

David Rusaanes Altinius

## "Talkin' in the name of religion"

A Closer Look at Bob Dylan's Gospel Years

Master's thesis in MLSPRÅK

Supervisor: Domhnall Mitchell

May 2020



Dylan, Bob. Train Tracks - White. 2012. Castle Fine Art. [www.castlefineart.com/art/train-tracks-white](http://www.castlefineart.com/art/train-tracks-white)



David Rusaanes Altinius

# **"Talkin' in the name of religion"**

A Closer Look at Bob Dylan's Gospel Years

Master's thesis in MLSPRÅK  
Supervisor: Domhnall Mitchell  
May 2020

Norwegian University of Science and Technology  
Faculty of Humanities  
Department of Language and Literature





## **Abstract**

When Bob Dylan released *Slow Train Coming* in 1979 and thus confirmed his conversion to Christianity, it shocked both fans and critics. Once again, Dylan had turned his back on his previous self for a new genre and what seemed like a new persona. A couple of years later, when he stopped preaching, many chose to overlook the three albums *Slow Train Coming*, *Saved* (1980), and *Shot of Love* (1981) both musically and spiritually. Even as literary attention to Dylan continued to grow, especially after his Nobel Prize in Literature in 2016, his religious period was still, to a degree, being ignored. However, with the release of *Trouble No More: The Bootleg Series vol. 13 / 1979 – 1981* in 2017, attention finally turned to this period. With this thesis, I will look in detail on the aforementioned albums and to what degree they differ, or indeed do not differ, from other parts of Dylan's oeuvre. Using the technique of close reading, I highlight the dense, poetic language of Dylan's lyrics, and discuss a long career of breaks and continuities. The personal journey of conversion is present on these albums, as a lot of the songs mirror Dylan's own experience at the time. What I find is that especially *Saved* is preoccupied with sharing a Christian idea and experience. The other albums are also influenced by this message and are to a degree just as preaching, but they are almost always informed by societal and political issues in addition to Biblical imagery, or intertextual references to other poets and authors. Just like allusions to and quotes from the Bible are found in all of Dylan's albums, so is a wry assessment of American life. These albums can thus be seen as a natural part of his musical journey, rather than an anomaly. The greatest constant in Dylan's career, however, is the Great American Songbook, which includes folk, blues, country, and Gospel.

## Sammendrag

Med albumet *Slow Train Coming*, som kom ut i 1979, konverterte Bob Dylan til kristendom og sjokkerte med det både fans og kritikere. Dylan hadde nok en gang distansert seg fra sitt tidligere selv for en ny sjanger og det som ble oppfattet som en ny person. Da han noen år senere sluttet å predikere, valgte mange å overse de tre albumene *Slow Train Coming*, *Saved* (1980) og *Shot of Love* (1981) både musikalsk og spirituelt. Dylan har siden den gang fått stadig mer litterær oppmerksomhet, spesielt etter at han vant Nobelprisen i litteratur i 2016, men de religiøse albumene ble fortsatt i stor grad oversett. Men, da *Trouble No More: The Bootleg Series vol. 13 / 1979 – 1981* ble sluppet i 2017, fikk denne perioden endelig mer oppmerksomhet. Med denne avhandlingen skal jeg analysere de ovennevnte albumene og hvordan de skiller seg ut, eller ikke skiller seg ut, fra andre deler av Dylans litteratur. Gjennom nærlesing belyser jeg det særegne, poetiske språket i Dylans musikk og drøfter en lang karriere med brudd og kontinuitet. Den personlige reisen det å konvertere innebærer reflekteres i disse albumene, da mange av sangene kan sies å gjenspeile Dylans personlige opplevelser i samme periode. Jeg argumenterer for at *Saved* er spesielt viet til en kristen idé og opplevelse. De andre albumene inkluderer også referanser til Bibelen og er til tider predikerende, men inneholder også observasjoner av samfunnsmessige- og politiske problemer, eller intertekstuelle referanser til andre poeter og forfattere. Akkurat som allusjoner til og sitater fra Bibelen finnes i alle Dylan-album, så finner man sarkastiske dommer av Amerikansk samfunn. Disse albumene kan således sees på som en naturlig del av hans musikalske reise, og ikke et avvik. Fremfor alt, så er det den Store Amerikanske Sangboken som er konstant i Dylans karriere, og den inneholder både folk, blues, country og Gospel.

## **Acknowledgements**

Writing a master's thesis takes a long time, which means that the list of people you would like to thank as you reach the latter stages grow exponentially.

Therefore, I am hesitant to thank too many individuals; chances are that if you are reading this, you are important to me and I would like to thank you.

To all of those who helped me understand the value of words, literature, and good stories. Thank you.

If I do not know you, and you are still reading this, I hope you enjoy reading it as much as I did writing it. Thank you.

A special thanks must nevertheless go to Domhnall Mitchell, my supervisor. Your interesting conversations, fascinating anecdotes, and honest feedback has been invaluable for me the last twelve months, and for that I would like to thank you.

Finally, thank you to Bob Dylan for composing the soundtrack for my five years in Trondheim.

David Rusaanes Altinius, May 2020.





**Table of Contents**

*Introduction* .....11

*The Gospel Years* .....13

*Close reading*.....16

    "Slow Train" ..... 18

    "Precious Angel" ..... 22

    "Saved" ..... 25

    "Property of Jesus" ..... 28

    "Every Grain of Sand" ..... 31

*Discussion*.....34

*Conclusion* .....38

*Literature* .....39

*Songs cited* .....40

*Appendix*.....42



Reporter: What do you think of people who analyze your songs?

Bob Dylan: I welcome them – with open arms.

(Press Conference, San Francisco, December 1965.)<sup>1</sup>

## Introduction

In October 2016 Bob Dylan (1941-) was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature.<sup>2</sup> With that, he manifested his place in the upper echelons of anglophone songwriters in history. Many would argue that he did not need a Nobel Prize for that to be the case. His friend Leonard Cohen probably put it best a couple of days after the award was announced, by saying that giving the award to Dylan "is like pinning a medal on Mount Everest for being the highest mountain."<sup>3</sup> When Dylan gave his Nobel lecture the following June, he opened by saying:

When I first received this Nobel Prize for Literature, I got to wondering exactly how my songs related to literature. I wanted to reflect on it and see where the connection was. I'm going to try to articulate that to you.<sup>4</sup>

The emphasis of this thesis will, therefore, be on how the three albums *Slow Train Coming* (1979), *Saved* (1980), and *Shot of Love* (1981) relate both to literature and to Dylan's career as a whole.<sup>5</sup> Released between 1979 and 1981, they comprise what is referred to as Dylan's "Christian period" and are particularly interesting because of how they were perceived when first released, many of his fans seeing his move to Christianity as a betrayal (Heylin 44).<sup>6</sup> This view was mirrored by music critics as well; Kurt Loder, when reviewing *Saved* for *Rolling Stone*, wrote "[a]bandoning the greatest of human religious quests – the intellectual pilgrimage toward personal transcendence – Dylan settled for mere religion."<sup>7</sup>

However, as this thesis will aim to show, he never settled for "mere religion", even in these manifestly Christian albums. I will look more closely at these albums and explore how – if at all – they differ from much of what Dylan has done in his career, while still being distinctively *Dylan* in their language, poetry, and themes. In doing so, I will be using the techniques of close reading, first associated with the New Critics, but still standard methodology in many other critical approaches to poetry.<sup>8</sup> However, I will also use historical and cultural sources to give context and draw conclusions from outside the lyrics themselves. In November 2017, almost forty years after the release of *Slow Train Coming* in August 1979, the eleventh instalment of the "Bob Dylan Bootleg Series"

<sup>1</sup> For the full transcript, see: Gleason, Ralph J. "Bob Dylan Gives Press Conference in San Francisco." *Rolling Stone* <https://www.rollingstone.com/music/music-news/bob-dylan-gives-press-conference-in-san-francisco-246805/>. Accessed May 7, 2020.

<sup>2</sup> "The Nobel Prize in Literature 2016." NobelPrize.org. Nobel Media AB 2020 <https://www.nobelprize.org/prizes/literature/2016/summary/>. Accessed January 15, 2020.

<sup>3</sup> "Leonard Cohen: Giving Nobel to Bob Dylan Like 'Pinning Medal on Everest'." *TheGuardian.com*. The Guardian <https://www.theguardian.com/music/2016/oct/14/leonard-cohen-giving-nobel-to-bob-dylan-like-pinning-medal-on-everest>. Accessed November 25, 2019.

<sup>4</sup> Dylan, Bob. "Nobel Lecture." NobelPrize.org. Nobel Media AB <https://www.nobelprize.org/prizes/literature/2016/dylan/lecture/>. Accessed November 18, 2019.

<sup>5</sup> Dylan, Bob. *Slow Train Coming*, Columbia Records, 1979. ---. *Saved*, Columbia Records, 1980. ---. *Shot of Love*, Columbia Records, 1981.

<sup>6</sup> See also: Kooper, Al. "Bob Dylan." *Britannica.com*. Encyclopædia Britannica, inc. <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Bob-Dylan-American-musician>. Accessed November 20, 2019.

<sup>7</sup> Loder, Kurt. "Saved." *Rolling Stone* <https://www.rollingstone.com/music/music-album-reviews/saved-2-252021/>. Accessed November 18, 2019.

<sup>8</sup> "New Criticism." *Britannica Academic*. Encyclopædia Britannica <https://academic.eb.com/levels/collegiate/article/New-Criticism/55452>. Accessed April 7, 2020.

appeared, entitled *Trouble No More – The Bootleg Series Vol. 13 / 1979-1981*.<sup>9</sup> With this release, Dylanologists around the world began to look at Dylan's Christian period.

Dylan's recognition first and foremost as a writer reinforces the feeling in some cultural circles that his lyrics are as worthy of the kinds of critical and academic attention that are given to poetry in general. For example, the University of Oslo has since 2011 offered courses on Dylan's works, lastly in the fall semester in 2019.<sup>10</sup> One of the first comprehensive works of Dylan as a writer was written by Harvard Professor Christopher Ricks, a poetry scholar, in his 2004 book *Dylan's Visions of Sin*. Two years later, Professor of Religion Stephen H. Webb wrote *Dylan Redeemed* about Dylan and religion as seen from his viewpoint as an evangelical Christian. More recently, a collection of essays by Scandinavian scholars called *A God of Time and Space: New Perspectives on Bob Dylan and Religion* (2019) was released. Notwithstanding the last two examples, comparatively few writers have focused on Dylan and religion, especially his Christian albums. As Gisle Selnes writes in his article "Bob Dylan's Conversions: The 'Gospel Years' as Symptom and Transition", "when the topic is Dylan and religion, (...) there has been a curious tendency among critics and commentators to downplay the importance of the genuinely evangelical gospel period" (164). Within Dylan's oeuvre, it has been seen on as something like an anomaly both musically and lyrically, that one can do without.

Much of what has been written about Dylan's Gospel period and his relationship with religion seems to highlight an underlying Christianity throughout his oeuvre. Most notably, Stephen H. Webb writes in *Dylan Redeemed* that "it is hard not to come to the conclusion that he [Dylan] was a Christian for years before he or anyone else knew it" (56). What I want to argue in this thesis, however, is that allusions to and quotes from the Bible do not make Dylan a Christian in the 1960s, it just makes him a part of a society built on a Judeo-Christian worldview with knowledge of both the Old and New Testament. By looking more closely at the three albums Dylan released between 1979 and 1981, I will point out consistencies in Dylan's imagery and poetry that both involves and transcends Christianity. These albums are therefore not to be seen as anomalies in Dylan's musical landscape, but a natural part of it. They coincide with Dylan's personal journey and relationship with Jesus, which led him to Gospel music. I do not do this to downplay his overt Christian message during this period, but to highlight that even these songs are sometimes allusive, interesting, thought-provoking, and ambiguous outside of, and within, Christianity. Although my emphasis will be on selected songs from *Slow Train Coming*, *Saved*, and *Shot of Love*, I will compare and contrast these ideas to songs ranging from 1963 to 2020.

<sup>9</sup> Dylan, Bob. *Trouble No More – The Bootleg Series Vol. 13 / 1979-1981*, Columbia Records, 2017.

<sup>10</sup> "Ide2084 – Bob Dylan: Tradisjonstolk Og Kulturspeil." Universitetet i Oslo <https://www.uio.no/studier/emner/hf/ifikk/IDE2084/>. Accessed January 15, 2020.

## The Gospel Years

There is something inherently *Bob Dylan* about Bob Dylan taking his music in a direction that angered his fans. The most famous example is probably when he went electric during the Newport Folk Festival in 1965, sending shockwaves throughout the music world. A year later, *Blonde on Blonde* was released, finishing a trilogy of rock albums. At Newport, his performance was received with resounding boos. The boos continued when he went on a world tour in 1966, performing an acoustic set at first that was greeted with applause, and then an electric, which had a more mixed reception. This led to the legendary incident in Manchester, United Kingdom, where a fan shouted "Judas" at Dylan, to which he promptly answered: "I don't believe you!"<sup>11</sup> His new, plugged-in sound seemed less authentic to fans than the acoustic sound he had yielded previously.<sup>12</sup>

However, Bob Dylan never left the American folk tradition, even though he went electric, moving to a traditional country sound towards the end of the 1960s together with, amongst others, Johnny Cash.<sup>13</sup> Since then, Dylan has continued to experiment with American folk forms – up until the last couple of years as he has released a trilogy of albums covering selected songs from the Great American Songbook.<sup>14</sup> This link is evident in the Gospel period as well, especially with the inclusion of "A Satisfied Mind" from the Great American Songbook on *Saved*. His career has always seen him return to the American tradition, which includes folk, blues, country, and Gospel.

As Clinton Heylin points out, in his book *Trouble in Mind* (2017), there are several similarities between what happened in 1965-66 and during the Gospel years. The most vocal members of the audience wanted Dylan to change back to his previous self. Accusations in the 1960s of Dylan being "Judas" for having sold out to rock-and-roll were replaced in the late 1970s and early 80s of Dylan having sold out for abandoning... rock-and-roll. The reactions to Dylan's new sound were thus similar in 1979 and 1965-66. However, Heylin argues, there are also some noticeable differences. For the first time, during his 1979 tour, he refused to play any of his old songs. His repertoire now consisted entirely of *religious* songs that had been written in the last twelve months – and all of his older, secular songs were put aside. Even at Newport and the subsequent tour of England in 1965-66, Dylan, as mentioned, first played an acoustic set before plugging in for the second part of the concert, thus meeting his fans halfway. There was no way he would do that in 1979, saying: "I don't sing any song which hasn't been given to me by the Lord to sing" (Heylin 119). The book gives a fascinating insight into Dylan's version of Christianity and what made it unique, and the comparison between his two most famous conversions is apt and shows how a disruption, for Dylan, can at the same time be continuous.

Although only the years 1979-81 are referred to as Dylan's "Christian period" there is a sense in interviews after this that he has not removed himself from the Christian doctrine completely. As Heylin points out, in an interview from 1986, Dylan

<sup>11</sup> Fleming, Colin. "Remembering Bob Dylan's Infamous 'Judas' Show." *Rolling Stone*. <https://www.rollingstone.com/music/music-news/remembering-bob-dylans-infamous-judas-show-203760/>. Accessed November 19, 2019.

<sup>12</sup> Dylan was on tour in England in 1965 as well, playing an acoustic set. This was about two months before the Newport Folk Festival. Much of this can be seen in documentaries about the period, most notably *The Other Side of the Mirror: Bob Dylan Live at Newport Folk Festival 1963-1965*, which shows his transition through the prism of the Newport Folk Festival. Extensive footage by D.A. Pennebaker during both his 1965 and 1966 tour resulted first in the movie *Don't Look Back* in 1967, and much later, *No Direction Home* in 2004, the latter directed by Martin Scorsese.

<sup>13</sup> Previously, the only song released from this cooperation was "Girl from the North Country" on *Nashville Skyline* in 1969. The fall of 2019, however, saw the latest Bootleg album *Travelin' Thru, 1967-69* (Columbia Records, 2019) in which more of the songs recorded with Johnny Cash were released.

<sup>14</sup> The albums *Shadows in the Night* (2015), *Fallen Angels* (2016), and *TriPLICATE* (2017) all consist entirely of traditional American folk songs from the Great American Songbook.

says: "There's truth and untruth, y'know? There's honesty and hypocrisy. Look in the Bible: you don't see nothing about right or left. (...) but that's the only instrument I know, the only thing that stays true" (Heylin 26). Dylan has since expressed these ideas several times, but he no longer seems to adhere exclusively to the Bible. For example, the first album after his Gospel trilogy, *Infidels* (1983), includes the pro-Israel song "Neighbourhood Bully", suggesting perhaps that Dylan was quietly returning to his Jewish roots. In the same year, his oldest son Jesse's bar mitzvah was held at the Western Wall in Jerusalem, showing that Dylan still observed to the rituals and traditions of his Jewish family (Shelton 568). In an interview referred to by Robert W. Kvalvaag and Geir Winje in the introduction to their anthology, *A God of Time and Space*, Dylan explains his disdain for the word "religion". "Faith", on the other hand, he can identify and adhere to. He goes on to explain that "these old songs are my lexicon and prayer book." Everything he creates points back to the Great American Songbook, even as he quotes Hank Williams, the famous American singer-songwriter, in explaining how he has "seen the light" (Kvalvaag and Winje 10-11).

Anders Thyrring Andersen, a parish priest and Master of Arts, argues in the same essay collection that Dylan's Christianity is something that is found not only during the Gospel years, but instead can be viewed as a constant in his career. He rejects the idea that Dylan ever was the voice of a left-wing generation and argues that religiosity is at the very core of many of his songs (183). Consequently, Andersen argues that Dylan was not indeed a part of the 1960s protest singers. Dylan's 1967 album, *John Wesley Harding*, was a self-titled "Christian rock album" and emphasises his distance both musically and spiritually to the "flower-power" counterculture at its peak in 1968. Andersen points out the fact that Dylan used the motorcycle accident in 1966 as an excuse to retreat from public life and touring so that he could spend more time with his family. His conversion to Christianity can be seen in connection to another disaster for Dylan, the divorce from his wife, Sara. Without his wife and thus the ability to reconnect with his family, as in 1966, he instead connects (for the first time) with Jesus.

Both Andersen and Erling Aadland look at the apocalyptic idea expressed in Dylan's Christian albums and compares them to songs like "Desolation Row" and "Hard Rain". They find this idea exclusively Christian, and the point that western society is built on an apocalyptic idea is expressed by Aadland, writing that: "it is undeniable that apocalypse is one of the original tales of Western civilization" (101). Aadland does not, however, make the link between Dylan and this idea outside of Christianity, which I think can be made, seeing as Dylan grew up in post-war Hibbing, Minnesota, where they would stage exercises in the event of an atomic war breaking out. The apocalypse must have seemed possible for Dylan both then and later, for example during the Cuban Missile Crisis, which led Dylan to write the song "Hard Rain".

There are other comparisons to be made between Dylan's conversion to Christianity and what happened in the mid-1960s. As his conversion to rock and roll foreshadows The Beatles and The Rolling Stones, the conversion to Christianity can be seen as foreshadowing Ronald Reagan's new doctrine for America, and the succeeding re-Christening of the country. With Reagan's electoral victory over the incumbent Jimmy Carter in November 1980, America took a step in the divine direction. The new President fronted what was known as The New Right, which embraced evangelism and a Christian message that is echoed in Dylan's Gospel songs. As Kjell O U Lejon writes in *Reagan, religion and politics*: "Reagan was the man who would help turn America back to what it was meant to be, one nation under God" (45). Robert Shelton relates this to Dylan, writing in his book *No Direction Home* (1986), that people were "shocked by its [*Slow Train Coming's*] fundamentalist, conservative theology" (563). Nevertheless, Dylan did

not want to be congregated with ultra-right-wing reactionaries and explained that anyone could find anything in the Bible, also expressing that: "[a]ny preacher who is a real preacher will tell you that: 'Don't follow me, follow Christ'" (Shelton 563). As Shelton points out, Dylan never publicly embraced the New Right or Reagan, and the xenophobia and the idea of a laissez-faire economy was not something that he shared with that movement. As I will attempt to show, there is still a social message in Dylan's lyrics, which makes it more inclusive than right-wing politics at the time. There is an ambiguity and complexity to his lyrics both during the Gospel years and in the ensuing albums that makes it possible to read them in more ways than one. This incertitude is consistent with the rest of Dylan's career, and even though this makes it difficult to pin him down, politically or spiritually, it does make him an intriguing subject for analysis and discussion.

## Close reading

There are allusions to and quotations of the Bible throughout Dylan's career, long before he ever went to Vineyard Fellowship in California for his conversion. However, the public hints that he was becoming a Christian started in November 1978, during warm-up sessions before shows he would play an early version of "Slow Train" and during concerts, the femme fatale in "Tangled Up In Blue" was no longer reading an Italian poet from the thirteenth century, but the prophet Jeremiah. This change occurred around a week after an incident in San Diego, where a cross was thrown onto the stage (Heylin 16-17).<sup>15</sup> As he got back to his hotel room, he thought to himself: "'I need something tonight,' and, I didn't know what it was. I was used to all kinds of things, and I said, 'I need something tonight that I never really had before.' And I looked in my pocket and I had this cross." Having been touched by Jesus, Dylan's life changed. His tour finished not long after, and when he returned to the public half a year later, during the summer of 1979, his conversion to Christianity was complete. His first album of what was to be known as the "Christian Trilogy", *Slow Train Coming*, was released in August that year. With the benefit of hindsight, this event is foreshadowed on his previous album, *Street-Legal* (1978). In a song like "Changing of the Guards", Dylan is clearly feeling some sort of change is needed: "But Eden is burning, either brace yourself for elimination / Or else your hearts must have the courage for the changing of the guards". Another example from *Street-Legal* is "Señor (Tales of Yankee Power)", which hints to a man looking for answers to some difficult questions: "Señor, señor, let's disconnect these cables / Overturn these tables / This place don't make sense to me no more". The conversion is made explicit, however, on both the album cover of *Slow Train Coming* and in the song lyrics. Having been raised in a Jewish household he was probably acquainted with the Old Testament from an early age, and references to both the Jewish holy scripture, the Torah, and the Christian Bible are found in lyrics from all periods of his life.<sup>16</sup> However, they are never as explicit and as fully embraced as in these three albums.

Below I will look more closely at, firstly, the songs "Slow Train" and "Precious Angel" from *Slow Train Coming* (1979). As the title track, "Slow Train" is interesting on its own, and the cultural connotations of the train and the social commentary elevate the lyrics. The album cover shows a train moving on a track as it is being built: one of the workers raises a pickaxe formed like a cross, working as a symbol for how Christianity helped build America. The train has similar connotations because the building of railroads in the mid-nineteenth century in many ways opened up the continent for the first time (Schievelbusch 89). This contributed to the sense of "manifest destiny" which began with the Puritan "errand into the wilderness" of the 1620s and 30s. This errand was not one of self-interest, as Perry Miller points out, but one with an explicit covenant with God to spread his word. "For once", Miller writes, "there would be a society so dedicated to a holy cause that success would prove innocent and triumph not raise up sinful pride or arrogant dissention" (Miller 8). The idea of manifest destiny is presented by Dylan concerning his career as well, most notably in his 2004 autobiography *Chronicles*. He writes about this in the first chapter, which retells the story of his arrival in New York in 1961. "I'd come from a long ways off and had started from a long ways down", Dylan writes, before continuing: "But now destiny was about to manifest itself. I felt like it was

<sup>15</sup> The following quotes are also from Heylin's book, which transcribes a lot of Dylan's improvised mini sermons during shows, like this at San Diego in 1979.

<sup>16</sup> To give an early example, see, for example, the opening line of "Highway 61 Revisited" from the album with the same name (1965): "Oh God Said to Abraham, 'Kill me a son'".



looking right at me and nobody else" (*Chronicles - Volume One* 22).<sup>17</sup> Here, Dylan aligns himself with American history and sees his journey as a part of the same tradition as the nation at large. "Precious Angel", the other song from *Slow Train Coming* that I will do a close reading of, tells the story of a man converting to Christianity with the help of an angel, while at the same time being bold enough to have his own visions. It works, undoubtedly, as an allegory for Dylan's conversion.

Continuing with the close reading, from the second Christian album, *Saved* (1980), it is once again the title track that is analysed. The song takes up the theme and imagery of "Precious Angel" about a man being saved by his conversion to Christianity. This time, Jesus is the saviour, and the short lines and repetitions represent an urgency not seen in "Precious Angel". From *Shot of Love* (1981), the songs "Property of Jesus" and "Every Grain of Sand" are explored because they both feature imagery which reveals the full complexity of Dylan's Christian identity at the time. In the latter there are even hints of self-doubt, pointing towards the next phase of Dylan's career. Throughout, references to songs from other parts of Dylan's discography will be used to indicate similarities and recurring images.

<sup>17</sup> For more on the relationship between Dylan and destiny, see: Maxwell, Grant. "'An Extreme Sense of Destiny': Bob Dylan, Affect, and Final Causation." *The Journal of Religion and Popular Culture*, vol. 25:1, Spring 2013, pp. 146-162.

## "Slow Train"

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

*I had a woman down in Alabama  
She was a backwoods girl, but she sure was realistic  
She said, "Boy, without a doubt  
Have to quit your mess and straighten out  
You could die down here, be just another accident statistic"  
There's a slow, slow train comin' up around the bend*

*All that foreign oil controlling American soil  
Look around you, it's just bound to make you embarrassed  
Sheiks walkin' around like kings  
Wearing fancy jewels and nose rings  
Deciding America's future from Amsterdam and to Paris  
And there's a slow, slow train comin' up around the bend*

*Man's ego is inflated, his laws are outdated, they don't apply no more  
You can't rely no more to be standin' around waitin'  
In the home of the brave  
Jefferson turnin' over in his grave  
Fools glorifying themselves, trying to manipulate Satan  
And there's a slow, slow train comin' up around the bend*

*Big-time negotiators, false healers and woman haters  
Masters of the bluff and masters of the proposition  
But the enemy I see  
Wears a cloak of decency  
All nonbelievers and men stealers talkin' in the name of religion  
And there's a slow, slow train comin' up around the bend*

*People starving and thirsting, grain elevators are bursting  
Oh, you know it costs more to store the food than it do to give it  
They say lose your inhibitions  
Follow your own ambitions  
They talk about a life of brotherly love show me someone who knows how to live it  
There's a slow, slow train comin' up around the bend*

*Well, my baby went to Illinois with some bad-talkin' boy she could destroy  
A real suicide case, but there was nothin' I could do to stop it  
I don't care about economy  
I don't care about astronomy  
But it sure do bother me to see my loved ones turning into puppets  
There's a slow, slow train comin' up around the bend*

"Slow Train" is the title track, and fourth song, of Dylan's first overtly Christian album, *Slow Train Coming*. As is noticeable, the word "coming" is omitted from the name of the song, and one can ask what that implies? The word "slow" tells us that the train is moving, and its arrival feels imminent. The train is coming "around the bend" at the end

of every stanza, without actually arriving. If it were to arrive, it is uncertain whether we will be allowed onboard or not. This uncertainty, and the fact that the train never actually arrives, means that what the train symbolises might be more critical than the train itself.

The first line is arresting and immediately suggests a moral stance: to be "disgusted" is to find something highly offensive. "Sometimes" is trochaic, which is emphatic, and the line reads like a preacher at the beginning of a sermon – this puts the listener on alert and gives the lyrics a sense of embedded importance. The next line tells us that the behaviour of his companions is morally repulsive to the speaker. The speaker turning against his companions also indicates the significance of the situation and implies a break from the speaker's previous point of view. The question about whether his companions are lost or found is fascinating on different levels. At one level, it is verbally playful: historically, train stations have a "lost and found" office. At another level, it is Biblical: we are here dealing with moral loss. In the parable of the lost sheep, Jesus speaks of a shepherd who leaves his flock of ninety-nine sheep to find one that is lost.<sup>18</sup> However, the idea of a "lost and found" office means that there is hope that you can find your moral values yet again, that it is not too late. The stanza closes with the line: "There's a slow, slow train comin' up around the bend". It has still not arrived; the question is what will happen when it does. The image is, again, ambiguous. There are no trains in the Bible (though there are carriages and chariots), so it is modern while at the same time being scriptural. In Matthew 24:42, we read: "Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come." Also, in Matthew 24:44, the same sentiment is repeated: "Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh." The sense of an impending change, and a Biblical one at that, is growing ever stronger.

The next stanza does not continue where the last one left us but instead chooses to focus on a personal story. It is about "a backwoods girl", which *sounds* demeaning, but instead suggests the pastoral virtues of rural innocence. By not being morally compromised by the corruptions of modern urbanity, she can be realistic and honest. Calling the girl "backwoods" is, therefore, a compliment. He will die "down here", clearly suggesting the Earth as opposed to Heaven, or even Earth as a kind of Hell. The reference to another "accident statistic", is again complex: it could refer to the many artists who died of accidental overdoses, such as Janis Joplin, Brian Jones, and Jimi Hendrix. This relates back to the idea about the lost and found office, and it not being too late for salvation. However, for many of Dylan's contemporaries, it was already too late, with the three mentioned above in addition to Jim Morrison and Paul Clayton, a folksinger who travelled with Dylan in 1964, all dying at a young age around 1970 (Rem 103). It could even be an oblique reference to Dylan's famous motorcycle accident in July 1966, which came at a time when he was taking many drugs, and thus relates to the idea of having to "straighten out".<sup>19</sup> After that, he stopped touring for almost eight years. It brought about a fundamental change in Dylan's life and music; instead of the classic rock of *Highway 61 Revisited* (1965) and *Blonde on Blonde* (1966) his next albums were the folk-rock *John Wesley Harding* (1967), and the country *Nashville Skyline* (1969).

A switch in the third stanza from the personal to the political is signalled by the mid-rhyme "foreign oil" and "American soil" as Dylan offers a rebuttal of both American politics and the foreign countries controlling them. What remains consistent is Dylan's judgemental voice as he says both are "bound to make you embarrassed". Again, it continues an authoritative moral judgement, just as the word "disgusting" did in the first

<sup>18</sup> *King James Bible*, Matthew 18:12-14 and Luke 15:3-7.

<sup>19</sup> See, for example, the first chapter of Håvard Rem's book *Bob Dylan* (1999) which includes a quote from Dylan saying "A lot of people think that I shoot heroin. But that's baby talk. I do a lot of things" (Rem 11).

stanza. He also alludes to the Middle East and Arab world – a region riddled with American foreign interest, internal conflict, and oil. The nose ring is another interesting image, as it envisages a bull, as well as an image of vanity and excess. Put together with fancy jewels, a big and angry bull works as contrast and emboldens Dylan's vision of the Americans being controlled.

Choosing Amsterdam as one of the cities controlling America is not arbitrary and nor is the comparison between "sheiks" and "kings". The latter is an allusion to the "cleansing of the Temple", when Jesus goes to Jerusalem for Passover, only to find that the temple is full of merchants and moneychangers. In a fit of righteous anger, he overturns the tables and demands that they "Take these things hence; make not my Father's house an house of merchandise" (John, 2.13-16).<sup>20</sup> Dylan adopts Christ's disdain for trade and profit. At one level, Christ's story gives Dylan the right to criticise materialism, though it has to be admitted that his stance is inconsistent: is he criticising materialism or foreign interference? At another level, he is speaking almost like a prophet or apostle, judging his countrymen. It is necessary to point out that this arrogance predates Dylan's conversion: lines such as "You gotta lot of nerve / To say you are my friend" from "Positively 4<sup>th</sup> Street", "Don't Think Twice, It's All Right", or (most memorably) "Like a Rolling Stone" ("Threw the bums a dime in your prime, didn't you?") all go to show that Dylan could be supercilious long before his conversion. On the other hand, the adoption of Christian imagery leads Dylan dangerously close to anti-Semitism because Amsterdam is a city where many Jewish merchants historically made a living in the diamond trade. These are the fancy jewels that are being referred to in the third stanza. The idea that Jews control the American economy, and thus its politics, is a long-lived anti-Semitic trope.

In his pre-song raps when playing "Slow Train" at concerts, Dylan would further question materialism and individualism, as symbolised by the "Wealth and Prosperity" doctrine. The theory stems from Deuteronomy 8:18, where Moses states: "But remember the Lord your God, for it is he who gives you the ability to produce wealth." Many Christians use this as an excuse to produce vast amounts of wealth for themselves.<sup>21</sup> Dylan rebukes the doctrine, and an example of this critique also makes it into the *Trouble No More* documentary which was released together with the thirteenth volume of his Bootleg Series (LeBeau).<sup>22</sup> His critique is thus the same in 2017 as it was in 1979.

Foreign policy is apparent in the fifth stanza as well, as it opens with the words "Big-time negotiators". Big-time negotiations did indeed take place in the late 1970s; the SALT II agreement between the USSR and USA, limiting the manufacture of strategic nuclear weapons, was signed in 1979, as was the Egypt-Israel Peace Treaty. The latter was signed on the 26<sup>th</sup> of March 1979, a year or so after the main outlines of the peace treaty were decided during the Camp David Accords and only a month before the recording of Dylan's album. Under the Carter administration, a war which had lasted

<sup>20</sup> Interestingly, as commented on above, the phrase "overturn these tables" is used a year earlier as well, in "Señor (Tales of Yankee Power)" from *Street-Legal* (1978).

<sup>21</sup> An example of a rap is to be found in *Trouble in Mind* (Heylin 156).

<sup>22</sup> The movie is dubbed a "documentary" but is much more than that. It is a mixture of live footage from concerts and rehearsals in the period 1979-81. In between the musical parts, a series of mini-sermons are held by a preacher wearing 80s clothing in a dimly lit church. The preacher addresses different parts of Christianity, but the majority of his sermons are devoted to the story of a rich man, who got rich from exploiting others, and a poor man, who has been exploited. The preacher makes clear which of those will go to heaven at the end and asks everyone "to look long and study in our own hearts" because we all have "worms creeping." Only by understanding this and judging yourself on the same merits as you do others, can you see clearly. The ideas and stories told by the preacher very much mirror a lot of what Dylan sings about in "Slow Train" and other songs from these three albums.

since 1948, was brought to an end.<sup>23</sup> If either of those are the negotiations that Dylan is referring to, it does not feel as if the outcome convinces him. They are masters of bluff and proposition, and he sees an enemy wearing only a cloak of decency. The enemy is a curious mixture of the Biblical, where the enemy is sin or Satan, and the political, there is a long tradition of paranoia about foreign agents and traitors in American political history. There is also the personal angle, which was seen in *Street-Legal*, where Dylan sings of fighting "that enemy within" in "Where are you Tonight?". In other words, though the overt Christianity is new, the Messianic in different forms is not.

Nowhere is this clearer, though, than in the sixth stanza. It begins with another line with a mid-rhyme, highlighting the contrast between the "thirsting" humans and the "bursting" grain elevators. This is an example of the old Dylan, who focuses on economic and social issues facing working-class people as he did before in songs such as "The Times They Are A-Changin'" and "With God on Our Side". We do not know whom the people telling Dylan what to do are, but again he distances himself from external control, dismissing political manipulation by referring to "they", and not by a more specific term. It is a faceless, inhuman group who are saying these things. The advice he gets is to be selfish, and his critique is thus of an individualistic society that does not care enough for the weak and the poor. It is all well and good to talk about a life of brotherly love, but Dylan himself is yet to see anyone who really lives up to his standards.

Erling Aadland writes, in his article "Against Liberals: Multi-Layered and Multi-Directed Invocation in Dylan's Christian Songs", that "rather than turning to simple, superficial, and favored liberal issues like oppressed minorities, which he used to do, and which still after all these years of worldwide changes on a grand scale seem to be the darling issues of liberals, he now bites into more unpleasant and dangerous contemporary features" (104). On *Slow Train Coming* alone, Aadland goes on to point out, Dylan flays sexual confusion and disorder, other religions and New Age spiritual substitutes, science, arrogance, and Arabian sheiks. In this world, where all of these evils exist, a righteous life is not attainable for anyone, which is why a faithful life is the only way to salvation. A lot of these images are seen in "Slow Train", a song which can work as a synecdoche for the rest of his Christian writings.

The song addresses a vast number of topics and problems, some highly personal, others to do with world politics, war, and conflict. The common denominator is that no-one seems to notice the slow train that is approaching, and which will seemingly change the situation that the world finds itself in. Whereas before, in the early 1960s, Dylan was very reluctant to accept himself as a spokesperson for the protest and Civil Rights movement, he is more comfortable here, adopting the voice of the prophet. Perhaps he felt it was safer: it was the forces of reaction, after all, who killed Martin Luther King and so many of the other Civil Rights activists. It is easy to draw parallels between the Christian idea of the Second Coming of Jesus and the train that is moving slowly around the bend. This connection is explicitly made by Dylan as well, in his introduction to the song at several concerts: "Christ will return to set up His Kingdom in Jerusalem... There really is a slow train coming and it is picking up speed" (Shelton 570). On one level, as discussed, there are political messages which are found in all of Dylan's lyrics. However, here, such opinions are always informed by the Biblical imagery that he imposes. Even the grain elevators that are bursting invoked the story when Jesus fed the multitude of five thousand men, in addition to women and children, with five loaves and two fishes.<sup>24</sup>

<sup>23</sup> Carter, Jimmy. "Camp David Accords." *Britannica.com*. Encyclopædia Britannica, inc. <https://www.britannica.com/event/Camp-David-Accords>. Accessed November 20, 2019.

<sup>24</sup> As referenced by all four Gospels, Matthew 14:13-21, Mark 6:31-44, Luke 9:12-17, and John 6:1-14.

## "Precious Angel"

*Precious angel, under the sun  
How was I to know you'd be the one  
To show me I was blinded, to show me I was gone  
How weak was the foundation I was standing upon?*

*Now there's spiritual warfare and flesh and blood breaking down  
Ya either got faith or ya got unbelief and there ain't no neutral ground  
The enemy is subtle, how be it we are so deceived  
When the truth's in our hearts and we still don't believe?*

*Shine your light, shine your light on me  
Shine your light, shine your light on me  
Shine your light, shine your light on me  
Ya know I just couldn't make it by myself  
I'm a little too blind to see*

*My so-called friends have fallen under a spell  
They look me squarely in the eye and they say, "All is well"  
Can they imagine the darkness that will fall from on high  
When men will beg God to kill them and they won't be able to die?*

*Sister, lemme tell you about a vision I saw  
You were drawing water for your husband, you were suffering under the law  
You were telling him about Buddha, you were telling him about Mohammed  
in the same breath  
You never mentioned one time the Man who came and died a criminal's death*

*Shine your light, shine your light on me  
Shine your light, shine your light on me  
Shine your light, shine your light on me  
Ya know I just couldn't make it by myself  
I'm a little too blind to see*

*Precious angel, you believe me when I say  
What God has given to us no man can take away  
We are covered in blood, girl, you know our forefathers were slaves  
Let us hope they've found mercy in their bone-filled graves*

*You're the queen of my flesh, girl, you're my woman, you're my delight  
You're the lamp of my soul, girl, and you torch up the night  
But there's violence in the eyes, girl, so let us not be enticed  
On the way out of Egypt, through Ethiopia, to the judgment hall of Christ*

*Shine your light, shine your light on me  
Shine your light, shine your light on me  
Shine your light, shine your light on me  
Ya know I just couldn't make it by myself  
I'm a little too blind to see*

A fascinating blend of the emotional and the spiritual, "Precious Angel" is the second song on *Slow Train Coming* and its imagery and story bear the hallmark of a conversion narrative. It is addressed to an angel, traditionally "a member of a class of celestial beings being considered intermediate between God and humanity and typically acting as attendants, messengers, or agents of God."<sup>25</sup> In this case, the angel is a woman "under the sun" – that is, of the earth rather than heaven, not necessarily supernatural, but still

<sup>25</sup> "Angel, n." *OED Online*, Oxford University Press, <https://oed.com/view/Entry/7458>. Accessed May 12, 2020.

acting as God's agent and carrying his message. This message is a highly personal one, which allows the speaker, Dylan, to open his eyes and see clearly.<sup>26</sup>

The angel has shown Dylan that he was blinded and lost. The idea of being blinded is repeated in the song "Saved" from Dylan's album with the same name. It is also seen in "Blowin' in the Wind", where Dylan is addressing the idea of turning a blind eye to a difficult situation when he writes "Yes, 'n' how many times can a man turn his head / Pretending he just doesn't see". The image of being lost, which we saw in "Slow Train" as well, is again repeated. Dylan draws on a passage from Luke 6:48-9, which contrasts those who follow Jesus like a man "who laid the foundation [of his house] on a rock", while those who do not follow are like "a man that without a foundation built an house upon the earth."<sup>27</sup> The rhyme pattern throughout the song is AABB, although it should be noted that in this first stanza the words "sun" and "one" rhyme with the words "gone" and "upon". This makes this stanza tightly knit, and the foundations of the poem are at least still intact.

In the second stanza, there is spiritual warfare between those with and those without faith. The contrast in the first line between the "spiritual warfare" and the fact that "blood and flesh [is] breaking down" shows us that this war, even though spiritual, has physical consequences. Unlike "Slow Train", where Dylan put himself on a moral pedestal, he now likens himself to others by admitting that "we are so deceived", and that the truth is in "our hearts, and we still don't believe" (emphasis mine). In the chorus, this idea is repeated, as he is asking the precious angel to shine its light on him so that he can finally see the truth that is in his heart. He admits that this is impossible to do on his own and that he need help because he is himself "a little too blind to see". Blindness as an image for unbelief is common in Christian writings, most famously in "Amazing Grace" where the speaker "was blind, / but now I see".<sup>28</sup> The chorus also draws on 2 Corinthians 4:4, which reads: "In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them." This passage includes the imagery of God shining the light for the blinded through Christ. Blinded are those who are lost and who do not believe, which also connects the idea from the chorus and the Bible passage to the last line in the stanza: "When the truth's in our hearts and we still don't believe?"

There are several changes in both form, language, and imagery from the first to the second stanza. The opening two lines of the song contain fourteen words, whereas the first two lines of the second stanza have twenty-four. This means that the second stanza sounds much more urgent and frenetic than the first. The romantic address is substituted for what seems like preaching; more spoken than sung. There is also a switch from the personal and human to the Biblical apocalypse where the moral decay is such that physical objects are breaking down. This continues after the first chorus, as he prophesies that the world has to be ending before his "so-called friends" finally turn to God. The consequences for them is everlasting punishment in Hell, where they will beg God to die. This idea draws on the Book of Revelations 9:6, where it says that: "in those days men [shall] seek death, and shall not find it; and shall desire to die, and death shall flee from them."

After having addressed the angel directly in the first stanza, he now speaks directly to someone he calls "sister". The speaker does not like the focus on Buddha and Mohammed, especially when it comes as a substitute for Jesus. The idea that others are

<sup>26</sup> As mentioned above, this image is also presented by the preacher in the film "Trouble No More".

<sup>27</sup> The song "Solid Rock" on *Saved* has a nod to the same passage, with the first lines reading: "Well, I'm hangin' on to a solid rock / Made before the foundation of the world."

<sup>28</sup> See, for example: <https://www.hymnal.net/en/hymn/h/313> for full lyrics.

too influenced by eastern religions is repeated in "When You Gonna Wake Up?" later on the album. Here, he writes "Spiritual advisors and gurus to guide your every move / Instant inner peace and every step you take has got to be approved". He is positioning himself as a visionary and a seer, which seems contradictory given how, in the chorus, he is "a little too blind to see". A "vision" is also something that is usually reserved for prophets. With this being the case, it seems like the "sister" is not the angel addressed earlier in the song. In spite of this, he is also sympathising with her, making the image an almost feminist one. Throughout the Bible, women are the ones who draw water, making the image a familiar one. Under the law, women have always been positioned beneath the husband, who is the head of the family. Even though Dylan is sympathising with her plight, he is criticising her for promoting Buddhism and Islam and thus forgetting Christ's sacrifice.

Dylan then goes back to addressing the angel directly. However, instead of showing gratitude, as he did in the first stanza, he is telling the angel to "believe me when I say": the roles have switched, and Dylan has become the bearer of a message. "Both our forefathers were slaves" is an allusion to Dylan's Jewish heritage, which is repeated in the next stanza with the reference of Moses freeing the slaves in Egypt. Before that, he again connects the spiritual with the physical by describing the angel both as "the queen of his flesh" and "the lamp of his soul". The lines rhyme, emphasising the relationship between the spiritual and the physical. She also "torches up the night", which is consistent with the juxtaposition of darkness and light and unbelief and faith that runs through the song. It does, however, have a distinctively sexual side to it that makes it different from the other contrasts drawn. The romantic language from the first stanza is brought back. However, it is ambiguous because he now appears to be explaining the ways of the world to the angel.

While in some ways a love ballad, the captivating combination of spiritual and physical consequences in the world of the precious angel makes this song much more than that. It is a conversion narrative, with Dylan proclaiming his love for the angel who helped him see the light. The dichotomy between right and wrong, vision and blindness, and light versus dark is seen throughout the song. The imagery draws on different parts of the Bible, the Book of Revelations, as mentioned, but also on John 8:12. In this verse, Jesus says: "I am the Light of the world. He that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." The language is strikingly similar to that which Dylan uses when speaking of the angel, again emphasising how she is a messenger of God's word.



## "Saved"

*I was blinded by the devil  
Born already ruined  
Stone-cold dead  
As I stepped out of the womb  
By His grace I have been touched  
By His word I have been healed  
By His hand I've been delivered  
By His spirit I've been sealed*

*I've been saved  
By the blood of the lamb  
Saved  
By the blood of the lamb  
Saved  
Saved  
And I'm so glad  
Yes, I'm so glad  
I'm so glad  
So glad  
I want to thank You, Lord  
I just want to thank You, Lord  
Thank You, Lord*

*By His truth I can be upright  
By His strength I do endure  
By His power I've been lifted  
In His love I am secure  
He bought me with a price  
Freed me from the pit  
Full of emptiness and wrath  
And the fire that burns in it*

*I've been saved  
By the blood of the lamb  
Saved  
By the blood of the lamb  
Saved  
Saved  
And I'm so glad  
Yes, I'm so glad  
I'm so glad  
So glad  
I want to thank You, Lord  
I just want to thank You, Lord  
Thank You, Lord*

*Nobody to rescue me  
Nobody would dare  
I was going down for the last time  
But by His mercy I've been spared  
Not by works  
But by faith in Him who called  
For so long I've been hindered  
For so long I've been stalled*

*I've been saved  
By the blood of the lamb  
Saved  
By the blood of the lamb  
Saved  
Saved*

*And I'm so glad  
Yes, I'm so glad  
I'm so glad  
So glad  
I want to thank You, Lord  
I just want to thank You, Lord  
Thank You, Lord*

A year after the release of *Slow Train Coming*, Dylan's second Christian album, *Saved* (1980), hit the shelves. Again, the imagery on the album cover is worth looking at. Where the train on *Slow Train Coming* opened up for analysis, this time around the album cover is less opaque. It shows a hand reaching down from the skies towards a group of hands in darkness stretching towards it. The image invokes Michelangelo's *The Creation of Adam* from the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel. The imagery of creation then evokes the "born-again" narrative that is often used when someone converts to Christianity, like Dylan. However, the artwork was quickly deemed too overtly Christian and replaced with a painting of Dylan on stage, which downplayed the blatantly religious nature of the album (Heylin 180-181). Even though replaced, the original album cover shows how explicit the Christian message was for Dylan.

The title of the song, as well as the album, implies that the person it describes has already been "Saved". We saw the image of a person in need of salvation or having been found in *Slow Train Coming*, and the idea is repeated here. The song begins with the felt drama of Dylan's predicament, with the imagery of blindness, a standard one in the Bible, as in 1 Corinthians 13:12, "For now we see through a glass, darkly", taking up the note sounded in "Precious Angel". This is then followed by another disaster as Dylan describes himself as "born already ruined" as he "stepped out of the womb". Dylan is referring here to the doctrine of original sin, whereby all human beings inherit damnation because of Adam and Eve having succumbed to temptation by the devil in the Garden of Eden.<sup>29</sup> The connection between "dead" and "womb" is a shocking image, and Dylan uses the last four lines of this octave to explain his survival. The repetition of "By his" in the last half of the stanza, the longer lines, and the positive words with which these lines end, changes the tone. By only reading the final word in each line (*devil, ruined, dead, womb, touched, healed, delivered, and sealed*) there is a clear narrative of salvation, from birth to death, and rebirth to salvation.

The chorus is largely written in lines of three, four, or one syllable, their brevity emphasising his certainty: "I've been saved". "The blood of the lamb", which has saved Dylan, also has clear biblical connotations. Often, Jesus will be depicted as a lamb, and the blood of the lamb symbolizes his sacrifice. Like many Christians, Dylan makes a connection between his own salvation and the story of Christ's sacrifice: Christ died on the cross to atone for human transgression, and to open up for the possibility of individual salvation through faith. The gratitude Dylan shows in the second part of the chorus is uncharacteristic for him, but the repetition of the phrases "I'm so glad" and "I want to thank You, Lord" emphasises the indebted feeling. In "Precious Angel" we saw Dylan experiencing a vision and thus aligning himself with prophets, and he continues in this vein as he is likening his salvation with Jesus'.

The second stanza mirrors the first, except that it reverses the structure slightly by beginning with the "By His/In his" phrase that finished the first, thus continuing the momentum of his faith. The repetition reads very much like an almost ecstatic prayer, spoken by someone who wants to get his point across. This time the lines are longer, so

<sup>29</sup> This event is also referenced in "Man Gave Name to All the Animals", a Christian children's song from *Slow Train Coming*.

the sense of urgency we discussed in the first stanza is not as evident anymore. Like in the first stanza, the struggle of the speaker is highlighted by the ominous words at the end of each line. In this octave, however, they are not as distressing if you read the full lines. The words "pit", "wrath", and the phrase "burns in it" are negative on their own, but we can see that he has been secured by "His love" and that he has thus been freed from the pit. It has to be admitted, though, that "pit" and "in it" is not Dylan's finest rhyme – but he makes his point.

The third stanza gives us more context as to from what Dylan needed to be saved. He finds himself in a hopeless situation, at the risk of drowning and with no-one to rescue him. It is only by divine intervention that he has been saved, by "His mercy". This stanza does not have the repetition of the first two stanzas, and thus works as a counterweight. He has been spared by "his Grace", but his own faith was also a factor. Even now that he is saved, he is still haunted by the difficulties that preceded this. Again, this is relatively standard theology. Christ's sacrifice made it possible, despite original sin, for some individuals to be saved – but they have free will and must, therefore, choose this for themselves. The choice demands an act of faith, a decision to believe – and Dylan records how exhausting that process was for him as he was surrounded by people who blocked his way. He gives the reader a feeling that all might not be well by using the present perfect tense. The repetition of "For so long I've been" indicates that his struggle and the fact that he is hindered and stalled continues to the present day. However, the fact that he ends with another chorus full of gratefulness and love towards his Lord makes it clear that he has been truly saved. He might also want to highlight the fact that he was helpless in this struggle until someone else could assist him – he was, after all, blinded, hindered, and stalled by none other than the devil.

Although, what is perhaps most apparent about this song is its lack of complexity, relative to Dylan's other work. There is a huge relief in the song, best expressed in the sequence "For so long I've been hindered / For so long I've been stalled". The last verb is particularly forceful because it is associated with enclosures for animals being fattened for slaughter, in contrast to the sacrificed "lamb of God" who has saved him. There is a powerful sense of creative release here for which Dylan is – in very un-Dylan ways – humble and grateful. The lyrics are, however, fairly straightforward, and repetitive: what's essential for Dylan with this song is to get across the very simple but joyous experience of salvation. It is almost as if, after a year of touting his Christian message, he decided he had to be more direct for him to be more successful as an evangelist. There is less room for ambiguity, and the calling of the name of the Lord is a part of the salvation: "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved" (Romans 10:13).

## "Property of Jesus"

*Go ahead and talk about him because he makes you doubt  
Because he has denied himself the things that you can't live without  
Laugh at him behind his back just like the others do  
Remind him of what he used to be when he comes walkin' through*

*He's the property of Jesus  
Resent him to the bone  
You got something better  
You've got a heart of stone*

*Stop your conversation when he passes on the street  
Hope he falls upon himself, oh, won't that be sweet  
Because he can't be exploited by superstition anymore  
Because he can't be bribed or bought by the things that you adore*

*He's the property of Jesus  
Resent him to the bone  
You got something better  
You've got a heart of stone*

*When the whip that's keeping you in line doesn't make him jump  
Say he's hard-of-hearin', say that he's a chump  
Say he's out of step with reality as you try to test his nerve  
Because he doesn't pay no tribute to the king that you serve*

*He's the property of Jesus  
Resent him to the bone  
You got something better  
You've got a heart of stone*

*Say that he's a loser 'cause he got no common sense  
Because he don't increase his worth at someone else's expense  
Because he's not afraid of trying, 'cause he don't look at you and smile  
'Cause he doesn't tell you jokes or fairy tales, say he's got no style*

*He's the property of Jesus  
Resent him to the bone  
You got something better  
You've got a heart of stone*

*You can laugh at salvation, you can play Olympic games  
You think that when you rest at last you'll go back from where you came  
But you've picked up quite a story and you've changed since the womb  
What happened to the real you, you've been captured but by whom?*

*He's the property of Jesus  
Resent him to the bone  
You got something better  
You've got a heart of stone*

On the final album of Dylan's "Christian trilogy", *Shot of Love* (1981), there is a noticeable change in his songs. The themes are no longer exclusively Christian, and a song like "Lenny Bruce", which is about a Jewish comedian who was convicted for obscenity, would not have made the cut on either *Slow Train Coming* or *Saved*. The title track, "Shot of Love", which I will not go into any great detail about in any of these close readings, is still worth mentioning. There is the same rejection of worldly goods, drugs, and non-worshippers that was seen on the other albums, and the speaker feels even more desperate than he did on "Saved". This climaxes in the final stanza, as the speaker

is both questioning what makes the wind blow, an obvious nod to "Blowin' in the Wind" and calling home only to realise that no-one is there. After Dylan's wife left him, he chose to follow Jesus, although that does not seem to help him out of this particular bother. The stanza ends: "My conscience is beginning to bother me today / I need a shot of love, I need a shot of love" which again shows the personal distress he is feeling, and knowing his past dabbles with drugs the idea of needing "a shot of love" makes you worry for him. The personal distress is sensed throughout the album, perhaps especially in the songs discussed below, "Property of Jesus" and "Every Grain of Sand".

"Property of Jesus" is an ironic song about how one can be judged for giving your life to Jesus. As we have seen, Dylan is himself "the property of Jesus", an interesting phrase that is close to being oxymoronic. The singer *belongs* to Jesus, but being a Christian involves a renunciation of worldly goods and achievements, like success in the Olympic games in a later stanza, itself perhaps a metaphor for a competitive and egocentric modern society. Here, Dylan imagines what others are saying behind his back: *he* is the outcast, but *he* is also one of the few. However, Dylan is projecting feelings and ideas upon others that might or might not be accurate. "He makes you doubt" in the first line is an example of this. Dylan feels that because he is confident in his conviction, others become uncertain when confronted with their non-beliefs. Others have trouble accepting his life now that he can live without the things that they cannot, and like both "Precious Angel" and "Slow Train", this song distances himself from his past. Although often judgemental in tone towards others, the polarization works the other way as well, as Gisle Selnes points out: "Dylan stages a martyr-like apostolic persona, scorned and virtually ostracized from (secular) social contexts because of his Christian belief" (175). This song is perhaps the most obvious example of this ostracization that Dylan feels, obviously outside of the society at large and a generation that he was once upheld as the voice of. The chorus makes clear the contrast between Dylan, belonging to Jesus, and the others, who have a "heart of stone". Again, the emphasis is on the "heart", as it was in "Precious Angel". Dylan is aligning himself here with Christian theologians who believe that faith is best achieved through the heart, through a felt experience rather than an intellectual or rational one.<sup>30</sup>

The second stanza is built up in a similar way to the first. Again, there is a contrast between how others act around Dylan and what he believes they say and do behind his back. For example, he imagines they are watching him walk down the street, hoping that "he falls upon himself". This can be read both literary and figuratively. It can be a bit of slapstick humour, but even more so falling upon yourself can suggest being confronted with the logic of your actions and being unable to explain them. However, Dylan seems sure to stay on both his physical and metaphorical feet. Another interesting point to make about this stanza is that Dylan is arguing that he can no longer be "exploited by superstition". Many would say that religion is, by its very nature, superstitious. Dylan turns this on its head and argues that it is the people who are not the property of Jesus being exploited by their superstition, the god of Mammon. In this sense, you get the feeling that Dylan is talking about drugs, money, and the materialistic urban life: striving for these things is as unquestioned and delusional as other people's ideas of Christian belief.

The third stanza builds on this juxtaposition between what is superstitious and real. Again, Dylan feels that he is being criticized for being out of touch with reality and that others are being kept in line by a whip: in other words, conformity to common goals

<sup>30</sup> A similar conflict between heart and head is dramatized in Mark Twain's *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (1884), where the main character follows his instincts in befriending a runaway slave even though his head tells him that it is morally wrong to do so.

and standards is a form of slavery and exploitation – while Dylan belongs to the chosen few who are free.<sup>31</sup> Dylan is explaining that this is because he does not pay tribute to the same king as they do. "King of Kings" is often used in both Judaism and Christianity instead of God, as seen in Revelation 17:14: "the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful." Dylan undoubtedly feels that this "you" that he is addressing is possessed by something or someone, and he does not see himself as being subject to the same spell. Although, a lot of what he thinks others are saying about him applies to how he feels about the non-believers. It has to be admitted, though, that Dylan is distancing himself from the situation by applying the third person. At one level, it is a kind of aggrandisement – speaking of oneself as somehow beyond subjectivity. At another level, one wonders if it betrays Dylan's uncertainty about his choices, a sort of emotional disassociation.

After another chorus, Dylan admits that public opinion is turning against his view and that what he is expressing is no longer seen as "common sense". Unrestrained capitalism has become a natural part of society, and Dylan is seen as a loser because he does not purely seek financial gain. The underlying economic and societal structures that determine how people act are the god of Mammon. Though the impetus of this criticism is undoubtedly religious, it is reminiscent of the old social, protesting, Dylan. This is found throughout his career; from the protest songs he wrote in the 1960s, to for example "Workingman Blues #2", which was released in 2006. Here, he sings that "The buying power of the proletariat's gone down / Money's getting shallow and weak". His sympathy for the working man in 2006 can be likened to his critique of individualism in this song, the sense of injustice is at least the same. Just like we find Christian imagery and messages throughout Dylan's oeuvre, we also find comments about social justice and politics.

The rhyme pattern throughout the song is very straightforward, in both the verses and the choruses. The verses have rhyming couplets, whereas the choruses have an ABCB pattern. What is worth noting is that there are only two lines that do not rhyme with any other, the first ending with "Jesus" and the second "better". This is an obvious thing to point out, but Jesus is thus given extra significance because *he* does not rhyme with any other word and if it were to couple with another one within this song it would be "better".

<sup>31</sup> Dylan may also be thinking here of Ralph Waldo Emerson's famous line in his 1841 essay "Self-Reliance", that "For nonconformity the world whips you with its displeasure" (24).

## "Every Grain of Sand"

*In the time of my confession, in the hour of my deepest need  
When the pool of tears beneath my feet flood every newborn seed  
There's a dyin' voice within me reaching out somewhere  
Toiling in the danger and in the morals of despair*

*Don't have the inclination to look back on any mistake  
Like Cain, I now behold this chain of events that I must break  
In the fury of the moment I can see the Master's hand  
In every leaf that trembles, in every grain of sand*

*Oh, the flowers of indulgence and the weeds of yesteryear  
Like criminals, they have choked the breath of conscience and good cheer  
The sun beat down upon the steps of time to light the way  
To ease the pain of idleness and the memory of decay*

*I gaze into the doorway of temptation's angry flame  
And every time I pass that way I always hear my name  
Then onward in my journey I come to understand  
That every hair is numbered like every grain of sand*

*I have gone from rags to riches in the sorrow of the night  
In the violence of a summer's dream, in the chill of a wintry light  
In the bitter dance of loneliness fading into space  
In the broken mirror of innocence on each forgotten face*

*I hear the ancient footsteps like the motion of the sea  
Sometimes I turn, there's someone there, other times it's only me  
I am hanging in the balance of the reality of man  
Like every sparrow falling, like every grain of sand*

"Every Grain of Sand" is a song worth discussing for several different reasons – not least because it is the final song on the last album of Dylan's Christian trilogy, giving it extra weight, but also because it is widely recognized as one of his finest compositions.<sup>32</sup> Secondly, the song is full of fascinating allusions to the Bible, but even so, there are hints of a step back from total Christian commitment. The song's title echoes the first line of William Blake's "Auguries of Innocence": "To see a World in a Grain of Sand" (96), which also mentions flowers and birds – and the flowers themselves are as much Baudelaire as the Bible. Whereas he alluded to political questions and world events in the first album, he is engaging more directly with other poems and poets here. Part of this is, of course, the inclusion of secular songs on the album itself, but also in the "religious" songs on the album, as "Every Grain of Sand", one can find this. The rhyme scheme is, as in "Saved", relatively uncomplicated, although some of the rhymes are worth analysing carefully. The title itself alludes to a pantheistic view on God, perhaps in contrast to the physical presence seen in previous songs, for example, the *angel* in "Precious Angel", the *Lord* in "Saved", *You* in "I Believe in You", or the *train* in "Slow Train".

The first stanza of "Every Grain of Sand" begins where so many of Dylan's Christian songs do – with his conversion. The idea of having been saved at a crucial time is the same that we saw in "Saved". The speaker in this song is someone in dire need of help, and he is not afraid to admit it – the image of the tears makes hyperbole seem restrained. However, it is interesting that this flood is not a universal one, not a catastrophic and divine punishment for humanity: it is more personal than seen previously. This is "*my journey*", not the judgement of mankind that we saw in "Slow

<sup>32</sup> The song was mentioned by Bruce Springsteen when he inducted Bob Dylan into the "Rock and Roll Hall of Fame" in 1988. See: <https://www.rockhall.com/inductees/bob-dylan>

Train". The confession is also a reference to St. Augustine, who wrote *Confessions in Thirteen Books* around 400AD about his sinful youth and conversion to Christianity. The link between St. Augustine and how Dylan views himself is clear. St. Augustine is also the subject in Dylan's song "I Dreamed I Saw St. Augustine", which appeared on the 1967 album, *John Wesley Harding*.

Dylan then chooses to compare himself to Cain, which is noteworthy. God condemned Cain to a life of aimless wandering for killing his brother Abel. This conflict is typical of a song marked by divisions, such as summer and winter, flowers and weeds, rags and riches, and light and night. Dylan seems to suggest that he too has led a life of restless wandering, but by converting to Christianity, he was able to break the chain and to find relief and purpose – unlike Cain. This is when he finally sees the "Master's hand" – a design, a plan. The pantheistic God is omnipresent; "In every leaf that trembles, in every grain of sand". The juxtaposition is evident here as well, being able to notice every leaf and grain of sand even in the "fury of the moment" shows a man in close contact with God. The same argument is made by Anders Thyrring Andersen, "even in the fury of the moment, in those moments where life hurts, or where it feels like God is holding back his grace, the person in the song feels the presence of God" (205).

The tears that he cried in the first stanza have now made the soil ready for flowering and forgiveness.<sup>33</sup> However, flowers are things of beauty which are natural and therefore temporary: they wither and decay. In this kind of emotional landscape, nothing lasts, good or evil, lovely or ugly: creation itself is vast, but human lives, however enormous in terms of population and history, vanish. The weeds of yesteryear are something unwanted, and the fact that they have choked the breath of good conscience and cheer makes both them, and the flowers, sound like unwanted elements in your garden. The choked breath and indulgence can also relate to the second of the seven deadly sins from the Bible, gluttony. Gluttony is the overindulgence of something to the point of waste, just like the tears which flooded every newborn seed in the first stanza.

The tone shifts in the third line of the stanza as the sun appears. The sun is used to indicate life, hope, and the Holy Spirit. Here, it shows Dylan the way to ease his pain and decay. However, on this road, he can gaze into temptation and hear his name being said. This hints at the idea that Dylan's faith might also not last. Being tempted, and hearing his name being called, shows that he has some trouble adjusting to his new life. This indicates both that they are familiar with him where there is temptation, and that he is looking into it again. The worrying signs are similar to those seen in "Shot of Love". Luckily for the speaker though, here, the sun is shining the way so that he can continue his journey.

In the second to last stanza, the speaker is again focusing on the journey that he has undertaken. The image of a violent summer's dream is distressing, and the sense of something being wrong is underlined both here and in the next two lines: "the bitter dance of loneliness fading into space / in the broken mirror of innocence". The ancient footsteps have become as natural to him as the motion of the sea. Because, if you live by the ocean, you no longer notice the sounds it makes, unless actively listening for it – or if there is a storm. There might be a storm brewing, and this is where doubt starts to creep in for Dylan. The image of the ancient footsteps is ambiguous, it can either be a deific figure, or Dylan's own past haunting him, as with the temptation in the previous stanza. The two lines "Sometimes I turn, there's someone there, other times it's only me / I am

<sup>33</sup> In the specific and technical definition of the word "indulgence" in the *Oxford English Dictionary*, it is defined through Roman Catholic teaching as: "A remission of the punishment which is still due to sin after sacramental absolution (...)". The flowers of indulgence which Dylan is referring to can be read as him being repaid for his awakening by reducing the time he has to spend in purgatory ("Indulgence, n,").



hanging in the balance of reality of man" indicates that the master's hand which he saw at the beginning of the song is occasionally missing. The confident, prophetic voice of the first two albums is now questioning what he does and does not see. Even in "Property of Jesus", where he mocks others for saying that he is out of touch with reality, it is interesting to see how much attention he gives to the voices of *doubt*. The sparrow in the Bible is also linked to the eye of God so that the final image he uses to compare with "every grain of sand" of a falling sparrow might also be indicative of his religious beliefs falling apart: a sparrow is a winged creature, one with a short life-span, and this one is, as mentioned, even falling. It is thus far removed from the angelic image seen previously.

Where "Slow Train" is an example of a fiery and polarizing interpretation of the new covenant, with the album *Shot of Love* and songs like "In the Summertime" and "Every Grain of Sand", Dylan shifts his tone. It is less personal and intimate with Jesus, and there is even room for a wholly non-religious song, "Lenny Bruce". "In the Summertime" is particularly interesting because it is transitional in an overt way, but the transition is now towards another form of religion. At the same time, there is no explicit mention of Jesus, making its true addressee unclear. There is a mix of eroticism and religious experience, where the song can speak to either a lover or Christ. Again, Selnes' "Bob Dylan's Conversions" is useful in suggesting that this album marks a change and that although "a momentous meeting has taken place, (...) the 'affair' is irrevocably over" (178). Even though the emotional and physical relationship might be over, the love in the song remains, and the speaker is adamant that "It'll be with me unto the grave / And then unto eternity." "Every Grain of Sand" is another example of God being still very much a presence in Dylan's life, even though doubts start creeping in and the relationship might be somewhat changing.

The imagery in this song is dense and complex, very different from the direct outpouring of "Saved". There are religious allusions – to the Master, to temptation – but just as many to other poets: the fall of the sparrow is reminiscent of *Hamlet*, where the Danish prince tells Horatio that "There is special providence in the fall of a sparrow" (Shakespeare 5.2), and as mentioned, there are links to both Baudelaire and William Blake as well. It is this combination of biblical elements with other literary influences and not least the preoccupation with almost existential or philosophical concepts of time and space, that signals a movement away from straightforward Christian doctrine – at least in the music. Dylan's next album, *Infidels* (1983), is no longer overtly Christian, although, as the title suggests, he is still pre-occupied with believers and non-believers.

The next phase of his career might be as ambiguous as any other, and his relationship with religion is not clear-cut by the time *Infidels* is released in 1983. The title itself has Biblical or at least religious connotations and indicates that he is not quite finished with the religious messaging, and the message is just as apocalyptic as seen in these albums. As Robert Shelton points out, in *No Direction Home*, Dylan had been "totally involved" in what was part of "his experience". Although, when it comes to a manifestly Christian message, Dylan feels that "maybe the time for me to say that has just come and gone. It's time for me to do something else (...) Jesus himself only preached for three years" (Shelton 568). This shows that he was perhaps more finished with his prophesying, than with the Christian idea altogether.

## Discussion

When Dylan announced himself to the world as a "born-again" Christian in 1979, it came as a shock to many of his ardent supporters and music critics throughout the industry.<sup>34</sup> What is striking is that so many of the statements made by fans leaving concert venues during this period reject Dylan's move to Christian-influenced lyrics in ways that echo comments made by fans in the early 1960s when he was moving from acoustic folk to electric rock.<sup>35</sup> However, even though the change in themes and imagery in his lyrics was shocking to them, the musical sound continued much in the same vein as *Street-Legal*, with Dylan using the same backing singers on *Slow Train Coming* to great effect. Nevertheless, as I have pointed out, even a year into his Christian journey, concert-goers were shouting for "rock-and-roll", and not accepting that his new sound was part of a musical odyssey that began at his high-school with 1950s-style rock and continues to evolve to this day. The similarities to 1965-66 are, as discussed, evident, with the added irony that Dylan was able to be castigated both for turning to and from rock-and-roll within the space of a little more than a decade. In moving from folk to rock, he was also shifting from social, political, and historical commentary ("A Hard Rain's A-Gonna Fall") to something more lyrical, personal, and subjective ("Buckets of Rain"). In some ways, his turn to Christianity is also a return to commentary and criticism but dividing these periods on these grounds is potentially reductive and misleading: Dylan's activism and engagement in the early 1960s was no less personal and emotionally invested than his rock period. It is evident from listening to his lyrics in the Christian period that his belief causes him immense joy, relief, and conviction – but, also pain, because the rest of the world does not see things in the same way as he does.

After the three albums had been released between 1979 and 1981 and Dylan continued his metamorphosis to new sounds and genres, the "Gospel years" was viewed as an anomaly. However, both musically and spiritually, this was never the case for Dylan. As mentioned, in an interview quoted by Shelton, Dylan explains that he has preached for three years, just like Jesus. With that, he felt that what he wanted to say was in the songs, for everyone to hear. Therefore, he did not need to write new songs or continue to preach at concerts. He continued to play songs from this period in concert, though, even some of the most religious ones as "I Believe in You", "Gotta Serve Somebody", "Solid Rock", and "In the Garden".<sup>36</sup> With time, the questions from reporters about his faith have become fewer, and we might have to accept that Dylan's faith might be as ambiguous, complex, and diverse as his lyrics and persona at large.

On April 17, 2020, Bob Dylan released the allusive ballad "I Contain Multitudes" as a single before his new album *Rough and Rowdy Ways*, which is due to be released in June. The title is borrowed from Walt Whitman's poem "Song of Myself" and is something that Dylan quotes in the 2019 movie *Rolling Thunder Revue*, directed by Martin Scorsese. In the movie, he says: "Whitman said 'I am large. I contain multitudes.' Today's poets don't reach into the public consciousness in the same way. Nowadays what people remember is quotes from songs, lines from songs" (Dylan, in: Scorsese). Dylan's Nobel Prize, ironically, proves his point, as even literary prizes are no longer exclusively for poets and authors. "I Contain Multitudes" is filled with references to poets and writers, including Edgar Allan Poe (and "The Tell-Tale Heart") and William Blake (and *Songs of*

<sup>34</sup> Dylan himself is no fan of the term "born-again", it has to be said. This is expressed both in Shelton (570) and Heylin (30): "[Born-again] is a hype term. It's a media term that throws people into a corner and leaves them there. Whether people realize it or not, all these ... religious labels are irrelevant."

<sup>35</sup> See, for example, the first minutes of *Trouble No More: A Musical Film* or Heylin (75-76).

<sup>36</sup> Bobdylan.com keeps track of setlists from all of Dylan's shows, and every song is presented with lyrics and an overview of how often it has been performed live. The songs mentioned above have all been played in the twenty-first century, with "Gotta Serve Somebody" being played regularly during the fall of 2019.

*Innocence and Experience*), as well as popular culture, directly to "them British bad boys, the Rolling Stones", and indirectly to David Bowie (through his mention of "all the young dudes", the title of one of Bowie's most iconic songs). As Ben Beaumont-Thomas, music editor at *The Guardian* points out, the song "lays out a wry but proud assessment of his [Dylan's] own songwriting and personality."<sup>37</sup> The song also tells us something about how Dylan views himself and trying to box him in is redundant and probably impossible. The fact that he is multitudinous means that almost everyone can find a Dylan that they relate to and agree with.

This does relate to *A God of Time and Space* as well, a useful collection on precisely this discussion of Dylan and religion. To a large degree, the authors in this book seem to find a Christian message throughout Dylan's career. However, seeing as they are Parish Priests, Professors of Religion and sociologists with interest in religion, I would argue they might be looking for this message, as much as "leftist" fans and critics were looking for a protest or socialist message in his earlier songs at the time that they came out. It may seem as if we know what Dylan is singing about in "Hard Rain" and "Blowin in the Wind", but there is ambiguity: Dylan does not mention atomic weapons, and the rain invokes the rain of hail on Egypt in Exodus 9:23, the rain of fire and brimstone on Sodom & Gomorrah in Genesis 19:24, or the rain that lasted for forty days and nights in Genesis 7:12. Many of the contributors cite Stephen H. Webb's book *Dylan Redeemed* (2006). Webb's book was one of the first ones to detail the relationship between Dylan and Christianity. Intriguingly, Webb writes in the introduction that he is an Evangelical Christian himself and that Dylan's conversion, which coincided with Webb graduating from High School, meant a lot to him personally. This does, of course, not invalidate his analysis, but he is at least open about how it colours his understanding of and relationship to Dylan.

What is quite striking, however, is Webb's criticism of the author Mike Marqusee for letting his political views affect his reading in the book *Chimes of Freedom: The Politics of Bob Dylan's Art* (2003). What Webb does not seem to notice, is that he is guilty of the very same thing. When analysing "Union Sundown", a song from the album *Infidels*, Webb argues that the song is not as cynical about union decline and globalism as it seems. Webb writes that: "He [Dylan] ends a long stanza on how jobs are shipped overseas with the description of a woman making only thirty cents a day for a family of twelve, and wryly observes, 'You know, that's a lot of money to her'" (56), as if that is a good thing. The line Webb leaves out, which immediately precedes the one he quotes, is: "Where a woman, she slaved for sure", which colours our understanding of Dylan's views. Webb *really* wants Dylan to be a Christian, as seen in the previously quoted line: "it is hard not to come to the conclusion that he [Dylan] was a Christian for years before he or anyone else knew it" (56). Such a bold statement from someone who admits that personal faith colours his interpretation of Dylan should make other critics vigilant when applying his analysis without comment.

Just like allusions to the Bible can be seen throughout Dylan's career, we have seen that there are other parts of his messaging, which we are accustomed to, that shines through in the Gospel years. The social message in "Slow Train" and the personal distress and relationship troubles from songs like "Precious Angel" and "Every Grain of Sand" is not an uncommon feature in Dylan's work. Equality and justice have always been at the forefront of his political message, and it shows in these albums as well. The image of the grain elevators from "Slow Train" can be seen as a critique of a capitalist

<sup>37</sup> Beaumont-Thomas, Ben. "'I'm Just Like Anne Frank, Like Indiana Jones': Bob Dylan Continues Return to New Songs." *TheGuardian.com*. <https://www.theguardian.com/music/2020/apr/17/anne-frank-indiana-jones-bob-dylan-new-song-contain-multitudes>. Accessed 27, April 2020.

system that leaves people starving rather than distributing food. There are other political critiques to be found as well, with both Henry Kissinger and Karl Marx being attacked in "When You Gonna Wake Up?", as is the Egypt-Israel Peace Treaty in "Slow Train". Dylan's political message is challenging to pin down, and he has shown disdain for overt political commitment at different parts of his career; it is almost as if saying for whom you vote does not belong in a song. However, this does not mean, as Erling Aadland argues, that his songs cannot be read ideologically (107). Dylan has admitted that he likes two figures as diverse as the assassinated Democrat President John F. Kennedy and Republican Senator Barry Goldwater (1909-98) in interviews, and in his 2004 book *Chronicles*, he writes that: "My favorite politician was Arizona Senator Barry Goldwater, who reminded me of Tom Mix, and there wasn't any way to explain that to anybody. I wasn't that comfortable with all the psycho polemic babble" (*Chronicles - Volume One* 283). Barry Goldwater is mentioned as early as 1964 as well though, in "I Shall Be Free No. 10": "Now, I'm liberal, but to a degree / I want ev'rybody to be free / But if you think that I'll let Barry Goldwater / Move in next door and marry my daughter / You must think I'm crazy! / I wouldn't let him do it for all the farms in Cuba".

Mention of John F. Kennedy brings us full circle back to the present day, for Dylan surprised his fans yet again very recently, after years of covering songs from the 1940s and 50s, by again releasing self-composed originals of his own and announcing a new album. The first of these songs is the single "Murder Most Foul", which appeared in March 2020. The title is from the scene in *Hamlet* where the eponymous character is told by the ghost of his father, the King, that his death was not an accident (*Hamlet* was also referenced in "Every Grain of Sand", as mentioned). The song is a 17-minute long ballad which references events in American cultural and political history from the last sixty years, and especially interesting concerning Dylan's gospel years is the line: "The day that they killed him, someone said to me, 'Son / The age of the Antichrist has just only begun'". In 1 John 2:18 it is written: "Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many Antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time." There are many antichrists, so knowing which one precedes the Second Coming of Christ has given rise to a great deal of speculation over the centuries, but, interestingly, Dylan distances himself partly from this idea by having someone else speak it, and by situating it back in 1963 (clearly, then, it did not happen, or has not happened yet). It is interesting to compare this reference, then, with Dylan's professions in 1979-81, in a song like "Slow Train", which is as an allegory for the idea of the Second Coming. As Clinton Heylin points out, Dylan would often talk about the Antichrist, an idea he had borrowed from the book *The Late Great Planet Earth* by American evangelist and Christian writer Hal Lindsey, during improvised sermons during his concerts in 1979-80 (Heylin 31-34). What we see here is that images of crime and divine retribution are still crucial in Dylan's writing, but that they take their place in texts that are now dense, again, with imagery from other walks of life, too. In some ways, we are back to his early days, to songs that promised a "hard rain" for instance. Kennedy is seen as a Christ-like figure in "Murder Most Foul" ("led to the slaughter like a sacrificial lamb") – but he is *Kennedy*, not Jesus. There are so many other references that it is closer to the dizzying landscape of "Desolation Row" (the musical group The Beatles, the films *Nightmare on Elm Street*, *Gone with the Wind*, and *What's New Pussycat*, the American artist Karl Wirsum, the clothing manufacturer Abraham Zabruder, who unwittingly filmed parts of Kennedy's assassination, and countless other actors, singers, musicians, and works). Especially interesting is the mention of the 1969 free concert at Woodstock that has come to represent the best of 1960s counter-culture and music, and the 1969 concert at Altamont four months later that signalled the end of the era of peace and love, with the

stabbing of a young African-American man. It is as if Dylan is listing (some of the many) cultural highlights of his life to counter a regime that is morally distasteful to him right now – for surely the "Wolfman", with implications of the *Wolf of Wall Street* and the immoral businessman, together with his uneasy "First Lady" are Donald and Melania Trump? The voice of his generation is speaking up for them once again.

## Conclusion

What I have attempted to show with this thesis is that even though there are allusions to and quotes from the Bible throughout Dylan's career, this does not make the message itself Christian – because he draws consistently on images from a wide range of sources in his work.<sup>38</sup> Instead, it comes from his upbringing in a Jewish household within a larger Christian cultural sphere; in this sphere, the Bible was a common point of reference, just as Shakespeare (and American greats like Whitman and Emerson) was. Even still, the post-war classrooms of Hibbing, Minnesota also staged exercises where pupils had to dive under their tables for cover in the event of an atomic explosion, so the apocalyptic message in "Hard Rain" or "Desolation Row" is not solely or actively Christian, but part of a referential landscape that included the possibility of an impending apocalypse. There is no question that Dylan converted to Christianity during the time period *Slow Train Coming*, *Saved*, and *Shot of Love* covers, and it can, therefore, be correct to categorize them as a "Christian trilogy", but to limit them to "mere religion" is reductive. My close reading found that just like any other Dylan album, the songs diverge in lyrical quality and density, however, as argued, even though the images the songs invoke are informed to a large degree by the Bible, they are not exclusively biblical. And, a song like "Saved", which is probably the most overtly Christian, is not littered with Biblical allusions, it is almost as if Dylan does not have time for the attention to detail that requires. This substantiates my claim that Biblical themes, allusions, or quotes do not make a song Christian, its message does.

The lyrics of the two songs "Murder Most Foul" and "I Contain Multitudes" suggests that, at least briefly, Dylan has got his mojo back. But that is not to say that his Christian period should be dismissed. It is true that his intense religious commitment makes it difficult for the listener/reader to insert her- or himself into the emotional landscape of many of the songs, but the music and singing are of such quality that many of them remain enjoyable, nevertheless. The writing is not always as complex and dense as his best songs, but not all of Dylan's songs prior to his Christian period ("Ballad in Plain D") or after it ("The Ugliest Girl in the World" and "Wiggle Wiggle") reached those high levels of achievement either. His fans were worried that his conversion to Christianity signalled a turn to the political right, but although some of the songs have suspect lines, there is no evidence that Dylan joined the NRA, voted for Reagan, opposed immigration, or discriminated against minorities. Instead, it could be argued that his embrace of Christianity is typical of a career marked by an exploration of the multitude of American styles of folk and popular music – and during the Christian period, it was Gospel, and it was often glorious.<sup>39</sup> It is worth remembering that when Whitman wrote the phrase "I contain multitudes", he was speaking not just for, or even as, himself – but as America itself. For a time there, Dylan had been trying out Rogers and Hammerstein, Frank Sinatra and others – and now he seems to have found his way back to his old self, lyrically at least. Just do not expect him to stay there too long.

<sup>38</sup> For instance, the "boulevard of crime" in "I contain multitudes" is the name of the first act of a 1945 French film, *The Children of Paradise*, directed by Marcel Carné, the name itself a reference to an area of Paris with many theatres.

<sup>39</sup> On the 2003 tribute album/documentary, *Gotta Serve Somebody*, various artists including Mavis Steeples and Aaron Neville, perform these songs in ways that again showcase their quality.

## Literature

- "Ide2084 – Bob Dylan: Tradisjonstolk Og Kulturspeil." Universitetet i Oslo  
[www.uio.no/studier/emner/hf/ifikk/IDE2084/](http://www.uio.no/studier/emner/hf/ifikk/IDE2084/). Accessed January 15, 2020.
- "Leonard Cohen: Giving Nobel to Bob Dylan Like 'Pinning Medal on Everest'."  
*TheGuardian.com*. The Guardian  
[www.theguardian.com/music/2016/oct/14/leonard-cohen-giving-nobel-to-bob-dylan-like-pinning-medal-on-everest](http://www.theguardian.com/music/2016/oct/14/leonard-cohen-giving-nobel-to-bob-dylan-like-pinning-medal-on-everest). Accessed November 25, 2019.
- "New Criticism." *Britannica Academic*. Encyclopædia Britannica  
[academic.eb.com/levels/collegiate/article/New-Criticism/55452](http://academic.eb.com/levels/collegiate/article/New-Criticism/55452). Accessed April 7, 2020.
- "The Nobel Prize in Literature 2016." *NobelPrize.org*. Nobel Media AB 2020  
[www.nobelprize.org/prizes/literature/2016/summary/](http://www.nobelprize.org/prizes/literature/2016/summary/). Accessed January 15, 2020.
- Aadland, Erling. "Against Liberals: Multi-Layered and Multi-Directed Invocation in Dylan's Christian Songs." *A God of Time and Space - New Perspectives of Bob Dylan and Religion*, edited by Robert W. Kvalvaag and Geir Winje, Cappelen Damm Akademisk NOASP, 2019, pp. 91-118. <https://doi.org/10.23865/noasp.74.ch3>.
- Andersen, Anders Thyrring. "Hard Rain: The End of Times and Christian Modernism in the Work of Bob Dylan." *A God of Time and Space - New Perspectives of Bob Dylan and Religion*, edited by Robert W. Kvalvaag and Geir Winje, Cappelen Damm Akademisk NOASP, 2019, pp. 183-212. <https://doi.org/10.23865/noasp.74.ch7>.
- "Angel, n." *OED Online*, Oxford University Press, <https://oed.com/view/Entry/7458>. Accessed May 12, 2020.
- Beaumont-Thomas, Ben. "'I'm Just Like Anne Frank, Like Indiana Jones': Bob Dylan Continues Return to New Songs." *TheGuardian.com*.  
[www.theguardian.com/music/2020/apr/17/anne-frank-indiana-jones-bob-dylan-new-song-contain-multitudes](http://www.theguardian.com/music/2020/apr/17/anne-frank-indiana-jones-bob-dylan-new-song-contain-multitudes). Accessed 27, April 2020.
- Blake, William. *Songs of Innocence and Experience: With Other Poems*. Basil Montagu Pickering, 1866. E-book. [books.google.no/books?id=1V8CAAAAQAAJ&hl=no&pg=PP1#v=twopage&q&f=false](https://books.google.no/books?id=1V8CAAAAQAAJ&hl=no&pg=PP1#v=twopage&q&f=false). Accessed May 12, 2020.
- Carter, Jimmy. "Camp David Accords." *Britannica.com*. Encyclopædia Britannica, inc.  
[www.britannica.com/event/Camp-David-Accords](http://www.britannica.com/event/Camp-David-Accords). Accessed November 20, 2019.
- Dylan, Bob. *Trouble No More – The Bootleg Series Vol. 13 / 1979-1981*, Columbia Records, 2017. [www.bobdylan.com/albums/trouble-no-more-the-bootleg-series-vol-13-1979-1981/](http://www.bobdylan.com/albums/trouble-no-more-the-bootleg-series-vol-13-1979-1981/). Accessed May 12, 2020.
- . *Shot of Love*, Columbia Records, 1981. [www.bobdylan.com/albums/shot-love/](http://www.bobdylan.com/albums/shot-love/). Accessed May 12, 2020.
- . *Saved*, Columbia Records, 1980. [www.bobdylan.com/albums/saved/](http://www.bobdylan.com/albums/saved/). Accessed May 12, 2020.
- . *Slow Train Coming*, Columbia Records, 1979. [www.bobdylan.com/albums/slow-train-coming/](http://www.bobdylan.com/albums/slow-train-coming/). Accessed May 12, 2020.
- . *Chronicles - Volume One*. Simon & Schuster, 2004.
- . "Nobel Lecture." *NobelPrize.org*. Nobel Media AB  
[www.nobelprize.org/prizes/literature/2016/dylan/lecture/](http://www.nobelprize.org/prizes/literature/2016/dylan/lecture/). Accessed November 18, 2019.
- Emerson, Ralph Waldo. *Self-Reliance, the over-Soul, and Other Essays*. Coyote Canyon Press, 2010.
- Fleming, Colin. "Remembering Bob Dylan's Infamous 'Judas' Show." *Rolling Stone*.  
[www.rollingstone.com/music/music-news/remembering-bob-dylans-infamous-judas-show-203760/](http://www.rollingstone.com/music/music-news/remembering-bob-dylans-infamous-judas-show-203760/). Accessed November 19, 2019.
- Gleason, Ralph J. "Bob Dylan Gives Press Conference in San Francisco." *Rolling Stone*  
[www.rollingstone.com/music/music-news/bob-dylan-gives-press-conference-in-san-francisco-246805/](http://www.rollingstone.com/music/music-news/bob-dylan-gives-press-conference-in-san-francisco-246805/). Accessed May 7, 2020.
- Heylin, Clinton. *Trouble in Mind - Bob Dylan's Gospel Years - What Really Happened*. Route Publishing, 2017.
- "Indulgence, n." *OED Online*, Oxford University Press.  
<https://oed.com/view/Entry/94800>. Accessed May 12, 2020.

- Kooper, Al. "Bob Dylan." *Britannica.com*. Encyclopædia Britannica, inc. [www.britannica.com/biography/Bob-Dylan-American-musician](http://www.britannica.com/biography/Bob-Dylan-American-musician). Accessed November 20, 2019.
- Kvalvaag, Robert W. and Geir Winje. "Introduction." *A God of Time and Space - New Perspectives of Bob Dylan and Religion*, edited by Robert W. Kvalvaag and Geir Winje, Cappelen Damm Akademisk NOASP, 2019, pp. 7-15.
- LeBeau, Jennifer. "Trouble No More." Sony Music, 2017. general editor, Grey Water Park Productions.
- Lejon, Kjell O U. *Reagan, Religion and Politics: The Revitalization of "a Nation under God" During the 80s*. Lund University Press, 1988.
- Loder, Kurt. "Saved." *Rolling Stone* [www.rollingstone.com/music/music-album-reviews/saved-2-252021/](http://www.rollingstone.com/music/music-album-reviews/saved-2-252021/). Accessed November 18, 2019.
- Maxwell, Grant. "'An Extreme Sense of Destiny': Bob Dylan, Affect, and Final Causation." *The Journal of Religion and Popular Culture*, vol. 25:1, Spring 2013, pp. 146-162. doi:10.3138/jrpc.25.1.146.
- Miller, Perry. "Errand into the Wilderness." *The William and Mary Quarterly*, vol. 10, no. 1, Jan., 1953, pp. 3-32, *JSTOR*, [www.jstor.org/stable/2936876](http://www.jstor.org/stable/2936876). Accessed March 20, 2020. doi:10.2307/2936876.
- Rem, Håvard. *Bob Dylan*. Gyldendal, 1999.
- Ricks, Christopher. *Dylan's Vision of Sin*. Ecco, 2004.
- Schievelbusch, Wolfgang. *The Railway Journey : The Industrialization of Time and Space in the 19th Century*. New edition, Leamington Spa, 1986.
- Scorsese, Martin. "Rolling Thunder Revue: A Bob Dylan Story by Martin Scorsese." Netflix, 2019. general editor, Grey Water Park Productions.
- Selnes, Gisle. "Bob Dylan's Conversions: The "Gospel Years" as Symptom and Transition." *A God of Time and Space - New Perspectives of Bob Dylan and Religion*, edited by Robert W. Kvalvaag and Geir Winje, Cappelen Damm Akademisk NOASP, 2019, pp. 163-182. <https://doi.org/10.23865/noasp.74.ch6>.
- Shakespeare, William. *Hamlet*. edited by Robert S. Miola, 2nd edition, Norton, 2019.
- Shelton, Robert. *No Direction Home*. Ballantine Books, 1986.
- Webb, Stephen H. *Dylan Redeemed*. Continuum, 2006.

## Songs cited

- Dylan, Bob. "Blowin' in the Wind." *The Freewheelin' Bob Dylan*, Columbia Records, 1963. [www.bobdylan.com/songs/blowin-wind/](http://www.bobdylan.com/songs/blowin-wind/). Accessed May 12, 2020.
- . "Changing of the Guards." *Street-Legal*, Columbia Records, 1978. [www.bobdylan.com/songs/changing-guards/](http://www.bobdylan.com/songs/changing-guards/). Accessed May 12, 2020.
- . "Every Grain of Sand." *Shot of Love*, Columbia Records, 1981. [www.bobdylan.com/songs/every-grain-sand/](http://www.bobdylan.com/songs/every-grain-sand/). Accessed May 12, 2020.
- . "Highway 61 Revisited." *Highway 61 Revisited*, Columbia Records, 1965. [www.bobdylan.com/songs/highway-61-revisited/](http://www.bobdylan.com/songs/highway-61-revisited/). Accessed May 12, 2020.
- . "I Contain Multitudes." *I Contain Multitudes (Original release)*, Columbia Records, 2020. [www.bobdylan.com/songs/i-contain-multitudes/](http://www.bobdylan.com/songs/i-contain-multitudes/). Accessed May 12, 2020.
- . "I Shall Be Free No. 10." *Another Side of Bob Dylan*, Columbia Records, 1964. [www.bobdylan.com/songs/i-shall-be-free-no-10/](http://www.bobdylan.com/songs/i-shall-be-free-no-10/). Accessed May 12, 2020.
- . "In the Summertime." *Shot of Love*, Columbia Records, 1981. [www.bobdylan.com/songs/summertime/](http://www.bobdylan.com/songs/summertime/). Accessed May 12, 2020.
- . "Murder Most Foul." *Murder Most Foul (Original release)*, Columbia Records, 2020. [www.bobdylan.com/songs/murder-most-foul/](http://www.bobdylan.com/songs/murder-most-foul/). Accessed May 12, 2020.
- . "Precious Angel." *Slow Train Coming*, Columbia Records, 1979. [www.bobdylan.com/songs/precious-angel/](http://www.bobdylan.com/songs/precious-angel/). Accessed May 12, 2020.
- . "Property of Jesus." *Shot of Love*, Columbia Records, 1981. [www.bobdylan.com/songs/property-jesus/](http://www.bobdylan.com/songs/property-jesus/). Accessed May 12, 2020.
- . "Saved." *Saved*, Columbia Records, 1980. [www.bobdylan.com/songs/saved/](http://www.bobdylan.com/songs/saved/). Accessed May 12, 2020.



- . "Señor (Tales of Yankee Power)." *Street-Legal*, Columbia Records, 1978.  
[www.bobdylan.com/songs/senor-tales-yankee-power/](http://www.bobdylan.com/songs/senor-tales-yankee-power/). Accessed May 12, 2020.
- . "Shot of Love." *Shot of Love*, Columbia Records, 1981.  
[www.bobdylan.com/songs/shot-love/](http://www.bobdylan.com/songs/shot-love/). Accessed May 12, 2020.
- . "Slow Train." *Slow Train Coming*, Columbia Records, 1979.  
[www.bobdylan.com/songs/slow-train/](http://www.bobdylan.com/songs/slow-train/). Accessed May 12, 2020.
- . "Solid Rock." *Saved*, Columbia Records, 1980. [www.bobdylan.com/songs/solid-rock/](http://www.bobdylan.com/songs/solid-rock/).  
 Accessed May 12, 2020.
- . "Union Sundown." *Infidels*, Columbia Records, 1983.  
[www.bobdylan.com/songs/union-sundown/](http://www.bobdylan.com/songs/union-sundown/). Accessed May 12, 2020.
- . "When You Gonna Wake Up?" *Slow Train Coming*, Columbia Records, 1979.  
[www.bobdylan.com/songs/when-you-gonna-wake/](http://www.bobdylan.com/songs/when-you-gonna-wake/). Accessed May 12, 2020.
- . "Where Are You Tonight? (Journey through Dark Heat)." *Street-Legal*, Columbia  
 Records, 1978. [http://www.bobdylan.com/songs/where-are-you-tonight-journey-  
 through-dark-heat/](http://www.bobdylan.com/songs/where-are-you-tonight-journey-through-dark-heat/). Accessed May 12, 2020.
- . "Workingman Blues #2." *Modern Times*, Columbia Records, 2006.  
[www.bobdylan.com/songs/workingmans-blues-2/](http://www.bobdylan.com/songs/workingmans-blues-2/). Accessed May 12, 2020.

## **Appendix**

### **Appendix 1:** *Relevancy of this Master's Thesis for my future work as a teacher*

## **Appendix 1: Relevancy of this Master's Thesis for my future work as a teacher**

Seeing as this thesis is the final stage on a five-year journey, I would like to write down some thought about what I have learned working with this thesis that I can use in the classroom. Additionally, what aspects in the thesis itself is relevant for the English curriculum on Lower and Upper Secondary School in Norway. These thoughts will be interesting both on a personal level, because I have to think about my thesis differently, but it should also prove intriguing for potential employers as it shows how I can apply my specialist knowledge about Bob Dylan in the classroom.

Bob Dylan's role in American, and western, post-war cultural history is possibly greater than any other. There are other characters who might have been reaching into the public consciousness to an even greater extent at the height of their power, for example Elvis in the 1950s or Michael Jackson in the 1980s, but Dylan's longevity means that when discussing cultural history, he will be a natural inclusion in every single decade since the 1960s up until today. Songs such as "Like A Rolling Stone", "Blowin' in the Wind", and "Hurricane" have already been a part of school curriculum around Europe and America for a number of years, and "Murder Most Foul" will probably be another contribution to school curriculums from Dylan. His name will also be natural to mention both when discussing cultural history and Dylan's importance for the new wave of rock and roll in the 1960s. Also, when discussing the Civil Rights movement and the March on Washington, in which he participated, somewhat controversially, his name might appear.

Of course, many of today's school students will probably not name Dylan as one of their favourite musicians, however most will probably be familiar with his name and voice, and he can thus serve as an introduction to a new topic. Working with poetry, a good way to help students scaffold their teaching is to give them one contemporary song, one song from the 1960s to 80s, and one classical piece of poetry in order to ease them into understanding poetry and the language used for analysis. One of the competence aims in the new curriculum for English after Vg1 is: "discuss and reflect on the form, content, and instruments in English-language cultural expressions from various mediums, including music, film, and games (my translation)."<sup>40</sup> This is an example of how music is already a part of the curriculum. Another competence aim that is relevant for this thesis is: "read, analyse, and interpret English-language fiction." The definition of literature is broadening, and both music, games, and spoken word are increasingly being accepted as literature, this should and can be reflected in the classroom while at the same time teaching the students about the traditional canon.

There are several aspects of this thesis that can be relevant in my future work as a teacher. However, the parts I have highlighted above stands out. Both as a scaffolding exercise to help students read and understand poetry better and as cultural history, music is important. Political songs and songs with a social message can of course also be used as an introduction to historical events or changes.

<sup>40</sup> For all of the competence aims (in Norwegian), see: <https://www.udir.no/lk20/eng01-04/kompetansemaal-og-vurdering/kv6>.

