

Example of bob dylans masters of war essay

[Environment](#), [Disaster](#)



Music is not just for entertainment and information purposes, but also an avenue through which artists articulate issues in the society. Protest songs have been used severally to express discontent in certain societal matters. The Masters of War by Bob Dylan was one such song whose message reverberated across both national and global circles. In order to understand the meaning behind the song, it is important to not just interpret the lyrics, but also consider the political, economic and social conditions that inspired the song. The Masters of War was inspired by various events happening prior to its release. Among other things, this paper will highlight the influence of the nuclear arms race in the 1960s and the associated conflicts on the writing of the song.

The increased manufacture of nuclear weapons in the nuclear arms race was one of the events that inspired the writing of the song. During this period, the United States and the Soviet Union were involved in the manufacture of nuclear weapons in order to cement political power globally. This saw the investment of hundreds of billions of dollars into programs to arm the military wings of these two governments and their allies. In their estimates, Lindley & Clemency (2009) reported that the United States government spent 74 billion dollars annually to develop nuclear weapons. Although these were projections between 1950 and 1965, year-specific figures describe the conditions at the time more vividly. In the four years prior to the release of the song, the gross increase in nuclear weaponry amounted to 4966, 3692, 3261 and 2072 in 1960, 1961, 1962 and 1963 respectively. The average cost over the four years was 10.3 billion dollars (Lindley & Clemency, 2009).

The writing of the song was also inspired by the Cuba Missile Crisis of 1962.

This is a period in the arms race where the United States plotted to overthrow the Castro Administration in Cuba because they were perceived allies of the Soviet Union, letting the Soviet Union erect sites for medium and intermittent range ballistic nuclear missiles in its territory. Through the patronage of the Central Intelligence Agency, the United States invaded Cuba in the Bay of Pigs Invasion (Office of the Historian, 2013). During the offensive, over 1500 raiders were killed (Weiner, 1998).

Various lyrics from the song are requisite to understanding the meaning behind the song. For instance, the following three lines of the first stanza by Dylan (1963) are important in understanding the meaning of the song:

**You that build all the guns
You that build the death
planes
You that build all the bombs**

These lyrics are related to the events of the arms race in the years leading to the release of the song. The first line relates to the manufacture of guns that were used to arm the soldiers who would be deployed in the event of a war between the United States and the Soviet Union. The second and third lines relate to the manufacture of jets to carry the nuclear bombs that were manufactured by both nations. The following lines from the fourth stanza by Dylan (1963) also exemplify the meaning of the song:

You fasten all the triggers
For the others to fire
Then you set back and
watch
When the death count gets higher
You hide in your mansion'

The first three lines relate to the events in that the planning of these events and offensives was done by politicians and military officers while the soldiers were deployed to the field while the politicians monitored from the safety of their offices. The third line relates to the death toll in the Bay of Pigs Invasion

in which over 1500 raiders were killed by Cuban troops.

The lyrics of the song communicate the message of the artist. They also communicate the political and economic conditions that inspired the song. By releasing this song, Dylan (1963) protested the actions of the political class, which were bound to have serious ramifications for the country and its citizens.

References

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