

The times they are a- changin

Literature



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Historical Analysis of Bob Dylan's 'The Times They are A-changing' It was 1963, a century after the Emancipation Proclamation. It was also two years after the victory of the former President John F. Kennedy in the national elections and also the year he died. Moreover, it was the year when the song, 'The Times They are A-Changing' was written. Bob Dylan, the singer-composer of the song, has achieved nationwide success with his first album, hence released his second album under the same title. Advocate of equality, Dylan wrote the song to encourage people to stop racial discrimination and to warn the people that a Civil War could recur if they do not change their attitude towards the change.

The song denotes political and economic changes at the time of its writing. The title of the song itself, which uses the slang term 'a-changing' gives the idea that the change is related to the rise of the African Americans. The song reflects the permeation of the African Americans into the suburbs. Dylan mentions that 'the waters...have grown' (3-4) and this water is overwhelming, it could drench someone 'to the bone' (6). The change that he is pointing out is something that gets to the bone because it pertains to blood, the blood of the African Americans. It could drench to the bone because the thought of African Americans leading the nation or becoming the majority is, for some, intolerable; it could cost their lives to think that such is happening.

The 1960s saw changes in the political and economic scenes of America. When JFK won, people had a new hope with his attempts at reviving the economy and establishing democracy. Following this, more and more African Americans migrated to the largest cities. According to Farber (264), suburbanisation rose with a total of 4.5 million non-whites. Specifically, New <https://assignbuster.com/the-times-they-are-a-changin/>

York's white population decreased by 7 percent whilst its African American population increased by 46 percent. Thus, the song expresses, " For he that gets hurt/Will be he who has stalled (27-28). Dylan implies that the African Americans will soon take over in power; therefore people should change and adopt the changes so that it will not be difficult for them to live and accept reality.

More and more African Americans have established names during the said time including Martin Luther King, Jr., Muhammad Ali, Sammy Davis, etc. As, Dylan claims, ' For the loser now/Will be later to win/For the times they are a-changin (20-21). Dylan prophesises the future of America with the African Americans winning the scene as this was the trend visible to him in the 1960s.

Along with it, however, several issues of human rights violation involving African Americans have also been noted. Thus, Dylan warns people that the change will ' soon shake your windows/And rattle your walls (32). Dylan addresses politicians to heed this call in order to avoid war similar to what happened one century ago. He knows that the Civil War could recur if people do not welcome the change, and for people to do so, legislators should establish laws for acceptance of the minority.

The content and message of the song capture the social transformation that was happening in the 1960s. As Dylan wrote, ' you better start swimmin or you'll stink like a stone' (9-10). By this, he warns those who have not accepted the change that there could be another war in America if they not change the way they see things. The song also predicts what would happen in the future such as the recognition received by African Americans, including the presidency of Barack Obama. Songs like this led Dylan to win <https://assignbuster.com/the-times-they-are-a-changin/>

international recognition and the Medal of Freedom in 2012.

References

Dylan, Bob. The Times They are A-changing. Song. 1964.

Farber, David. The Columbia Guide to America in the 1960s. Columbia: Columbia University Press, 2013.

Dylan is pushy towards adjusting to the change as he has noted the need to adapt to it. Doing the opposite will lea

Many artists nowadays are famous for the songs they make. Some are famous for songs about love and social and political relevance

Bob Dylan is known for being the boss of his boys.

Come gather round people

Wherever you roam

And admit that the waters

Around you have grown

And accept it that soon

You'll be drenched to the bone.

If your time to you

Is worth savin

Then you better start swimmin

Or you'll sink like a stone

For the times they are a-changin.

Come writers and critics

Who prophesize with your pen

And keep your eyes wide

The chance won't come again

And don't speak too soon

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For the wheels still in spin
And theres no tellin who
That its namin.
For the loser now
Will be later to win
For the times they are a-changin.
Come senators, congressmen
Please heed the call
Dont stand in the doorway
Dont block up the hall
For the times they are a-changin.
Come mothers and fathers
Throughout the land
And dont criticize
What you cant understand
Your sons and your daughters
Are beyond your command
Your old road is
Rapidly agin.
Please get out of the new one
If you cant lend your hand
For the times they are a-changin.
The line it is drawn
The curse it is cast
The slow one now
Will later be fast

As the present now

Will later be past

The order is

Rapidly fadin.

And the first one now

Will later be last

For the times they are a-changin.