revue Studios, 1957-1963.

Cooke, Sam. "A Change is Gonna Come." December 1964.

Didion, Joan. Joan Didion's Review of "The Executioner's Song" by Norman Mailer. *New York Times*. 7 October 1979. Accessed at [www.bookmarks.reviews](#).

Dreier, Peter. "The Political Bob Dylan." *Dissent Magazine*, May 24, 2011, https://www.dissentmagazine.org/online_articles/the-political-bob-dylan/ Accessed 15 October 2023.

"Dylan: A Riddle Wrapped in a Musician." ABC News. 12 February 2009. [www.abcnews.go.com](#).

Dylan, Bob. "Blowin' in the Wind." *The Freewheelin' Bob Dylan*. Columbia Records, 1963.

Dylan, Bob. "A Hard Rain's A-Gonna Fall." *The Freewheelin' Bob Dylan*. Columbia Records, 1963.

Dylan, Bob. "The Times They Are A-Changin'." *The Times They Are A-Changin'*. Columbia Records, 1964.

Gill, Andy and Shepherd, Jack. "70 reasons why Bob Dylan is the most important figure in pop-culture history". *The Independent*, revised 13 October 2016, [70 reasons why Bob Dylan is the most important figure in pop-culture history: The Independent](#). Accessed 13 October 2023.

Gobran, Joseph. "10 Incredibly Powerful Edgar Allan Poe Quotes That Will Leave You Amazed". 11 July 2019. [10 Incredibly Powerful Edgar Allan Poe Quotes That Will Leave You Amazed - Bookstr](#). Accessed 30 October 2023.

Kerouac, Jack. *On the Road*. New York City, Viking Press, 1957.

Kimball, Roger. "Norman Mailer's American Dream." *The New Criterion*. Vol 42 No. 3, November 1997. Accessed 26 October 2023 at [www.newcriterion.com/issues/1997/11/norman-mailers-american-dream](#).

Lennon, J. Michael. "Norman Mailer: Mailer on Mailer." *American Masters*, PBS. 4 October 2000. Accessed October 29 at www.pbs.org.

Library of Congress. The Post War United States 1945-1968. <https://www.loc.gov/classroom-materials/united-states-history-primary-source-timeline/post-war-united-states-1945-1968/overview/>. Accessed 15 October 2023.

Library of Congress. West Side Story: Birth of a Classic. Accessed 25 October 2023 at www.loc.gov.

Mailer, Norman. "The White Negro (Fall 1957)." *Dissent Magazine*, 20 June 2007, [The White Negro \(Fall 1957\): Dissent Magazine](#). Accessed 13 October 2023.

Marx, Gary T. "The White Negro and the Negro White." *Phylon*, Vol. 28, No.2. Summer 1967. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/273559?typeAccessWorkflow=login>. Accessed 15 October 2023.

McGrath, Charles. "Norman Mailer, Towering Writer With Matching Ego, Dies at 84." *New York Times*, 10 November 2007. [Norman Mailer, Towering Writer With Matching Ego, Dies at 84: The New York Times \(nytimes.com\)](#). Accessed 13 October 2023.

"Norman Mailer: Mailer on Mailer." *American Masters*. Dir. Christine Le Goff and Tamar Hacker. PBS, October 2000. Accessed 13 October 2023.

Oberacker, Richard and Taylor, Robert. "Just Like It Was Before". *Bandstand Original Broadway Cast Recording*. Broadway Records, 2017. YouTube. [Just Like It Was Before - YouTube](#). Accessed 5 November 2023.

Odell, Jonathan. "The White Negro (the essay) a story." *African American Registry*. 24 February [no year given]. Accessed 21 October 2023 at www.aaregistry.org.

Parker, Nicholas. "Where to Start with the Beat Generation." *New York Public Library*. 10 March 2017. Accessed 24 October 2023 at www.nypl.org.

Pinckney, Darryl. "My Norman Mailer Problem-and Ours." *The Nation*, 7 March 2022, <https://www.thenation.com/article/culture/norman-mailer-white-negro/>. Accessed 13 October 2023.

Ray, Nicholas (Director) *Rebel Without a Cause*. Warner Brothers Pictures. 1955.

Savage, Jon. "The Darker Side of Bob Dylan." *The New Statesman*. 30 June 2021. Accessed October 23, 2023 at www.newstatesman.com.

Sennero, Johan, Scrutton, Alistair. “‘Greatest living poet’: Bob Dylan wins Nobel literature prize.” *Reuters*. 13 October 2016. Accessed at www.reuters.com.

Shoemaker, Steve. “Norman Mailer’s ‘White Negro’: Historical Myth or Mythical History?” *Twentieth Century Literature*, Vol 37, No 3. Autumn 1991. Duke University Press.
<https://www.jstor.org/stable/441708?typeAccessWorkflow=login>. Accessed 15 October 2023.

Sisario, Ben, Alter, Alexandra, and Chan, Sewell. “Bob Dylan Wins Nobel Prize, Redefining Boundaries of Literature.” *New York Times*, 13 October 2016. [Bob Dylan Wins Nobel Prize, Redefining Boundaries of Literature: The New York Times \(nytimes.com\)](https://www.nytimes.com/2016/10/13/arts/music/bob-dylan-wins-nobel-prize-redefining-boundaries-of-literature.html). Accessed 13 October 2023.

Tucker, Ken. “The 100 Greatest Moments in Television: 1950s.” *Entertainment Weekly*. 19 February 1999. Accessed October 22 at www.ew.com.