Themes Of Bob Dylan’s Music Essay, Research Paper

Bob Dylan was recognized by his poetry and song writing. He usually wrote songs about protesting and religious themes. Although the theme of Bob Dylan?s work is depressing, it is necessary to consider how the events in his life affected his music. Also Bob Dylan had other musicians that influenced him in his early years.Bob Dylan was born in Duluth Minnesota on the date of May 24th 1941. By the time he was ten years old he was writing poems and had taught himself to play guitar. He later changed his name from Robert Allen Zimmerman to the famous name Bob Dylan. In 1962 Bob visited his big early influence Woodie Guthrie in the hospital. Finally Bob Dylan got to meet him and become friends with his lost idol who was slowly dying of Huntington?s disease in Morristown, New Jersey, Dylan had written him a song called song to Woody. A famous quote from this song is ?Bout a funny old world that?s coming along. Seems sick and it?s hungry, it?s tired and it?s torn, it looks like it?s dying and it?s hardly been born.?After he graduated high school in the early 1959 Dylan found himself playing folk music. This is also the time he began to write his legendary folk songs. In the 1960s Bob Dylan had turned the themes of his music to protest what many people consider the wrongs of society. In his songs he writes about the ?luckless, the abandoned and? forsaken,? as he put it in ?chimes of Freedom.? He condemned the Ku Klux Klan in ?The Death of Emmett Till? and the John Birchites in ?Talking? John Birch Paranoid Blues.? In Masters of War?he damned the war makers. And in Blowing? in the wind, ?he created probably his most famous song, though Dylan once stated that he wrote that song just for his friends. In fact, this anti racist, antiwar anthem is, in its deepest sense, a subtitle plea for awareness. (?How many times must a man look up/ Before he can see the sky? / Yes ?n? how many ears must one man have/ before he can hear people cry??) Dylan had the characteristics of a biblical prophet, but also he had a sense of humor and irony (?Talking Bear Mountain Picnic Massacre Blues?). One soon started to notice that he was a beginning to write songs that saw the world as consisting not just of heroes and villains but mostly cowardly people caught up in all-to-human situations. In the song ?Who killed Davey Moore?? Dave Moore was a boxer who got killed by another boxer in the ring. Dylan sings about the death of the boxer Dave Moore and dramatizes the excuses (in a way that echoes the rhyme? who killed Chock Robin?) Given by the referee, the fighter?s manager, the gamblers, the sportswriters and the crowd.In 1965 Bob Dylan married Sara Lowndes and later had four children together.In 1966 Bob had a fatal motorcycle accident, suffering from several broken bones, some broken vertebrae, a concussion and lacerations of his face and scalp. For months he was forced to recuperate in his home in Woodstock with his wife. Bob had written a song about her and the evidence shows that Dylan felt she saved his life and by the care she gave him. In the song ?If not for you? Bob writes about how is wife being there for him when he was recuperating and what he would do if she were not there. If not for you my sky would fall/rain would gather too./without your love I?d be nowhere at all, /I?d be lost without you. During his long recuperation, he spoke to no one in the press. However, in May 1967, Dylan broke his silence and told the New York Daily News; ?What I?ve been doing mostly is seeing only a few close friends, reading little about the outside world, poring over books by people you never heard of, thinking about where I?m going and why am I running, and am I mixed up too much, and what am I knowing, and what am I giving and what am I taking. And mainly what I?ve been doing is working on getting better and making better music, which is what my life is about.? His next album would deeply reflect how he had changed. It was entitled ?Nashville Skyline.? Bob Dylan?s fans were shocked. They had been expecting the old Dylan back but instead they had a person who was now singing country. The album was a bust and showed little future.In 1971 he published his first book ?Tarantula? and did little to help his slumping career. Confused about his future Dylan agreed to compose the score a new movie called ?Pat Garrett and Billy the Kid.? The movie was a failure but the soundtrack was a huge success.In 1967 to 1974 he wrote songs about legends, myth?s, bible and ghosts on the album John Wesley Harding. In this album according to the Rolling Stone press he presents two characters in his songs whom in some way, seem to represent two different parts of his personality needing and looking to be reconciled for example the joker and the thief in ?All along the watch tower. In 1973 Dylan had his first US #1 Hit ?Knocking on Heaven?s Door.? This song went on to become one of Dylan?s greatest songs.Dylan and Sara (his wife) had separated and this made it possible for his next album to what it was. They called the album ?Blood on the Tracks.? It was Dylan?s most mature effort ever recorded. The songs were well written and gave an excellent perception of how he felt inside. He was clearly very upset about his separation with Sara. The album had some of his greatest songs, such as ?Tangled Up in Blue,? ?Idiot Wind,? ?Simple Twist of Fate? and ?Shelter From the Storm.? Dylan?s greatest album to date.In 1977 Dylan and Sara divorced and in 1978 he acted in the movie ?Renaldo & Clara? and that same year converted to Christianity. In 1985 he performed at ?Live Aid? and ?Farm Aid? and contributed to ?We Are the World.? In 1970 Dylan received an Honorary Doctorate of Music from Princeton University. In 1988 Dylan was introduced to the R&R Hall of Fame. In 1991 Dylan received a Grammy Award for ?Lifetime Achievement.? In 1997 Kennedy Center Honors Dylan for achievement in the arts. President Clinton stated, ?He probably had more impact on people of my generation than any other creative artist.? In 1998 he was the winner of three Grammy awards in major categories for ?Time Out of Mind?: The album of the Year, Best Male Contemporary Rock Vocal Performance, and Best Contemporary Folk Album. In 2000 Dylan is awarded ?The Polar Music Prize? by the Royal Swedish Academy of Music for his ?indisputable influence on the development of 20th century popular music as a singer-songwriter. They also nominated Dylan for the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1997, 1998 and 1999.