

Rachel Rosenzweig
May 2, 2022
Written Project No. 2, Dylan & The Folk Movement
Music of the 60s, Spring 2022

Peter, Paul, & Mary - Album 1700

Rolling Home - The lyrics speak to the simple, universal desire of wanting to find love, while also wanting to stay true to yourself in a world that asserts its judgement on you and demands you lean into the materialness of our society. Overall, it talks about how everyone, despite where they come from or who they are, have similar universal feelings like the fears of dying and growing old. The music makes you feel like you are chugging along on a road with all of your friends in the car.

Leaving on a Jet Plane - The lyrics are primarily about saying goodbye to your lover, hoping that they will wait for you and forgive you for all the mistakes you made because time is fleeting. It also has an overwhelming emphasis on focusing on the good and the potential future that they can hold onto in their minds as they await a reunion. The music has a melancholy feeling because of the slow tempo and the dragging out of words. The soft strumming of acoustic guitar as well as the heavy reliance on just her voice creates the sense that it is more of a ballad.

Weep for Jamie - The lyrics seem like they could mean a myriad of things, but most of all, it appears to suggest that Jamie has been violated in a way that has left her permanently warped (womb unfilled, aching loneliness, etc.). When referring to her as the child of emptiness, it seems to suggest that some blame for her trauma resides in her father. The flute and accordion adds a whimsical aspect to the music, calling upon almost renaissance fair type music. When they alternate voices at around 1:42 in the song, the listener gets the sensation that they are whispering in each ear, which creates a ghostly echoing that only reinforces the effect of the sad lyrics.

No Other Name - The song is written from the perspective of a woman who feels as though she has no permanence (like flickering firelight or wind on a hill). There seems to be a logic woven throughout the lyrics of being detached, of having no name, and at the end of the song it solidifies even further with "I'll die alone, away from my home." The long notes that she holds especially at the end of lines of lyrics leaves an impression of desperation and aching, but also being resigned to one's fate. The repetition in the song, with the rising and falling from high to low notes, gives the sensation of being in a calming rocking chair.

The House Song - I reacted most strongly to the opening of the song, where the singer starts loudly and confidently with "This house goes on sale every Wednesday morning" and then immediately falls to a soft, dejected voice saying "and taken off the market in

the afternoon." The tone of the song changes so quickly and is not dictated by shifts in instruments but rather just the volume of the singer which was fascinating to me. I think it signals the excitement of starting a new chapter and the simultaneous realization that another chapter must end in order for that to happen. The lyrics feels distinctly about how a house remains haunted by the memories of those who lived in it, regardless of how the ownership changes. Especially the emotions of the person selling it to another, hoping that it will mean the same to them as it has for him/her.

The Great Mandella (The Wheel of Life) - The lyrics, from my interpretation, are about the lone person who stands upon in the face of what the rest of society has accepted, identifying it as wrong. And more so about how that person, deemed a martyr or "crazy," has an important role in being the voice of conscience despite whether or not he actually convinces the masses to stop killing. When multiple voices come in during the chorus, versus the lone singer before that, you get the sense of the more intense pressure we all have to "take your place on The Great Mandela." When they all join to say "we can kill now, we can hate now, now we can end the world," you get the sense of us vs. the other (who is the martyr).

I Dig Rock and Roll Music - The song is about the cult of saying you are into rock and roll music, but not understanding its true call is to move you to action about politics, changing your worldview, or questioning authority. For example, "I dig The Mamas And The Papas At "The Trip, "Sunset Strip In L.A. and they got a good thing goin' when the words don't get in the way." Conversely, it is also about how rock and roll music artists must hide their messaging within upbeat or deceiving melodies, so that they can still get played on the radio. They achieve this effect with the playful emphasis on "I dig" which has a more colloquial sound to it then a typical, melodic lyric.

If I Had Wings - The song is about the irritation that comes from those cast judgements upon others, especially the unique expectations that they don't hold for other people (or in this case for birds or children). The singer identifies freedom as being able to be yourself, without being questioned. I don't know what instrument makes the "clopping" sound in the background, but that sound coupled with the maracas, reminds me of the concept of "marching to your own drum." Additionally, when he sings "I'll fly free then" it has the feeling of ascension, similar to flying upwards.

Im in Love With a Big Blue Frog - The most notable, unique instrument of this song is the kazoo, alongside boing noises and splashing, which creates a sense of lighthearted playfulness. This is reinforced by her pronunciation of Philadelphia, which makes the whole song seem like a joke. While I don't know what the song is really getting at, it appears to be the common process that many women go through as they try to convince those around them that who they love is good because he has or is x, y, and z (i.e has a PHD, has beneficial genetics, and comes from prestigious family).

Whatshername - The song is structured as a conversation of nostalgia, where the participants are catching up. However, because of the one singular voice, and the lack of questions that we as an audience hear, it feels as though the singer is having the conversation with themselves. The singer sounds exhausted, regretful, and perhaps unsatisfied – especially as he recounts memories of “whatshername,” the one who got away. There are contradictions in the lyrics, as he says he will never forget “whatshername” but in using that phrase it is apparent that he has forgotten her name.

Bob Dylan's Dream - The song speaks to the simplicity of youth, or a certain time in someone's life where decisions and the feeling of satisfaction came easy. There is repeated imagery and reference to gambling, potentially suggesting that times like that are “one in a million” with friends who make you feel like you have won big. The plucking of the guitar, and the folklike tempo, is a clear nod to Bob Dylan's style of songwriting and playing.

The Song is Love - The song is clearly about love, but more so its power to make two people feel worthy as individuals because they are in it together. There is a timidity as she sings alone, trying to explain where she is coming from and a confidence that comes when two voices are joined to sing the chorus. The repetition of the lyric “the song is love” feels like a celebration, a triumph, and a final conclusion to what they have been searching for.

Bob Dylan - *The Times They Are A'Changin'*

The Times They Are A'Changin' - Dylan writes about the coming of revolution, and the changing of vision that comes as one generation grows up to replace the one before it. It also suggests that anyone who tries to get in the way, or make an assumption about how it will pan out so that they can be in favor of the “winners,” will not be rewarded. The harmonica solos which break up the lyrics feel like final punctuations that signal an end, and then the need to move forward as the next set of lyrics comes quickly after.

Ballad of Hollis Brown - The repetition of lyrics plays into the emotional theme of the song – pure exhaustion from all the stress and responsibility placed on you, and the feeling of drowning as you try to meet all of the expectations while surviving yourself. The song is about bad luck and downright despair, and the repetition speaks to how when you are experiencing a state like that you are constantly reminded and thinking about it. The guitar in this song is similar to that which is used in outlaw movies or old westerns, possessing a kind of bad-assery and perseverance.

With God on Our Side - The song appears to criticize the hypocrisy of a death that comes despite “having God on your side,” as well as how empty of a phrase it can be when it seems that oppressors also come to have God on their side. Also, it has been a constant throughout history that God is invoked when enacting violence, which I feel like the length of the song speaks to as the passing of time. The simplicity of the strumming allows the lyrics to be fully heard, and the pausing/slowing he takes while singing points the reader to words he wants to emphasize.

One Too Many Mornings - The song seems to mostly be about missed opportunities, miscommunication, and the residual feeling of loss that comes with it (one too many mornings and a thousand miles behind). The rise and fall of the harmonica mimics the rhythm of the lyrics, almost feeling like a more raw rendition of the words or the feelings that can't be captured with just words alone. The harmonica reaches unbelievably high pitches and notes, which adds a level of passion or desperation.

North Country Blues - The story of this song is about the fall of mining towns from centers of glory and opportunity, to disheveled remnants of what once was. Similarly, it speaks to the rise and fall of a family as they deal with death, birth, and hardship — and how that cycle repeats. The way in which “come and gather around friends” is sung in the opening, makes it feel like a sad warning, inviting listeners to commiserate with the singer.

Only a Pawn in Their Game - In by far my favorite song of the album, Dylan explains how rather than seek community based on similar class standing, society is sold on the lie of whiteness which assures poor whites that they are “better off” if only for their “pure skin,” and that they have nothing in common with people of color. An interesting aspect of the song is how he speeds up and then very quickly after slows down, creating a whiplash effect in the tempo of the music. His sequence of notes makes it feel like you are walking down steps, emphasizing the last word so as to create a rhythm based on rhyming.

Boots of Spanish Leather - This song is a dialogue between two lovers, or more so lovers who are not on the same page in terms of their future, their feelings, or their reaction to her departure. As the song progresses, the male lover becomes increasingly bitter and untrusting. There is no difference or fluctuation of tone as Dylan jumps from the dialogue of one lover to another, creating a consistency that is also felt by him playing the same chords on the guitar that are repeated for the entirety of the song. In that consistency maybe there also lies a bit of passive acceptance, of life remaining unchanged because you have no real choice?

When the Ship Comes In - The metaphor of a “ship” is used to convey political/social movements in their journey to bring about/discover a new world. The “foes” referenced in the song, who are defeated like Goliath, seem to be a nod to “the man” or conservative institutions. The fast tempo at the beginning gives a feeling of excitement, providing the audience a glimpse of what it must have felt like to be on a mission driven by passion, knowing they are on the right side of history. As the story grows, so do the supporters of the voyagers, from the seagulls to even the rocks.

The Lonesome Death of Hattie Carroll - The song is about the death of Hattie Carroll at the hands of the privileged, unapologetic William Zanzinger. It also contains a harsh criticism at all those lofty idealists of the Left who are just as complicit in the circumstances that created her death, but yet try to mourn her. Most of all, Dylan uses this story as an example of how corrupt our legal system is, how it favors those who have connections and resources, doling out punishments that are wholly inadequate for the harm they have caused. The musical feature most stand out

to me was the way Dylan dragged out the words in the chorus “but you who philosophize, disgrace and criticize all fears, take the rag away from your face, now ain't the time for your tears” to really drive home the point as he tried to hold them accountable in his own way. Specifically the words “you” and “take” feel poignant because of how he sings them.

Restless Farewell - The song centers around a transient wanderer who has not stuck around long enough in one place to “make amends,” or make it through the night in such a way that he feels ready to greet the day. As the last song on the album, it feels like a commentary on how despite being a finished work, he wants only to bid farewell “till we meet again” because he has more left to say. The first strum of the song in itself feels like it could be the ending notes of a song, kind of that final expression where you expect silence after but are instead met with him continuing his story.