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Abstract

This thesis will investigate the relationship between politics and art, with a specific focus on the Beat movement in America. I will investigate the aims Beat movement art in relation to the surrounding environment. I will examine the societal issues which two members of the Beat movement were influenced by, relating this to the reaction which manifested itself in their art, and will attempt to draw out a conclusion as to whether they were successful in their aims. The Beat movement were a literary movement which took place in the mid-20th century in America. Their influence extended outside of literature and influenced artists of a variety of artistic genres. Two of these genres were comedy and art. In this thesis I will investigate the comedy of Lenny Bruce and the song writing of Bob Dylan, who were both affiliated with the movement. Through these individuals I will investigate their reaction to the predominant societal influences which later shaped their art. The predominant societal influences are was race-relations, drugs, sex, religion, the government and the media. Through this investigation I will draw out a conclusion to the question; were the Beats beaten?

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Table of contents	Page
Chapter One: Introduction	5
Chapter two: Lenny Bruce	8
Chapter three: Bob Dylan	22
Chapter four: Conclusion	39
List of References	43

INTRODUCTION

Freedom has its price. Some pay with their life for the freedom of speech, whereas others charge to their death with the freedom of silence. One of the central characters of the Beat movement was Jack Kerouac. “Kerouac suggested that "Beat" meant being socially marginalized and exhausted ("beaten down") and blessed ("beatific"). There are also musical connotations to the name as many members were jazz enthusiasts.... [They] extolled individual freedom and attacked what they saw as the materialism, militarism, consumerism, and conformity... they cultivated mystical experiences by the use of drugs or by meditation... were politically radical, and to some degree their anti-authoritarian attitudes were taken up by activists in the 1960s” (*Beat Generation*, 2007). Much of the mantra of the Beat movement outlined above was far from the conventions of America at this time. They sought to push the bounds of convention. It seems the notion of bounds, often set out by institutions such as governments and religions, are the topics of many artists. It is these institutions which, through their medium, influence peoples evaluation on wars, race relations, drugs and peoples attitudes to their bodies. These medium are of great importance when it comes to world events [even in today’s world], as they exert the intended influence from the powers in control. Two artists who had similar, but not identicle, views on these institutions and their practices were; the comedian Lenny Bruce and the singer/ songwriter Bob Dylan. Bruce encountered the Beat movement through the portal of jazz, whereas Dylan came into contact with the movement through literature. The land of dreams eyes were rapidly moving, the American dream was in effect, though some thought the dream was part-nightmare.

The upbringing of both of these artists saw a nation at war, divided by ideologies of politics and religion. With tensions between America and the Soviet Union rising, Americans all over would feel the effects on their lives, and these two artists are no exceptions. Bruce’s view of satire was tragedy plus time Bruce, after having fought in World War two, used his comedy to satirize the war (and notions of war). Dylan, being born during

world war two, grew up to become all too familiar with the devastation which war brought, but also noticed there is gain to be made also. Dylan would use his songs to address some key issues surrounding war, and plays these songs which are sadly still relevant. In the times of both of these artists race was an issue. "African Americans had been fighting against racial discrimination for centuries; during the 1950s, however, the struggle against racism and segregation entered the mainstream of American life" (*The 1950s*, 2013). Bruce used his comedy to address the origin of the power of oppression, speaking subversively to mixed crowds. The blues "was influenced by work songs and field hollers, minstrel show music, ragtime, church music, and the folk and popular music of the white population. Blues derived from and was largely played by Southern black men, most of who came from the milieu of agricultural workers" (*Blues*, 2013). Dylan grew up with blues in his blood, so Dylan stood alongside his African American brothers in their fight against oppression.

The blues music matured into what became known as jazz, as „ass music“ (as it was originally called) was too obscene. It was often played by African Americans as with the blues. "Musical entertainment (especially Jazz) opened up a vast world for people trapped in parochial settings"(Bailyn et al, 1992. P353). Jazz was often played through a freeform style and it certainly influenced both Bruce and Dylan in their approach to art. The jazz scene and the Beat scene were intertwined. "Jazz was associated with interracial sex (many jazz nightclubs were open to patrons of any race) and with illegal drugs, in the early days, marijuana, and during the 1950s, with heroin" (*Jazz and the African American Literary Tradition*, 2010). Bruce and Dylan both felt drugs could benefit peoples lives (though Dylan changed his view at a certain point, or at least reserved his views from the public sphere). With the Cold War seemingly closing in, many felt that they should enjoy life (intoxicated or not) while they could. As Baudrillard said;"if the bomb drops, we shall have neither the time to die nor any awareness of dying", so "people have become tired of nuclear blackmail and decided not to give in to it, leaving the threat of destruction hanging mid-air above them, perhaps with an obscure sense of how unreal it is" (1986, P42). The threat of death made these people strive for life. Lenny was a self-proclaimed drug user. He was introduced to drugs during his time fighting in World War Two, eventually being prescribed drugs(which are now illegal) by his doctor. His honesty toward these chemicals, both onstage and offstage,

would get him in considerable legal trouble. Dylan used drugs and publicly spoke of the benefits of drugs in his early years, though this would change in 1966. After this he became ambivalent on the topic.

The currency of free love in the sixties counter-culture was issued from the banks of the Beats. This is one topic however that Bruce and Dylan differ upon. Dylan did not speak about sex publically, and tended to keep his intimate relationships private. The topic of the body and its evolutionary function; sex, was a favoured area for Lenny. He would talk about sexual relations onstage. This is the material which would brand him as „sick“ by critics and „obscene“ in the courtroom. Lenny felt that the ambivalence towards sex came from religious leader’s abstinence from sex. Both Bruce and Dylan were strongly against organised religion. Neither had a problem with the authority of the religious institution; God. Instead they had a problem with the medium (organised religion), of how the religious doctrine was used through this medium. Dylan has always been spiritual, feeling drawn towards a destiny. Dylan resented corporations as they would commoditize every-thing, including Christ. Bruce viewed organized religion to be a business, which he would satirize, but he also viewed it as his own form of Government. Both noticed a peculiar relationship between the media and the Government, which is similar to that between the religious doctrine and organised religion. These are the main political forces which Bruce and Dylan were influenced by, and which manifested itself in their art. I will investigate these in further detail and will then draw out a conclusion of the question „Were the Beats beaten“?

Lenny Bruce, An Overview

Lenny Bruce was born Alfred Leonard Shneider in 1925. It seems fitting that Lenny was born in the roaring twenties (due to his later drug use), the era which placed an “emphasis on personal self-indulgence” (Bailyn, B et al, 1992, P335). The air of World War one still lingered in Lennys youth, which he no doubt inhaled. His mother divorced Lenny’s father in 1933. Lenny was eight years old at the time of his parents’ divorce, and it surely had an impact on him, he wrote in his autobiography that “When you’re eight years old, nothing is any of your business”(P18). He clearly felt isolated from the world to a degree, a void which the camaraderie of war would later fill. The amount of members in the Klu Klux Klan was two-hundred-thousand in 1928 and this presence of prejudice surely had an effect on Bruce (Bailey et al, 1992 P335). His mother spoke in „Swear to Tell the Truth“ of how “Lenny grew up free, guiltless...but he was quiet and melancholic”. His melancholia would later contribute to his drug-taking. He would be introduced to drugs during the war and it would have a profound effect upon him. Another event which had a lasting impact on the Lenny was seeing his cousin having sex. Upon seeing this act he wrote in his autobiography: “Without someone telling me what they had been doing, I could never tell you whether that was a clean act, a dirty act, a self-indulgent act, or an act of pure religious procreation... you must interpret what went on in your own way” (p31). His mother was certainly a factor in his guiltless attitude to sex as she spoke to him openly about sex, reading him entries to a sexology book (which would have Lenny in hysterics) and even bringing him to a burlesque show in his early teens. At this show Lenny noticed that his mother was the only lady in the audience, and upon asking her why there are no other women here his mother responded “they think it’s dirty” (Weide, R. 1998). These early encounters with sex definitely had a profound effect on Lenny and became a huge area of interest in his comedy. Lenny also grew up of Jewish faith and reported being „schlepped around“ as a youth (which is probably why he identified with the African American civil rights movement) and as a result became hugely interested in Religion. As Kenneth Tynan notes, Lenny’s message was “whatever releases people and brings them together is good, and whatever confines and separates them is bad (Bruce, L, 1966. P7).

Bruce and the War

The Japanese attacked Pearl Harbour on December 7th 1941, with that America was in World War Two. Lenny recalled of his father “His motive was to better himself, and, in turn, better us all” (1966, p27). Naturally enough Lenny wanted to be like his father. When his parents split up, Lenny surely felt a sense of isolation from his parents relationships as it was none of his „buisness“. “World War Two found Americans, intellectuals and ordinary people alike, even more genuinely united” (Bailyn, B et al, 1992, P409) Lenny joined the fight in 1942. He writing; “for the first I was able to relate to my fellow man” (1966, P38). Here he could better himself through camaraderie, and in turn, he could help us all by fighting the „good“ fight, just like his father. Around this time one American Newspaper wrote “The first responsibility of an American to his country...is no longer that of a citizen, but of a consumer” (Bailyn, B et al, 1992, P352). Consumerism became a way of life. Televisions were beaming advertisements into the homes of Americans, and people identified with the products. Lenny saw through this vain veil, “seeing those pitiful, fresh dead bodies. I knew then what a mockery of life the materialistic concept is... [and that all the once precious material items would] eventually thrown out of the basement, for the stuff would now be crap” (Bruce, L. 1966, P43). Yet Lenny would never forget the changing of values he was learning in the war, the true value of life lies not in material items. Lenny felt that the act of selling “implies talking the customer into purchasing an article he has not previously had any need or desire for” (Bruce, L, 1966. P63). He soon after became disillusioned with the war. Since he had left his mother had become a comedian/dancer. He decided to leave the war. He both humorously and theatrically dressed in drag and got himself discharged from the navy.

In 1945 he returned to America soon to be bitten by the showbiz bug. Once bitten, he would even satirize the war; which was fought for freedom. To Lenny satire was „tragedy plus time“. He did a sketch for his 1958 album „*The Sick Humour of Lenny Bruce*“ called „*Hitler and the MCA*‘. In this sketch he subverted the rise of the fascist leader Adolf Hitler. He parodied a group of Germans auditioning for a dictator. None of the people who auditioned fitted the part, until they saw a man „painting the wall““. The hidden talent

was found. Once his name was altered, a costume was made and a theme tune was found, he was told „Adolf we“re gonna make a lot of money with you baby““ (track7). He also spoke sympathetically of Adolf Eichmann (the lieutenant colonel of the Nazi SS party, one of the major organisers of the Holocaust), whom he considered a victim of circumstance. He had merely fallen victim to the propaganda of fascist ideology. Lenny wrote “and people say Adolf Eichmann should have been hung. Nein. Do you recognise the whore in the middle of you-that you would have done the same if you were there yourself...Do you people think yourselves better because you burned your enemies at long range missiles without ever seeing what you had done to them?(1966, P143). This is a similar sentiment which Bob Dylan would convey many years later. Sketches like the former released some tension about the war (which was a sensitive area with many) through humorous parodies, whilst sketches like the latter made people question the morality of the „good“ fight. Those sketches were much later, after Bruce formed his act. When he returned from the war, he then desired to become a comedian, to which his mother was nothing but encouraging. One night Lenny accompanied his mother to one of her shows, the scheduled MC was arrested for possession of marijuana (it is ironic that drugs got him into comedy, and also out of comedy/life-dying from a drug overdose in 1966). Lenny was asked to be the MC. He was immediately heckled by a man surrounded by his male friends who said “bring out the broads” to which Lenny quickly replied “I’d like to, but then you wouldn’t have any company at the bar” (1966, p57). It was his first laugh and from that moment on Lenny recalled “I was hooked” (1966, P57). The comedian was born.

Lenny and Race

“Entertainment became a major industry” (Bailyn, B et al, 1992, P481).

Lenny saw the blooming business, and he set out to establish himself within it. “The memory of nearly four years of grim warfare, made her [America’s] people exceedingly reluctant to think about future battles” (Brogan, H. 2001, P585) Instead people wished to enjoy present humours, and Lenny Bruce was more than happy to facilitate their need. In 1951 while working at a place called „Club Charles“, Lenny met Harriet Lloyd. Harriet Lloyd was a stripper who went by the stage name „Hot Honey Harlow“, and Lenny recalls she was a mix of the “virgin Mary and a \$500-a-night-whore (1966, p38). Lenny married her soon after. Once married they became a duo act, they started performing together, doing comedy sketches and singing. Up until then people had praised Lenny for not having to resort to dirty toilet humour, but this puzzled Lenny; he began to wonder „how dirty is my toilet“?. One act they then did was a singing act, covering a song called „*Bake dat chicken Pie*‘. The chorus contained the word „nigger“ (a derogatory word for African American) many times, which got them a lot of negative response. Lenny recalls of his rejection that they “sure got lots in those days” (1966, P36), but he was determined not to let words overpower him. Honey recalled in the film „Swear to Tell the Truth“ of how Lenny used to always tell her “if you say it [the bad words] enough it loses its response” (Weide, R., 1998). This was to become one of the central concepts of Bruce’s entire comedic aim.

He began working in strip clubs and as Robert Di Niro pointed out in „Swear to tell the Truth“, “clean jokes could get you thrown off stage” (Weide, R., 1998). Thus „dirty Lenny“ was born. He became completely free and unbridled on stage. Reportedly performing acts in the nude, he would perform different material every night in a freeform style of which he wrote “This process of allowing one subject spontaneously to associate itself with another is equivalent to James Joyce’s stream of consciousness” (1966, P44). This style of comedy was similar to the freeform/improvisation style of jazz, many of whose

players which were often African American. Lenny liked Jazz musicians, whom he worked with in clubs, because they “appreciate art forms that are extensions of realism, as opposed to realism in a represented form” (Bruce, L. 1966. P34). Lenny treated them as an equal, as did they with him, stating; "the jazz musicians liked me. I was the only hippy around" (Bruce, L. 1966. P93). He empathised with their situation, saying he could identify with prejudice and could empathize with their situation saying "they're pissed off and understandably so" (*Let the Buyer Beware*, 2004, cd 5, track eleven). This is where Lenny became affiliated to the Beat generation, through jazz. Bob Dylan remarked in his 2004 book 'Chronicles': "To the beats the devil was bourgeois conventionality, social artificiality and the man in the grey flannel suit" (p247). Lenny wanted to bring people onto a level playing field, for real, and to show that we are all the same underneath our clothing (no matter what colour skin is underneath).

In 1955, at a time when an African American woman called Rosa Parks was arrested for not giving up her seat for a white person (1955), and Martin Luther King was just beginning to declare that he was “tired of being segregated” (Brogan, H. 2001, P615), Professor Barry Sanders recalls Lenny (White) doing a subversive sketch with an African American friend where the two were literally chained together in this act (YouTube, 1996). As Robert Di Niro explained “by 1957 there seemed to be no stopping Lenny...in just a few short years he had become one of America’s sharpest humourists, satirising America’s most sensitive areas like „How to Relax your Coloured Friend’s at Parties“...Lenny would take on anything and anyone; Jesus, Jimi Hoffa, the President and the Pope. He even lampooned the very fabric of cold war patriotism [in which Bruce parodies a cryptographer who is being interrogated for his nation’s secrets. Upon seeing torture methods (hot lead enema) Bruce exclaims; „The flag goes down the toilet...Here’s the secrets Jim...I’m gonna make up secrets!(*To is a Preposition, Come is a Verb*, 1961, track10)]”(Weide, R. 1998).

He had a sketch called 'Are there any Niggers here tonight?'. He would perform this to a mixed-race crowd, often gathering a hostile reaction. He would bombard the audience with a barrage of derogatory words; nigger, spick, kike, greaseball, micks, asking if any of them are in the club that night. He was sure the suppression of the word gives it the power; and that if "every day you heard nigger nigger nigger nigger nigger, in the second month...nigger would lose its impact and it would never make any four year old nigger cry when he came home from school"(*Let the buyer beware*, 2004, disc1, track 1). On the cover of the 1959 album „*Togetherness*“, he featured African American's draped in Klu Klux Klan robes, standing behind him hugging two oriental women. The three held a sign together reading; „*Togetherness*“. Actions like this totally subverted the societal conventions of the day, bringing humour to an important social issue.

He couldn't understand how after World War Two "we (Americans) pour millions into propagating Europe, but never a penny to radio free south" (Bruce, L. 1966 p186). In a 1961 sketch called 'White White Woman'. This sketch posed a choice to the audience; „You have the choice of marrying a white white woman(softly spoken) or a black black woman(harshly spoken)...kissing and hugging, sleeping in a single bed on hot nights... a white white woman(softly spoken) or a black black woman(harshly spoken)...the white woman is Kate smith(a somewhat larger lady, a well-known singer) and the black woman is Lena Horne(a much sought after African American lady, a well-known singer/actress)...so you are not concerned with black or white anymore are you, you are concerned with how cute...if you are concerned with how cute or how pretty then let's really get basic and persecute ugly people...so you see it's a facade' (*To is a Preposition, Come is a Verb*, track11). Only Lenny could be kicked out of 'sin city', Las Vegas. He sprayed Pearl Bailey with a fire extinguisher, after speaking ill in previous establishment in front of a lot of people (including the owner). Pearl Bailey was an African American performer He spoke of how he resented her for doing performances which state "negresses have loose morals" and that "negresses are lazy" (*Let the Buyer Beware*, 2004, disc 4, track 29). He disliked that she perpetuated the stereotypes associated with African American people. Yet he did not blame these people for their prejudice, feeling "there's no good or bad, they are part of their environment" (*To is a Preposition, Come is a Verb*, track11). This is a sentiment later expressed in Bob Dylan's song '*Only a Pawn in their Game*'(which too dealt with racial prejudice) which will be discussed later.

Lenny and drugs

When Lenny was in the Navy during World War Two he was introduced to hashish. It has been written on the Casa Palmera (rehabilitation centre) website that “In the 1960s, marijuana use became a popular drug of choice among white Beatniks (though I am sure it was not exclusive to white people) (2013). “Marijuana was widely used as a medicinal drug from 1850 to 1937 and could even be purchased over the counter in pharmacies and general stores” (Casa Palmera, 2013). This was soon to change. “In the 1930s, studies began to emerge that linked marijuana use by lower class communities to crime and violence, leading to the eventual banning of marijuana in 1937”(Casa Palmera, 2013). Lenny was outraged that marijuana was illegal whereas alcohol had been legalized. In 1960 a researcher from Yale University called Elvin Morton Jellinek concluded that alcoholism was a disease. “This vision of alcoholism as a disease proved popular because it removed stigma: alcoholism was not due to weakness of will or temperament, but an illness to be understood by science and treated by medicine” (Leonelli S, Ankeny R A, Nelson N C, Ramsden, 2013. P12). These diseased people were to be treated medically for their disease yet marijuana users were to be thrown into jail. “Ask your doctor this...if you give man A a pint of whiskey a day, man B he smokes the same amount of marijuana...we stop them both cold. What happens; the guy who drinks will suffer absence syndromes, he needs a taste, he has an addiction problem...pot smoker no addiction problem...a little bronchitis tops”(Let the buyer beware, 2004, disc 4, track 10). Drugs.ie claim that “You can get psychologically addicted to cannabis” (2013), but in Bruce’s day the focus on addiction lay in a physical realm. Bruce wrote of how he felt it was absurd that “there are American citizens [one of whom was Honey] in jail for smoking flowers...I don’t smoke pot and I’m glad because I can champion it without special pleading” (1966, P129). He felt “marijuana will become legal in five years because most of you know law students who smoke marijuana, who will become a senator and will legalize it to protect themselves “(*Busted*, 1962. Track 16). [As he said this someone in the audience was getting arrested for drug possession, to which Lenny tells him to „say some Puerto Rican in the park gave it to you, then a policeman ended Lenny’s show”](*Let the Buyer Beware*, 2004. Disc 5 Track 18). Bruce declared he didn’t smoke marijuana because “it’s a hallucinatory and I’ve got enough going on in my head” (*Warning Lenny Bruce is Out Again*, 1961, track 27).

As you may recall Lenny's mother remarked of his melancholic/quiet nature as a child. This is not the energy level required to hold a crowd in stand-up comedy. Lenny recalled "I have been plagued with spells of lethargy" (1966, P131). Lenny sought medical help. His doctor then "prescribed an amphetamine" (Bruce, L 1966. P132). This drug increased heart rate and gave Bruce the comedic pace which is found throughout most of his performances. The drug has since become illegal and is considered dangerous, but the sixties were early days for the drug. Bruce claimed to dislike the taste of the drug so he would instead inject it. This was not uncommon in those days as Casa Palmera explains: "The practice of injecting amphetamines gained popularity in the 1960s" (2013). Though he had a prescription his drug use got him in quite a substantial amount of trouble with the law. The police suspected he was using some form of opium, heroin or morphine (an illegal drug). Their suspicions turned out to be correct as Bruce died of a morphine overdose. He suspected that the reason narcotics are illegal is because "they destroy the ego and that's the only reason we get anything done in this country...to build up to the neighbours...the opiate shleps all that away" (*Berekeley Concert, 1969*). Bruce felt "Our society is based on competition. If it isn't impressed upon you at home with the scramble for the love between brothers and sisters, they really lay it down to you in school...In essence you are gratified by your schoolmates failures" (Bruce, L. 1966 P 44). This is quite similar to the psychodynamic theorist Alfred Adler's theory of the inferiority complex, where since being a helpless infant; we all strive for some sort superiority. Whereas Bruce felt opiates destroyed the desire superiority, and this shortage of superiority was a negative trait for a capitalist society. Thus it was illegalised. Bruce sarcastically wrote "anyone who does anything for pleasure to indulge his selfish soul will surely burn in hell" (1966, P130).

Lenny and sex

As Bob Dylan wrote in his song dedicated to Lenny “He just took the folks in high places and he shined a light in their beds”(Shot of Love, 1975, track 4). Ever since his encounters through sexuality in his youth Lenny had an open attitude to sex. Lenny would literally bare all and perform naked. He felt “if the bedroom to you is dirty to you then you are a true atheist...if anyone in this audience believes that God made his body and his body is dirty, the fault lies with the manufacturer...and then you wanna get definitive and tell me which parts he made” are dirty (Let the Buyer Beware, 2004, CD3, track 8). He could not understand how people “qualified the creativity [of God] by stopping it above the kneecap and resuming it above the Adams apple, thereby giving lewd connotations to mother’s breast that fed us and father’s groin that bred us” (Bruce, L. 1966. P121). It was Bruce’s focus on this topic which got him in a vast amount of legal trouble. He was first arrested for using the word „cocksucker“ in San Fransisco in 1961. Ralph Gleason was a renowned jazz critic of the time. He testified that Bruce’s work contained “social criticism of stereotypes and the hypocrisy of contemporary society...that words have been given...almost a magical meaning...[and his real theme was] semantics, the search for the ultimate truth” behind the words (Bruce, L. 1966, P112/115). He was acquitted, but he was by no means free.

He was arrested many times on grounds of obscenity. He would talk about sexual relations, but was adamant that “obscenity is a human manifestation”, that “there are no dirty words, only dirty minds, take this toilet and boil it” (Bruce, L. 1966. P122). Obscenity was “a shameful or morbid interest in nudity, sex or excretion which goes substantially beyond the customary limits of candor in description or representation of such matters and is matter which is utterly without redeeming social importance” (Bruce, L 1966. P127). Bruce understood the need for quality control but he felt that his art was no threat, and that it was of social significance. He acknowledged the “argument is that a child will ape the actions of an actor. What he sees now in his formative years, he may do as an adult” (1966, p151). Bruce wondered why then the film Psycho (a famous horror film) was accepted and a blue movie was rejected. He wondered how sex was considered more dangerous to a youth,

than a portrayal of murder in a film (which would have been easier for them to see given their popularity). He talked about this onstage to highlight the hypocrisy of society's standards. Bruce's comedy was devoted to "distinguishing between the moral differences of words and their connotations" (Bruce L, 1966. P33). He has a sketch (and an album) called „*To is a Preposition, Come is a Verb*. In this sketch Bruce, accompanied by him hitting cymbals on a drum" would lay the pinnacle of the sexual out semantically. "To is a preposition, come is a verb, the verb in transitive; to come"... [He would then detail some of the „hang-ups" which can accompany the sexual act] "Did you come good? (frantically saying this repeatedly)...I can't come...you don't love me...no it's not that; I can't come when I'm loaded [on drugs]" (1961, track 9). He felt the ambivalence towards sex came from religious leaders abstaining from sex. If the „good" people in our society abstain, then sex surely must be dirty.

Lenny and Religion

Lenny was not anti-God, instead declaring “my philosophy is anti-organized religion” (1966, p42). Whilst married to Honey, who was a Catholic, Lenny was fascinated by her faith. He was interested in all Religions, and he wanted to know all about their doctrines and practices. He felt that the Catholic religion was a hypocritical institution, writing “Why don’t religious institutions use their influence to relieve human suffering?” (1966, P71). He felt that “so called „Men-of-God“ are self-ordained. The calling they hear is just their own echo” (1966, p53). “Conditions of unspeakable poverty, filth and humiliation exist right now” (1966, P58) so it is hypocritical for a wealthy institution such as Catholicism to not to help these problems, as they preach of equality. “The controversy that actually did make me was the bit I called Religions Incorporated” (1966, p94). This was a sketch which he parodies a business meeting of religious leaders. He speaks in a subversively hip style of talking; “Christianity is up nine points...The Jewish star/lucky cross and lighter combined [are selling well]...now there’s some guys we haven’t seen here before...no individual hustling...we gotta make the scene together...[The Pope calls the main leader on a collect call]...(Pope) hello johnny, what’s shakin baby...yeah the puff of white smoke knocked me out...(religious leader) they’re buggin us again with that dumb integration...they say get the religious leaders, make em talk about it...they don’t know more quotations from the bible, they want us to come out and say things, they want us to say let them go to school with them...and that stop war jazz, they want us to say thou shall not kill means that.... No, nobody knows your jewish” (*The Sick Humour of Lenny Bruce*, 1958. Track3).

He did another sketch called „Christ and Moses“. Here Christ and Moses come back to the earth to the magnificent St Patricks Cathedral in New York. Bruce gave a third person view of their journey. When they arrive to the church “Christ would be confused, cause they’re root took em through Spanish Harlem, and he would wonder what forty Puerto Ricans were living in one room and this guy (Spellman-actual cardinal of the parish) has got

a ring on that's worth eight grand...he would wonder why aren't the Puerto Ricans living here...its clean". The priest sees Christ and Moses in the back, and confers with another priest "you'll never guess who's here...Christ and Moses....(Sheen- actual church bishop) are you sure it's them? (Spellman) well I've only seen them in pictures but I'm pretty sure it's them... (Sheen) did Christ bring his family? Oh what's his mother's name? Ah that's weird I read the book today, I'm so nervous...Hail Mary? Hairy Mary?". The word gets out they are on earth and Newsweek calls up to find out the story. We can hear Spellman's answers;" No I don't know if they are going to do any tricks today...of course they're white!" (*Carnegie Hall Concert*, 1961). Lenny resented how the religious leaders did not practice what they preached (having wealth but not helping the poor), and instead used their religious doctrine to gain power within the medium of their institution; organised religion. Lenny became so controversial that not only he would get in trouble for his performances, but the owners of the clubs in which he played in would too. One policeman even threatened in Chicago "I'm going to pinch you and everyone in here if you speak against religion" (Bruce, 1966. P146). He would not only speak against Christianity, he also talked about the situation of Judaism within society. In a sketch called „Jews killed Christ" he said the definition of a Jew is "one who descended from the ancient tribes of Judea...but you and I know what a Jew is, the one who killed the lord...we did it 2000 years ago, there should be a statue of limitations with that crime...yes we did it, my family did it...we found a note in the basement saying „we killed him, signed Morty" (*Let the Buyer Beware*, 2004, CD 4, track11). Yet it was clear that his Christian material cut the deepest. An obscenity trial of his took place in Chicago on Ash Wednesday and Bruce recalled how all of the jury and the judge had a spot of Ash on their forehead before the trial. Bruce felt that Catholicism was a business, and each church was a franchise of the main office-the Vatican. He was sure that Catholicism was a government in itself. In this case Bruce fought two Governments.

Lenny and the Government/media

The American Government's first amendment is that of free speech. Within this amendment is what is known as the free exercise clause. This states "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof" (First Amendment of the Bill of Rights to the United States Constitution, 2013). The court could not hold him accountable for his negative comments on the church, but it clearly made an impact. Instead Bruce was tried for his use of obscene language. Lenny, sometimes even representing himself, was mostly acquitted (sometimes through appeals). It became clear that Lenny was a marked man. He wrote that "if you get arrested in town A and town B...then you get to town C, they have to arrest you or else what kinda shithouse are they runnin?" (Bruce, L. 1966, P141/142). His saving grace was that he had recorded most of the „obscene“ performances, and there were many audience members to testify that Bruce was not appealing to the prurient interest (the grounds for obscenity), but was instead of great social significance. There was even a petition to free Lenny Bruce signed by many prominent members of society including Bob Dylan, Lawrence Ferlinghetti, Allen Ginsberg to name a few. He was however found guilty of performing an obscene show in the Café Wha in New York City, alongside the owner for presenting an obscene show. As Jean Baudrillard wrote "It has to be said that New York and Los Angeles are the centre of the world" and that in New York "only tribes, gangs, mafia families, secret societies and perverse communities can survive" (1986, p23 & p18). Bruce had been charged for obscenity in both Los Angeles (for saying „schmuck“) and New York (for commenting on Eleanor Roosevelt's breasts). Lenny pleaded with the Judge of New York "Please don't end my career...don't lock up these words" (Weide, R. 1998) but was found guilty in New York, alongside the club owner.

He felt utterly deprived. He blamed Time magazine, who had "originally labelled me „the sickest of them all“" (Bruce, L. 1966. 158). It was Time magazine and other forms of media which misrepresented him to the public. "The news media did me in" (Bruce,

L. 1966, P159). He said it was due to the media's disregard for the truth when it was reporting, that my reputation has been hurt" (Bruce, L. 1966, P160). They placed a negative value upon him. In turn the legal system took notice of his material, and branded him obscene. He became an outlaw, a seeming pariah to society, and it was affecting both his career and life. He couldn't get a gig, remarking in 1966 "I have been calling up night club owners all over the country, but they're afraid to book me" (P184). He was becoming more and more absorbed with his appeal for New York. He was convinced he had never been given a fair trial. With this case, there had been no tape; the court was relying on a transcript by a policeman who reported on the show. Bruce remarked of the irony that he had to court and defend the policeman's act. Yet he believed that no crime had been committed, and believed in the country's constitution as a redemptive force. Just as he felt the preachers had misused the religious doctrine, Bruce was convinced that the governing police men (whom the media alerted to Lenny) had also misused the law. He spent the last two years of his life, from 1964 to 1966, pouring over law books. The few shows he did in those years consisted heavily of Lenny talking about his trial, reading from the transcripts. Lenny never lived to see the court reverse its verdict, which it did on the 23rd December 2003. He died August 3rd 1966 of a morphine overdose, but many believe it was a police overdose. Lenny Bruce fought for freedom of speech, in the language of the law, and the cost him his career (and some say life). This cost was tallied by the American legal system of the mid 20th century.

Chapter 2- Bob Dylan , Overview

Just one month before Lenny Bruce passed away in 1966, a death of a sort occurred in Bob Dylan's life. At this time he was often referred to as 'conscience of a generation', 'messiah' and 'prince of protest'. Yet he denied all of this, and still does to this day. He did not believe he could save people from destiny (which he called peoples inner voice on their subjective mission), and rarely did he explicitly say who he was protesting against. There is a mass of mystic surrounding Dylan, and it is hard to know the truth about who he is, where he came from, what he stands for and where he is heading. It is quite possible that this mystic, and his ever changing approach to art, is the reason for his success. In his early years Dylan saw that "America was still 'straight', post-war...into a grey flannel suit thing, McCarthy, Commies, puritanical s very claustrophobic" (Artur T. 2006. P852). He was born in the middle of World War Two and grew up during the Cold war, so war definitely affected his life. He travelled to New York in 1961. He set out "looking for was what I read about in '*On the Road*' [by Jack Kerouac]...what Allen Ginsberg had called the 'hydrogen jukebox world" (Dylan, B. 2004 P25). He began writing about topical items of the day once arrived. His love of the Beat writer's dynamic writing attracted him, and during his stay in New York, he became affiliated with the movement.

Dylan was born during World War Two and spent his adolescent/ early adulthood years surrounded by the Cold War. This impacted him hugely. He also affiliated himself himself with the African-American civil rights movement which was growing at the time, with Martin Luther King emerging as a voice to be reckoned with. Dylan grew up of Jewish faith, and as he noted in 1975; 'a lot of people hate Jews' (Artur, T. 2006. P522). This is perhaps why, like Lenny Bruce, he could identify with the prejudice toward African Americans. He gained much notoriety for his 'protesting' amongst the public. He toured the globe raising awareness. He was using a lot of drugs to keep up with the pace, which had its toll on him. His privacy was hindered due to his immense popularity. Dylan married in 1965, fathered a child and wanted privacy for his family. He wanted to keep his private life private, and felt he owed nothing to the public. In 1966 Dylan disappeared from the public view altogether for 18 months. Soon after he returned he would no longer be the prince of public protest. His music style and faith would change. This would be the first drastic change [of many] of Bob Dylan as he was before known Yet to this day we get glimpses of the societal commentator, when he chooses to speak. Dylan refuses to be pinned down by labels, thus

often avoiding the media, perhaps seeing the damage it did Lenny Bruce. Dylan was often criticized for his silence. Where Bruce fought for freedom of speech, Dylan would then fight for the right to remain silent. In this Chapter I will demonstrate how Bob Dylan's life was shaped by the surrounding political landscape and how he attempted to correct the wrongs he found.

Dylan on War

Bob Dylan was born Robert Zimmerman in 1941. Bob describes in his memoirs of how he was "born in the spring of 1941...the world was already being blown apart and chaos was already driving" (Dylan, B. 2004, p28). America had joined World War two months earlier. Hitler committed suicide on 7th of May 1945 and in August of that same year America would drop two atomic bombs on Japan. The war was then over and the enemies had been defeated. The 'good' fight had been won. In the aftermath of World War Two, one question remained; "what should be done about conquered Germany?" (Bailyn et al, 1992, p447) . "After the end of the war, a conference was held in Potsdam, Germany, to set up peace treaties...Germany and its capital Berlin were divided into four parts. The zones were to be controlled by Great Britain, the United States, France and the Soviet Union. The three western Allies and the Soviet Union disagreed on many things and as time went on Germany was divided into two separate countries : East Germany , which had a Communist government and West Germany, which was a democratic state" (Rosmanitz, K, 2013).

The differing political ideologies between America and the Soviet Union now posed a new problem. This conflict became known as the cold war. "The division of Europe was the beginning of the Cold War, between the democratic nations of the west and the Communist countries of eastern Europe. The Iron Curtain marked the border between these two regions" (Rosmanitz, K. 2013). This iron curtain cut off many Americans view of communism, but the western governments insisted that communism was an evil. Dylan recalls how in school "we were trained to...hide and take cover under our desks when the air-raid sirens blew because the Russians could attack with bombs. We were also told that the Russians could come parachuting from places over our town at any time...like monsters who were coming to slit our throats and incinerate us. It seemed peculiar...it was easy to become a victim of their strange fantasy" (Dylan, B. 2004. p29). He added "the threat of annihilation was a scary thing and we didn't know what we did to make them so mad" (Dylan, B. 2004 p30). The American government had taught the people to believe in this „strange fantasy“, through the media. "As the leaders in the state department interpreted Soviet behavior the Russians were following a long term plan to destroy all capitalist societies" (Bailyn et al, 1992, p451), with America being one. Dylan was „taught that commies couldn’t destroy America with guns or bombs alone, that they would have to destroy the constitution” (Dylan,

B. 2004. P30). In the 1964 song „*With God on Our Side*“ he wrote of the strong anti-Soviet sentiments which he learned about as a youth. The lyrics detailed how Dylan “learned to hate Russians/All through my whole life. /If another war starts/ it’s them we must fight. /to hate them and fear them, /to run and to hide, /and accept it all bravely/ With God on my side” (*The Times they are a Changin*, track3). The cold war left a young Robert Zimmerman feeling cold, and this sentiment towards war would have a profound impact upon him

Dylan's first encounter with war was surely a negative one. Dylan resented the fear which was instilled in him as a child. Dylan said in an interview in 1961 "I can offer songs that tell something of this America" and that he did "write talkin blues on topical things" (Artur, T. 2006. P19). In his first song, 'Song to Woody' Dylan wrote of a world which "looks like it's dying and it's barely been born"; (*Bob Dylan*. 1961 Track12). With the number of deceased people in World War Two at approximately 63,185,500 (World War 2 Casualty Statistics. 2013), it is not hard to see why the young Dylan would see this. "In 1962, the Soviet Union was desperately behind the United States in the arms race. Soviet missiles were only powerful enough to be launched against Europe but U.S. missiles were capable of striking the entire Soviet Union. In late April 1962, Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev conceived the idea of placing intermediate-range missiles in Cuba". This worked both ways as Cuba's leader " Fidel Castro was looking for a way to defend his island nation from an attack by the U.S. Ever since the failed Bay of Pigs invasion in 1961, Castro felt a second attack was inevitable. Consequently, he approved of Khrushchev's plan to place missiles on the island. In the summer of 1962 the Soviet Union worked quickly and secretly to build its missile installations in Cuba" (An Overview of the Crisis, 2013). Many homes were building bomb shelters in fear. In a notebook entry that year Dylan wrote about a song called '*Let me Die in my Footsteps*'. The song was about the fear of dying taking over people’s lives. The lyrics contain such lines as "There’s been rumors of war and wars that have been./The meaning of life has been lost in the wind/And some people thinkin“ that the end is close by./“Stead of learnin“ to live they are learnin“ to die...If I had rubies and riches and crowns/I’d buy the whole world and change things around/I’d throw all the guns and the tanks in the sea/For they are mistakes of a past history" (The Bootleg Series, Vol 1-3: Rare & Unreleased 1961-1991, 1991. track 7). In an interview also in 1962 Dylan remarked "I still say some of the biggest criminals are those that turn their heads away when they see something wrong and know it's wrong". (Artur T, 2006. P44). Clearly Dylan felt that evil

prevails when good men stand idly by, and he wasn't going to be an accessory in the evils of warfare.

The *'Freewheelin' Bob Dylan(1962)* album brought many of what became known as Dylan's „protest songs“. In *„Blowing in the Wind'* Dylan asked his audience "how many times must the cannon balls fly/before they are forever banned...how many deaths will it take till he knows, that too many people have died" (track 1). Dylan cried for compassion, he called for an end to the war, not just the war but all wars. His song *„Masters of War'* showed his sentiments towards war, and the people behind it. He called out the "masters of war/who build the big guns...[who] build all the bombs...[who] hide behind walls...I can see through your mask...[he resented those who] turn and run farther/when the bullets fly...you fasten the triggers/for others to fire/then you sit back and watch when the death count gets higher...Even Jesus would never/forgive what you do...Is your money that good/will it buy you forgiveness... I hope that you die/ and your death does come soon...I'll stand o'er your grave and make sure that you're dead" (track 3). This song is a powerful protest against those who benefit from war. In 1980 he would state "war is business...there are certain people who make a lot of money off of war" (Artur, T. 2006. P 720). In 2001, speaking just days before the 9/11 terrorist attacks in New York, Dylan spoke of how this song was "speaking against what Eisenhower was calling a military industrial complex"(Artur, T. 2006. P1313). Dylan resents that the people benefit from the war economically. Dylan did not feel it was the politicians alone responsible for war, and perhaps they have no power at all. He said in 1983 "corporations are God...politics is a hoax. The politicians don't have any power" (Artur, T. 2006. p803). For example he took aim in 1982 at corporations such as toy manufacturers for portraying a bad image to the youth. "The toy manufacturers that make guns and tanks for small children...they're the ones that start the assembly line of death" (Artur, T. 2006. P754). This is similar to the 'blue movies' versus 'psycho' hypocrisy Lenny Bruce outlined. Children's imitation of violence is tolerated within society yet to simulate sex is severely frowned upon. Through songs/statements like these he makes his audience question the message we are sending out to the youth.

The song '*Hard Rain's gonna fall*' also came from the '*Freewheelin Bob Dylan*' album. In 1965 Dylan would explain that he "wrote it at the time of the Cuban Missile crises...wondering if it was the end...[it was a] song of terror...trying to capture the feelings of nothingness" (Artur, T. 2006. P158). The lyrics detail devastating doom, featuring flashing images such as a "newborn baby with wild wolves all around it...guns and sharp swords in the hands of young children...sound of thunder it roared out in warnin...Where the pellets of poison are flooding their waters...the executioners face is always well hidden...black is the number, none is the number" (track6). Dylan painted a pessimistic view of the world in relation the surrounding militant environment. Dylan explained in 1963 that the 'pellets of poison' he mentions are the "lies that people get told on their radios and their newspapers ..[which] try and take peoples brains away" (Artur, T. 2006. P53). It is these pellets of poison which polluted the minds of some Germans who attempted genocide, which can guide racism. Like Bruce, Dylan also put into question the morals of the 'good' fight. Speaking of the Nuremberg trials, of people like Adolf Eichmann, Dylan said "cats say I had to kill these people or else they'd kill me; now who's going to try them for that? How do you know they [the judges of the trial] wouldn't do the same thing?" (Artur, T. 2006. P114). This is hugely similar to Lenny Bruce's view on the same subject. People are part of their environment, and if the belief in Germany was 'believe the Jews are an inferior race or die', so of course the German people are going to feel this way towards them. They had learned this prejudice from a medium which exerted influence.

Dylan on race

In his memoirs Dylan recalls "I saw one of the last black-face minstrel shows at a county carnival" (Dylan, B. 2004. P234). As the online Britannica encyclopedia states a minstrel show "an indigenous American theatrical form, popular from the early 19th to the early 20th century, that was founded on the comic enactment of racial stereotypes"(*Minstrel Show*, 2013). Here non-African American actors would dress in black face-make up, as African Americans were mostly not allowed to perform on stage. This was to change through the birth of the blues. The blues became popular even amongst white people, granting some privileged players a special role in society, giving them a platform. Dylan recalled;"The Mississippi river. The bloodstream of the blues, also starts up from my neck of the woods...always felt like it was in my blood" (Dylan, B. 2004. P241). Race relations in America were changing. Elvis Presley, a young white man from Mississippi came onto the music scene in mid 1950's. By 1955 "drawing on...black rhythm and blues" (Bailyn et al, 1992. P487), Elvis brought black music to a wide white audience. In 1958 a seventeen year old Robert Zimmerman spoke of how his favorite music was "rhythm and blues"(Artur, T. 2006 P11). He would be introduced to Robert Johnson in 1961. Johnson was a travelling musician in southern America at the beginning of the 20th century. Dylan recalled "As great as the greats were, he goes one step ahead" (Dylan, B. 2004 P286). He added of Johnson of a "fast moving story going around that he had soul to the devil at a four way crossroads [which Dylan too would later claim]" (Dylan, B. 2004. P286). From the beginning Dylan refused to accept prejudice in society and sought to free people from such oppression through his music.

One of the first songs which Dylan would write would be about the murder of a fourteen year old African American boy. His name was Emmet Till, a youth killed for speaking disrespectfully to a white woman. The murders were acquitted by an all-white jury. The lyrics claim "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 in shackles and chains, and your blood it must refuse to flow/For you let this human race fall down so God-awful low//This song is just a reminder to remind your

fellow man/That this kind of thing still lives today in that ghost-robed Ku Klux Klan/But if all of us folks that thinks alike, if we gave all we could give/We could make this great land of ours a greater place to live"(The Bootleg Series, Vol 9: The Witmark Demos: 1962-1964. (2010) track 13). He did not place blame on the members of the Klu Klux Klan, like he did not place blame on the corrupted Nazi's in World War Two, instead he viewed them as 'pawns' in a game much bigger than themselves. They „pellets of poison“ had infected their thoughts. An example of such propaganda could be seen between "1923 to 1924, the Washington State Klan published a newspaper out of Seattle called The Watcher on the Tower. Its propaganda shows how white supremacists in the Pacific Northwest promoted an organization associated with the U.S. South" (*The Ku Klux Klan In Washington State*, 1920s. 2013). This song '*Only a Pawn in their Game*' talks of these types of men, used men. The song was written about the murder of an African American Civil rights activist Medgar Evers. The song explains how the racist has simply learned 'You're better than them, you've been born with white skin'. He's simply "a tool/he's taught in his school...that the laws are with him/To protect his white skin./To keep up his hate/so he never thinks straight...he's taught how to walk in a pack...with his fist in a clinch/To hang and to lynch/to hide 'neath the hood/ To kill with no pain...[he's]only a pawn in their game" (track 6). Though he is deferring the blame somewhat, Dylan never explicitly says who is the chess player is in this game. He also wrote a song about an African American maid who was killed by her owner. The song was called „*The Lonesome Death of Hattie Carroll*’. Hattie Carroll was a mother of ten, and the judge, “to show that all’s equal...that the ladder of law has no top and no bottom, handed out strongly...a six month sentence” (*The Times they are a Changin*, 1964. Track10). Dylan was outraged that a man would only receive a six month sentence for the murder of an innocent woman, and he used his song to publicly highlight this injustice It was this kind of injustice which Dylan sought to eradicate, which he used his art to subvert some of the views of these important issues.

Dylan contributed financially to the Student Non-violent Co-ordinating Committee[an organisation to help African Americans in Southern America). In 1964 Dylan felt that was "the organisation I feel part of spiritually" (Artur R. 2006. 2006. P84). He said he "often performed without charge at civil rights rallies" (Artur T. 2006. P87).He also recalled that he did "travel to Mississippi to play at a voters registration rally" (Dylan, B. 2004. P65). He even played that great day just before Martin Luther King declared his

dazzling dream in 1964. Dylan toured these songs worldwide and resonated with people all around the world. He became viewed as a leader. It became a burden and in June of 1964 he spoke to Nat Hentoff during recording of his third album(which took place in one night over a couple of bottles of Beaujolais[red wine]). Dylan said"there aren't any finger pointing songs. Those other records I made, I'll stand behind them, but some of that was jumping into the scene to be heard and a lot of that was because I didn't see anybody doing that sort of thing...I don't want to write for people anymore. You know-be a spokesman...from now on I want to write them from inside of me" (Artur, T. 2006. P84) He claimed to be "bored by the bomb" (Artur T, 2006 P123) to defer peoples pleads to reveal what he was protesting about. He did not want to lead the masses. He felt the change must come from an individual level. He stated "I'm not a believer in doing things by numbers. I believe the best things get done by individuals" (Artur T. 2006. p228). When people would ask him why he didn't write songs like masters of war, he would tell them "I might meet one person now, and the same thing can happen between that one person and I that used to happen between thousands" (Artur, T. 2006. P419).

Dylan on Drugs

He was using a lot of drugs to keep up to pace of his tour in the early-mid sixties. He spoke of this time in 1978 and said „we were taking a lot of chemicals back then, which doctors prescribed for entertainers [such as Bruce]” (Artur, T. 2006. P628). He said in 1969 "I was on drugs, a lot of things...it did keep me up there to pump em out" (Artur, T. 2006. P433). He even stated in 1966 "opium and hash and pot- now...They just bend your mind a little. I think everybody's mind should be bent once in a while...LSD...makes you aware of the universe so to speak. You realize how foolish objects are" (Artur, T. 2006. P119). He even wrote a song called „*Rainy Day Women #12 & 35*” which appeared on his 1966 album „*Blonde on Blonde*’. This song subverted the meaning of „to get stoned”. It played on the double meaning of the word „stoned”. “Stoning is arguably the world's oldest form of execution. It is as old as written literature, and the most common death penalty described in the Bible.... Although it has never been a legal form of execution in the United States, it is practiced elsewhere in the world, primarily in the Middle East and sub-Saharan Africa” (Death by Stoning. 2013). In the sixties to get „stoned” referred to the effect of drug intoxication, particularly marijuana. Though the song primarily dealt with the notion of getting stoned as a punishment, but each verse ended with the phrase „everybody must get stoned”. The song was subsequently banned from being played on the airwaves. Dylan claimed years later in 1978 that “marijuana isn’t a drug like the others” (Artur, T. 2006. P645). Dylan would also claim in 1978; “drugs are dangerous...I hate to see people become slaves of drugs. I’ve never taken drugs” (Artur, T. 2006. P723). He then contradicted in 1983 by saying “I never got hooked on any drug...I don’t wanna say anything to encourage anybody” (Artur, T. 2006. P763). It would seem that he did not want to advocate drugs, nor disavow them, perhaps keeping his view to himself. the public protesting Dylan, and all his drug taking, retreated to his private life after a 1966 motorcycle crash.

Dylan on sex/intimacy

In 1965 Dylan married and fathered a child. His concerns were shifting from the public to his private life. His intimate relations are not something he discussed publicly. His motorcycle accident in July 1966 gave him neck injuries. Dylan wrote in *Chronicles* “I had been in a motorcycle accident and I’d been hurt, but I recovered. Truth was I wanted to get out of the rat race. Having children changed my life and segregated me from just about everybody...Outside of my family nothing had any real interest for me, and I was seeing everything through different glasses. Even the horrifying news items of the day, the gunning down of the Kennedy’s, King [Martin Luther King], Malcolm X...I didn’t see them as leaders being shot down, but rather as fathers whose families had been wounded” (Dylan, B. 2004. P114). He felt no responsibility to the surrounding movements, political or civilian. He felt “being true to yourself, that’s the thing” (Dylan, B. 2004. P115). Yet much of his audience could not accept this. They even came to his house, looking for instruction. He recalled “intruders started to break in day and night...rogue radicals looking for the prince of protest...looking to party, raid the pantry” (Dylan, B. 2004. P116). He wanted to “set fire to these people” who would arrive awaiting him to “lead them somewhere... [they demanded he] stopped shirking my [his] duties of conscience of a generation” (Dylan, B. 2004. P118). This is why Dylan felt “whatever the counter-culture was, I’d seen enough of it” (Dylan, B. 2004. P119). He began to deconstruct his public image to gain breathing space for his family. As he recalled, he was “photographed at the western wall wearing a skull cap...this helped a little...recorded what appeared to be a country and western record...people scratched their heads. I started a rumour that I would be quitting music and going to college...missed Woodstock [a huge music festival]-just wasn’t there” (Dylan, B. 2004. P123). Dylan felt “the whole spectral world can go to Hell” (Dylan, B. 2004. P121). He was not a politician. He was not a preacher. He was a musician/songwriter who had written some topical songs. His duties lay with his family. He recalled “As long as my own form of certainty stayed intact, I owed nobody anything...The press? I figured you lie to them [which puts into question all of the interviews I am quoting here]” (Dylan, B. 2004. P123). He did not desire to lead anybody’s journey, he was on his own spiritual journey and shortly after Dylan entered what critics have called his „Jesus Years“.

Dylan on Religion

Dylan had many contrasting points of view on Religion. He wrote a notebook entry in 1961 “I have no religion... Never seen a God-can’t say till I see one” (Artur, T. 2006. P20). There was a song on his 1964 album „The Times they are a Changin“ which dealt solely (no pun intended) with the notion of God and religion. This song was called „*With God on their Side*‘. This song is supremely subversive. The lyrics detail of how Dylan was “taught and brough up here/ the laws to abide. / And the land that I come from/ has God on its side.// Oh the history books tell it...the cavalries charged/ the Indians fell...Oh the country was young/With God on its side... [Of] The first world war...the reasons for fighting/ I never did get/ but I learned to accept it/ Accept it with pride/ for you don’t count the dead/ when God’s on your side//The second World War came to an end/ we forgave the Germans/ and then we were friends/ Though they murdered six million/ in the ovens they fried// The Germans too had God on their side...Jesus Christ was betrayed by a kiss/ but I can’t think for you, / you’ll have to decide/ whether Judas Iscariot/ had God on his side...if God’s on our side/ he’ll stop the next war” (track 3). It is no wonder then that in 1966 he would remark that “people who use God as a weapon should be amputated upon” (Artur, T. 2006. P318). He disliked how the different religions separated people. He explained in 1965 that “the phoniness of telling somebody they’re different from you because they’re a different religion. That’s not right... [Dylan liked religion]As long as he [the believer] doesn’t think I’m right, I’m right because my preacher told me I’m right” (Artur, T. 2006. P189).

In 1978 Dylan would become strongly affiliated with the figure of Christ. He had released an album in 1975 called „*Shot of Love*‘, which featured the song „*Lenny Bruce*“. When questioned on whether he agreed with Bruce’s philosophy of anti-organized religion, he answered “ritual has nothing to do with spiritual law” (Artur, T. 2006. P737). He did not bow down to what Lenny Bruce called „Religions Incorporated“. In „It’s all right ma (I’m only bleedin) Dylan remarked of the commerciality within organised religion. He wrote of „flesh coloured Christs that glow in the dark/it’s easy to see without looking too far/ That not much is really sacred” (*Bringing it all Back Home*, 1965. Track11). He explained “Religion is repressive...Christ didn’t preach religion. He preached the truth” (Artur, T 2006.

P706). In 1983 he would declare “Religion is a dirty word. It doesn’t mean anything. Coca Cola is a religion. Oil and Steel are a religion. In the name of religion, people have been raped, killed and defiled. Today’s religion is tomorrows bondage” (Artur, T.2004. P754). Dylan resented how „preachers“ have used the doctrine of religion as a weapon. Yet Dylan would perform for the Pope in 1997 (ironically playing Knockin on Heavens Door), which would put into question the previous statements[Perhaps he felt Pope John Paul II could change all of this?]. His attraction towards the teachings of Christ would fall from the forefront of Dylans life, at least publically, as he remarked that “Jesus only preached for three years” (Artur, T. 2006 P811). Dylan remains spiritual to this day claiming in 2004 that “God’s the judge” and is the reason he is where he is today. Dylan elaborated that he “made a bargain” with “the chief commander ...in this world and in a world we can’t see” (Artur, T. 2006 P1368). In this same interview Dylan deviously speaks of how he went to the crossroads and made a big deal” (Artur, T. 2006 P1373). This is the same thing Robert Johnson, one of Dylans favourite musicians, claimed many years earlier; that he had sold his soul to the devil for the ability to play the guitar. Whether Dylan is confessing that this is the „chief commander“ which guides him, or just exploiting the old blues myth to add to his mystic is anyone’s guess. Either way Dylan has always been spiritual, guided toward his destiny by an inner voice. He summed this up in 1975 exclaiming that “we each have our own vision and a voice inside that talks only to us. We have to hear it” (Artur, T. 2006 p516).

Dylan on Government/Media

It is safe to say that Dylan respected spiritual law over Human law-the Government. In his early years, as was discussed, he publically protested his negative view of war, race-issues and drug prohibition. He disliked the fear instilled to him of the Americans by the Government/school as a youth. He resented the unfair treatment and unjust laws in place for African Americans in place in the early 20th Century. It was this sort of oppression, unjustifiable discrimination, which Dylan would (and still does) stand up to. Issues like the civil war and race relations were of utmost importance to him. He wrote the civil war was the “all-encompassing template behind everything that I would write” (Dylan, B. 2004. P86). This kind of hate was born, as Dylan believed, out of polluted propaganda. With the Cuban missile crises and the civil rights issues Dylan was more than upset. Accepting an award from the National Emergency Civil Liberties Committee, Dylan made an infamous speech. He said “I look down and see the people that are governing me-and they haven’t got any hair on their head- and I get very uptight about that...I’ve never seen one history book that tells how anybody feels...without thinking about anything as trivial as politics...I’m thinking about the general people and how they get hurt...I don’t see why anybody can’t go to Cuba[speaking of president John F Kennedy’s murderer] I saw some of myself in him...I saw things that he felt...not to go that far and shoot him[Boos and hisses]” (Artur T. 2006. P74). He was clearly unhappy with how the country was being run, with the mediums of academia and media espousing propaganda . He stated; “The teachers in school taught me everything was fine...But it ain’t fine...so many lies have been told, so many things are kept back...Kids have a feelin like me...they’re scared to step out. But I ain’t scared to do it” (Artur, T. 2006. P78). Time magazine, originally labelling Lenny Bruce „the sickest of them all“, conducted an interview with Dylan in 1965. In perhaps his most explicit interview Dylan spoke of who is may corrupting the media. Dylan told the interviewer that Time magazine has “too much to lose by printing the truth”. He explained that the truth is a plain picture of “a tramp vomiting, man, into the sewer...next door to the picture Mr Rockefeller...on the subway going to work”. The „Rockefeller“ he is referring to is no doubt one of the many “great-grandchildren of John D. Rockefeller, the family patriarch and America's first billionaire” (Rockefeller Family Tries to Keep A Vast Fortune From Dissipating. 1992). “John D. Rockefeller was the

head of the Standard Oil Company and was one of the world's richest men” (John D. Rockefeller biography. 2013). It is most likely David Rockefeller senior. He is a man who “joined Chase Bank (one of the biggest banks in the world) in 1946... [and] worked his way up to CEO” and has a net worth of 2.7 billion today. (David Rockefeller, Sr. 2013) It has long been thought that extremely wealthy men have a sway over politics.

He wrote the song „*The Times are a Changin'*” in 1964, and this song was aimed at authoritarians. He explained in 1965 that the song demonstrates “bitterness towards authority-the type of person who sticks his nose down and doesn’t take you seriously, but expects you to take him seriously” (Artur, T. 2006. P156). The lyrics warn “senators and congressmen/ [to] please heed the call/ don’t stand in the doorway/ don’t block up the hall...your old road is rapidly aging...the order is rapidly changing...the times they are a changin” (*The Times They are a Changin*, track1). This is why he had support for the students, as “they’re going to be taking over the world...they don’t have to fight, they can sit back and wait” (Artur, T. 2006 P416). Dylan learned that he did not desire to preach to the people, as they had enough of this preaching within the media and the academic system(not to mention the religious institutions). He believed the media often misrepresented him, misquoted him and did not understand what he was doing. He believed instead to lead by example. He knew that “All revolutions have always had a musical backcloth” (Artur, T. 2006 P723), so he must set the example in his art. Politics was not the answer, “that’s what sin is politics” (Artur, T. 2006 P 747). Dylan thought that he “didn’t even know the definition of politics...The law is a good thing until its used against the innocent [war/slavery]...Politics could be useful if it was used for good purposes...like feeding the hungry and taking care of the orphans. But it’s not...it’s like a snake with a tail in its mouth...show me an honest politician and I’ll show you a sanctified whore” (Artur T, 2006 P354). He furthered this saying “Politics is an instrument of the devil...politics is what kills... [He’s] not sure if presidents change anything (Artur, T. 2006 P 762). In the 1983 song „*Union Sundown*” Dylan proclaims “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” (*Infidels*, track6). Of the 1989 song „*Political World*” Dylan remarked that it “could have been triggered by current events. There was a heated presidential race underway” (Dylan, B 2004. P167). Here he writes “We live in

a political world/ [where] Wisdom is thrown in jail... Where mercy walks the plank... Where courage is a thing of the past... Where peace is not welcome at all”(Burlesque Empire, track1). Yet he played at Bill Clinton’s presidential inauguration in 1992, which would put into question these above statements. Perhaps he felt Clinton could change the evils of politics.

One of the most recent political events Dylan has spoken about is the terrorist attacks of September 11th 2001. He quoted a poem called „Gentlemen Rankers“ which reads as follows; “we have done with hope and honour, we are lost to truth/ we are dropping down the ladder rung by rung. / and the measure of our torment is our youth”. He then said “my mind would go to young people at a time like this”, and that the way to effect change is that “people will have to change their inner world” (Artur T. 2006. P1331). This is why he resented the media. They were always trying to pin him down, to place value upon him, to integrate him into the establishment. He spoke of the starving artist image; “The big bankers...who buy art started it. They want to keep the artist under their thumb” (Artur T. 2006. P555). Once the image is established it can become propaganda for the media, which will then influence the masses. He spoke similarly of the term „Beatnik“ saying “the term „Beatnik“... was made up by magazine people who are invisible who like to put a label on something to cheapen it. Then it can be controlled by other people who are also invisible” (Artur t. 2006 P856). The same went for the Rock and Roll, which began as „the devils music“ and a „danger to society“(perhaps because it originated from African American blues). As Dylan explains “Once the corporate world, when they figured out what it was and how to use it, they snuffed the breath out of it and killed it...it’s been neutralised” (Artur T. 2006 P866). He felt this began in 1966 saying “something changed in 1966.....it was the beginning of corporate America” (Artur T. 2006 P1313). This seemed to be the focal point of Dylan’s rebellion; corporations (the „invisible“ people [corporations] behind politics/media exerting influence over the masses). As he proclaimed “The politicians don’t make a difference. It’s the business men behind them” (Artur, T. 2006 P1138) which he feels are polluting the world. These are the same business men he speaks in the 1967 song „All Along the Watchtower“ [which he calls his most political song]. Those “Businessmen, they drink my wine, plow men dig my earth,/None of them along the line know what any of it is worth”(

John Wesley Harding, Track4), and their wrong evaluation of worth is tainting peoples values.

Dylan feels that the only change must come on an individual level. He is aware of the power of art, and its influence on people. He felt that music could “get into peoples subconscious minds...and make them feel better” (Artur T. 2006 P935). He knew that television and the media’s propaganda was “super powerful. It forms peoples opinions” (Artur, T 2006 P946), but he felt that art too could have a similar power. Dylan uses this power for good. To this day he is on his „Never Ending Tour“, charging to his death the language of the lord [his judge]. He sings all of the songs I have mentioned and many more which detail compassion for less fortunate souls, and contempt for those corrupted souls.. He is singing against these „*Masters of War*‘, who benefit from other peoples losses. He is creating awareness of racial injustice, or any discrimination which plays on stereotypes, pleading with people to not be just a “*Pawn in Their Game*”. He is making people wonder is “*God on Our Side*”, and where God is (is it in a church or in the heart of the believer)? He is creating awareness of The „*Political World*‘ we live in, and to the possibility of politics just being a front. As Martin Luther King spoke; “Everything that we see is a shadow cast by that which we do not see” (Beyond Vietnam -- A Time to Break Silence. 2001). Through his art Dylan urges us to take a closer look at society, but also to examine our inner self. For Dylan “the reality of the enemy is a spiritual being...the enemy who“s controlling who you think your enemy is” (Artur T. 2006 P748). The person must be the change they want to see the world. This is Dylan“s point. As he explained in 1975 to Allen Ginsberg in an interview, with art you must stop time and “to stop time you have to be exist in the moment, so strong as to stop time and prove your point...if you succeed in doing that, everyone who comes into contact with what you“ve done...will catch some of that... That“s a heroic feat” (Artur, T. 2006. P524). Once the artist has awareness so strong of himself and his position in society, knowing the enemy both inside and out, then one can create an art which can influence change. He charges to death with his freedom of silence on his 'Never Ending Tour'. He speaks the language of the lord, his judge [who has not yet tallied the total cost of Dylan“s freedom].

Conclusion-Were the Beats beaten?

For a large part, both Lenny Bruce and Bob Dylan of the Beat movement were largely dissatisfied with the conventions set by the powerful institutions of Government and religion of the 1950's and 1960's. Both felt that the wars which the government entered had a dark side, which were not seen or talked about. Bruce's parodies of figures of war provided a release on the highly pressurized topic and his subversive sketches questioned the moral of the „good“ fight. Dylan used his songs to highlight that there is gain to be made from war, and like Bruce questioned the morality of the „good fight“ also. Both felt that the discrimination towards African Americans was totally unjust, but that people were just part of their environment (leaving them susceptible to propaganda). Bruce used his comedy to demonstrate the relationship between the suppression of words and the oppression of others. He also has sketches which would subvert people's stereotypes of race. Dylan used his music to highlight the unjust crimes which were being committed and made people aware that the problem of discrimination is larger than the single racist; their hatred was simply learned in their environment(though it hard to say who exactly the teachers are). They had differing views on drugs, but also experienced different times. Bruce saw a scientific hypocrisy (which still exists) between the illegality of marijuana in a society where alcohol (a far more harmful drug) is legalized and advertised. Bruce used drugs legally and medically, though these laws changed shortly after. He used his comedy to talk about the positive side of drugs and some hypocrisy within the legality/illegality of some drugs. However Bruce passed away from a drug overdose so that is worth bearing in mind. Dylan too defended against the social taboo associated with marijuana, even LSD and opium in the early sixties. Yet after 1966 his views on drugs become ambivalent and it would seem that he wishes to keep these views private. Like his views on drugs, Dylan kept his intimate relationships, and all details of sex private too. Bruce on the other hand talked openly about sex. His early encounters through his mother left a profound impact. Sex was not publically talked about much in those days, but Bruce broke down this barrier. He espoused his guiltless feelings toward sex to break people out of their repressed realm. It was the language of this topic, examining the power of words, which would place Bruce in most trouble, legally speaking. His views on

religion did him no favours either in a court which states „In God we Trust“. Bruce viewed organized religion as a business, and a hypocritical institution, and used his comedy to highlight these views. Dylan too disliked religious institutions feeling it can be used as a weapon, and that the various religions separate people. Dylan subverted the notion of God being on Americans side, and still does today. Yet Dylan was at one stage profoundly influenced by the teachings at Christ and to this day accounts his success to the inner guiding spirit of destiny.

Both artists felt that the media often had a detrimental role toward their art, and peoples values. They both agreed that institutions such as religion and governments have put fourth propaganda, through the respective medium (organised religion/media) which asserts unjust values within the masses. An Example of this can be seen through wealthy religious institutions (such as Catholicism) preaching the good word yet not using their power to eradicate poverty. Another example of this could be seen in the media's role in propaganda of the anti-Semitic Nazi's or the White supremacist group „The Klu Klux Klan“ (which governments distributed). This is the peculiar relationship between the government and the media (which is parallel to preachers using religious doctrine for power in organised religion). Bruce remarked that it was magazines labelling him as „sick“ which gained him a negative reputation. This cost him his career as nobody would hire the outlaw he had become. This negative reputation then attracted the attention of the governments law enforcers, which got him in legal trouble for being obscene, putting him under immense pressure. Kenneth Tynan spoke of how “constant, abrasive irritation produces the pearl; it is a disease of the oyster” (Bruce, L. 1966. p7). Lenny Bruce was this pearl (though to some he was the cure). Lenny paid for his freedom of speech, through the language of law, with his career. This cost was tallied by the judge of the government's law. Dylan too resented the media. He felt by placing a label upon him, he becomes valued, and is then a commodity of a corporation. This is most likely why Dylan is constantly re-inventing himself, to ensure that no label sticks. He felt that once a label stuck, it became part of the governments propaganda (which is quite likely what happened to Lenny Bruce [Lenny being dubbed „sick“]). This propaganda, once part of the established order (the government); could then influence people. They could then mould the commodity to suit their desire. He does not believe that governments possess total control (if any at all). He believes that governments, and politicians, are just a hoax for the corporations behind them. He only once explicitly named someone who fit this description, one of the richest families in America[both then and now]; the Rockefellers. Dylan refuses to

be a pawn in the game of these shadow men. Instead he listens to his inner voice, which guides his spirit. Yet he does not publicly offer guidance as much as the age if instant communication would like. As he explained in an interview with Bono: "if I'm inspired to make a statement, I'll make a statement" (Artur, T. 2006 P807). With issues of war, race-relations, drugs, sex, religion, governments and media still of importance to the people on this earth, Dylans input would be of supreme value to many.

One thing is clear; the cost of freedom depends upon the nature of the judge. The evidence has been presented, but the decision lies in the gavel of the judge. Who is the judge? Were the decision in the hands of the law, like Bruce, a procedure of court would have to be followed. "In U.S. law, decisions in many civil and criminal trials are made by a jury. Considerable power is vested in this traditional body of ordinary men and women, who are charged with deciding matters of fact and delivering a verdict of guilt or innocence based on the evidence in a case" (Jury, 2013). First of all Bruce and Dylan would have to be tried individually, regardless of having been affiliated with the same movement. In Bruces case this actually happened. He was found guilty in 1994, but the decision was post humously reversed in 2003. At this rate what value can be placed on the sentencing of a judge, if the sentencing is not final? In the case of Dylan we would need to know who his opposition is, what the charges against him are. In this case we are speaking of fiction so to draw a conclusion here would be of little value.

An alternative procedure is to replace the judge of the law, which Bruce dealt with, and place Dylan's judge in the position of power. The problem here lies in the fact that Dylan never specifically said which lord is internally speaking to each individual. However he was born into Jewish faith. The belief in Judaism is that "The God who created the world revealed himself to the Israelites at Mount Sinai. The content of that revelation makes up the Torah" and "The Torah is the foundation of Jewish religion and law and refers to the Five Books of Moses, the Pentateuch: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy". This "text of the Torah is more or less the same in Jewish translations as the text in the Christian Bible" (Central beliefs & Torah, 2010). This is convenient as the only other lord Dylan mentioned was Jesus Christ of Christianity. "Jewish People believe that goodness and obedience will be rewarded and sin punished by God's judgment after death" (Central beliefs, 2010). This co-incides with the Christian belief that God is the ultimate

judge in life, and will evaluate everyone on the day of judgement. I dare not make judgement on behalf of a God of any faith. The only logical approach remaining is to listen to that inner voice which Dylan spoke about(which surely spoke to Bruce also), and make the judgement as individuals. As for my own judgement, having chosen to study the two artists I obviously am biased. I will use my right to remain silent (like Dylan). I feel there is too much information trying to sway influence over us in this present world, telling people how to think, how to act how to feel. Instead I will leave you with the evidence I have accumulated (in which alternative research may show my bias/judgement), and empower the reader to make their own decision. I reserve my judgment from the public sphere, and leave you silence; an inner voice to hear.

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