

POETRY AND MUSIC :  
A CRITICAL STUDY OF THE POETRY  
IN THE SELECTED MODERN POPULAR SONGS  
( 1955-1975 )

By

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## SUPERVISOR'S CERTIFICATE

I certify that the dissertation entitled "Poetry and Music: A Critical Study of the Poetry in the Selected Modern Popular Songs (1955-1975)" submitted by Cassandra Wahlang, in partial fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of the Master of Philosophy of the North-Eastern Hill University, Shillong, is the record of original investigation carried out by her under my supervision.

She has been duly registered and the dissertation presented is worthy of being considered for the award of the M. Phil degree. This work has not been submitted for any degree of any other University.

SHILLONG  
THE 16<sup>th</sup> DECEMBER 1986.

  
( E. N. IALL )

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(ii)

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(CASSANDRA WAHLANG)

INTRODUCTION

## INTRODUCTION

X.J. Kennedy in his book, An Introduction To Poetry says: "Most poems are more memorable than ordinary speech and when music is combined with poetry, the result is more memorable still". There can be no doubt that music adds flavour and excitement to poetry and sharpens our aesthetic sense. Whenever the sound of music, both vocal and instrumental, seeps through the poems they become immortalized.

In modern times, it is difficult for the older generation to accept modern English and American popular<sup>1</sup> songs as poetical, thought-provoking and valuable to society as a whole. Yet popular songs entertain and educate people. It is true that there are many songs that do not reach the top rung of the ladder, either in the world of music or poetry. Such songs usually end up in the trash-can of time. But careful probing will assist one in finding certain songs that are poetical. These songs are mankind's expressions of joys and sorrows. If modern popular songs meet the requisites of music and poetry, then one hopes that critics will regard them as part of modern American and English poetry.

ENDNOTES

1. "Of, pertaining to, ... the people as a whole as distinguished from any particular class; ..."  
"Prevalent or current among, or accepted by the people generally; ..."

- O.E.D.

CHAPTER -I

A HISTORICAL SURVEY OF THE TERM "SONG",  
AND ITS ACCEPTANCE IN LITERATURE

This chapter focuses on the evolution of songs and their contribution to the enrichment of literature. Songs come from various literatures of different countries. This chapter also studies the indebtedness of the English lyricists to the Italian, Greek and German lyricists.

There are many poems that do not have a musical setting, but still may be called songs, for example, Smart's "A Song to David"; Blake's "Songs of Innocence" and Robert Service's "Songs of A Sourdough". However, the term "song" in its literary sense usually denotes a poem and its musical setting. Music and words may be composed together or the music may be fitted to the words and vice-versa. However a broad assessment should be taken of the term "song", for at times, it wears the form of a poem meant for chanting, with or without a musical background. At other times, it is meant for singing, with or without musical accompaniment. It is known that poetry was earlier designed to be sung or chanted, and the oral tradition sustains the union of music and poetry.<sup>1</sup> Thus it clearly follows that a song is a perfect combination of music (vocal and instrumental), and poetry.

A song is still called a lyric and has got a distinctive feature, in that it is different from dramatic

verse of any kind. The average length of a song is often only between a dozen and thirty lines; but it can reach up to fifty or sixty lines or even more. The singer usually expresses the thoughts and feelings of a person under certain circumstances and not necessarily those of the singer or the composer himself. The good expression of the song depends much on the composition as well as the personal rendering of the song by the singer himself.

Lyric verses cover a wide range and variety and they form the bulk of poetry in most literatures. Various indications point out that the earliest lyrics found are Egyptian (c. 2600 B.C.). The pyramid texts of this period reveal examples of the funeral song (a kind of elegy), the song of praise to the King (a type of ode), and an invocation to the gods (a form of hymn). Within the same period, inscriptions are found on tombs. These inscriptions include the songs of shepherds and fishermen. Later works (c. 1550 B.C.) include a love song and an epitaph.<sup>2</sup>

A valuable contribution also comes from Greek lyric poetry. To the Greeks, music has a much wider meaning than it has to us. The word 'music' comes in the adjective form of the noun 'muse'. In classical mythology, the word 'muse' refers to any one of the nine sister

goddesses who preside over certain arts and sciences. Thus according to the Greeks, Astronomy is also closely connected with music. This was acknowledged by Plato, who ordinarily is known to profess little love for the arts; and in his Republic (Republic, X, 617), the connection between music and astronomy, is given in a poetic form in the beautiful myth of the "music of the spheres". This idea is echoed by writers throughout the Middle Ages and appears also in Shakespeare and Milton. The Greek's wider conception of music, both vocal and instrumental, is on the close union of melody, and poetry. In fact, to them, the two are practically synonymous. Thus, the Greeks define a lyric as a song to be sung to the accompaniment of a lyre (lyra), and "tragedy" incorporates the verb aeidein, which means "to sing". Aristotle in his Poetics has pointed out that forms of poetry that lack music, should not be given any designation at all, so that "ode" and "hymn" are also classed as musical terms. According to Aristotle, music and words directly imitate or represent the passions or states of the soul — gentleness, anger, courage, temperance and other qualities. So the artist, whether a musician or a singer, in imitating a certain passion, is under obligation to exercise his power with due regard for its

effect on others, so that the listeners become imbued with the same passion. The Greek doctrine of ethos is based on the conviction that music affects character in different ways. So we have a general division into two classes, according to the two strong inclinations in a Greek soul. The first, is an endeavour for clarity, temperance and moderation, and songs whose effect is bent towards calmness and upliftment, are always associated with the worship of Apollo. The musical instrument accompanying the music of such songs is the lyre. Their related poetic forms are the ode and the epic. Being a responsive nation, the Greeks also respond to the sensual qualities of music. They are known to appreciate a form of music that tends to produce excitement and enthusiasm, driving them towards the fantastic and orgiastic. Songs falling under such influence of music, are known to be associated with the cult of Dionysus. The musical instrument accompanying the music of such songs is known as the aulos. The songs' related poetic forms are the dithyramb and the drama<sup>3</sup>. This contradiction between the calm and serene and the exciting, sensual, musical forms, re-appeared in Richard Wagner and again in Nietzsche, whose experiences were responsible for The Birth of Tragedy from the Spirit of Music, in which the Apollonian and the Dionysian elements are at war with each other.

But it was not until the 7th Century, that proper lyrics appeared in public, where one can sort out the Aeolian or personal lyrics like those written by Sappho and Alcaeus, and the Dorian lyrics which are more open and impersonal written by Stesichorus and others. Sophocles, Aeschylus and Euripides contributed the choral odes. All in all, the Greek contribution comes in the form of the dance-song, the dirge, the dithyramb, ode, hymn and pæan. It is also worthwhile noticing the Hebrew contribution from the Hebrew Psalter on which many early church hymns were based.<sup>4</sup>

Roman lyrics are mostly written in the form of the Aeolian mood . They tend to be more subjective and reflective in nature. Such lyrics are mostly always sombre, such as those written by Catullus, Tibullus, Propertius, Martial, Ovid and Virgil. Medieval Latin lyrics, display a remarkable technical skill, where they employ Hebrew as well as Greek methods and their influences. Poets employing such elements, are Abelard, Ausonius, Fortunatus, Paulinus of Nola, Petronius Arbiter and Prudentius. Church lyrics of the 12th and 13th centuries are unique in their beauty. Such are the Stabat Mater and the Dies Irae.

The Mozarabic poetry of Spain has produced the so-called Patristic lyrical songs. Such songs have had their origin in religious ceremonials. Therefore most of them are in the form of hymns and psalms.

In the period between c.A.D. 300 and c.A.D. 1200, two other traditions from the East and the West can be seen in the development of the lyric form. The first, comes in the form of Old English lyrics, with outstanding examples, like "The Seafarer", "The Wanderer", "The Wife's Lament", "The Lover's Message" and "Deor". The second, comes when the art of writing lyrics is being perfected in China and Japan. Between the 12th Century and the 15th Century, lyric form was highly developed in Persia, only that it was not noticed in England until the 19th Century.<sup>5</sup>

Lyrical art continued to survive in the later Middle Ages. In fact, up till the 16th Century in Europe and England, poet and composer and musician were known to be often one and the same. The epic, the war-song, the ballad, the madrigal and the lyric were in many cases the works of professional musician poets who were also composers. These poets were known as the skalds, scopas, troubadours, troverès and Minnesänger.<sup>6</sup> Their lyrical

compositions had specific names, like "chanso", "sirventes", "planh", "tenso", "pastorela" and "aubade".<sup>7</sup> These were intended to be sung, often accompanied by a dance. It is however known that only during the 16th Century (or a little earlier) that the classifying of literary forms or genres put the song in an individual category. From this period onwards, the term "song" is widely known and accepted as a literary composition in verse-form, set to music.

The Renaissance period made an outstanding contribution to song-writing. In Tottel's Miscellany (1557), we find that Sir Thomas Wyatt has written beautiful songs for the lute. Two stanzas can be cited from one of his better known works:

My lute awake! perform the last  
 Labour that thou and I shall waste,  
 The end that I have now begun;  
 For when this song is sung and past,  
 My lute be still, for I have done.

As to be heard where ear is none,  
 As lead to grave in marble stone,  
 My song may pierce her heart as soon;  
 Should we then sigh or sing or moan?  
 No, no, my lute, for I have done.

During the Elizabethan and Jacobean periods, the two prominent composer poets were Thomas Campion and John

Dowland. They composed songs which were called "airs".  
 Campion had published four Books of Ayres (1610-1612). The  
 fourth book contains one of his best known songs entitled  
 "There Is A Garden In Her Face". Dowland published three  
 volumes called Songes or Ayres of Foure Partes (1597, 1600,  
 1603). In the third book, the anonymous song "Weep You No  
 More, Sad Fountains", contains several merits of the song-  
 lyric of the period. Lines of the song are as follows:

Weep you no more, sad fountains;  
 What need you flow so fast?  
 Look how the snowy mountains  
 Heaven's sun doth gently waste.  
 But my son's heavenly eyes  
 View not your weeping,  
 That now lies sleeping  
 Softly, now softly lies  
 Sleeping.

Sleep is a reconciling,  
 A rest that peace begets.  
 Doth not the sun rise smiling  
 When fair at ev'n he sets?  
 Rest you then, rest, sad eyes,  
 Melt not in weeping  
 While she lies sleeping  
 Softly, now softly lies  
 Sleeping.<sup>8</sup>

A number of other publications of songs, besides  
 those of Campion and Dowland came up immediately before  
 and after the year 1600. The more notable and popular of  
 the songs, were the madrigals. Madrigals are names given  
 to forms of concerted vocal music, Italian in origin. The

earliest appearance of madrigals was in northern Italy in the 14th Century and are quite different from madrigals around the year 1530. Early madrigals have the suggestive derivation from mandria (sheepfold), since early writers associated them with the pastourelle of the troubadours and their subject matter is usually idyllic and contemplative, if not exactly pastoral. Later on in the 16th Century, madrigals were thought of simply as equivalent to matricale, meaning 'in the mother tongue' which points out to be Italian and not Latin, for it is applied to poems without any fixed form. These madrigals were set to music, which is likewise intentionally dignified, reminding one of the sonorous chansons. 16th Century madrigal composers were bringing in the rapid development of a new musical language, one that has repercussion on the setting of words to music. Madrigals are only one step short of the Cantata, which was the most elevated form of secular or religious vocal music in the 17th Century. They gained popularity all over Europe; but nowhere were they so completely naturalized as in England, where they were also intended to be sung by several voices. They are known to be at court since the time of Henry VIII, but achieved real popularity only around the 1580s. Noted madrigal composer-poets were William Byrd

(1543-1623), Thomas Morley, John Wilbye and Thomas Weelkes. Morley indulges in lighter, cheerful madrigals, such as Canzonets or "little short songs" as he called them. John Wilbye and Thomas Weelkes brought to the English madrigal a certain depth of feeling and occasionally a profound melancholy that is not typical of the Italian school. On this, Weelkes is more bolder and original. The tradition of madrigal-singing was kept alive throughout the 18th and 19th Centuries, where English and foreign madrigals were sung in cathedrals and collegiate churches throughout the country.<sup>9</sup>

The dramatists of the period (1580-1640) realized that songs become indispensable as they help in creating or sustaining a particular mood in their dramas. The most prominent examples are the songs in the dramas of William Shakespeare. Exquisite is the song in Henry VIII, where we have the following lines:

Orpheus with his lute made trees,  
And the mountain tops that freeze,  
Bow themselves, when he did sing:  
To his music plants and flowers  
Ever sprung; as sun and showers  
There had made a lasting spring.

Everything that heard him play,  
 Even the billows of the sea,  
 Hung their heads, and then lay by.  
 In sweet music is such art,  
 Killing care and grief of heart  
 Fall asleep, or hearing, die.

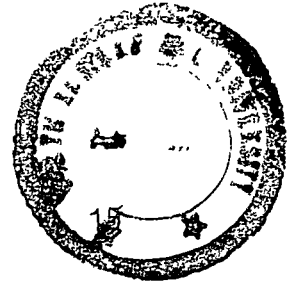
Other instances can be given, quoting the opening line in each case: 'And will he not come again?' (Hamlet); 'Blow, blow, thou winter wind', (As You Like It); 'Come, thou monarch of the vine', (Antony And Cleopatra); 'You spotted snakes with double tongue', (Midsummer-Night's Dream); 'The master, the swabber, the boatswain and I', (The Tempest); 'Take, O take those lips away', (Measure For Measure); 'Hark! hark! the lark at heaven's gate sings', (Cymbeline); 'Full merrily the humble-bee doth sing', (Troilus And Cressida); 'Fie on sinful fantasy!', (Merry Wives of Windsor); 'Oh mistress mine! where are you roaming?' (Twelfth-Night); besides these, there are a host of other songs in the dramas of Shakespeare.

In the 17th Century, Dryden's chief contributions in song-writing are "Beneath a myrtle shade" (The Conquest of Granada, 1670), and his "Ode for St. Cecilia's Day". Other poets composing songs were Suckling, Herrick, Lovelace, Jonson, Beaumont and Fletcher, and others. Masques contain many a good song and they open a channel for the technique

of blending music and words beautifully. On this, two noted composers are worth mentioning. They were Henry Lawes (1596-1662) and his brother William (1602-1645). Later, Henry Purcell introduced new innovations in the form of semi-operas and his one true opera Dido and Aeneas (1689). His style is full of grace, power and poetry, where unpredictable gaiety rubs shoulders with poignant melancholy. In Arcades (1633) and Comus (1634), Milton also produced outstanding songs. An example can be taken from the masque of Comus, where there is the famous song to Echo, with the following lines:

Sweet Echo, sweetest Nymph that liv'st unseen  
 Within thy airy shell  
 By slow Meander's margent green,  
 And in the violet imbroider'd vale  
 Where the love-lorn Nightingale  
 Nightly to thee her sad Song mourneth well.  
 Canst thou not tell me of a gentle Pair  
 That liketh thy Narcissus are?  
 O if thou have  
 Hid them in some flowry cave,  
 Tell me but where  
 Sweet Queen of Parly, Daughter of the Sphear  
 So maist thou be translated to the skies  
 And give resounding grace to all Heav'ns Harmonies.

England, in the 18th Century, finds the art of song-writing exists also in dramatic prose and occasional plays. For instance, Goldsmith wrote a successful song called "Let schoolmasters puzzle their brain" for She Stoops to



Conquer (1773), and another song for his novel, The Vicar of Wakefield (1766) with the opening line "When lovely woman stoops to folly". Sheridan also showed the knack with his rousing catch "Here's to the maiden of bashful fifteen" in School for Scandal (1777).<sup>10</sup> Around this time, Italy, France and Germany already laid an importance on operas and ballad operas, where many vocal solos, duets and choruses were introduced; and when George Frideric Handel came to settle in England in 1712, the country seemed to be ripe for good Handel's operas tinged with German and Italian influences. But later on people preferred the more tuneful ballad opera, where all characters are anti-heroes; members of the London under-world of criminals, fake beggars and bribe-taking law enforcers. One such opera is John Gay's The Beggar's Opera which is produced in 1728.<sup>11</sup> Sheridan produced an opera known as the comic opera entitled The Duenna (1775). But surprisingly, very few writers and dramatists have dedicated themselves solely to the composition and production of operas. Instead, there is a collaboration between dramatist, novelist and composer in producing both dramas, prose-writing and operas. In recent times, W.H. Auden collaborated with Igor Stravinsky to create The Rake's Progress (1951). Another modern example of adaptation is Benjamin Britten's opera, The Turn of the Screw

(1954), inspired by Henry James's novel of the same title.<sup>12</sup> In modern times, the latest ones are, of course, known as the rock-operas, such as Joseph And the Amazing Technicolour Dreamcoat, based on the life of Joseph in the Old Testament. Jesus Christ Super Star, is based on the life of Christ. Robert Stigwood produces these operas on stage. Evita centres round the life of Eva Peron, the first wife of the Argentinian post-war dictator, Juan Peron. In this rock-opera contains the famous song called "Don't Cry For Me, Argentina". Another one entitled Cats is based on books by Beverley Nicholls. All these rock-operas mentioned above are written and composed by Tim Rice and Andrew Lloyd Webber.

The 18th and the 19th Centuries produced songs of variety, although it has been often observed that the art of song-writing during these centuries, was in a precarious condition. Certain songs of these periods are secular, others are religious in nature, and a group of them are patriotic and inspiring. Noted composers were Thomas Moore, Robert Burns, William Blake, Thomas Haynes Bayly and a number of anonymous composers of ballads and folk songs. Being a musician poet, Thomas Moore (1779-1852) was being acknowledged as the national lyricist of Ireland, when he published his Irish Melodies (1807-1835). His other publications

are the National Airs (1815) and Sacred Songs (1816). What Moore had done for Ireland, so also Robert Burns did for Scotland. Robert Burns (1759-1796), had written some of the finest songs the world has ever known. Most of his songs can be found in James Thomson's Scots Musical Museum (1787-1803) and George Thomson's Select Collection of Scottish Airs (1793-1805).<sup>13</sup> In the 19th Century, we also have Thomas Lovell Beddoes and Lord Alfred Tennyson who had shown considerable talent for musical lyrics. Besides, one cannot also ignore the emergence of great and famous hymns during these centuries, such as Christina G. Rossetti's hymn with the opening lines that run as follows:

What are these that glow from afar,  
 These that lean over the golden bar,  
 Strong as the lion, pure as the dove,  
 With open arms, and hearts of love?

The hymn as a whole, gains its ethereal quality when B. Harwood's musical composition was attached to it. Sir H. Parry set Tennyson's poem "Crossing The Bar" to music, and it turns into a much beloved hymn. When the musical compositions of W.H. Monk and A. H. Dyke Troyte were attached to H.F. Lyte's hymn "Abide With Me", the hymn gains a universal appeal, irrespective of caste, creed or religion, for its philosophical projection of that human clinging faith

to the Divine Creator. Cardinal John Henry Newman (1801-1890) had written the famous hymn entitled "Lead Kindly Light". The first tune to the hymn was being composed by Rev. J.B. Dykes and the second tune was composed by C. H. Purday in 1860. When he was a young man, Newman set off on a tour of Europe. From Naples, he sailed over to Sicily, where he had fallen ill. At last, aching to get home, he got on board the ship bound for Marseilles. In the straits between Sardinia and Corsica, he took out a pen and paper and wrote this hymn — the poem of a homesick traveller, which his genius had turned it into a form of religious experience that has comforted and inspired thousands. The lights of the ship made Newman draw the thematic inspiration which was based on the scriptural words that say:

And the Lord went before them by day  
in a pillar of a cloud, to lead them the  
way; and by night in a pillar of fire,  
to give them light; to go by day and  
night.

[Exodus: 13:21]

A distinctive feature in the history of songs is the composition of carols or festive religious songs. They are sung in a spirit of joy at Christmas time and occasionally, at Easter. The word "carol" offers suggestions for dancing, for the early carols are sung as well as danced; that of

the open air, for carols are still a good deal sung in the open; that of simplicity, for they are always simple in thought and often sung and understood by common people; and that of age, for the best carols have served many generations of men. A carol can be dramatic, narrative or lyrical. The Christmas "crib" in church, turned out to be an inspiration for the composition of very early carols, and such carols are assumed to have first been initiated by St. Francis of Assisi (c. 1182-1226). The themes are usually about Mary and Joseph, about the Wise Men, or the shepherds or even about the animals around the manger. One such is the English "Coventry Carol" which is required to be sung in nativity plays. Other English carols have had their origin in Mysteries, Miracle Plays and Moralities. The composition of a number of old carols that we still sing today cannot be earlier than the 15th century, for it was only in 1521, that a person known as Wynkyn de Worde, had been printing the first collection of Christmas carols. Counterparts of the carol in other countries are the noël in France and the Weihnachtslieder in Germany. These are quite unrelated to medieval carols. In the 17th century, several poets like Milton, Southwell, Crashaw, Vaughan and Herbert, wrote poems and songs belonging to the carol genre.

Milton's "Nativity Hymn" and Southwell's "The Burning Babe" are outstanding examples. Some other well known carols are: "The Seven Joys of Mary"; "I Saw Three Ships"; "God Rest You Merry, Gentlemen"; "The Virgin Unspotted"; "Jesus Born in Bethlehem"; and "The Twelve Days of Christmas". More recently, the United States has given the world a carol called "O Little Town of Bethlehem" and the negro spiritual carol, "Go Tell It on the Mountain". From Austria has come the best loved of all carols, and that is "Silent Night". The Pueblo Indians who greet Christmas in full dance costumes enjoy the lively, rhythmic carols as they sing and dance to the beating drums, in a way that would have delighted the old medieval carolers.<sup>14</sup>

Another distinctive feature, though often ignored or forgotten, on account of its major entertainment for children, does bear a stamp of pure human relationship and innocent human existence. This literary landmark belongs to the oral tradition and forms the composition of lullabies, where the opening lines of some of the better known ones are "Hush-a-bye, baby, on the tree-top", and "Rock-a-bye, baby", and a host of others. Lullabies are usually sung in a low, tender voice in order to calm and soothe babies. But the composition can also be meant for the voice or for the

musical instrument. Examples are the "Berceuse" from Benjamin Godard's opera Jocelyn, and Chopin's Berceuse in D flat. In this genre, is also the composition of nursery rhymes, whose origin is thought to be of considerable antiquity. The oral tradition has helped them to survive for centuries. Some of the oldest nursery rhymes deal with simple babies' games, such as "Handy dandy prickly prandy, which hand will you have?" (recorded 1598), and the face-tapping formula "Brow bender, eye peeper, nose dropper, mouth eater, chin chopper" (recorded 1788). But surprisingly, parallel formulas are also found in Europe such as those in the German nursery rhymes. The singing game "London Bridge is falling down", and the riddle rhyme, popularized by Lewis Carroll in Through The Looking-Glass (1872), namely, "Humpty Dumpty sat on a wall" find their parallel counterparts in as half across Europe, within the same period, indicating that all of them have been handed down from very early times. Counting-out formulas are employed by children to determine which one of them shall take some special role. But the similarity of the sounding of formulas employed by children in different countries, is simply amazing. In Great Britain children say:

Eena, meena, mona, my,  
 Barcelona, bona, stry,  
 Air, ware, frum, dy,  
 Araca, baraca, wee, wo, wack.

And in northern Germany, children say:

Ene, tene, mona, mei,  
 Pastor, lone, bone, strei,  
 Ene, fune, herke, berke,  
 Wer? Wie? Wo? Was?

But all in all, these counting-out rhymes are preserving, even if in a corrupted form, the sounds of very ancient numerals. Certain nursery rhymes are inspired by personalities of the time, and occasionally these can be identified. "Jack Sprat could eat no fat" appeared (at the latest in 1659) to have been used to ridicule an Arch-deacon Pratt, and local tradition in Somerset associates "Little Jack Horner" (recorded 1725) with a Thomas Horner of Mells who had done well for himself during the dissolution of the monasteries.<sup>15</sup>

So far as English nursery rhymes are concerned, more than eight hundred are known to exist. They wear different forms like counting jingles, weather rhymes, songs from games, riddles, tongue-twisters and so forth. Apart from these, are rhymes in more or less ballad form, a few

examples of which are "Tom The Piper's Son", "The Love-sick Frog" and "Bobby Shaftoe". Those extremely popular among children the world over, up to the present day are: "Ring-a-Ring O'Roses", "Humpty Dumpty", "Goosey Gander", "Ding, Dong, Bell", "Old Mother Hubbard", "Solomon Grundy", "The Queen of Hearts", "Miss Muffet", "Little Jack Horner", "Jack and Jill", "Simple Simon", "The House That Jack Built", "Sing a Song of Six Pence", "Old King Cole", "Little Bo-Peep", "Oranges and Lemons" and "London Bridge". Collections of nursery rhymes are in Tom Thumb's Pretty Song Book (1744), Mother Goose's Melody (c. 1765); Gammer Gurton's Garland (1784); Nursery Rhymes of England (1842), Popular Rhymes and Nursery Tales (1849); The Oxford Dictionary of Nursery Rhymes (1951) compiled by Iona and Peter Opie. Also by the same editors is The Oxford Nursery Rhyme Book (1955).<sup>16</sup>

In the twentieth century, writers are at one time or another, becoming aware of the importance of songs in their works. This can be seen in the writings of W.B. Yeats, Sean O'Casey, T.S. Eliot, W.H. Auden, Brendan Behan and John Arden and many others. In For The Time Being, a Christmas Oratorio, W.H. Auden includes the solo, the chorus and the semi-chorus for the development of the plot. There is also his composition of lyrics entitled the "Five

Songs". In John Arden's play Live Like Pigs, songs become introductions in almost every scene. In this play, he writes:

The stanzas of song at the beginning of each (or nearly each) scene are intended to be sung as an introductory statement either just before the set is discovered or while the lights are coming up.

T.S. Eliot, among his works involving musical setting, brought in the idea of songs in the very titles of his poems, examples of which are "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock", the Four Quartets and "Choruses from 'the Rock' - 1934".

T.S. Eliot was deeply convinced that the existence of songs elevates the realm of poetry. According to him, there are the three voices of poetry and the second voice is the voice of a poet addressing an audience, whether large or small, but the voice must be most "distinctly audible". Here lies the important function of a song, where the singer imparts messages to the audience, and where music gives an added impression. Eliot himself pays a glorious tribute to Thomas Campion, the Elizabethan writer of songs, when he says:

I should say that within his limits there was no more accomplished craftsman in the whole of English poetry than Campion. I admit that to understand his poems fully there are some things one should know; Campion was a musician, and he wrote his songs to be sung. We appreciate his poems better if we have some acquaintance with Tudor music and with the instruments for which it was written; we like them better if we like this music; and we want not merely to read them, but to hear some of them sung, and sung to Campion's own setting.<sup>17</sup>

As for a song's vital relationship with poetry, Eliot again elucidates:

I think that a poet may gain much from the study of music: how much technical knowledge of musical form is desirable I do not know, for I have not that technical knowledge myself. But I believe that the properties in which music concerns the poet most nearly, are the sense of rhythm and the sense of structure. . . . But I know that a poem, or a passage of a poem, may tend to realize itself first as a particular rhythm before it reaches expression in words, and that this rhythm may bring to birth the idea and the image; and I do not believe that this is an experience peculiar to myself. The use of recurrent themes is as natural to poetry as to music. There are possibilities for verse which bear some analogy to the development of a theme by different groups of instruments; there are possibilities of transitions in a poem comparable to the different movements of a symphony or a quartet; there are possibilities of contrapuntal arrangement of subject-matter. It is in the concert room, rather than in the opera house, that the germ of a poem may be quickened.<sup>18</sup>

In this chapter, we have seen how history has revealed that throughout the centuries, literature cannot discard the existence of songs. Great writers in the Renaissance Period such as Shakespeare and Ben Jonson, and in the modern times, T.S. Eliot and W.H. Auden, have composed songs and included them in their works. This illustrates the significance of songs in the world of poetry.

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ENDNOTES

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5. Ibid., pp. 366, 367.
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7. Ibid., p. 367.
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CHAPTER - II

THE THEMES IN MODERN POPULAR SONGS

(1955 - 1975)

This chapter concentrates on themes in modern popular songs expressing joy and happiness as well as anxieties and a fearless attempt to share the burden of solving the problems of contemporary society. They juxtapose cultures, both high and low, flowing in the stream of modern life.

The modern singer-poets may seem to belong to an experimental school of modern poetry, but the themes in their lyrics reflect the rapid changes in modern times. The themes also focus on problems, national and international. These problems may be economic, social, political or religious in nature. Ihab Hassan comments in his book, Contemporary American Literature:

The original talents of Bob Dylan, John Lennon and Paul McCartney, Leonard Cohen, and Jacques Brel suggest the international scope of a genre that goes farther than open-form poetry in challenging academic assumptions.<sup>1</sup>

Throughout the centuries, myriads of lyrics have come up, chanting and singing about love, which is one of the primal emotions of man. In contemporary society, we have many modern lyrics on love. However, the evolution of new musical forms, should be taken into consideration, as they are partly responsible for introducing certain

novel aspects in the mood of these love-lyrics, depending also on conditions and circumstances of the era in which we live. As Henry Pleasants observes:

With Johnny Cash, as with other country and blues singers, the context is oratorical rather than melodic or harmonic. The lyric is more important than the tune.... Another of Cash's biographers, Christopher Wren, in Winners Got Scars Too, has put it well: "Blues or jazz convey their emotion through music with the words as an accessory. In country, the lyrics — blunt, direct, painful — become the expression: the tune just lubricates them.<sup>2</sup>

It follows that a kind of music combining all these musical expressions; enables to produce lyrics that are not only melodious, but gives us an insight into real life situations.

Tim Hardin's tense but tender ballad is entitled "If I were A Carpenter". This song breaks away from the traditional love-song, in that it is very realistic. His song presents the picture of a lover offering a humble but a sudden and abrupt marriage proposal to his lady-love. He imagines himself to be a carpenter and wonders whether his beloved will still be willing to marry him and more so, not feel ashamed to have his baby. He wants an assurance from her, that even if he were "a tinker" or "a miller", she will still be willing to be his helpmate, sharing the

burdens of a hard life and not regretting or missing her former easy and comfortable life. For if love contains a reciprocal value, then the lover's appeal shines best when he says:

Save my love through loneliness  
 Save my love for sorrow.  
 I've given you my own ownliness,  
 Come and give me your tomorrow.

Another facet of love in modern times, is of a lover balancing himself between salvation and despair. In a love-lyric entitled "I Walk the Line" written by Johnny Cash, the lover confesses that he always keeps "a close watch" on himself and his own feelings. He is always on the alert for the love-tie that binds the two hearts together. It makes him true and faithful to her for the happiness she gives him. But the implication of the message in the declaration of undying love, is the dreadful contemplation of what will happen, if the object of all that devotion should prove unworthy of his love. Thus, it is no wonder when the lover sings the following lines:

I keep a close watch on this heart of mine;  
 I keep my eyes wide open all the time;  
 I keep the end up for the tie that binds.  
 Because you're mine  
 I walk the line.

"Elusive Butterfly" written by Bob Lind, is an example of a typical folk-rock lyric,<sup>3</sup> and it is beautifully encased within a lyrical shell. Here, love is characterized and symbolized as "the bright elusive butterfly". The song expresses insurmountable difficulties in attaining true love, showing partly the instability of social habits in contemporary society. It tells us of a dreamer of love who is just a "fading shadow" fleeting past people's windows, or one can see him (her) as "the floating motion/ Of a distant pair of wings". The searcher of love says:

You might have heard my footsteps  
 Echo softly in the distance  
 Through the canyons of your mind.  
 I might have even called your name  
 As I ran searching after  
 Something to believe in.

We sympathize with the person, for he (she) keeps running through "the long abandoned ruins" of memory. But the song tells us not to place too much emphasis, for the song tells us of a person pursuing something he (she) is not so sure of getting. He (she) is only a dreamer weaving "nets of wonder" to "chase the bright elusive butterfly of love."

Yet no image in love songs is more persistent or more compelling than the spirit of an elusive young woman. But never has she been so thoroughly, yet so lovingly

dissected as in Bob Dylan's ballad called the "Sad-Eyed Lady of the Lowlands". The song shows the paradoxical quality of Woman. This sad-eyed lady can be so non-chalantly strong, yet so predictably weak; so innocent, yet so corrupted. Dylan gives the following description:

With your mercury mouth in the missionary times,  
 And your eyes like smoke and your prayers like  
 rhymes,  
 And your silver cross, and your voice like chimes  
 Oh, who among them do they think could bury you?...

With your sheets like metal and your belt like  
 lace,  
 And your deck of cards missing the jack and the  
 ace,  
 And your basement clothes and your hollow face,  
 Who among them can think he could outguess you?  
 With your silhouette when the sunlight dims  
 Into your eyes where the moonlight swims,  
 And your match-book songs and your gypsy hymns,  
 Who among them would try to impress you? ...

Now you stand with your thief, you're on his  
 parole  
 With your holy medallion which your finger-tips  
 fold,  
 And your saintlike face and your ghost like soul,  
 Oh, who among them do you think could destroy  
 you? ...

However the repetitive lines in the song say:

Sad-eyed lady of the lowlands,  
 Where the sad-eyed prophet says that no man comes,  
 My warehouse eyes, my Arabian drums,  
 Should I leave them by your gate,  
 Or, sad-eyed lady, should I wait?

Bob Dylan later declares that this song has been written for his wife, Sarah. Yet the source of his inspiration hardly matters, for the sad-eyed lady's personality becomes part and parcel of every man's beloved, which is the theme of the song.

In dealing with the themes in modern songs, we should also be aware of circumstances and events in contemporary society, acting as major influences on song-writers. One of them is the coming in of various faiths and cults, which are not traditional in character. The Beatles as a band come under the influence of this new religiosity. The band comprised of John Lennon, Paul McCartney, George Harrison and Ringo Starr. All four of them were born and brought up in Liverpool. Their song, "I Want To Hold Your Hand" released in 1964 gained international recognition for them. Around this time, they were welcomed in literary circles and with the publication of John Lennon's first book, In His Own Write in 1964, he was known to be the guest of honour at Foyle's literary lunch. The Beatles turned out to be the first rock group to bridge the generation gap, for their lyrics showed a great concern for the very young and the very old. However, the Beatles were the only group who were involved in Hindu philosophy and Eastern mysticism.

This can be seen in songs like "It is "He" (Jai Sri Kṛṣṇa)," "The Inner Light" and many others.

A reflection of change in modern times was given by the sober-minded Cambridge historian, the late Arnold Toynbee. He reckoned man's prompt readiness for the deification of any new Caesar, who can stand up for world unity and peace. Along with an inheritance of various philosophies in the West, perhaps this may be one of the reasons for people in the west, especially the younger generation, to turn more and more towards various cults, for example, the psychic practitioners, occultism, scientology and the Moonies. North American society alone is vastly swept by the new movement called the Transcendental Meditation (T.M.) Movement, led by the Maharishi Mahesh Yogi. The movement had also entered Britain. This fact has been reflected in Beatle George Harrison's lyric, "My Sweet Lord" — a hymn to Lord Krishna. The most prominent attachment to the song is the "Hallelujah — Hare Krishna" descant, which forms the theme of the song. On this particular lyric, George Harrison had clearly expressed in his book, entitled I. Me. Mine., that, basing on Hindu philosophy, he wanted people to repeat over and over again, holy names, for this had saved many a heroin addict's life.<sup>4</sup> The attachment of

the "Hallelujah - Hare Krishna" descant, is a symbol of Harrison's longing for the unification of all religions in the world into one religion. This lyric shows a change in the Western world's acceptance of religious faiths coming from the East. On another of his lyrics entitled, "Awaiting On You All", George Harrison wrote the following lines:

By chanting the names of the Lord and  
you'll be free  
The Lord is awaiting on you all to  
awaken and see

You don't need a passport  
You don't need no visas  
You don't need to designate or  
to emigrate,  
Before you can see Jesus

If you open up your heart,  
You'll see he's right there  
He always was and will be  
He'll relieve you of your cares

George Harrison supplies the following explanation on the lyric:

Awaiting On You All is about Japa Yoga meditation which is repetition on beads (mala) of mantras. A mantra is mystical energy encased in a sound structure, and each mantra contains within its vibrations, a certain power. They are constructed from the fifty letters of the Sanskrit alphabet (Devanagari — language of the Gods) and they turn the mind toward concentration on the supreme releasing spiritual energy in the Chakras of the Body.<sup>5</sup>

Thus, through the lyric's lines mentioned above, we can see George Harrison's attempt to utilize the Hindu method for realizing the presence of God and that this method can also be applied in the Christian religion as well.

In the midst of various changes, the traditional Christian faith still marches on in contemporary society. Both black and white American gospel singers, English and European singers of popular songs, now and then, sing hymns based on traditional tunes and words. For example, the famous hymn called "Amazing Grace" was sung and recorded by various negro gospel singers such as the Staple Singers and Mahalia Jackson as well as a host of other singers. It was also beautifully rendered by the country folk-singer, Glen Campbell, who sang and employed the Scottish bag-pipes for the tune, in commemoration to the Campbell clan in Scotland. The traditional hymn called "Morning Has Broken" owes its inspiration to an ancient Irish hymn entitled, "St. Patrick's Breastplate," which was written during the fifth century and not later than 463 A.D. Cat Stevens sang the traditional "Morning Has Broken", of which the words had been written by Eleanor Farjeon. However, he introduced musical innovations to the tune of the traditional hymn, for his own personal rendering of the hymn.

This can be seen in the staff notations given below, regarding the introduction which precedes the music of the main stanzas of the song: the musical introduction starts in D Major, whereas the music of the main hymn starts in C Major. As the music accompanying the **third** stanza ends, the tune changes again to a higher key in D Major. The final portion of the song is sung again in C **Ma**ajor. (Staff notations in the next page).

MORNING HAS BROKEN

The first system of music is in 3/4 time and G major. The treble clef part features a melody of eighth and quarter notes, while the bass clef part provides a simple accompaniment of quarter notes. The key signature has one sharp (F#).

The second system continues the melody in the treble clef. The bass clef part has a few rests. The key signature remains G major.

The third system shows the continuation of the melody. The bass clef part has a few rests. The key signature remains G major.

The fourth system begins with the tempo marking *a tempo*. The treble clef part has a melody of quarter notes, and the bass clef part has a simple accompaniment of quarter notes. The key signature changes to D major (two sharps).

The fifth system continues the melody in D major. The treble clef part has a melody of quarter notes, and the bass clef part has a simple accompaniment of quarter notes.

The sixth system continues the melody in D major. The treble clef part has a melody of quarter notes, and the bass clef part has a simple accompaniment of quarter notes.

Handwritten musical notation, first system. It consists of two staves: a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff. The treble staff contains several chords and single notes, including a sharp sign (#) in the third measure. The bass staff contains mostly quarter notes and rests.

Handwritten musical notation, second system. It consists of two staves: a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff. The treble staff contains a sequence of chords and notes, with some beamed eighth notes. The bass staff contains quarter notes and rests.

Handwritten musical notation, third system. It consists of two staves: a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff. The treble staff features a melodic line with a slur over the first two measures and a fermata over the last two measures. The bass staff contains quarter notes and rests.

Handwritten musical notation, fourth system. It consists of two staves: a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff. The treble staff contains a melodic line with a slur over the first two measures and a sharp sign (#) above the third measure. The bass staff contains quarter notes and rests.

Handwritten musical notation, fifth system. It consists of two staves: a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff. The treble staff contains a sequence of chords and notes, ending with a double bar line and repeat dots. The bass staff contains quarter notes and rests.

Handwritten musical notation, sixth system. It consists of two staves: a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff. The treble staff contains a melodic line with a slur over the first two measures and several sharp signs (#) throughout. The bass staff contains quarter notes and rests.

Handwritten musical notation for the first system, consisting of a treble staff and a bass staff. The treble staff contains a series of eighth and sixteenth notes, some beamed together, and a few rests. The bass staff contains a few notes, including a dotted half note.

Handwritten musical notation for the second system, including a key signature change to two sharps (F# and C#) and the tempo marking "a tempo". The treble staff shows a sequence of notes, and the bass staff has a few notes with rests.

Handwritten musical notation for the third system, continuing the melodic and harmonic development with various note values and rests in both staves.

Handwritten musical notation for the fourth system, featuring a series of chords and notes in both staves.

Handwritten musical notation for the fifth system, showing further melodic and harmonic progression with various note values and rests.

Handwritten musical notation for the sixth system, concluding the piece with final chords and notes in both staves.

Handwritten musical notation, first system. Treble and bass staves, key signature of two sharps (F# and C#), 4/4 time signature. The number 42 is written in the top right corner. The treble staff contains a melody of quarter notes and eighth notes, while the bass staff provides a simple accompaniment of quarter notes.

Handwritten musical notation, second system. Treble and bass staves, key signature of two sharps. The treble staff features a melody with eighth notes and a slur over a group of notes. The bass staff has a simple accompaniment.

Handwritten musical notation, third system. Treble and bass staves, key signature of two sharps. The treble staff has a melody with eighth notes and a slur. The bass staff has a simple accompaniment.

Handwritten musical notation, fourth system. Treble and bass staves, key signature of two sharps. The treble staff has a melody with eighth notes and a slur. The bass staff has a simple accompaniment. The system ends with a double bar line and a key signature change to two sharps.

Handwritten musical notation, fifth system. Treble and bass staves, key signature of two sharps. The treble staff has a melody of quarter notes. The bass staff has a simple accompaniment of quarter notes.

Handwritten musical notation, sixth system. Treble and bass staves, key signature of two sharps. The treble staff has a melody of quarter notes. The bass staff has a simple accompaniment of quarter notes.

Handwritten musical notation for the first system. The treble staff contains chords and single notes, including a sharp sign. The bass staff contains single notes.

Handwritten musical notation for the second system. The treble staff contains chords and single notes. The bass staff contains single notes.

Handwritten musical notation for the third system. The treble staff contains chords and single notes, including a sharp sign. The bass staff contains single notes.

Handwritten musical notation for the fourth system. The treble staff contains chords and single notes. The bass staff contains single notes.

Handwritten musical notation for the fifth system. The treble staff contains chords and single notes. The bass staff contains single notes.

Handwritten musical notation for the sixth system. The treble staff contains chords and single notes, including a sharp sign. The bass staff contains single notes.

Handwritten musical notation for the first system, measures 1-3. The top staff is in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a 4/4 time signature. The bottom staff is in bass clef. Measure 1 contains a melodic line in the treble staff with notes G4, A4, B4, C5, and a bass line with notes G2, B1, and D2. Measure 2 continues the melodic line with notes D5, E5, F#5, G5 and the bass line with notes E2, G2, and B2. Measure 3 features a melodic line with notes G5, F#5, E5, D5 and a bass line with notes G2, B2, and D3. A double bar line is at the end of measure 3.

Handwritten musical notation for the second system, measures 4-6. The top staff is in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a 4/4 time signature. The bottom staff is in bass clef. Measure 4 contains a melodic line with notes G4, A4, B4, C5, D5 and a bass line with notes G2, B2, and D3. Measure 5 continues the melodic line with notes E5, F#5, G5, A5 and the bass line with notes E2, G2, and B2. Measure 6 features a melodic line with notes G5, F#5, E5, D5 and a bass line with notes G2, B2, and D3. A double bar line is at the end of measure 6.

An empty musical staff consisting of five horizontal lines.

An empty musical staff consisting of five horizontal lines.

An empty musical staff consisting of five horizontal lines.

An empty musical staff consisting of five horizontal lines.

An empty musical staff consisting of five horizontal lines.

An empty musical staff consisting of five horizontal lines.

An empty musical staff consisting of five horizontal lines.

An empty musical staff consisting of five horizontal lines.

In addition to this, various novelties in popular Christian hymns keep appearing. A few examples are "Across The Bridge", the cowboy hymn entitled, "A Man We Ought To Know" and the calypso Christmas carol called "Mary's Boy Child".

In modern songs, things of the past are always fondly recalled. The Beatles were deeply concerned with nostalgia and reminiscence. The song "In My Life" written by John Lennon and Paul McCartney, sublimely expresses a deeply felt recollection of people who are dead and gone and "things that went before". Although the much beloved hometown offers imperceptible changes, nothing can change the love and affection for people and places that have "had their moments" in the past. The persistent wailing and haunting melody in the song entitled "Yesterday" of the Beatles, only helps to emphasize the crying longing for the past, **for the past** always reveals a picture of beauty and serene happiness. So the Beatles sing in a chorus, the following lines:

Yesterday, all my troubles seemed so  
far away,  
Now it looks as tho' they're here  
to stay,  
Oh I believe in yesterday.

Another song on the theme of nostalgia was written by Gene Raskin, entitled "Those Were The Days", where we have the following terminal refrain from this song:

Those were the days my friend,  
 We thought they'd never end,  
 We'd sing and dance forever everyday,  
 We'd live the life we chose,  
 We'd fight and never lose,  
 For we were young and sure to have our way.

In the beginning of this lyric, we have the use of the word "tavern", for the lines run thus:

Once upon a time there was a tavern,  
 There we used to raise a glass or two,  
 Remember how **we loved to wade the hours,**  
 Think of all the great things we would do.

But the song later on says:

Just tonight I searched before the tavern,  
 Nothing seemed the way it used to be,  
 In the glass I saw a strange reflection,  
 Was that lonely woman really me?

Thus "the tavern" symbolizes the contrasting periods of Youth and Age — a favourite theme of many poets like Keats, as in his poem, "The Human Seasons"; and Coleridge's poem "Youth and Age". Moreover, the repetition of the terminal refrain stresses on Youth, the golden period of life, which seems to be the pivot that holds its sway over the entire

span of life. The solace and comfort in the song lies in the fact that although "the busy years went passing by us", time would seem to be still, "For in our hearts the dreams are still the same". This lyric offers solace and comfort to human beings, which is similar to Wordsworth's feelings as found in his poems like "The Daffodils" and "Yarrow Unvisited".

In the popular songs of the 1930s and 1940s, there used to be two images of Woman — the goddess and the girl friend. The former is the angelic vision around whom a person weaves his dreams and who he can blame for his misfortunes, for she becomes very much unobtainably alluring as in John Keats' "La Belle Dame Sans Merci". The latter is the pleasant companion whom a person wants to indulge also in the pleasures of the flesh, only to discover that she strictly upholds chastity. The result is that a person has to settle down for true love and if not, to suffer the agony of a heart break. In between these two images lies an empty chasm of indifference and inhumanity. But as time passes by, these images of Woman become unfit in modern society. Thus woman is no longer an object of worship or of agonizing desire. Modern popular songs picture women in a world of reality and not of dreams. They become real,

human and available. They are down-to-earth persons whom one meets every now and then in one's daily life. The four ladies in the four songs mentioned below, represent her own creator's personal vision, but each earns the right of being a flesh-and-blood personality.

Leonard Cohen's mystical and enchanting song "Suzanne" pictures a half crazy woman in the role of a harlot and teacher. A man will visit her in her dull and stark riverside dwelling. She will feed him "tea and oranges/That come all the way from China", for they were given to her by the sailors. She never lets any man ignore the fact that he is her friend as well as her lover. Yet Suzanne is an intellectual in her own way. Through her, men realize that true love is based not on the physical aspects of love. Through her, men learn that true love abides forever when there is both spiritual and intellectual understanding. So Suzanne becomes the teacher who shows that still:

Among the garbage and the flowers.  
There are heroes in the seaweed,  
There are children in the morning,  
They are leaning out for love,  
And they will lean that way forever.

This will be so, as long as Suzanne is the only possessor of the key to the ultimate truth of true love. She suddenly

becomes a half-avenging angel who scorns blind humanity that never knows to tread the path leading to the ultimate goal of true love.

The song "Brown Eyed Girl" by Van Morrison presents the modern popular "love is togetherness" cartoonish picture. It tells of an innocent friendship between a little boy and a little girl. Both of them have spent their happy days in the lively and entertaining games of childhood, as in "Skipping and a-jumping,/In the misty morning fog" or "Slipping and a—sliding/All along the waterfall". As time passes by, the boy grows into a man, who one day sees that his little companion has turned into a beautiful woman. He immediately falls in love with the same childhood sweetheart, for she reminds him of love, joy, laughter and the past.

"Twentieth Century Fox" written by The Doors, casts the spotlight on a woman who at times, reminds us of Thomas Hardy's Sue Bridehead or G.B. Shaw's Candida. She is a figure symbolizing the imperceptible progress of the twentieth century Woman's Lib. Undoubtedly educated, fashionable and sophisticated, she has no regrets for the past and no fears for the future, never wasting time on superficial formalities, for "She won't waste time/On

elementary talk,/She's a twentieth century fox." Yet she is always bent on enticing the world by her charms and endeavours to grip the world within her power, for the song tells us that "She's a twentieth century fox./Got the world/Locked up/Inside a plastic box;". The song entitled "Where Do You Go To My Lovely?" projects the desperate struggle for liberated womanhood, in whatever way that is possible. Here are a few stanzas taken from the song:

You go to the Embassy parties  
 When you talk in Russian and Greek.  
 All the young men who move in your circle  
 They hang on every word you speak! Yes  
 they do.

Refrain: But where do you go to my lovely  
 When you're alone in your bed?  
 Tell me the thoughts that surround you,  
 I want to look inside your head! Yes I do.

I've seen all your qualifications,  
 You got from the Sorbonne,  
 And the painting you stole from Picasso,  
 Your loveliness goes on and on, yes it does!

Your name is heard in high places,  
 You know the Aga Khan,  
 He sent you a race horse for Christmas  
 And you keep it, just for fun,  
 For a laugh, ha ha ha! ha ha ha!

They say that when you get married,  
 It will be to a millionaire,  
 But they don't realize where you came from  
 And I wonder if they really care or give a damn!

"Motor Cycle Irene" written by Skip Spence, is only another term for a reckless teenager, who is very informal in her dress and appearance. There are the following lines: "Where her tatoos and her chains/Wrap around her body,/Where written are the names/Of prisons she's been in,/And lovers she has seen". Such lines carry the stamp of a person under the influence of the hippie-cult. The sexy-looking Irene spurts out violence and parades her low morals in a permissive society.

Song-writers are not unaware of current events — political, economic and social. They do not hesitate to express in songs, the evil elements running in such events. They see superficial and hypocritical elements running in certain conventional beliefs and do not hesitate to demonstrate against such, in their songs. Besides these, there are many other things which to them, do not symbolize truth at all. They express their dissatisfaction through their songs, which take the form of protest songs. Some of these songs, especially the political ones, have proved to get the most attention, as can be seen in the various compositions of Bob Dylan. To name a few of the titles of such songs of Dylan are "Masters of War", "Talkin' World War III Blues", and the song with an ironical title, "With God

On Our Side". Other songs falling under this category can be discussed in detail in the later sections.

Elements of protest can be seen in songs reflecting life in contemporary society. Both Simon and Garfunkel realize that modern civilization has contributed to man's alienation from his fellowmen, resulting in the inevitable loneliness of Man and as such, folk-rock statements are made as in the songs entitled, "The Sound Of Silence", and "I Am A Rock". In "The Sound Of Silence", the very title itself suggests contrast and contradiction, where the meaning of the word "sound" is pitched against the word "silence". The web of modern life is a complicated one, coupled with the advancement of science and technology. Materialistic gains are stupendous, but the seed of greed and lust is already impregnated in the hearts of men. The lines in the song state: "And the people bowed and prayed/ To the neon God they made,". This in turn, brings in an element of cowardice and hypocrisy. People never dare to face or voice the stark naked truth. The hustle and bustle of modern life, on the contrary, develops in man, quite unconsciously, an apathy towards his own environment. Modern man creates a wall of self-centredness and indifference around him, reaping in turn, the penalty of loneliness. A lonely figure walking on the narrow cobbled streets can

even see "People talking without speaking/People hearing without listening". All in all, this human indifference takes the form of "Silence". As in the words of a modern prophet who writes them on the "subway walls and the tenement halls", so also the song sends out a warning that "Silence like a cancer grows" which shows that lack of communication, indicates people's fear for each other. Thus "silence" indicates a sign that will finally destroy man and his genuine happiness.

The song "I Am A Rock" written by Paul Simon, dwells on a personal feature of human vulnerability. A modern man is trying to disown two primary feelings which are friendship and love. Aristotle once said that one who does not have the need to search anymore for these two feelings, is either a god or a beast. There is also William Cowper's poem "Verses: Supposed to be written by Alexander Selkirk, during his solitary abode in the island of Juan Fernandez", where we have the following stanzas:

O Solitude! where are the charms  
That sages have seen in thy face?  
Better dwell in the midst of alarms,  
Than reign in this horrible place.

Society, Friendship and Love,  
 Divinely bestowed upon man,  
 Oh! had I the wings of a dove,  
 How soon would I taste you again!

But the above observations are often not heeded by modern man who keeps on attempting to reject the divine gift, for he provides his own reasons. In the song-lyric, "I am A Rock", a person cries out:

I have no need for friendship,  
 Friendship causes pain,  
 Its laughter and its loving I disdain.

And against accepting love, a person weeps with the lamenting words that say:

Don't talk of love,  
 But I've heard that word before,  
 It's sleeping in my memory.  
 I won't disturb my slumber,  
 Of feelings that have died,  
 If I've never loved,  
 I never would have cried.

Thus, a person can seek protection elsewhere, maybe in his "books" and in his "poetry", making him wish to be either a rock or an island, where the song says:

For a rock feels no pain  
 And an island never cries.

Songs on human alienation such as these, remind us much of Mathew Arnold's poem, "Switzerland: 'To Marguerite — Continued'". The poignancy of the danger in the human lack of consideration for other fellowmen, can be much felt in the "Ballad of Hollis Brown" written by Bob Dylan. Such songs awake people's conscience and they are much rewarded for bringing in the unity and brotherhood of Man. The writer and critic, Wilfrid Mellers remarks:

Bob Dylan, castigating the social conditions that have produced the plight of suicidal Hollis Brown, invites us to join with him in pointing an accusing finger at the off-stage villains of the piece: "The more vigorously such songs declare lonely alienation, the better they function as rituals of solidarity in an accepted state of mind."<sup>6</sup>

Songs play a vital role in functioning freely as channels that let out expressions of fear, pain and misery. The singer-poets write out protest songs against war, picking out examples from wars that had already taken place. Such songs arouse in people, thoughts that will sort out solutions for propagating peace and not war.

The West and in particular, the United States had already tasted the bitter fruits of war. In the Korean war, an elaborate armistice was signed at Panmunjon on

July 27, 1953, which ended the Korean War. But it had cost the United States 54,246 dead; 103,284 wounded plus billions of dollars.<sup>7</sup> This war had left a scar on the American nation, and the younger generation in general, had unconsciously nurtured a hatred against war.

Then came one of the longest and by all odds, the most unpopular war in the United States history — the Vietnam war. All in all, the struggle had taken the lives of over 56,000 Americans, around 300,000 wounded and nearly 100 billion dollars in expenditures calculated since 1965. The cost to the natives of Vietnam — in deaths, injuries, sufferings, dislocation, devastation of homes, villages, towns and the very land itself — had been staggering and incalculable. A psychic scar of undetermined proportion touched nearly every citizen in America, in one way or another, especially after the military trial of Lt. William L. Calley Jr., on account of the notorious My Lai massacre in 1968. What Kurt Schumacher, writing of the Nazi era, exploring the national conscience, had stated that there is always a hidden beast in every man — das innere Schweinhund — it had crouched balefully into the American administration as well. Eventually, the anti-war mood grew louder and uglier. A nation wide moratorium, on behalf

of peace, had received mass observances in hundreds of cities and campuses during the autumn of 1969, culminating in drawing over 250,000 quiet anti-war demonstrators to Washington in mid-November of the same year. News of the invasion of Cambodia in the spring of 1970, had produced a virtual scream of anguish from the nation's colleges and universities and from every walk of life. During President Nixon's tenure, public reaction verged on hysteria.<sup>8</sup>

Thus it is no wonder, when in the song "Portland Town" written by Joan Baez, she sang, backed up by a wailing folk melody, the words that say:

Got married in Portland town,  
Had children, one, two, three,  
Yes I did, Yes I did, Yes I did.

They sent them away to war,  
Aint got no kid, no more,  
No I aint, no I aint, no I aint.

At the back of the record album, entitled "Come From The Shadows", Joan Baez writes:

Some Vietnam veterans have told me what they did over there when they were animals. They have been giving testimony about it to the public, to juries, to judges. Some of the juries cry, and so do some of the judges.

One Ex-Marine has a face like a Puerto Rican angel and a body count of 390. That means he and his unit killed 390 people in a variety of hideous ways, and the angel got to count the dead bodies for the record.

And now he and a lot of his buddies are trying to make up for what we made them do. We paid the taxes that bought the war that hired the men and dropped the fire that burned the huts and killed the people who then were the bodies that Scot counted. It's a rotten thing to brainwash someone into doing the dirty part of the killing while we stay at home. It's a rotten thing to pretend the war is coming to an end when it's only taken to the air. And in 1972 if you don't fight against a rotten thing you become a part of it.

What I'm asking you to do is to take some risks. Stop paying war taxes, refuse the armed forces, organize against the air war, support the strikes and boycotts of farmers, workers and poor people, analyze the flag salute, give up the nation state, share your money, refuse to hate, be willing to work.... in short, sisters and brothers, arm up with love and come from the shadows.9

In the album, mentioned above, there are many songs against war, social evils and injustice. Among them is a tender and sentimental lyric entitled, "All the Weary Mothers of the Earth" (People's Union), expressing the sincere hopes and wishes of a singer-poet for the coming in of world peace, where the concluding stanza says:

And when the soldiers burn their uniforms  
 in every land,  
 And the fox-holes at the border will be  
 left unmanned —  
 General, when you come for the review  
 The troops will have forgotten you,  
 And the men and women of the earth shall  
 rest.

Undeterred, Joan Baez wrote several protest songs against war, becoming the most controversial female performer in the 1960s and 1970s. Among them, is a mournful ballad entitled "Bangladesh". In this song, Joan Baez never deviated from history. In the book, The Saga Of Bangladesh, Jamma Das Akhtar wrote:

It was a night of terror, butchery and bloodshed. History has never before recorded such a terrible slaughter.

It is said that the army started moving into Dacca at 10 P.M. on March 25. At 11 P.M. it began an attack on the Rajabagh Armed Police Headquarters. Another column attacked the East Pakistan Rifles Headquarters at Pilkhana and a third the University Campus. The 10 army employed tanks, mounted heavy guns and recoilless rifles to break down entrances and walls. Policemen and soldiers were sleeping at that time. Little did they know that the West Pakistani army would launch such a surprise attack. 10

This is the event during the evolution of Bangladesh in 1971. On this, when history repeats itself even on cruelty and inhumanity, Joan Baez's moving lines ring out;

The story of Bangladesh  
 Is an ancient one again made fresh  
 By blind men who carry out commands  
 Which flow out of the laws upon which  
 nations stand  
 Which say to sacrifice a people for  
 a land.

Around a million people were sacrificed for the formation of Bangladesh. Cholera had gone rampant and people, young and old, were known to be continuously dying. The lines in the song state:

Once again we stand aside  
 And watch the families crucified  
 See a teenage mother's vacant eyes  
 As she watches her feeble baby tries  
 To fight the monsoon rains  
 And the cholera flies.

Again in The Saga of Bangladesh, we find the following lines:

Another strong military column with tanks surrounded the university campus. Mr. Colin Smith of The Observer, London, reveals that the killing began at the university at about one in the morning....

Suddenly searchlights were played on the windows, dazzling the students so that they had to quit and turn away, then came the Punjabi and Baluchi soldiers with their Chinese A.K. 47 automatic rifles; smashing the window glasses with their butts and spraying the dormitories with fire....

The survivors were finished off with the bayonet.19

The song of Joan Baez says:

And the students at the University  
Asleep at night quite peacefully  
The soldiers came and shot them in  
their beds  
And terror took the dorm, awakening  
shrieks of dread  
And the silent frozen forms and pillows  
drenched in red.

Thus, the song says that when the sun "sets in the west", dies "a million people of Bangladesh". Although the song of "Bangladesh" appears to be a simple narration of the savagery of modern war, it contains an anti-war slogan. It opens up people's eyes to look at the untold miseries and griefs, a war can bring about.

Robert Allen Zimmerman, who later happened to take the name of Bob Dylan, in his apparent admiration of the poet Dylan Thomas, has written lyrics that become powerful protest songs against war and social evils. His early "message" songs blend passion, conscience and history to awaken a sleeping generation. One of his lyrics, entitled "Blowin' in the Wind" has turned out to become an anthem for all the protest movements in America, especially the political ones. The song contrasts freedom and slavery, war and peace, and points out the human lack of foresight, wisdom and tolerance — qualities which are much needed in

the world today. Dylan like Shelley, places faith and hope in "the wind" which will bring in a revolutionary change, for the betterment of mankind. Thus, only the first two stanzas of the song, can be given as illustrations:

How many roads must a man walk down  
 Before you call him a man?  
 Yes, 'n' how many seas must a white  
 dove sail  
 Before she sleeps in the sand?  
 Yes, 'n' how many times must the cannon  
 balls fly  
 Before they're forever banned?  
 The answer, my friend, is blowin' in  
 the wind,  
 The answer is blowin' in the wind.

How many times must a man look up  
 Before he can see the sky?  
 Yes, 'n' how many ears must one man have  
 Before he can hear people cry?  
 Yes, 'n' how many deaths will it take  
 till he knows  
 That too many people have died?  
 The answer, my friend, is blowin' in  
 the wind,  
 The answer is blowin' in the wind.

On this song by Bob Dylan, we have the following comment in the book entitled Contemporary Poets, edited by James Vinson:

His words and his music are a part of world culture unlike any other human being's have ever been. We weep for the strange obliterations of sensibility necessary before "Blowin' in the Wind" is first orchestrated without voice and

second played on Muzac systems in airports from Duluth to Johannesburg. Here in the U.S., one cannot pull the words from the music and an assessment of the "poetry" is that it is song, as it was intended to be. 12

One of Dylan's finest compositions, which acts as a poetic revelation on the evils and uncertainties of this nuclear age, is the rambling ballad with the title called "A Hard Rain's A-Gonna Fall". Dylan brings in the familiar picture of the "blue-eyed son" sitting on his father's lap. The father represents the present older generation and the son typifies the young generation. The innocent son is in no way a match to the father who is a man of experience, who has travelled through the six continents which Dylan calls in the song, as the "six crooked highways", braving dangers and difficulties. The father perceives that controversies, suppression and injustice arise in the world today. In one section, the father says:

Heard one person starve, I heard many  
people laughin',  
Heard the song of a poet who died in  
the gutter,  
Heard the sound of a clown who cried  
in the alley,

In another section of the song, he says:

I met a young child beside a dead pony,  
 I met a white man who walked a black  
 dog, ....  
 I met one man who was wounded in love,  
 I met another man who was wounded with  
 hatred.

Circumstances indicate the suppressed fears of the nuclear war and as conditions seem to worsen, Bob Dylan sounds prophetic when he says:

I heard the sound of a thunder, it  
 roared out a warnin',  
 Heard the roar of a wave that could  
 drown the whole world,

And when the impending nuclear war will finally happen, Dylan unrolls stunning apocalyptic visions in the following lines that say:

I saw a newborn baby with will wild  
 wolves all around it,  
 I saw a highway with diamonds with  
 nobody on it,  
 I saw a black branch with blood that  
 kept drippin',  
 I saw a room full of men with their  
 hammers a-bleedin',  
 I saw a white ladder all covered  
 with water,  
 I saw ten thousand talkers whose tongues  
 were all broken,  
 I saw guns and sharp swords in the hands  
 of young children,

The above lines make Dylan take the side of the down-trodden and the under-developed, when through the father's lips, he declares:

I'll walk to the depths of the deepest  
 black forest,  
 Where the people are many and their  
 hands are all empty,  
 Where the pellets of poison are flooding  
 their waters,  
 Where the home in the valley meets the  
 damp dirty prison,  
 Where the executioner's face is always  
 well hidden,  
 Where hunger is ugly, where souls are  
 forgotten,  
 Where black is the colour, where none  
 is the number,  
 And I'll tell it and think it and speak  
 it and breathe it,  
 And reflect it from the mountain so all  
 souls can see it  
 Then I'll stand on the ocean until I  
 start sinkin',  
 But I'll know my song well before I  
 start singin',

But there lies the prophet's lament that rings out in every verse:

And it's a hard, and it's a hard, it's  
 a hard, it's a hard,  
 And it's a hard rain's a-gonna fall.

As to the conditions of the unborn generations, Dylan leaves it to the listeners' imagination. More impressive, is the musical melody accompanying this song-

lyric, bringing in the form of chanting out the lines of words, but ever constantly laying emphasis on the weeping and wailing notes in the internal refrain.

Even the Beatles who were dubbed as agitators, preached about peace and not war. The television documentary authorities in Britain, had discovered that even their gentle love song called "We Can Work It Out" contained an implicit anti-war message as well ("Life is much too short for fussin' and fightin' my friend").

John Lennon had offered a solution to the problem of war, as in his song entitled "Give Peace A Chance". His very personal life had experienced an acute loneliness and if there is a common theme in his solo songs, it is that universal peace and love and understanding can help the human race to survive and conquer pain and misery. Differences should vanish, whether political, secular or religious. Thus the lines of the famous song "Imagine" state:

Imagine there's no country  
It isn't hard to do  
Nothing to kill or die for  
And no religion too  
Imagine all the people  
Living life in peace

Refrain: Oh! You may say I'm a dreamer  
But I'm not the only one  
I hope some day you'll join us  
And the world will be one.

But an unhappy irony, a few years later, was the fact that when Lennon had at last found an inner contentment, his life was taken away by an assassin. This sad event took place in New York on the eleventh of December, 1980 at 10.50 P.M.

Drug-taking is not altogether a new social phenomenon, otherwise Thomas De Quincey would not have given his book such a glaring title as "The Confessions Of An English Opium Eater". As certain poets of the past, modern singer-poets, if not all, also take refuge in drugs, both as a fashionable release and in a desperate and somewhat rebellious attempt at rediscovering their own identities in the complicated web of a frustrated, contemporary society. The Beatles were known to have taken drugs of various kinds and for various purposes: These drugs were uppers, downers, purple hearts, black bombers, yellow submarines and marijuana. The Beatles' drug-experiences had been reflected in their songs as found for example, in the "Sergeant Pepper" album. The song lyric entitled "Lucy In The Sky With Diamonds" provides a psychedelic landscape, where "Suddenly

someone is there at the turnstile/The girl with kaleidoscope eyes". "Strawberry Fields Forever" records a drug-experience where "Nothing is real". So also in the Beatles' album "Let It Be", there is the song-lyric, "Across The Universe", which has the hall-mark of a psychedelic experience. The following excerpt from the lyric states:

Words are flowing out like endless rain  
Into a paper cup.

Not only the Beatles, but other song writers as well, have focussed their lyrics on drug-experiences. Steppenwolf's "Magic Carpet Ride" and "Faster Than The Speed Of Life" refer to the use of methadrine. Then we have Amboy Dukes' "Journey To The Centre Of The Mind". The song-lyric entitled "Connection" refers to a drug peddler. "She's A Rainbow" speaks of rainbows which are actually nembutals or seconals or depressants.<sup>13</sup>

Flitting through the 1950s onwards, one finds that the starting of the second half of the twentieth century is openly and rebelliously shaking off the Victorian rigidities on sex and its supposed boundaries. But there has also been an attempt on the part of song-writers to clothe songs on liberated sex in the garb of decency. Thus, in such songs, we get only hints and suggestions of sex. These

song-lyrics escape the censor, and are being transmitted through the radio and the television, which are means of conveyance to the masses at large. In Willie Dixon's "Back Door Man", we get the repetitive cunning-fox sly suggestion:

I am a back door man  
 I am a back door man  
 Well, the men don't know  
 But the little girls understand.

The Beatles' early message:

Well, she was just seventeen  
 You know what I mean

is what Blake Morrison has commented in the Times Literary Supplement (May 15, 1981) as "a nudge in the ribs and a knowing leer".<sup>14</sup> Then the Beatles' number one single "Please Please Me", on careful scrutiny, provides strong suggestion of heavy petting, supported by the falsetto resolution and the escalating cries of "Come on". Thus, we get a glimpse of a frustrated male, pleading to his beloved to do back to him, what he is doing to her.

In the 1950s, Elvis Presley sang the song "Be-Bop-A-Lula" written by Gene Vincent and Sheriff Tex Davis. Presley's rendition of the song revealed that dancing and

sexuality are crucially connected, for the song strongly suggests that if you cannot have energetic potency, you also cannot love.

Prominent problems of the century are complicated enough to even have surfaced themselves in popular lyrics, such as the racial problem. Both black and white lyricists share their views on this problem. The Beatles sang in a group the song with the suggestive title "Get Back (to where you once belonged)", and the song appeared to have **caused** strong racial tension as at the time when Enoch Powell was in power in Britain. On the other side of the ocean, the black American lyricist, James Brown from Georgia was being dragged head long into the political arena, where he was caught up in the political tangle. On one side, he was personally thanked by President Lyndon Johnson for helping to calm racial tensions and on another side, he was accused of making dramatic T.V. appearances immediately after the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. He however, as if paying back in the same coin, composed the song-lyric with the **defiant** title: "Say It Loud — I'm Black And I'm Proud" (1968). In the book entitled Black Music, this particular song has been described as "The spontaneous anthem born of the street riots that summer".<sup>15</sup>

However, critics have noted that this song-lyric proved to be one of the early affirmative statements depicting the new black American consciousness and awareness of one's own identity. Unfortunately, the Ku Klux Klan blood that runs in the veins of such early lyrics as "Nigger, Be A Nigger" and "Run, Nigger Run" have helped only to a boomerang of angry refutations from modern black lyricists, such as Sly Stone's lyric with a defiant title, "Don't Call Me Nigger, Whitey!"

However, sincere attempts for solution to the racial problem appear every now and then. The combined labour song and the negro-spiritual, culminating in the new American protest anthem with the title, "We Shall Overcome", has come to be identified with Joan Baez, in which politics became the major concern of her life during the early 1960s. She has sung the song at the much publicized civil rights marches in the United States, culminating in the 1963 Freedom March to Washington. Yet, Bob Dylan offers more mature political statements, particularly about the treatment of negroes in America, as found in one of his songs, called "The Lonesome Death of Hattie Carroll", and the utilization of both black and white communities for self-gains by beaurocrats, as found in his other song-lyric called "Only A Pawn In Their Game".

Themes in modern popular songs can be more appreciated when one realizes that the world is rushing at a dizzy rate, pushing man towards a destiny that is overcast with final questions — questions that are not only concerned with past wars, but also the nuclear arms race, ravages to the natural environment, discriminations of race and sex, political protests of every kind, the advancement of science and technology and the coming of **the space** age. These songs make one convinced of the collapse of older values, leaving the modern world in a strange mixture of order and anarchy, which drives man to live perilously at the point where prophecy and nostalgia meet.

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CHAPTER -III

THE POETRY IN THE SELECTED SONGS

This chapter deals with modern song-writers' manipulation of language and the use in their lyrics, of elements such as diction, similes, metaphors, tone, sound and sense, rhyme, rhythm, symbolism, imagery and even the use of clichés; in short, those elements which are vital for a truly good lyric and which constitute the force of modern poetry — that particular force, which Dr. Johnson describes as that "which calls new powers into being, which embodies sentiment, and animates matter."

Since this chapter deals with songs which are musical lyrics, we should also be conscious of the music that accompanies the words. It is rather even better to accept the attitude of the Greeks to musical lyrics, that musical tune goes in harmony with the words, so that both become practically synonymous. Shakespeare had echoed this thought in his drama, "Henry VIII", when he said:

Orpheus, with his lute made trees,  
And the mountain tops that freeze,  
Bow themselves when he did sing:  
To his music plants and flowers  
Even sprung; as sun and showers  
There had made a lasting spring.

Keeping this in mind, we can understand that the language in modern lyrics is therefore adapted to suit the music, whether it is folk, folk-rock, soul, calypso,

light and heavy rock, or even reggae and classical rock. In addition to this, critics have pointed out that poetry feeds and lives on its contemporary language. Thus, the language of modern songs is largely that of the American beat movement of the 1950s. Song-writers are influenced by poets like Allen Ginsberg, where modern songs, every now and then, mentioned his name; Jack Kerouac, who is known as the "eulogist of spontaneity"; and the modern writer, William Burroughs, who never forgot the lesson he learned from his friend, Brion Gysin, a modern painter, who told Burroughs:

I come to free the words  
 The words are free to come  
 I come freely to the words  
 The free come to the words.<sup>1</sup>

Thus, even the vocabulary has a significance of its own, not quite traditional: for example, "a guy" means a man, "a chick" means a girl, "a straight" means a supporter of the establishment, etc. (This word has many, if not all, the connotations of the outmoded "square"); "to freak out" connotes an exaggerated behaviour under the influence of music, drugs or any other extreme stimuli; the word "man" is another fashionable mode of address. In Britain, the replacement of "yeah" for "yes" was

enthusiastically adopted by the younger upper classes, when in conversation with their social inferiors, in the belief of doing away with class-consciousness.<sup>2</sup> These and many others, including a number of sexual metaphors, have come up as a form of current expressions. Thus, in understanding the language and diction, that mirror contemporary society, we can proceed to trace the poetical elements present in certain modern songs.

Richard Goldstein, has the following comment on Bob Dylan, among song-writers of modern popular lyrics:

Probably no one has had a greater influence on the texture of modern rock than Bob Dylan. He demolished the narrow line and lean stanzas that once dominated pop, replacing them with a more flexible organic structure. His rambling ballads killed the three-minute song and helped establish the album as a basic tool for communication in rock.<sup>3</sup>

Bob Dylan was educated in the University of Minnesota, Minneapolis; he is now, one of the most influential lyricists in the second half of the century. Sharp lances of criticism against his works, only psychologically submerge and agree to accept the wide acknowledgement that Bob Dylan is the voice, the conscience and "the spokesman of his generation".

His songs are the consciousness of the modern generation -- the generation of the Cold War and atomic genocide. His songs reveal a unique perception which crystallizes in vivid images. He describes the passing modern science; he captures the modern world tragedies and lunacies with a devastating razor-edge surrealism that stripped the flesh of hypocrisy from the bones of the grim skeleton of truth.<sup>4</sup> As an example, we have the following lines from his song, entitled "It's Alright, Ma (I'm Only Bleeding)":

Disillusioned words like bullets bark  
 AS human gods aim for their mark  
 Made everything from toy guns that spark  
 To flesh-colored Christs that glow in the dark  
 It's easy to see without looking too far  
 That not much  
 Is really sacred.

While preachers preach of evil fates  
 Teachers teach that knowledge waits

Can lead to hundred-dollar plates  
 Goodness hides behind its gates  
 But even the president of the United States  
 Sometimes must have  
 To stand naked.

In another Dylan-song entitled, "The Times They Are A-Changin'", we have the following lines:

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'.

Can we call his lyrics, poetry? That is our point of discussion. We shall consider some of Dylan's writings and examine the structures and language.

Bob Dylan has manipulated the language of his lyrics to convey the emotions of his soul when he looks at the picture of his generation, his society and his world. He sings of Man in the modern predicament. He brings out the social and political evils, the cares and anxieties of modern man, as in his song sarcastically entitled "Long Ago, Far Away".<sup>5</sup> In reading or hearing the song, we find that it is an ironic view of modern society, the problems of war and hatred and the thoughtless killing of men and women. Bob Dylan is telling us that to preach of peace and brotherhood in this hatred-torn world, involves a great sacrifice, even the cost of losing one's life. Dylan then gives concrete examples of this truth. The instances given by Dylan are: Christ's death on the cross; Abraham Lincoln's assassination and the legend about the gladiators who fought to death in the Roman times, as the crowd

cheered with excitement. He then speaks of modern warfares where men are slaughtered like sheep and dogs; the "lynchin'" of a man's son, resulting in the old father dying of a broken heart. Dylan wonders whether these things do not happen nowadays.

The tone of the lyric is deeply ironical and satiric. Dylan, through a hyperbole, is telling us that in the past, people hated each other, killed each other, not sparing even those who preached the gospel of peace and brotherhood. But in stating so, Dylan indirectly reminds us that in our time also, these things happen, for they are not the long ago and far away incidents of life. Today, Man still hates his fellow men. There is still inequality rampant on the street, where humanity is a mixture of the very rich and the very poor. The climax of the satiric note is arrived at, in the last line of the song where Dylan concludes the song with a question:

Things like that don't happen  
No more, nowadays, do they?

Bob Dylan uses the conventional stanza form to convey his ideas in the poem. The ideas flow from the very first two lines till the close of the song. Dylan starts with a statement: "To preach of peace and brotherhood,/Oh, what

might be the cost!". This statement is then developed in the different stanzas of the song, by means of different historical examples of what happened to people who had spread the gospel of peace and brotherhood. One historical example can be found right in the very first stanza, telling us of Christ of the Hebraic world who, for his divine mission of peace and love, was nailed to the cross and died a terrible death. The second stanza tells us of how Abraham Lincoln paid with his own life, when he was shot dead for his heroic struggle to abolish slavery in America. Then the sixth stanza reveals that in the Roman times, there was much glee and excitement among the public, who could see gladiators covered with blood, fighting in the arena. But in between, are stanzas interwoven in a tapestry of ancient and modern events, indicating the incessant cruelty and selfishness in humanity running through the centuries. Social evils and inequality still exist in today's society. The following lines of the song also reveal the use of parallelism and the juxtaposition of class difference:

One man had much money,  
One man had not enough to eat,  
One man he lived just like a King,  
The other man begged on the street.

So also as in the past, there is still war and killing today, as the song says:

One man died of a knife so sharp,  
 One man died from the bullet of a gun,  
 One man died of a broken heart  
 To see the lynchin' of his son.

Bob Dylan departs from the style of song-composition of the past decades. Indeed, if we examine the song, we find the second stanza consists of eight lines, and the rest of the stanzas consist of seven lines. His songs differ from popular songs of past decades, for the majority of the old songs consist of the regular four-line stanzas.

Geoffrey N. Leech in his book, A Linguistic Guide to English Poetry, writes on the language of modern poetry in the following words:

To revitalise the language of poetry, the poet draws directly on the resources of the contemporary language. ... The effect of the return to ordinary language in the present century has been far-reaching. The feeling that there are intrinsically poetical and unpoetical sectors of the language has been repudiated. Much of the old paraphernalia of poetic expression (e.g. archaism) has been overthrown, and poets have eagerly delved into the most unlikely resources, such as the terminology of aeronautics and finance. Pound, Eliot, and the poets of the thirties showed their determination to be rid of orthodox restrictions of choice by making use of flagrantly

prosy and vulgar aspects of everyday usage. In the new poetry of the fifties, this flamboyance has given way to a more sober and easy acceptance of colloquialism, even slang, as a fit medium of poetic expression.<sup>6</sup>

The poetry of Bob Dylan too, is a poetry conveyed in the language of the everyday life, of slangs and colloquialism. For example, in the first stanza of the song "Long Ago, Far Away", we find Dylan repeating the pronoun in the third line: "A man he did it long ago" to sound colloquial. The last two lines of the stanza reveal a colloquial tone in: "These things don't happen/No more nowadays".

The second stanza shows other poetic inversions of the language. The lines:

The chains of slaves  
They dragged the ground  
With heads and hearts hung low

show how Dylan has inverted the construction of the sentence to strike a spark of newness as well as rhythm in the sentence structure. Thus, the sentence would have run: "The slaves dragged their chains on the ground..." which he, however puts it in another way, by means of repeating the pronoun "They"; so we have "The chains of slaves/They

dragged the ground". Dylan is noted for his fondness of repeating the pronoun in his other lyrics as well. For instance, in his "Ballad in Plain D",<sup>7</sup> he wrote in the very first line: "I once loved a girl, her skin it was bronze", and in "With God On Our Side", he wrote:

Oh my name it is nothin'  
My age it means less.<sup>8</sup>

In the song, "Long Ago, Far Away", the alliteration in the third line of the second stanza quoted above, too, should be noted: heads, hearts, hung.

Within the same stanza of "Long Ago, Far Away", we find that another feature of Dylan's language is his twist of the pronoun, by placing it in such a position that it creates an image which catches the reader's or listener's attention. The lines,

The chains of slaves  
They dragged the ground  
With heads and hearts hung low

show that the pronoun "They" would appear to apparently stand for the noun "chains", yet we do get the sense that the sentence conveys the meaning that the slaves dragged

the chains. Again, the preposition "on" or "along" has been left out, so that the meaning apparently would be that the "chains dragged the ground". In fact, Dylan has very well compressed the words and meanings, so that the lines carry two images: that of the slaves dragging the chains along the ground; and another implicit meaning would be suggested, that there were chains of slaves walking along, and are being fettered and dragged along the ground by their masters who expected the maximum work out of them. Geoffrey N. Leech calls such a technique, Grammatical Deviation,<sup>9</sup> and he gives the examples from Hopkins:

Thou hast bound bones and veins in me,  
fastened me flesh.

and from W.H. Auden:

There head falls forward, fatigue at evening,  
And dreams of home,  
Waving from window, spread of welcome,  
Kissing of wife under single sheet;  
But waking sees. ...

Vivid images on the evils of war occur in the third stanza, when guns fired wildly by soldiers, would seem to make the whole world submerge in bloodshed and death. Margaret Schlauch has discussed another technique in modern poetry in her book, Modern English and American Poetry,

where she describes it as "Normal Order of major sentence parts". She gives examples of many modern poets, for instance:

The guns spell money's ultimate reason

(Stephen Spender)

Though the world has slipped and gone  
Sounds my loud discordant cry.

(Edith Sitwell)<sup>10</sup>

This same technique is also to be seen in the third stanza of Dylan's song, "Long Ago, Far Away". Thus a section of the lines run as follows:

The war guns they went off wild,  
The whole world bled its blood.  
Men's bodies floated on the edge  
Of oceans made of mud.

This section also reminds us of T.S. Eliot's technique in the lines of his poem "Sweeney Among The Nightingales."

The nightingales are singin near  
The Convent of the Sacred Heart,

And sang within the bloody wood  
When Agamemnon cried aloud,  
And let their liquid siftings fall  
To stain the stiff dishonoured shroud.<sup>11</sup>

Differences in social and economic status occur in the fourth stanza, whereas in the fifth stanza, we clearly

see the modern weapons of death: bayonets ("a knife so sharp"); "the bullet of a gun" and "lynchin'". The shocking insight into Man's delight on seeing death is clearly brought out in the sixth stanza, where

People cheered with bloodshot grins  
As eyes and minds went blind.

However, the vein of the satiric note, lies in the repetition of the line "Long ago, far away" indicating that past evils still exist today. All the events are wound up in the climax of sarcasm that comes in the last stanza, where Dylan simply asks "Things like that don't happen/No more, nowadays, do they?"

Bob Dylan also utilizes the technique of repetition in his song. He repeats the last three lines of the first stanza, in every other stanza:

Long ago, far away  
Things like that don't happen  
No more, nowadays.

Since this composition is intended to be sung, X.J. Kennedy in his book, An Introduction to Poetry, calls this technique "an internal refrain" which he describes as

one that appears within a stanza, generally  
in a position that stays fixed throughout  
a poem.<sup>12</sup>

He gives examples, of an anonymous eighteenth century Irish ballad entitled "Johny, I Hardly Knew Ye", where there is a fixed line — "Och, Johny, I hardly knew ye!" — repeated in every stanza. The other example is W.B. Yeats's "Long Legged Fly", where there are the following fixed lines attached to every stanza:

Like a long-legged fly upon the stream  
His mind moves upon silence.

However, Yeats slightly changed the internal refrain in the second stanza, by substituting the word "His" with "Her". Dylan also slightly changes the internal refrain in the last stanza. (Only two ending words — "do they?"). X.J. Kennedy calls this "an incremental refrain" when he says that:

A refrain whose words change slightly  
with each recurrence is called an  
incremental refrain.<sup>13</sup>

By twisting this repetition in the last stanza, Dylan pitches the incremental refrain against the internal refrain, to drive home the satiric image of our modern age, which is the theme of the song.

Edward W. Roseinheim, Jr. in his book, What Happens In Literature has very succinctly defined poetry as follows:

When we become aware of rhyme, we become aware as well of the fact that language has somehow been deliberately arranged for the benefit of those who will listen to it. Here we are not confronted with the casual flow of words by which we are asked questions or given information; instead, language has been manipulated and shaped to construct something permanent. Something has been made for our pleasure or our edification, and, in place of a mere act of communication, we have been given a rhyme (sic), an arrangement of words which cannot be altered and still affect us in precisely the same way, which stands ready always to be read or recited or listened to in the form which its author gave it. The very use of the word "poetry" ... implies our ability to distinguish between language as it is used merely to make sense and language arranged into a permanent, created whole.<sup>14</sup>

Bob Dylan has arranged his lyrics in rhymes. Yet, he does not follow strictly the conventional meters and rhymes, for the rhyme-scheme in the song "Long Ago, Far Away" is intentionally haphazard — in order to create a greater impact. In this song the rhyme-scheme of the stanzas is as follows: (1) abcbded; (2) abcdefe; (3) abcbded; (4) abcbded; (5) abacded; (6) abcbded; (7) abcbded.

It is true that the existence of "rhyme" in songs, does help to bring poetry closer to music. In Dylan's song, mentioned above, the general form is alternate rhyme. We can also find that the verse form is free, though smooth and flowing, turning it into "a permanent, created whole".

Richard Goldstein has rightly observed that:

It is impossible to speak of poetry in rock without mentioning the pervasive influence of rhythm. Until recently, rigid conventions kept pop lyrics within a metrical framework that poets have discarded long ago. Even the most adventurous lyricists wrote even stanzas, made frequent use of rhyme, and kept that mighty beat churning through their words. Today these rules are regarded as more of a legacy than an ultimatum.<sup>15</sup>

In the song "Long Ago, Far Away", Bob Dylan utilizes a particular rhythm which is expressive of the theme of the song. The meter in the stanzas is mostly Iambic:

To préach/ǒf peáce/ǎnd bróth/ǎrhóod/  
 Ōh, wát/míght bé/the cóst!/  
 A mán/hé díd/íť lóng/ǎgó/  
 And they hung/hím ón/ǎ cróss./

with the last line in the anapaest and Iambus.

And with a shift in the repeated lines:

Long ágo,/fár áway;  
 Thése thínghs/dón't háppén  
 Nó móre/nówadays.

consisting of dactyls and spondee and trochees.

In total, the song gives a satiric picture of man. Man's indulgence in hatred, self-centredness, wars and bloodshed, makes Dylan work on this experience throughout the song and the historical examples enable him to convey the full sense of an innate viciousness and evil of man. It is this capacity in Bob Dylan that Richard Goldstein points to when he says:

to claim that he (Bob Dylan) is the major poet of his generation is not to relegate written verse to the graveyard of cultural irrelevance. Most young people are aware of linear poetry. But they groove on Dylan, not because the rock-medium has overwhelmed his message for this generation, but because, in Dylan's songs, the two reinforce each other.<sup>16</sup>

Another protest song against war, entitled "Masters of War",<sup>17</sup> Bob Dylan directs his fiery anger against the post 1950 beaurocrats who sit behind desks, legislating laws and orders, knowing little of the reality of bloodshed and crimes committed in the name of War. In this song, Dylan speaks of the 'guns', the 'death planes', the 'big bombs', built by people 'that hide behind walls', 'that hide behind desks'. In the second stanza, Dylan becomes cynical:

You that never done nothin'  
 But build to destroy  
 You play with my world  
 Like it's your little toy  
 You put a gun in my hand  
 And you hide from my eyes  
 And you turn and run farther  
 When the fast bullets fly

Then the allusion to the Judas-figure is included in a more cynical frame:

Like Judas of old  
 You lie and deceive  
 A world war can be won  
 You want me to believe  
 But I see through your eyes  
 And I see through your brain  
 Like I see through the water  
 That runs down my drain

Dylan charges the 'masters of war', for being **guilty** of bringin even psychological fears in parents to bear babies, for in the fifth stanza, he says:

You've thrown the worst fear  
 That can never be hurled  
 Fear to bring children  
 Into the world  
 For threatening my baby  
 Unborn and unnamed  
 You **ain't** worth the blood  
 That runs in your veins

Dylan even damns to hell, the souls of the 'masters of war', for in the seventh stanza, he says:

Let me ask you one question  
 Is your money that good  
 Will it buy you forgiveness  
 Do you think that it could  
 I think you will find  
 When your death takes its toll  
 All the money you made  
 Will never buy back your soul

If we analyze the syntax of the sentences in the first stanza, for example, we find that the first sentence starts with an imperative mood: "Come you masters of war", which suggests a tone of challenge or command to the masters of war to come and pay attention to his words. The sentence then continues with clauses that tell us about the masters of war, so to say, illustrating to the readers why the poet challenges or orders the 'masters of war'. Thus the phrases that follow are phrases that tell us more about the 'masters of war'. The lines of phrases are:

You that build all the guns  
 You that build the death planes  
 You that build the big bombs  
 You that hide behind walls  
 You that hide behind desks

The sentence, thus continues again after these five phrases, to link the idea stated in the first line: "Come you masters of war" with the lines, "I just want you to know/ I can see through your masks".

It can also be noted that Bob Dylan uses symbols in order to convey certain ideas contained in the song. In reading the line, "You that build all the guns", it indirectly suggests that the 'masters of war' are not people who literally build the guns, nor can guns be built, but manufactured or made. Nor are there masters of war, for there can be masters of ceremony, masters of the house, etc. But there cannot be 'masters of war'. Thus it follows that Dylan is hinting that these particular 'masters' are designers and instigators of war, by branding them as people 'that build all the guns'. Indeed, Dylan wants to convey the idea that these people bear the responsibility of major bloodsheds in the world. The same observation can also be applied in the next phrase, 'You that build the death planes'. However, there is a peculiar combination of nouns in this phrase. The planes are called "death planes" where the noun "death" stands like an adjective, which as a rule is not an adjective at all, for the adjective of "death" is "dead". Yet Dylan suggests a deeper meaning in the phrases: the masters of war are those of the modern age and are responsible for the loss of many innocent lives, which is brought about by war jets and deadly missiles, killing an unaccountable number of people, in the recent wars in different parts of the world. The line, "You that

build the big bombs", will at once make a modern reader recall to his mind the bombings and machine-gunnings that had taken place during the Second World War, as well as the horrible and tragic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Then we have the next two lines:

You that hide behind walls  
 You that hide behind desks

In searching the above lines for symbolic meanings, let us examine the word 'hide'. The meaning of this word is: "put or keep oneself out of sight", "prevent from being seen, known, found", "conceal oneself". The different shades of meaning carry the idea that the person who hides is a person who does not want to be seen, known or found out; who conceals himself from others. Then the question arises: why do these persons hide themselves? The lines we have seen above, carry the answer, for they are the ones who are responsible for shedding innocent blood, with 'guns', 'death planes' and 'big bombs'. What about the words 'walls' and 'desks'? 'Walls' mean 'continuous, usually vertical, solid structure(s) of stone, brick... used to enclose, divide or protect something'. The word 'desks' carries a symbolic picture of 'beaurocracy; officials'. The phrase therefore conveys the idea that the

authoritative beaurocrats are persons hiding themselves behind their official desks or tables, sheltered within their houses or palaces or mansions, surrounded by walls which protect them from being harmed by others; perhaps, by those very victims of war. Other meanings can also be analyzed in the other stanzas of the song. But what one wants to point out here is that Bob Dylan is a poet because he is not simply writing lines to be sung, but because his songs are usually steeped in the mystery of life, but ever constantly focussing on modern man's predicament.

It is interesting to note the following lines in the second stanza of the song:

You that never done nothin'  
But build to destroy

The symbolic overtone in these sharply satirical lines, lies in Dylan's use of the conversational slangy language: 'You that never done nothin'' to stress the negativeness of the meaning: the masters of war who have never attempted anything in their lives but only to destroy; secondly, the above lines symbolically flash a contrast of two classes of people — people who speak the standard language behind 'desks' and 'walls', as against the common man who speaks the common language containing slangs, and who is the

victim of authority. The simile that follows expresses anger against the authorities, for they 'play with my world/Like it's your little toy'.

This analysis can go on with other stanzas in the song. Richard Goldstein has the following remark on Bob Dylan:

But it was Dylan's success which established beyond a doubt that poetic imagery belonged in pop music.<sup>18</sup>

And this same critic boldly re-asserts:

Dylan's remarkable achievement has been to inject pop music with poetic power by simply grafting his own sensibility onto what was already implicit in rock.<sup>19</sup>

The verses of Dylan's songs are very much like the verses of an Eliot or Pound poem. Take for instance, Dylan's lines in the song, 'Masters of War' which say:

You that hide behind walls  
You that hide behind desks

and the other two lines:

You that never done nothin'  
But build to destroy

Following the discussion on the lines mentioned above, it follows that they offer a comparison in symbolism and imagery to Ezra Pound's poem, entitled "The Jewel Stairs' Grievance", where there are the following lines:

The jeweled steps are already quite white  
with dew,  
It is so late that the dew soaks my gauze  
stockings,  
And I let down the crystal curtain  
And watch the moon through the clear autumn.

Pound supplies these notes on connotations in the poem: "Jewel stairs, therefore a palace. Grievance, therefore there is something to complain of. Gauze stockings, therefore a court lady, not a servant who complains. Clear autumn, therefore she has no excuse on account of weather. Also she has come early, for the dew has not merely whitened the stairs, but has soaked her stockings. The poem is especially prized because she utters no direct reproach."<sup>20</sup>

Protest against war is partly echoed in his other song entitled "The Times They Are A-Changin'",<sup>21</sup> where the following excerpts can be taken:

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'.

Here, as in his other song "A Hard Rains A Gonna Fall", he speaks of the worst time coming over the world, perhaps the advent of a nuclear war, in the image of a growing flood, similar to the great deluge mentioned in the Bible. In the next stanza, the satirical attack is more specific, when he sings:

Come senators, congressmen  
 Please heed the call  
 Don't stand in the doorway  
 Don't block up the hall  
 For he that gets hurt  
 Will be he who has stalled  
 There's a battle outside  
 And it is ragin'.  
 It'll soon shake your windows  
 And rattle your walls  
 For the times they are a-changin'.

In the song, "John Brown",<sup>22</sup> Dylan gives a pathetic picture of a young lad by the name of John Brown who went off to war "to fight on a foreign shore", and "His mama sure was proud of him!". After a long time, a letter finally came, telling her to "Go down and meet the train/ Your son's a-coming home from the war". The mother was shocked to see her son, for

On his face was all shot up and his hand  
 was all blown off  
 And he wore a metal brace around his waist.  
 He whispered kind of slow, in a voice  
 she did not know,  
 While **she** couldn't even recognize his face!  
 Oh! Lord! Not even recognize his face.

And the boy, John Brown, tells his mother:

Don't you remember, Ma, when I went  
off to war  
You thought it was the best thing I  
could do?  
I was on the battle ground, you were  
home... acting proud.  
You wasn't there standing in my shoes.

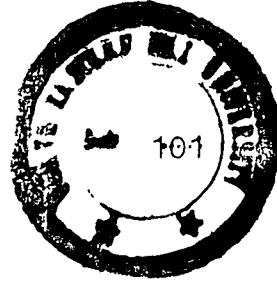
Then next lines are very ironic:

'Oh, and I thought when I was there, God,  
what am I doing here?  
I'm a-tryn' to kill somebody or  
die tryn'.

But the thing that scared me most was when my  
enemy came close  
And I saw that his face looked just  
like mine'.  
Oh! Lord! Just like mine!

The above lines remind us of the ironic element that  
we find in Wilfred Owen's poem, "Strange Meeting" where we  
have the following lines:

Then, as I probed them, one sprang up  
and stared  
With piteous recognition in fixed eyes,  
Lifting distressful hands as if to bless.  
And by his smile, I knew that sullen hall,  
By his dead smile, I knew we stood in Hell.  
... 'Strange friend', I said, 'here is no  
cause to mourn'.  
'None', said the other, 'save the undone years,  
The hopelessness. Whatever hope is yours,  
Was my life, also; ...  
I mean the truth untold,  
The pity of war, the pity war distilled.  
... I am the enemy you killed, my friend,  
I knew you in this dark;



Further, Dylan's John Brown narrates:

'And I couldn't help but think, through  
the thunder rolling and stink,  
That I was just a puppet in a play.  
And through the roar and smoke, this  
string is finally broke,  
And a cannon ball blew my eyes away.'

Dylan's sympathy for the soldiers also exists  
in Siegfried Sassoon's poem, "The Death-Bed", in the  
following lines:

Night, with a gust of wind, was in the ward,  
Blowing the curtain to a glimmering curve.  
Night. He was blind; he could not see the stars  
Glinting among the wraiths of wandering cloud;  
Queer blots of colour, purple, scarlet, green,  
Flickered and faded in his drowning eyes. ...  
Light many lamps and gather round his bed.  
Lend him your eyes, warm blood, and will to live.  
Speak to him; rouse him; you may save him yet.  
He's young; he hated War; how should he die  
When cruel old campaigners win safe through?

And did not Wilfred Owen, in his plea for the sol-  
diers' lives, angrily remark in his poem "Insensibility"  
that:

The front line withers,  
But they are troops who fade, not flowers  
For poets' tearful fooling:  
Men, gaps for filling:  
Losses who might have fought  
Longer; but no one bothers.

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Like Dylan's John Brown, Owen's survivor was also suffering the same fate, for Owen described him as:

Alive, he is not vital overmuch;  
 Dying, not mortal overmuch;  
 Nor sad, nor proud,  
 Nor curious at all.  
 He cannot tell  
 Old men's placidity from his.

In another powerful anti-war song entitled "With God on Our Side",<sup>23</sup> Dylan chides the makers of war and stresses on the unthoughtful assumption, where people leisurely take it to be that God is always on the side of the winner. In this song, Dylan speaks of the 'cavalries' charging against the Indians; of the Spanish-American War and the Civil War. Then on the First World War, he sings the following lines:

Oh the First World War, boys  
 It closed out its fate  
 The reason for fighting  
 I never got straight  
 But I learned to accept  
 Accept it with pride  
 For you don't count the dead  
 When God's on your side.

On the Second World War, the lines run thus:

When the Second World War  
 Came to an end  
 We forgave the Germans  
 And we were friends  
 Though they murdered six million  
 In the ovens they fried  
 The German now too  
 Have God on their side.

On the modern nuclear warfares, the lines run thus:

But now we got weapons  
 Of the chemical dust  
 If fire them we're forced to  
 Then fire them we must  
 One push of the button  
 And a shot the world wide  
 And you never ask questions  
 When God's on your side.

Dylan thus concludes with a biblical allusion which sums up his satiric view on war:

In many a dark hour  
 I've been thinkin' about this  
 That Jesus Christ  
 Was betrayed by a kiss  
 But I can't think for you  
 You'll have to decide  
 Whether Judas Iscariot  
 Had God on his side.

At times, Bob Dylan discards rhyme-schemes and prefers free verse. But at other times, Dylan uses end rhyme as well as internal rhyme. Dylan's method of rhyme is a good one, for X.J. Kennedy has stated in his book, An Introduction to Poetry, that a good rhyme is not an expected one, but should have the capacity to surprise. In Dylan's song, "Masters of War", we have the following lines:

You fasten the triggers  
 For others to fire  
 Then you set back and watch  
 When the death count gets higher

And in his song, namely "All I Really Want To Do",<sup>24</sup> we can see that the whole song is completely involved in end rhyme, internal rhyme, masculine rhyme and feminine rhyme. The song also includes an internal refrain. The following stanzas can be taken as examples:

I ain't lookin' to block you up,  
Shock or knock or lock you up,  
Analyze you, categorize you,  
Finalize you or advertise you.  
All I really want to do  
Is, baby, be friends with you.

I don't want to straight-face you,  
Race or chase you, track or trace you,  
Or disgrace you or displace you,  
Or define you or confine you.  
All I really want to do  
Is, baby, be friends with you.

This same technique is being employed in Rober Burns's satiric ballad, "The Kirk's Alarm"<sup>25</sup>:

Orthodox, Orthodox, wha believe in John Knox,  
Let me sound an alarm to your conscience:  
Ther's a heretic blast has been blawn i' the  
wast,  
"That what is not sense must be nonsense."

Another technique employed by Dylan in his lyrics is the method of repetition. In "Masters of War", we have the following:

You that build ...  
 You that build ...  
 You that build ...  
 You that hide ...  
 You that hide ...

This heightens the musical pattern of the song as well as enhancing the ideas and emotions conveyed in the song. To a listener who hears Bob Dylan's personal rendition of the songs, this marked tendency in him, makes the listener know that the repetition of lines, either spot lights the inner theme of the song, or throwing a full impact on the last lines ending the stanzas. For example, the following stanzas can be cited from his other song entitled "She Belongs to Me";<sup>26</sup>

You will start out standing  
 Proud to steal her anything she sees.  
 You will start out standing  
 Proud to steal her anything she sees.  
 But you will wind up peeking through her keyhole  
 Down upon your knees.

She never stumbles,  
 She's got no place to fall.  
 She never stumbles,  
 She's got no place to fall.  
 She's nobody's child,  
 The Law can't touch her at all.

She wears an Egyptian ring  
 That sparkles before she speaks.  
 She wears an Egyptian ring  
 That sparkles before she speaks.  
 She's a hypnotist collector,  
 You are a walking antique.

Another interesting mark to be seen in his songs is his use of punctuation. In certain songs, Dylan totally discards the rules of punctuation marks, whereas in other songs, his use of punctuation is very scanty, as can be seen in the following stanza from the song, "With God on Our Side";

Oh the history books tell it  
 They tell it so well  
**The** cavalries charged  
 The Indians fell  
 The cavalries charged  
 The Indians died  
 Oh the country was young  
 With God on its side.

Such poetic license can also be seen in E.E. Cumming's poem, "All In Green Went My Love Riding":

All in green went my love riding  
 on a great horse of gold  
 into the silver dawn.

Then there are the following lines from Bob Dylan's "Some Other Kinds of Songs":

high treachery sails  
 unveils  
 its last wedding song  
 bang sing the bells  
 the low pauper's prayer  
 rice rags in blossom  
 blow in a fleet. ...27

Such lines are often seen in modern poets, as in Allen Ginsberg's "In Back Of The Real":

railroad yard in San Jose  
 I wandered desolate  
 in front of a tank factory  
 and sat on a bench  
 near the switchman's shack.

Furthermore, in song-writing, Bob Dylan uses clichés. After all, it cannot be denied that a popular song cannot scorn or snub a cliché. Yet those who want to criticise the art of Bob Dylan, need not go further than did William James in his affectionate disparagement of William Shakespeare.

Christopher Ricks in his book entitled, The Force Of Poetry has the following comment on Dylan in relation to clichés:

Dylan has a newly instinctive grasp of the age-old instincts which created a cliché in the first place, and this is manifest on all the occasions when he throws new light on an old cliché, or rotates a cliché so that a facet of it catches a new light. At the same time, like the very unlike Geoffrey Hill, he often grounds his wit, humour, and pathos on an intuition as to how a cliché may incite reflection, and not preclude it, by being self-reflexive.<sup>28</sup>

In the song, "Masters of War", we have the cliché, "see through your eyes". Ordinarily, it means to see things through another person's eyes or view-point; which is easier said than done and perhaps, a very misguided thing to do, too. Dylan tactfully wrests the cliché, in order to bring in the sense which goes with sharp-eyed suspicion. So the phrase turns out to be 'seeing through things' and knowing the cunning and hypocrisy of the masters of war. Christopher Ricks comments:

For the first verse had sung 'I just want you to know/I can see through your masks' — the vigilant sense of 'see through' — so that when we hear 'But I see through your eyes', we see that it doesn't mean the usual blandly magnanimous thing ('from your point of view'), but the stubborn opposite: I see what your eyes are trying to hide. The cliché has been alerted, and we are alerted to its clichéness, seeing the words from a new perspective, a different point of view, and seeing penetratingly through them.<sup>29</sup>

Another Dylan song, "I shall be Free"<sup>30</sup> is free from the clichéness of its clichés. Take for instance, the following lines:

Well, ask me why I'm drunk alla time,  
It levels my head and eases my mind.  
I just walk along and stroll and sing,  
I see better days and I do better things.

On the above lines, Christopher Ricks very aptly comments.

The phrase 'seen better days' has itself seen better days - that would do as the definition of a cliché. But Dylan brings it from its past into his and our present, by turning it into the present tense, 'I see better days'; and by marrying it to 'and I do better things', he does a far better thing with it than usual. He eases it from the dim past into a bright present. He helps us see it in a better light, so that instead of its ordinary sad backward glance, there is a step forward, the strolling of an unaggressive intoxication which refreshes the flat old phrase....<sup>31</sup>

Let us examine the love song of Bob Dylan entitled "I Threw It All Away".<sup>32</sup> We have the following lines:

So if you find someone that gives you all  
of her love,  
Take it to your heart, don't let it stray,

Bob Dylan stubbornly refuses to write down the phrase 'Take her to your heart' usually found in love songs of the early decades of this century, for he knows perfectly well that people would expect him to write the next usual phrase 'And take her in your arms'. He does not even write the old phrase 'take it to heart'. Thus Christopher Ricks comments:

The trouble with a cliché like 'take it to heart' is that by now it's almost impossible to take it to heart. Yet genius with words is often a matter, as T.S. Eliot said, of being original with the minimum of alteration, (Introductory Essay to London and The Vanity of Human Wishes (1930) and such is one of the evidences of Dylan's genius. ... 'Take it to heart' becomes 'Take it to your heart', just enough to take it into the heartfelt; it stands for 'all of her love',...33

'Make it new' commanded Ezra Pound from the captain's tower; and this is what Dylan has done in the renovation of the state of language. We also note that the best American poets have often focussed on the poignancy that there is nothing considered to be final. Instead, there is always a trend of continuity. Bob Dylan has caught this well in his song "If You See Her, Say Hello", with the following lines:

Sundown, yellow moon  
 I replay the past  
 I know ev'ry scene by heart  
 They all went by so fast.

The above lines have got the touch of Dylan's personal experience, coupled with American technology in his mind's eye, and Christopher Ricks has the following comment on the above lines:

There is no such thing as a video of the heart; replaying the past does depend on knowing every scene by heart; but what makes this heartfelt is the unspoken "And Yet" between the lines: ...  
 "And yet they all went by so fast", not 'because they all went by so fast' ...  
 it would have been by their having gone by so slowly that they were known by heart.... Simply that you have to be quick on the uptake as Dylan kisses the joy as it flies, in both senses of it flies.<sup>34</sup>

On the modern belief that violence and idealism have an occult connection, we have Robert Lowell's translation of Racine's Phedre, where he states:

Lady, if you must weep, weep for your silence  
 that filled your days and mine with violence.

(I.iii)

But Lowell gives greater emphasis to rhyme than Dylan, by insisting metrically on the extra syllable in 'violence'. Dylan did the opposite and he caught it well in his song, "Love Minus Zero/No Limit"<sup>35</sup> with the following lines that run smoothly:

My love she speaks like silence,  
 Without ideals or violence,

Dylan even exposes that reality does not even seem real in contemporary society, as exposed in the following lines of his song, "When The Ship Comes In".<sup>36</sup>

Oh the foes will rise  
 With the sleep still in their eyes  
 And they'll jerk from their beds and  
 think they're dreamin'.  
 But they'll pinch themselves and squeal  
 And know that it's for real,  
 The hour when the ship comes in.

More recent poems written by other poets like Leonard Cohen, Allen Ginsberg and others, are being set to music, apparently encouraged by Bob Dylan. Yet there is a difference between Dylan and Ginsberg, for Dylan understood his background whereas Ginsberg never seems to have understood. Lachlan Mackinnon observes:

**The fragments of the past which appear in Dylan's songs movingly remind us of what may have been lost, where Ginsberg's bodhisattvas unhappily resemble Dylan's "flesh-colored Christs that glow in the dark". Dylan is a better artist than Ginsberg because he doesn't horse around pretending to be both Whitman and a master of Eastern wisdom but gets on with exploring and developing inherited forms in new directions.<sup>37</sup>**

Dylan is nowadays regarded as a poet who prefers to speak in tongues, as he often does along with the background music. Yet he never bothers about vocal excellence, for his primary purpose is to convey the words to the audience. A close study of Bob Dylan's work makes the New York critic, Richard Goldstein remark:

Dylan's intention is to reconcile poetry with song. Scattered throughout his liner notes are constant references to this aesthetic task ("a song is anything that can walk by itself/i am a songwriter. a poem is a naked person... some people say i am a poet").<sup>38</sup>

The world is having great and greater expectations for more and more creative works from Bob Dylan. Thus, we sum up our study of Bob Dylan's songs by saying that his songs are not shallow but contain poetry, because they juxtapose symbols of high and low cultures, ever focussing on that great concern for modern society and its people.

Turning to other singer-poets, we shall also explore some of their compositions and their poetical elements. Let us examine some of the songs composed by Paul Simon (b.1942) and sung by Simon and Garfunkel. On Paul Simon's composition called "The Sound of Silence",<sup>39</sup> Richard Goldstein writes in the introductory note to the song:

This is one of the earliest folk-rock statements of man's alienation from you-know-whom. Some say Paul Simon took his theme from Steppenwolf. If not, it is certainly an analogous situation and one which has provided abundant source material for rock poets. But never has it been expressed so succinctly and with such compassion.<sup>40</sup>

The song as a whole is symbolic — a man wishing "darkness" as his "old friend" and coming to talk to it again:

Because a vision softly creeping,  
Left its seeds while I was sleeping  
And the vision that was planted in my brain  
Still remains within the sound of silence.

This, in itself, is a symbolic picture of a man who feels alienated in his society and whose only company in life is "darkness". The song is not only symbolic, but approaches the subconscious areas of Henry James, Virginia Woolf and Eliot's Prufrock. This is seen in the second stanza of the song, where Paul Simon tells us that during his "restless dreams", he "walked alone/'Neath the halo of a street lamp, ..."

In developing the theme of alienation, one should note that prominent symbols are employed in the form of visual colours and the repercussions of the musical language of the song. For shades of colour, we have "darkness" symbolizing loneliness, "night" as the state of the subconscious, "the halo of a street lamp", symbolizing warmth and sympathy; and a "neon light" signifying the presence of a crowd reaching out for the cold fingers of contemporary materialism. The repercussions of the musical language lies in

diction itself and the auditory sensitiveness to the words. We can even hear and feel the degrees of sound. Thus in the song, we have the following words: "sound", "talking", "speaking", "echoed", "whispered" and "silence", which is the absolute negativeness of sound.

The theme of man's alienation in society is in turn, bringing out the tone of contrast, which can be seen in the very title of the song, namely, "The Sound of Silence". This contrasting tone is further emphasized in the third stanza of the song:

And in the naked light I saw  
 Ten thousand people maybe more,  
 People talking without speaking,  
 People hearing without listening,  
 People writing songs that voices never share  
 And no one dares disturb the sound of silence.

The song carries a satiric note on modern man and modern society, in the following lines:

And the people bowed and prayed  
 To the neon God they made,  
 And the sign flashed out its warning  
 In the words that it was forming.  
 And the sign said:  
 "The words of the prophets are written  
 on the subway walls and tenement halls"  
 And whispered in the sound of silence.

What meaning do these lines carry? Paul Simon speaks in symbols — people praying to the neon gods "they made",

conveying the idea that people worship things that they have made by themselves; in short, materialism takes the place of spiritual values in contemporary society. This phenomenon leads the people in turn, to prefer "silence" symbolizing not "consent" but "indifference".

In fact, the whole song is symbolic — a woefully symbolic picture of man's alienation from his fellow-men. What is the cause of this feeling of alienation that Paul Simon expresses? The reasons are clear in the song. It is chiefly because people themselves have become machines, and thus, artificial and unnatural. The people he mixes and lives with are those "People talking without speaking, / People hearing without listening," — people who utter sound to "communicate ideas, by words" (C.O.D.), but who do not "speak" or "make known (one's opinions)" (C.O.D.): people who "hear" or "perceive sound with the ear" (C.O.D.), but do not "listen" or "make effort to hear something" (C.O.D.) spoken to them. Paul Simon feels that he, like the prophets of old, has a duty to do — to teach his fellow-men. He says:

"Fools!" said I, "You do not know  
 Silence like a cancer grows.  
 Hear my words that I might teach you  
 Take my arms that I might reach you."

The song ends with a moral and a warning to such indiffer-  
 rent people. The very gods and idols that they, so deeply  
 worshipped, will be forming like the neon lights of an  
 advertisement, flashing out a warning to them, in the form  
 of a sign that declares in bold letters:

"The words of the prophets are written  
 on the subway walls and tenement halls"

But the warning is only a "whisper" in "the sound of  
 silence". The singer-poet's requests are rejected:

But my words like silent raindrops fell  
 And echoed, in the wells of silence.

What people are bent on hearing is only the "Sound of  
 Silence".

The song is rich in symbolic meaning and with a ten-  
 dency towards an incremental refrain at the end of every  
 stanza. This technique of using a refrain, gives power to  
 stress an ironic contrast on the words, "sound" and  
 "silence". Even the musical melody attached to the song  
 is compatible to the theme, where musical notes linger a  
 little bit longer on the words "sound" and "silence". On  
 this, we should also note that, as there are 'measures'  
 in poetry, so also there are 'bars' in music, where in

both, there is a 'falling rhythm' (dactyls and trochees) and a 'rising rhythm' (iambes and anapaests); and also that 'a pause' (.) (a deliberate silence) in vocal music, no matter how short it is, becomes a counterpart to a 'silent stress' (^) in poetry. Geoffrey N. Leech says:

The most interesting of them, from the metrical point of view, is the silent stress (^), which sometimes has an entire silent measure to itself.<sup>41</sup>

And he gives the following example:

Ding/dóng/béll/ ^ /Pússy's/in tĥe/wéll/

Perhaps, the best example in vocal music, would be Handel's "Hallelujah Chorus" where we have the following line:

Hallelujah! . Hallelujah! . Hallelujah! .  
                   ^                  ^                  ^  
 Hallelujah! ^ . Hal-le-lu-jah!  
                   ^ ^

From the above discussion, we can feel and hear that the melody and the words blend perfectly well in Paul Simon's song, mentioned before. The following line is given as an example:

.d | s:-| -:-. t<sub>1</sub> | d.l<sub>1</sub> :-| -:-||  
 The sound ^ of Silence  
     /      /      /      /      /

Thus, in the above line, we find that the musical 'pause' or the poetical 'silent stress' covers the entire contrasting tone on the words 'sound' and 'silence'.

The form of the song as a whole is that of modern free verse, with a rhythmic beat and scattering end rhymes in such lines as the following:

Hello darkness my old friend,  
I've come to talk with you again,  
Because a vision softly creeping,  
Left its seeds while I was sleeping

In restless dreams I walked alone,  
Narrow streets of cobble stone  
'Neath the halo of a street lamp,  
I turned my collar to the cold and damp.

The song in total, is beautiful where its expression is indeed full of compassion for contemporary society.

Another song written by Paul Simon is entitled, "Richard Cory (With Apologies to E.A. Robinson)".<sup>42</sup> This song was published in 1966 by Paul Simon. Edwin Arlington Robinson (1869-1935) had published it as a poem, with the same title, "Richard Cory". Robinson's poem runs as follows:

Whenever Richard Cory went down town,  
We people on the pavement looked at him:  
He was a gentleman from sole to crown,  
Clean favoured, and imperially slim.

And he was always quietly arrayed,  
 And he was always human when he talked;  
 But still he fluttered pulses when he said,  
 "Good-morning", and he glittered when he walked.

And he was rich -- yes, richer than a king--  
 And admirably schooled in every grace:  
 In fine, we thought that he was everything  
 To make us wish that we were in his place.

So on we worked, and waited for the light,  
 And went without the meat, and cursed the bread;  
 And Richard Cory, one calm summer night,  
 Went home and put a bullet through his head.

Paul Simon writes his song on the same theme more poetically in a contemporary setting. The following are the lines of his song:

They say that Richar Cory owns  
 One half of this old town,  
 With elliptical connections  
 To spread his wealth around.  
 Born into society,  
 A banker's only child,  
 He had everything a man could want:  
 Power, grace and style.

Refrain: But I, I work in his factory  
 And I curse the life I'm livin'  
 And I curse my poverty,  
 And I wish that I could be  
 Oh I wish that I could be  
 Oh I wish that I could be  
 Richard Cory.

The papers print his picture  
 Almost everywhere he goes:  
 Richard Cory at the opera,  
 Richard Cory at a show  
 And the rumour of his party  
 And the orgies on his yacht —  
 Oh he surely must be happy  
 With everything he's got.

(Refrain)

He really gave to charity,  
 He had the common touch,  
 And they were grateful for his patronage  
 And they thanked him very much,  
 So my mind was filled with wonder  
 When the evening headlines read:

"Richard Cory went home last night  
 And put a bullet through his head."

(Refrain)

X.J. Kennedy calls Paul Simon's song, Richard Cory, "a folk ballad". So let us compare the two poems, to see how Paul Simon drags E.A. Robinson's theme into contemporary society.

Richard Cory of E.A. Robinson is "... a gentleman from sole to crown/Clean favoured, and imperially slim." He was "... rich — yes, richer than a king — /And admirably schooled in every grace:" Robinson's Richard Cory is therefore, an aristocratic gentleman belonging to the nineteenth century or even earlier, and always being tied down to that particular era's conventions and social formalities.

Paul Simon's Richard Cory is a modern man who owns half of the old town and whose ambiguous connections enable him to "spread his wealth around". Modern society recognizes him as the rich "banker's only child", and everyone envies him, for people realise that only through wealth, a man attains "Power, grace and style".

Not only this, Paul Simon's Richard Cory, is more of a modern millionaire:

The papers print his picture  
 Almost everywhere he goes:  
 Richard Cory at the opera,  
 Richard Cory at a show  
 And the rumor of his party  
 And the orgies on his yacht -  
 Oh he surely must be happy  
 With everything he's got.

The narrator in E.A. Robinson's poem is a day-labourer, for he says:

So on we worked, and waited for the light,  
 And went without the meat, and cursed the  
 bread;...

Paul Simon's narrator specifies more of a modern factory worker, when he says:

But I, I work in his factory  
 And I curse the life I'm livin'  
 And I curse my poverty.

The endings of Robinson's poem and Paul Simon's ballad are identical. Of course, the Richard Cory of both "put a bullet through his head".

The difference between the two poems is just a matter of details. Richard Cory of Robinson is a gentleman of the past. But Paul Simon's Richard Cory is a gentleman of the 1960s. Further, the narrators of both Robinson and Simon are day-labourers. But Simon's narrator is a modern factory worker, who works in Richard Cory's factory.

But what we should note is the theme that has interested Paul Simon — the theme of class difference, between the aristocratic high society and the down-trodden working class, where we have both the labourers of E.A. Robinson and Paul Simon, living a life of poverty, who "went without the meat", who "cursed the bread."

What makes this song a poem, is the deep, underlying symbolic meaning it conveys, through symbolic words and phrases. For example, we have the following newspaper statement from Simon's "Richard Cory".

"Richard Cory went home last night  
And put a bullet through his head"

The statement looks simple. But the ironic tone of the lines, lies in the deep and quizzical symbolic meaning of life: What would be the use of being rich like Richard Cory, when there is no peace of mind? Again, what would be the use of being poor like the factory worker who faces constant difficulty in driving away the wolf from the door? The factory worker must have even realized that when poverty knocks at the door, love flies through the window. In fact, the song in total, seems to be forming a question - "What is the meaning of life?" - If to be rich, there is no peace of mind; and if to slave in a factory also, there is no happiness and relief. In addition, the terminal refrain in Paul Simon's "Richard Cory", is a musical device to highlight the theme of the song. However, although the song's stanzas wear the traditional form, yet the technique is that of modern free verse.

On his own selection of popular lyrics, Richard Goldstein has already written in the preface to his book, The Poetry of Rock:

But I do assert that there is an immense reservoir of power here, on impressive awareness of language, and a profound sense of rhythm. I call those qualities "poetic"; you may want to call them "unconscious", but I do not see how the two are incompatible.43

Besides Goldstein's selections, other examples of songs can be cited to show this "impressive awareness of language" and this "profound sense of rhythm". One can include the following songs below for a comparative study.

The first song is "El Condor Pasa", sung by Simon and Garfunkel. Here, a person speaks of the spirit of freedom which is denied to a man who is tied to the chains of slavery. The song states:

Away, I'd rather sail away  
Like a swan that's here and gone;  
A man gets tied down to the ground,  
He gives the world, its saddest sound.

The sentimental and tragic melody accompanying the song places more emphasis on the symbols taken from Nature, to express the meaning of **suppression** as well as liberty and freedom. The "sparrow" and the "swan" in the song, are symbols of liberty; the "snail" — a symbol of suppression. The "forest" too, is a symbol of freedom; the "street" — a symbol of suppression. It should be noted that the song in total, also carries the Wordsworthian notion of Nature versus city-life.

The next song is that of John Denver, whose original name is John Henry Duetschendorf. The song is entitled the

"Wind Song". In order to understand its form and structure, symbols and imagery, the song needs to be quoted in its entirety:

The wind is the whisper of our mother the earth,  
 The wind is the hand of our father the sky,  
 The wind watches over our struggles and pleasures,  
 The wind is the goddess who first learnt to fly.

The wind is the bearer of bad and good tidings,  
 The weaver of darkness, the bringer of dawn,  
 The wind gives the rain, then builds us a rainbow,  
 The wind is the singer who sang the first song.

The wind is a twister of anger and warning,  
 The wind brings the fragrance of freshly mown hay,  
 The wind is a racer and a white stallion running  
 And a sweet taste of love on a slow summer's day.

The wind knows the songs of the cities and canyons,  
 The thunder of mountains, the roar of the sea,  
 The wind is the taker and giver of mornings,  
 The wind is the symbol of all that is free.

So welcome the wind and the wisdom she offers,  
 Follow her summons when she calls again,  
 In your heart and in your spirit  
 Let the breezes surround you,  
 Lift up your voice then  
 And sing with the wind.

In this song, we cannot deny the existence of a glorious and exhilarating imagery that runs through the song. The song shows a remarkable use of rhythmic repetitions and 'conscious' use of poetic symbols. It reminds us of

Whitman's style of writing poetry. To illustrate, we take an excerpt from one of Walt Whitman's poems; "To A Locomotive In Winter":

Thee for my recitative,  
 Thee in the driving storm even as now, the  
 snow, the winter day declining,  
 Thee in thy panoply, thy measur'd dual  
 throbbing and thy beat convulsive,  
 Thy black cylindric body, golden brass and  
 silvery steel,  
 Thy ponderous side-bars, parallel and  
 connecting rods, gyrating, shuttling at thy  
 sides,  
 Thy metrical, now swelling pant and roar, now  
 tapering in the distance,  
 Thy great protruding head-light fix'd in front,  
 Thy long, pale, floating vapor-pennants, tinged  
 with delicate purple, ...

Thy knitted frame, thy springs and valves, the  
 tremulous twinkle of thy wheels,  
 Thy train of cars behind, obedient, merrily  
 following, ...

The latter portion of Denver's song as well as the latter portion of Whitman's poem, contain no parallelism. But in the first three-fourth of the song, Denver uses the parallel phrases in all lines. The lines start with the same construction: "The wind..." Walt Whitman uses the parallel construction, in the first portion of his poem, by beginning his lines with "Thee ...." and "Thy ...." Such style of writing shows the conscious and "impressive awareness of language". But it is not just the language

that Denver is aware of. The language too is symbolic, for the prime symbol of "the wind" is freedom; whereas the secondary symbolic meanings of the wind are clearly explained in the lines. What Denver wants to impress upon the listeners is for them to appreciate that sort of freedom which is morally good and healthy. The song reveals a Wordsworthian appreciation of Nature. This is well noted in many of Denver's song-lyrics, so that although John Denver majors in architecture, America lovingly acknowledges him as "country-boy Denver."<sup>44</sup> In Wordsworth, we find that he draws us from Nature in the objective sense to Nature in the subjective sense, thereby drawing a moral lesson by pondering on the philosophy of Nature. The same trend also exists in Denver's song. But since his composition is meant to be sung, the singer-poet in a high spirit, requests his listeners instead to:

Lift up your voice then  
And sing with the wind.

The wind is a favourite symbol for modern song-writers; and it usually stands for freedom. Joan Baez sings the following lines from the song "Donna, Donna":

'Stop complaining' said the farmer,  
 'Who told you a calf to be?  
 Why can't you have wings to fly with  
 Like the swallows so proud and free.'

Refrain: How the winds are laughing,  
 They laugh with all their might,  
 Laugh and laubh the whole day through  
 And half the summer's night.

Donna, Donna, Donna, Donna,  
 Donna, Donna, Donna, Don,  
 Donna, Donna, Donna, Donna,  
 Donna, Donna, Donna, Don.

Here also, the 'swallows' and the 'winds' are symbols of freedom; whereas the 'calf' is a picture of passivity.

Bob Dylan give the title to his famous song — "Blowin' in the Wind". Dylan's "wind" symbolizes Freedom as well as Free Thought, which are means to bring in a social and political change. But since the Leftists have acclaimed him as one of America's greatest poets, the political motivated anger has been directed against Dylan, charging him of being a communist, and whose trinity of heroes, happens to be, by coincidence, — Woody Guthrie, Leadbelly and Pete Seeger — all assumed to be American communists. At one time, eminent sociologists and politicians, anticipated the coming in, of a youth revolution when Dylan's "Blowin' in the Wind" was released in America. Yet Dylan is sincere in reforming his contemporary society

and also his intellectual capacity must have enabled him to coolly foresee the demerits as well of his democratic America, both in its home-affairs as well as external affairs.

Modern lyrics employ new symbols like "red, blue jeans", "blue suede shoes" and cars, where, for instance, we have the following lines from the song "Mabellene", written by Chuck Berry, Russ Fratto and Alan Freed:

AS I was motivatin' over the hill,  
I saw Mabellene in a Coup de Ville,  
A Cadillac a-rollin' on the open road  
Nothin' will outrun my V.8. Ford.

But the "rose" continues to be a<sup>2</sup> symbol of love and beauty, forming a motif in popular romance, as in the song "Spanish Harlem", written by Phil Spector and Jerry Leiber, where the message is to pick up love wherever a person finds it and to rear it up tenderly. Sometimes mythical and allegorical elements motivate the songs, as in "New Christ Cardiac Hero" by Janis Ian, and "Crucifixion" by Phil Ochs. These elements are used as a prism to explore the modern hero and our demand for his sacrifice. Moreover, a web of irony is sometimes woven round the song in total, where the subject matter of the lyric and the flow of vocal melody are pitted against each other at emotional

counter-point. That is why, we often find singers sing chivalric odes, but always keep their voice —unmistakably harsh, rough and crude.

Modern song-writers have the profound awareness of slang and its implication. Thus the ability of today's lyricists to say extraordinary things in ordinary words. Even songs on pure sex are often put in the context of the permissible as in Willie Dixon's "Back Door Man".

It should also be noted that the primary purpose of a lyric, especially around 1957, is to convey mood and not meaning, so that even a simple repetitive song is not boring, but intriguing enough to survive incessant repetition. But this has enabled truly good lyrics to bury their meaning deep within the pervasive influence of rhythm. It is no wonder that a recognized Canadian poet and novelist, Leonard Cohen, who has recently turned to song-writing, admitted that he is greatly influenced by former composers like Ray Charles. Thus, Cohen's lyrics have the consistency of modern verse, but unlike linear poetry, they are deeply immersed in rhythm,<sup>45</sup> as in his song, "Suzanne", which was first introduced to the public in 1966, by Judy Collins and later on sung by Neil Diamond.

Let us now turn to another important aspect — that of the song-writers' utilization of ambiguous symbols in their songs; indeed, in the very titles of their songs:

Today's rock poets deal with the drug experience in poeticized code, as jazzmen and blues singers before them did. It is enough for Grace Slick of the Jefferson Airplane to cry "Feed Your Head!" at the end of "White Rabbit" for teenagers to understand her suggestion. . . .

In a sense, this awareness of jargon is one sign of a repressed culture. But it has also provided teenagers everywhere with a solid sense of their own identity — something all good poetry is supposed to convey.<sup>46</sup>

Right or wrong, it is still true that today's lyricists still bury meanings deep within their songs. So, follows myriad examples of conscious obscurity in rock lyrics. Illustrations of the fact mentioned above, begin with certain songs written and sung by the Beatles. The group-effect of the Beatles had been described as "kaleidoscopic", which was a prominent word in the 1960s, until the word "psychedelic" replaced it. Although the critic Russel Davies, in referring to the Beatles, stated that everybody knows that:

as with a kaleidoscope, that if the thing once broke open, the fragments contributing to the display must reveal themselves to be tawdry bits of stuff, unspectacular to the point of ugliness outside the self-referring mirrors of the machine.<sup>47</sup>

He however forgets that the temporary hallucinatory experiences are permanently imprinted in the songs, in the form of writing and publication. It is also the duty of a psychedelic rock-lyric to reconstruct on actual drug experience. That is why, it is often called "acid rock", for "acid" is a slang-word for L.S.D.

By 1965, the Beatles had attempted to experiment with Dylan's free-wheeling vision, resulting in the composition of "Norwegian Wood", which marks the Beatles' distinctive style of writing and a unique personal rendition of the song. The following lines:

I sat on a rug  
Biding my time,  
Drinking her wine.

mark the frank confrontation of the situation and also gives a clear-cut picture of a hunter stalking his prey. But why does the narrator inform us that when he was awake, he found out that he was alone and that he had "crawled off to sleep in a bath" and also that "this bird

had flown"? Reliable sources have detected that the very words "Norwegian Wood" is a British teenager's term for marijuana. More so, in the musical accompaniment of this particular song, is the prominent engagement of the "sitar", which in all likelihood, symbolizes that drugs usually flow from the East to the West.

As there are poems that record hallucinations and drug experiences as Samuel Taylor Coleridge's "Kubla Khan", wherein the poet mentions the "flashing eyes" and the "floating hair", as well as the "circle", which means a magic circle drawn to keep away spirits; so also nowadays, there are songs that record drug-experiences. Thus we find that the next song of the Beatles possesses a symbolic title — "Lucy In the Sky With Diamonds". The symbol is being hidden within the initials of the title itself. In the words "Lucy", "Sky" and "Diamonds", we get their initials — L.S.D. Thus we get the message of a drug experience in the song. Indeed, the language of the song does not carry the semantic meaning at all. Yet, casting aside the disgusting and degenerating effects of the influence of drugs, let us examine the song, purely and solely for the sake of an aesthetic judgement. Taken from such an angle, one finds only innocence and beauty, which is almost

ethereal in this song. Although it is true that the Beatles are presenting a psychedelic landscape in the song, it gives instead, to the reader and listener, pleasure and not repulsion. The landscape itself is more that of Hans Christian Andersen and Lewis Carroll than that of William Burroughs. All that the Beatles as a group, have contrived to do, is to re-open the nursery door. One can pass through the nursery door, and like "Alice" in "Wonder-land", one is overwhelmed with pleasure to view a wonderful sight filled with so many "Newspaper taxis", flowers that grow so "incredibly high" (remind us of "Jack and the Bean-stalk"), "Cellophane flowers of yellow and green", "rocking-horse people" eating "marshmallow pies". Then, when one wants to look up, one can see the "marmalade skies", or one can view across a land filled with "tangerine trees" (It makes a child's mouth to water). Even when one is on a railway platform, at least for a child, he or she, will be thrilled to see "plasticine porters with looking glass ties". Thus in total, the song offers an adult, a symbolical drug experience; and to a child, the innocent offering of a child's delight and pleasure.

The similarity of this song lies in another song of the Beatles, namely, the "Yellow Submarine", one of the

Beatles' biggest hits, on which the "National Review" commented as "a beautiful children's song". But to the grown-ups who are well versed in drug terminology, know that a "yellow jacket" is a submarine-shaped barbiturate, ~~seconal~~ or "downer", for a "downer" submerges a person. In writing drug-lyrics, we can see that the Beatles were cautious, sensible and remained securely down-to-earth. We take for instance, the title of another of their drug-lyrics, namely, "Strawberry Fields Forever" which is thought by many to be pure hallucination, but it was actually being drawn from the name of a Liverpool orphanage. Secondly, the Beatles made the title suggestive enough, at least to the younger generation — since marijuana is often planted in strawberry fields in England, in order to avoid detection, because the plants are similar in appearance.

Acid-rock lyrics are often bathed in various cults and in ambiguous code and double-entendres, which only the younger generation understands. Drug-lyrics are a mystery to most adults, chiefly because of the Aesopian language. There is the carefully coded expression of narcotics in The Jefferson Airplane's "White Rabbit", where drug-users refer to taking drugs as "feeding your head"; while the words "White Rabbit" is an allusion to the pill

which is an amphithamine or "upper" (stimulant), and the pill that makes one smaller, which is a barbituarate or "downer" (a depressant). Other examples for symbolical ambiguity in the titles of drug-lyrics are being found out. Few can be given here, although there are hundres of such songs. These are the following:

"Colored Rain" (methadrine), ...  
 "Jumpin' Jack Flash" (when methadrine taken intravenously, hits the brain it is known as a "flash"); "Lady Jane" (marijuana), ... "Mr. Tambourine Man" (drug peddler), Bob Dylan; "Mainline Prosperity Blues" ("mainlining" is shooting drugs directly into the vein), Richard Farina; "Puff the Magic Dragon" (smoke marijuana) by Peter, Paul and Mary; "Yellow Balloon" (drugs are often carried in a balloon so that they may be swallowed and later retrieved in the event of imminent arrest) by the Yellow Balloon.... "Acapulco Gold" (a particular fine grade of marijuana) by The Rainy Daze; ... 48

Another trend in modern popular song lyrics is the existence of an **attitude** to life and music that tends to be Dionysian in character. In the middle fifties, we have the late Elvis Presley singing the song entitled "Be-Bop-A-Lula", written by Gene Vincent and Sheriff Tex Davis. The very tittle suggests the exhilarating heart-beats of a person who is in love. The tone of the lyric is lively and brisk, as an extract from the song shows:

She's the gal in the red blue jeans  
 She's the queen of all the teens.  
 She's the one that I know.  
 She's the one that loves me so.

The stanzas of the song possess a regular end-rhyme (aabb), but it demands the reader to read in rhythmic gasps, pausing only to enunciate key-phrases like "red blue jeans" or "the flyin' feet". The song is simple and carries the staccato rhythm. But the imagery points towards action rather than reflection. This particular lyric carries us back to the ancient Greek understanding of their Dionysian lyrics, where dancing and sexuality are crucially connected. "Be-Bop-A-Lula" carries the notion that if you cannot shake, you also cannot love. Therefore, the importance of this lyric is that it forms the starting point to stress on the association between dancing and sexuality, which appears frequently in popular lyrics from the 1950s onwards.

The other interesting trend in modern poetry is the tendency, if not always, to turn poems in the form of sly puzzles. So also are musical lyrics:

Lennon's power as a lyricist is greatest when he rips apart the actual texture of words and re-arranges them into a sly puzzle, which is somehow compelling as it is cryptic.<sup>49</sup>

Even his book that was published in 1964, John Lennon has given its title, In His Own Write. Lennon has got two books published to his credit, containing the so-called "poetry and whimsy". His skill in playing with words not only lies in his lyrics but also in his prose writings as in his other book, A Spaniard In The Works.

In lyrics, we have an extract from the song, "I Am The Walrus":

Semolina pilchard climbing up the Eiffel Tower  
 Elementary penguin, singing Hare Krishna  
 Man you should have seen them kicking  
 Edgar Allen POE  
 They are the eggman, I am the eggman, I  
 am the Walrus  
 Goo goo goo joob.

In the stanza above, we have the playing of the vowels and consonants, where apparently, various topics are mentioned including the words "Hare Krishna" connected with the International Society of Krishna Consciousness, where we can find the alphabets 'iscon'; and also the last line may mean "Good good good job", depending on the sounding of the syllables and the suggestive reversal of the consonant "b" into the missing "d". Such a style of writing bears similarity to Lewis Carroll's apparently nonsense poem, entitled "Jabberwocky", with only one verse as an instance:

'Twas brillig, and the slithy toves  
 Did gyre and gimble in the wabe:  
 All mimsy were the borogoves,  
 And the mome raths outgrabe.

In "Through The Looking Glass", Alice seeks the elucidation of Humpty Dumpty to decipher the meaning of the words. "Brillig" he explains, "means four o'clock in the afternoon — the time when you begin broiling things for dinner". "Slithy" he further explains, means "lithe and slimy... You see it's like a portmanteau — there are two meanings packed up into one word". He then says to Alice: "To 'gyre' is to go round and round like a gyroscope. To 'gimble' is to make holes like a gimlet". Humpty Dumpty also agrees with Alice that "the wabe" is "the grass plot round a sundial". The word "mimsy" stands for "flimsy" and "miserable", and a "borogove" is "a thin shabby-looking bird with its feathers sticking out all round — something like a mop." A "rath" is "a sort of green pig". As for the word "outgrabe", Humpty Dumpty says, "Well, 'outgrabing' is something between bellowing and whistling, with a kind of sneeze in the middle." But for the word "mome", he says, "I'm not certain about. I think it's short 'from home' — meaning that they'd lost their way, you know". Thus, in poems as well as in song-lyrics, there are puzzle-like words with the playing of the vowels and consonants as well as packed-suitcase words.

An appreciation of the works of certain singer-poets can be seen in the statement made by Blake Morrison in the Times Literary Supplement:

The Beatles' songs had always been full of such covert allusions, and by now it was becoming respectable to treat them seriously. As early as 1963 William Mann had detected "chains of pandiatonic clusters" in one song and "an Aelion cadence" in another, then Tony Palmer compared the gifts of Lennon and McCartney to those of Schubert; later Wilfred Mellers was to subject their music to a full length book study, Twilight of the Gods, arguing that "the basic Beatles song is Edenic". The lyrics too, were granted the status of poetry. American campus courses with titles like "The Poetry of Relevance" ranked the Beatles, Bob Dylan and Leonard Cohen with Blake and Shelley. In Britain, Karl Miller's 1968 anthology Writing in England Today: The Last Fifteen Years included the Beatles' "Eleanor Rigby" and the Pink Floyd's "Arnold Layne" alongside Golding, Osborne and Larkin.... These Lennon-McCartney songs touched on the sadness of ordinary life — "all the lonely people" — in a way that Larkin's poetry had also done (it was no surprise, either, that "the Beatles' first LP" should later make an appearance in Larkin's poem "Annus Mirabilis").<sup>50</sup>

The lyrics of Bob Dylan and the Beatles can be compared to the lyrics of Blake and Shelley. Their lyrics are indeed "the poetry of relevance", which is social relevance in particular, for their songs reflect the anguish

and agony of their generations. Dylan sings of the evils of war, corruption, social inequality, man's animosity against his fellow-men, and other evils in contemporary society. The Beatles, among many of their songs, sang of the "Nowhere Man" with an Audenesque style as Auden's poem, "The Unknown Citizen", reflecting the existence of a nihilistic trend in contemporary society. In a chorus-style, they sing "Nowhere Man, Nowhere Man/Living in a nowhere land/Isn't he a bit like you and me?" The rhetorical question is left unanswered, but it is food for thought. The Beatles too, had suggested a gigantic attempt to do away with boundary, caste, creed and religion as the only mean for retaining world peace in the midst of the nuclear arms' race. Their lyrics also reflect drug-experiences and the acceptance of cults, which are not traditional, as the means of achieving inner peace in the world of evils. In a nutshell, both Dylan and the Beatles act like spokesmen of their generation.

Blake concentrated, as C.M. Bowra had very aptly put it, on the:

... criticism of society, of the whole trend of contemporary civilization. His compassionate heart was outraged and wounded by the sufferings which society inflicts on its humbler members and by

the waste of human material which seems indispensable to the efficient operation of rules and laws.<sup>51</sup>

The Beatles' "Eleanor Rigby",<sup>52</sup> dwells on the loneliness of the rejected ordinary people in our modern democratic society, where there are still social and economic difficulties. This song reminds us of the chimney-sweeper, the soldier and the harlot in Blake's poem "London". "Eleanor Rigby" stamps our mind with the two pathetic figures: Eleanor Rigby, a poor, shabby and old spinster and Father McKenzie, who lives in a lonely parish house.

If Eleanor Rigby is rich or special, she would have been of social importance. But she happens to be a coarse commoner who is considered to be dull by contemporary society, as she is a regular church-goer. This woman does not have enough food to eat, for she "Picks up the rice in the church where a wedding has been". The verb 'picks' gives one an image of a bird picking its food. But for a person picking grains of rice and not gathering or collecting, indicates that the person is on the point of starvation. Eleanor "Lives in a dream" for she fears to face reality which means a life full of miseries and whose happiness lies only in dreams. She wears make-up, but

nobody appreciates her. At last the poor woman dies, but nobody came to her burial, except the poor, lonely Father McKenzie, who is in charge of the parish church. That is Eleanor Rigby's short episode in the song. Thus the Beatles sing:

Eleanor Rigby  
 Picks up the rice in the church where  
 a wedding **has been**,  
 Lives in a dream,  
 Waits at the window  
 Wearing the face that she keeps in  
 a jar by the door.  
 Who is it for?

Eleanor Rigby  
 Died in the church and was buried  
 along with her name.  
 Nobody came.  
 Father McKenzie,  
 Wiping the dirt from his hands as he  
 walks from the grave,  
 No one was saved.

Father McKenzie, another character in the song, is an old, religious man. The Beatles tragically depicts his loneliness with such lines:

Father McKenzie,  
 Writing the words of a sermon that no  
 one will hear,  
 No one comes near  
 Look at him working,  
 Darning his socks in the night **when**  
 there's nobody there.  
 What does he care?

The portrait of Father McKenzie that is being drawn gives a poetical image. His life is a life of poverty and loneliness, for he darns "his socks in the night when there's nobody there". He writes "the words of a sermon that no one will hear". This line is ironical — ironical on the spiritual "waste-land" of modern life.

The song is written in a simple free verse with a beautiful rhythm, mostly in the iambic metre, and with a scattering of the anapaestic and the trochaic. For example, in the following lines we have the iambic and the anapaestic:

Eléa/nor Ríg/by  
 Died ín/ the chúrch/ and was bú/ried  
 alóng/ with her náme

The lyrical element of the song is wrought out not only by means of the rhythm, but also by means of the technique of repetition, which stresses on the theme of the loneliness of ordinary people. The repetition comes in the form of rhetorical questions, which are used not as mere embellishments or decorations, but enhancing the theme of the song: the following questions are asked repeatedly:

All the lonely people  
 Where do they all come from?  
 All the lonely people  
 Where do they all belong?

There is also the pathetic repetition:

Ah, look at all the lonely people!  
 Ah, look at all the lonely people!

Thus, we can also see that the Beatles' theme on people's loneliness is similar to the themes in Philip Larkin's poetry. The life of Father McKenzie reminds us of an ironical stanza in Larkin's poem, "Church Going":

Yet stop I did: in fact I often do,  
 And always end much at a loss like this,  
 Wondering what to look for; wondering, too,  
 When churches fall completely out of use  
 What we shall turn them into, if we shall keep  
 A few cathedrals chronically on show,  
 Their parchment, plate, and pyx in locked cases,  
 And let the rest rent free to rain and sheep.  
 Shall we avoid them as unlucky places?

Philip Larkin is in agreement with the thoughts of the Beatles and he appreciates their works, and cannot help mentioning them in his poem, "Annus Mirabilis", with the following lines:

Sexual intercourse began  
 In nineteen sixty-three  
 (Which was rather late for me) —  
 Between the end of the Chatterly ban  
 And the Beatles' first LP.

This poem gives "self-irony", a touch of "civilized lightness".<sup>53</sup>

The Beatles' song "Eleanor Rigby" has gained the attention of poets and critics, and we can agree with the following comment of Richard Goldstein:

In the tradition of metaphysical poetry the Beatles invest implements of everyday existence with an overwhelming sterility. Rice, socks, cosmetics become instruments of fatalism in this song. And each stanza ends with a metaphysical question, asked in a shrug and left unanswered.<sup>54</sup>

But the beauty of the song will be half-appreciated, if its music is not taken into consideration. In fact, the music adds more to the song's theme, with its sad minor tune.

The songs in this chapter have shown their particular craftsmanship in their respective compositions. The song-writers mentioned in this chapter have employed the basic verbal techniques practised by poets. In the songs, we find the existence of sound patterns that support the meaning, the existence of imagery which includes similes as explicit comparisons and metaphors as implicit ones. The song-writers also use meters and verse patterns,

welcome rhyme and unrhymed schemes, where we still find the use of 'assonance' as well as 'consonance'. There is also the rotation of clichés, bringing them into newer light and form. As for 'poetic diction', no generation feels the same way as its ancestors, and so modern song-writers inevitably use words differently to suit the modern age. But this means the renewal of language, and the twentieth century discards all florid gestures and demands the language of speech. This is also what happens in the history of poetry, which indicates cycles of poetic diction. However, modern song-writers, like all lyricists of the past, have to work in a narrow compass and therefore use more precise qualities of compression and design. Therefore we understand that their words seem to be distilling at the same time - the music, the meaning, the image and idea, the dramatic force and lyrical intensity, even colour, light, and power. The creative urge in song-writers to use these techniques in writing these selected songs, shows that we cannot dismiss them as ordinary songs, but we should accept them as modern poems.

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CHAPTER - IV

IMPACT OF SONG-WRITERS AND THEIR WORKS  
IN CONTEMPORARY SOCIETY AND VICE-VERSA

This chapter concentrates on the inter-action between contemporary society and modern song-writers. From the 1950s onwards, "rock" music has been a major influence in the composition of modern popular songs. Such music combines various musical forms, which previously walked strictly along racial lines. Therefore, today we are innervating myriads of country-rock lyrics, folk-rock lyrics, soul, calypso, reggae lyrics and others. These lyrics deal with bright or uncomfortable topics, as well as with problems facing contemporary society. Songs may be unconventional or conservative, depending on the outlook of the song-writer himself.

However, occasional comments on modern songs and music from experienced critics, appear to be sometimes vague and confused. This springs either out of cultural, religious and political prejudices, or to the more tragic fact, due to ignorance and indifference to the cultural source and stream of popular music. But Truth is stranger than Fiction. R. Serge Denisoff and Richard A. Peterson, have the following comment in the Introduction to their book entitled, The Sounds of Social Change:

Since the dawn of history, music has accompanied man in his work, play and love-making. Songs have been composed to teach, convert, seduce, pacify and arouse. Diverse persecuted groups have galvanized around music; and both political and church authorities, fearing its powers, have tried to repress the joyful noise. Ironically, though men of affairs have long considered music a potent socio-political tool, academic researchers have paid it scant attention.<sup>1</sup>

What is stated above, points to the necessity for acquiring that acute sense of perception of the Greek absolute values of truth and beauty — a perception very much needed for a careful scrutiny of the arts, whether ancient or modern. It will not let us ignore the different streams of popular music that culminate in the production of a variety of modern popular songs. Yet, consciousness of truth and beauty, in turn, brings in a sharp awareness of contemporary environment in which we are living. We live in a scientific age, and we cannot also deny that contemporary society does also include bohemians and beatniks, hipsters and coffee-house desperadoes, who will smash anything involving puritanical repressions. Along with the Dionysian trend in contemporary society, are also traps laid out for the frustrated youth, who automatically become heirs to a ready-made ideology, that may offer hope or disillusionment in a desperate search for status and identity.

Pearl S. Buck, has the following comment in her book,  
The Kennedy Women:

Ours is an age of despair and revolt so deep that even individuals are pulling away from one another. Nowhere is this more evident than in our music, especially in our popular songs. At this very moment while I write I hear on the television a song which cries aloud in yearning pathos, "If that's all there is, then — let's go on dancing. Bring out the booze, and let's have a ball." And the list of titles of popular songs is repetitious individualism, touched with sad loneliness. "By Myself", "I've Gotta Be Me", "I Take A Lot of Pride In What I Am", "I'm All I've Got", "I'm Me", and so on infinitely.

This loneliness is significant, of course, as is the instinct to dance separately, instead of together. But it is significant because this individualism, this loneliness, this separateness cannot be permanent. It is the prelude to a new grouping of human beings. And the likelihood is that the new grouping will be about an individual, who best understands and expresses the present mood of the young who feel themselves not understood, who will give themselves utterly to the one whom they believe understands, and he may then become a dictator. Never has our country been so ready for dictatorship as it is today.<sup>2</sup>

Pearl Buck's comment is a plea for greater tolerance and understanding coming from institutions and establishments of democratic countries towards the younger generation and their popular music — a plea for reshuffling of con-

ventions for a better adaptation in modern times. Only in feeling and doing so, will democracy ward off the forces of dictatorship. Her comment does not let us ignore the power of music in contemporary society and the vital relationship between a particular social group and its music. In this context, we shall have to give prime attention to the evolution and development of protest songs. Their origin can be traced back to the time after the Reformation, when hymns became instrumental in bringing people into a particular denomination. Thus hymns convey the idea of "them" versus "us". Revolutionary elements can be traced out in Methodist hymns, where bar-room tunes were employed for singing in church services. After all, John Wesley himself openly declared by saying: "Why should the devil have all of the good tunes?" To John Wesley, music has loftier purposes than limiting it to sensual entertainments. Hymns of the Methodist revivalists of the 1820s were being gradually borrowed heavily by even secular movements championing Marx and others. Evidences can also be seen in the Nazi use of music as an instrument of powerful social control, where numerous National Socialist songs bear strong similarity to Christian church hymns. One of them is the "Horst Wessel" song, which is in many respects, similar to the Christian hymn entitled "Onward, Christian

Soldiers". These circumstances contribute to the image of a protest song. So nowadays, propaganda songs, especially the political ones that are tinged with a radical colour, are hurriedly classed as protest songs. In addition to this, people who sing them also are branded as iconoclasts and non-conformists. Yet none can stop the element of protest that exists in certain folk-rock lyrics, country-rock lyrics, black lyrics and other types of lyrics.

John Greenway in his book entitled, American Folk Songs of Protest defines protest songs as:

... the struggle songs of the people. They are outbursts of bitterness, of hatred for the oppressor, of determination to endure hardships together and to fight for a better life. Whether they are ballads composed on the picket line, they are imbued with the feeling of communality, or togetherness.<sup>3</sup>

It thus follows that protest songs in folk music can be classified into two types. One type is the magnetic, which invites the non-participant to a movement for a common cause, suggesting group solidarity to find a solution to a common social problem. This type of song is in conflict with certain sections of legitimate institutions of the social structure. In such a song, the pronoun "we" is frequently used. An example can be given from the Black

Freedom Movement that gained its major revival in the 1960s. Certain "civil rights" groups combined the negro spiritual with the labour song of the negroes in cotton plantations. This combination has enabled to produce inspiring "freedom songs". The song "We Shall Overcome" began as a Negro spiritual and was changed into a labour song during the Depression years. But in the 1960s, it became a major representative of such "freedom songs". Although its original significance lies in presenting the entire protest song tradition in America: religion, workers' song and finally, civil rights, it has also gained much love and regard, as a genuine "freedom song" throughout the world. During the civil rights' movement in America, both black and white singers such as Mahalia Jackson, Nina Simone and Joan Baez had enthusiastically sung this song, culminating in the freedom marches to Washington, and awakening the thoughts of the administrators.

Another type of folk protest song is the rhetorical in which there is a voice of protest against inequalities and injustice in society, whether economical, social or political. It expresses anger and frustration, but refrains from offering any solution to a problem for it

remains as a food for thought. Certain protest songs of Bob Dylan are of this type such as "A Hard Rain's A-Gonna Fall", "Oxford Town", and the "Ballad of Hollis Brown". But they are indirectly awakening the conscience of the public. Yet Dylan goes further than this. He has changed the shape of popular music. His concern for contemporary society has made him produce various types and forms of songs, which are also imbued with poetic power.

However, it would not be worthwhile without mentioning the legendary folk-singer and song-writer, Woody Guthrie. He had been a major influence on modern song-writers, particularly Bob Dylan. Although most of Guthrie's lyrics reveal the consciousness of class struggle, yet they contain social significance, ideology and sincerity. Although Woody Guthrie has been called a communist, yet who can deny that on his guitar was the slogan carved with the words: "This Machine Kills Fascists"? Thus Woody Guthrie received bitter criticism as well as praise for his lyrical contributions to the American society and society at large. He became the inspiration of Bob Dylan, who has been able to produce issue-oriented and topical songs, such as "Who Killed Davy Moore", describing the death of a boxer. After mentioning those who denied

responsibility, Dylan pointed out that boxing is illegal in Cuba. "The Lonesome Death of Hattie Carroll" tells the story of a brutal murder of a Baltimore house-servant, committed by a white employer, in which Dylan mentioned their names. The note of tragedy lies in the fact that the white employer, William Zanzinger, received the penalty of only "a six-month sentence". "Subterranean Homesick Blues" points the American social and cultural landscape. Ralph J. Gleason in his article, "A Cultural Revolution" has the following comment on the above lyric:

In "chains of flashing images" Dylan described a world in which young people are monotonously advised to "please her, please him", urged to be a success, told "don't steal, don't lift", and as a reward after "twenty years of schoolin'... they put you on the day shift". The repeated theme of the song was "look out kid, it's something you did, God knows when but you're doin' it again." Dylan hit on the mindless drive to blame the young, the new, and the different, and on the true hypocrisy of the American dream.<sup>4</sup>

And on "Maggie's Farm" and "It's Alright, Ma (I'm Only Bleeding)", Ralph J. Gleason remarks:

Dylan lays out a view of American society as valueless, its institutions as rotten, and its leaders as immoral and without any motive but greed and power.<sup>5</sup>

Since Bob Dylan is known as "the spokesman of his generation", it is not surprising that many young people are influenced by Dylan's songs. They can perceive in his songs, the ideology which despite its radical nature, is imbued with the concept of truth. The majority of his songs turn out to be a pre-requisite for political activity in America, for his songs indicate that the ends do not justify the means, when the means are unjustified. At the same time, his songs point out that this problem cannot be solved, until a way is found to revise the entire social structure. The trio of unofficial anthems, namely "Blowin' in the Wind", "The Times They Are A-Changin'", and "Chimes of Freedom", have revealed the empty values of patriotism in contemporary society, and that the younger generation would prefer to be alive, in whatever colour it is, where there is no cause worth dying for. At the same time, Dylan has pointed out, that contemporary society would be better off, if it trusts on its own intuitions, thoughts and feelings, and then only, it will not need "a weather man to know which way the wind blows."

His lyrics are moving and almost spiritual in nature and have had a tremendous impact on contemporary society.

Bob Dylan has been best summed up by critic Alfred Arnowitz, in the following words:

He has almost single-handedly changed the shape of popular music. He has fathered a new generation of poets, helped shape the probability that contemporary music will become the literature of our time.<sup>6</sup>

Contemporary society cannot also ignore protest songs advocating black culture and black power. Although American negroes no longer don a mask or commune with spirits, they symbolically take refuge behind a clarinet, a drum, a guitar, a piano or a voice, to give expression to their thoughts and feelings. The vocal roots of black protest songs can be given in three general forms.

... "the shout song" (a rhythmic religious song characterized by responsive singing between leader and congregation) and the "moan" (to make a low, prolonged sound of grief or pain). These utterances represent the beginnings of Negro protest under the bonds of slavery. However, the "cry" (an inarticulate utterance of distress, rage or pain; to cry out for help or to proclaim publicly) is unique, because it is the quintessence of the new sound of protest in avant-garde jazz today.<sup>7</sup>

The above quotation is given to show that these roots become techniques utilized by negro singers up to the present day, in their vocal rendition of the black songs.

A group of these lyrics belong to the famous "soul music" of the negroes.

When Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was assassinated, Nina Simone, known as the "High Priestess of Soul", cried out in her song, "Why? (The King of Love is Dead)". That question reverberated throughout the country, making Nina Simone become the voice of the black revolution, as well as opening up the eyes of the white community. Her songs first touched the hearts, then the minds and finally the souls of the people. However, there was already a sign of frustration in the 1950s, among American negroes, regarding social and economic injustice heaped upon them. They gave vent to their frustration through popular songs, of which two examples are "Sixteen Tons" and "Detroit City" where mining and factory work were not glorified at all. However it was only when James Brown, known as "The Godfather of Soul", released his composition, which was the new anthem for black people, entitled "Say It Loud — I'm Black and I'm Proud", that modern American negroes become conscious of their own identity. It created in them a desire to preserve it in every aspect of life. Unfortunately the Ku Klux Klan elements that run in lyrics like "Run, Nigger, Run" and "Nigger Be A Nigger" contribute

only to a sharp re-action from black song-writers like Sly Stone who composed a lyric with a defiant title, "Don't Call Me Nigger, Whitey". In the midst of such unhappy circumstances, there are song-writers, both black and white, who are still sincerely helping, through their lyrics, if not to solve, but at least to calm the racial tension. The lyrics of Bob Dylan, Joan Baez, Stevie Wonder and Bob Marley have given their share in tackling this acute problem. In their own distinctive styles, they are a boon to society at large. The reggae music of Bob Marley still inspires the young unemployed blacks in America, Britain and Europe for it gives them hope and focus in life. If after emperor Haile Selassie, Bob Marley was the Rastafarian with the largest following, he had gained recognition for his unstinting efforts towards people's rights by both the governments of Zimbabwe and Jamaica. On his death, glowing tributes were paid to this great patriotic singer and song-writer by various leading politicians.

Another group of modern popular songs that fall within the country-music genre reflect fundamentalism. Certain songs of Johnny Cash, Tim Hardin, John Denver, Glen Campbell and others, convey the conservative ideas

of love and the family life and of the nostalgic theme of the "good old days". At the same time the cowboy-style of singing the lyrics depicts the promise —and—denial tragedy, as well as causes rationalizing failure in life, short of questioning the American dream itself.

Yet in all types of love-lyrics, the image of woman in contemporary society should not be ignored. Women cast in a world of reality are living —personalities and not figments of imagination, as in the past. As an illustration we have Bob Dylan's "Sad-eyed Lady Of The Lowlands" and "Just Like a Woman" that focus on a day-to-day personality. These lyrics reveal woman's greed, hypocrisy, whining and hysteria, which are her natural traits. Yet all along, who can deny the patronizing observation where adult women have a way of breaking "just like a little girl"? But the inhuman and distorted image of woman appears in the music of the Rolling Stones, where sexual exploitation reaches unique heights. Marion Meade, has the following comment on the lyrics of the Rolling Stones in her article, "The Degradation of Women", for to the Rolling Stones:

A woman is a "Stupid Girl" who should be kept "Under My Thumb", a "Honky Tonk Woman" who gives a man "Satisfaction". In "Yesterday's Papers", where women are equated with newspapers, the dehumanization is carried to an extreme. Who wants yesterday's papers, the song arrogantly demands, who wants yesterday's girl? The answer: Nobody. Once used, a woman is as valuable as an old newspaper, presumably good only for wrapping garbage.

But the Stones' album "Let It Bleed" is surely unrivalled when it comes to contempt for women, as well as lewdness in general. One cut in particular, "Live With Me" is explicit about woman's proper place: "Doncha' think there's a place for you in between the sheets?" And only an extraordinary masochistic woman could listen to the album's title song with any sense of pleasure whatsoever. There a woman is represented as a drive-in bordello, a one-stop sexual shopping centre offering all the standard services plus a few extras casually thrown in as a kind of shopper's Special of the Day.

The Stone's next album has been tentatively titled "Bitch". It figures.<sup>8</sup>

But, Marion Meade asserts that the "sadistic, anti-woman sneers of Mick Jagger" of the Rolling Stones will be short-lived. No wonder that such lyrics tarnish the image of woman and become a speck in the eye to other modern song-writers in their search for certain true values in Woman.

In turning to the Beatles, we find they always kept one step ahead of current trends. Their energy and inventiveness had enabled them to give the decade an image of itself. But what hurts contemporary society in democratic countries, appears to be the production of the two songs, namely "Revolution" and "Back In The U.S.S.R.", jointly written by John Lennon and Paul McCartney. Their release had infuriated Gary Allen and other critics, who even suspected that the above recorded lyrics were being smuggled into Russia from East Germany - a suspicion based on the fact that the Beatles had received their intensive training in Hamburg. These critics charged that these two songs take the Moscow line and were being based on Lenin's Left Wing Extremism: An Infantile Disorder. No matter what certain critics said, we should remember that the Beatles were advocating Free Thought, as can be seen in their lyrics with a phrase, such as "free your mind instead". When the Beatles sang the phrase mentioned above, people gained confidence for the beat was translated into a personality of movement. Free thought was encouraged, not because it was radical in nature, but because of that privilege for mental freedom, enabling people to opt for the Right or for the Left, in the true democratic sense. In the song "Revolution", the "count me

out" version seems to outweigh the "count me in" version.  
John Lennon sang the lines:

You say you got a real solution  
Well, you know  
We'd all love to see the plan  
You ask me for a contribution,  
Well, you know  
We're doing what we can.  
But if you want money for people with  
minds that hate  
All I can tell you is brother you  
have to wait.

The above lines, are in themselves, an indication that we cannot woo the Beatles to a cause to which they were not committed. Instead, people went to them for a confirmation of their own attitudes, however unpleasant those might be to the Beatles. Thus we can agree with Greil Marcus, when he makes the following comment in his article, "A New Awakening":

A lot of the people were mad at the Beatles because their "politics" didn't agree with ours. We felt tricked, because we had expected the Beatles to be our spokesmen (whoever "we" were), to say what we wanted to hear, what we wanted to learn about. We had taken the Beatles for granted, and if we felt tricked, it was probably our fault. There was though, a lot more involved.

The Beatles were giving orders and setting up rules, singing words that were perfectly intelligible, making sure

nobody missed anything, singing a song that neatly caught a listener in a logical trap. No one takes sides with the "minds that hate" that the Beatles were singing about. "Revolution", though hardly a protest song, worked like one. It set up all the old barriers, retrieving all the abandoned assumptions about life: the world divided into two sides, right and wrong, one side indefensible, the other side unassailable. And who wants to be wrong, especially when the magic Beatles are beckoning? .... The lyrics John Lennon was singing had no space doubt or illusion, no space for the listener if he happened to be different. They had no space, for that matter, for fun. Nothing was left to the imagination. The words delivered a straightforward message, a strict command.<sup>9</sup>

The above comment also applies to another song by John Lennon, namely "Give Peace A Chance", which offered political action even in the American political arena. Lennon's political lyrics are not threatening, but appealing and thought-provoking. Thus no one seriously believes the Beatles to be Kremlin agents, otherwise they would not be rewarded with an MBE by the British Crown.

Although, the Beatles as a group were influenced by the Transcendental Meditation Movement and the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (the ISKCON), George Harrison was the only Beatle who harboured a deep interest in Indian music and the intricacies of the

philosophy of Hindu religion. Through the strenuous exercises on the sitar, given by Ravi Shankar, he was well versed with the 'pick' Misra; the stroke given to the note Bol; the 'da', the 'ra' and the 'diri diri'. He was also well versed with the 'Krintan' and the 'Meend', which relate to clipping the sitar-string and bending the notes, respectively. So along with his self-discipline, were Harrison's efforts to combine the Eastern and Western cultures and faiths into one. This maybe a gigantic task and a controversial one in some circles. But for his lyric, "My Sweet Lord", he wrote in his book, entitled I.Me.Mine:

I wanted to show that 'Halleluja' and 'Hare Krishna' are quite the same thing. I did the voices singing 'Halleluja' first and then the change to 'Hare Krishna' so that people would be chanting the Maha Mantra - ... a 'Mantra' which repeats over and over again, holy names.

I don't feel guilty or bad about it, in fact it saved many a heroin addict's life. 10

Of course, in total, the Beatles lyrics seem to satisfy all things to all men. Yet their songs clarified the options, such as, sexual freedom, experimentation with drugs, political commitment, transcendental religion, and even counter-cultural activity; their songs simultaneously incited us to try some of these, and at the same

time warned that in the end, we would be disappointed as they had been. Yet if Dylan represents a relentless real description of modern days, the Beatles speak of hope, as in "Hey Jude" and "Imagine" which are almost religious in tone, and also of a glorious future as in their lyric entitled "All We Need Is Love".

Another influential song-writer is Leonard Cohen who gives a poetic touch to his song-lyrics, making people aware of their aesthetic values when poetry and music are combined. Leonard Cohen's song "Suzanne" turns from the ordinary, and gets itself surprised into a world of visionary experience.

Out of the junk of the everyday — "the garbage and the flowers" — the magical world of the imaginative is created. There is a strong sense in which his poetry is a prodigious search of experience for the exit from the ordinary.<sup>11</sup>

His song-lyrics and especially his ballads, have been able to create a powerful impact upon society, for they are the stepping stones of the surrealistic experiences of his imagination, that at times, become almost gnomic.

Contemporary society is also influenced by Zen Buddhism. Poets of the Beat generation like Allen Ginsberg and others, are influenced by it. So also are modern

song-writers. This can be seen particularly in love-lyrics, where the isolation phase offers a chance of exploring the facets of the self, which can only be possible, when one is alone. Examples are songs like "Solitary Man" by Neil Diamond and Paul Simon and Garfunkel's "I Am A Rock". Cat Stevens' album, Catch Bull At Four concentrates on a big circle, within which an Oriental is engaging the horns of a bull. The title was derived from Zen's ten stages of enlightenment.

One can also notice that modern society is also deeply troubled with controversies concerning the generation gap. However, one can find songs that sincerely help to bridge the generation gap. Songs like "Lemon Tree", "Sixteen Yellow Roses", "But You Love Me, Daddy", "Father and Son", are attempts to bring closer family ties. Critics may lash at a portion of Dylan's song, "The Times They Are A-Changin'" as being on the way to the generation gap, but they forget that Dylan has clearly pointed out, that the gap will not happen, if the older generation lend a helping hand to the young and the new. He thus sings the lines: "Please get out of the new road/If you can't lend a hand/For the times they are a changin'". The Beatles as well, have shown concern about the old and

lonely people. Thus, they sang songs like "Eleanor Rigby" and "When I'm Sixty Four". Modern society maybe rigged in, between causes for and against the generation gap, but certain lyrics have provided hope for a closer-knit society.

Modern popular songs provide us with evidence that the song-writers have an important role in contemporary society. It should also be noted that the milieu in modern society, gives rise to the character, shape and form of modern songs. Certain lyrics express love and happiness in a modern setting. But the majority of lyrics between 1955 and 1975, reveal the tenacity to deal with problems facing modern society, such as racialism, denial of human rights, class-struggle, the psychic fear of the impending nuclear war and many other problems. We therefore find that the merit of modern songs lies in the fact that they emphasize liberal humanistic thinking.

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ENDNOTES

1. Edited by R. Serge Denisoff and Richard A. Peterson, The Sounds of Social Change, (Chicago: Rand McNally & Company, 1972), p.1.
2. Pearl S. Buck, The Kennedy Women (A Personal Appraisal) (London: Methuen & Co. Ltd., 1970), pp.208,209.
3. John Greenway, American Folk Songs of Protest, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 1953), p. 3.
4. Ed. by R. Serge Denisoff and Richard A. Peterson, Op.cit., p. 141.
5. Ed. by R. Serge Denisoff and Richard A. Peterson, p. 142.
6. The "Reader's Digest", The Reader's Digest Association Ltd., September, 1970, p. 164
7. Ed. by R. Serge Denisoff and Richard A. Peterson, Op.cit., p. 29.
8. Op.cit., pp. 174, 175.
9. Op.cit., pp. 130, 131.
10. George Harrison, I. Me. Mine. (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1980), p. 176.
11. Ed. by James Vinson, Contemporary Poets, Second ed., (London: St. James Press, 1975), p. 268.

CHAPTER - V

CONCLUSION

Songs, in whatever form they are, have a vital link with poetry and literature at large; for if literature is the expression of life itself, then songs are the channels for such expression. Lyrics form the bulk of poetry in most literatures. The earliest lyrics found are the pyramid texts of Egypt, where we have examples of the funeral song (a kind of elegy), the song of praise to the king (a type of Ode), and an invocation to the gods (a form of hymn). If we turn to the Greeks, we find that they focus on the union of melody (both vocal and instrumental) and poetry. In fact, they accept the two, to be practically synonymous. Thus, the Greeks define a lyric as a song to be sung to the accompaniment of a lyre. Aristotle states in his Poetics, that any form of poetry that lacks music, should not be given any designation at all. Even the word "tragedy" to the Greeks, incorporates the verb aeidein, which means "to sing". The Roman contribution comes in the form of lyrics that are sombre, such as those written by Virgil and others. From Spain, come the so-called Patristic lyrical songs, which originated in religious ceremonials. Thus, most of them are in the form of hymns and psalms. In addition, the traditions of the East and the West had strived to perfect the art of writing lyrics in the past centuries. On the other hand,

England produced outstanding Old English lyrics, such as "The Seafarer", "The Wife's Lament" and others. It is also known that up till the 16th Century, in England and Europe, poet and composer and musician were often one and the same. Thus, it is no wonder, that such singer-poets are known in literature as the skalds, scops, troubadours, troverés and minne-singers. Their lyrical compositions got specific names, like "chanso", "sirventes", "tenso", "planh", "pastorela" and "aubade". Scottish singer-poets are known as bards or minstrels. In England and Europe, the inheritance of songs from the past, comes in the form of madrigals, cantatas and others. Solos, duets, quartets or choruses are usually found in masques and operas. In England, even carols and nursery rhymes are given an important place in literature. Some outstanding examples are Milton's "Nativity Hymn", Southwell's "The Burning Babe" and Lewis Carrol's "Humpty Dumpty sat on a wall". Modern writers like W.H. Auden, Brendan Behan, John Arden and others, accept the vital role of songs in their works.

T.S. Eliot was deeply convinced that poetry and music should go together for he says that the properties in which music concerns the poet most, are "the sense of rhythm" and "the sense of structure". He was inspired by

Beethoven's symphony, when he wrote the Four Quartets; for a symphony contains the first voice, the second voice, the third voice, and the fourth voice. T. S. Eliot himself brought in the image of a song, in the very titles of his poems, such as "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock", "Choruses from 'the Rock'-1934" and others. There is no doubt that Eliot believed that songs play an important role in poetry.

Decades come and decades go, yet songs live on, although wearing new and newer forms. But the majority of these lyrics from the 1950s onwards, come under the influence of rock music. Even Ihab Hassan in his book, Contemporary American Literature, calls the modern singer-poets, the "new rock minstrels" who utilize current technology to suit "their ancient bardic role". The lyrics of the Beatles, Bob Dylan, John Denver, Paul Simon and others, dwell on themes that express joy and happiness, and a readiness to share the responsibility of solving the problems of contemporary society. Thus, the themes also focus on problems which are national and international. These problems maybe social, political or religious in nature. Moreover, there is always that psychic fear of the impending nuclear war. If lyrics express the

anger of the people in the present day, they come in the form of protest songs. However, modern popular instrumental music should be taken into account, as it partly contributes to produce lyrics that give us an insight into real life situations.

It follows that modern love songs break away from the traditional ones, for they are very realistic, such as Tim Hardin's "If I Were A Carpenter" and "I Walk The Line" written by Johnny Cash. Bob Lind's "Elusive Butterfly" symbolizes modern love, and comments on the instability of social habits in contemporary society. The conventional image of Woman no longer exists. Women in modern lyrics are flesh-and-blood personalities, for they are in a world of reality and not of dreams. Bob Dylan's ballad entitled, "Sad-Eyed Lady of the Lowlands", shows the paradoxical quality of Woman, which is the truth of every man's beloved. The theme on nostalgia still exists, as in the lyric of the Beatles entitled "Yesterday" and Gene Raskin's lyric entitled "Those Were The Days". The western world's acceptance of religious faiths and cults coming from the East, can be seen in the Beatle George Harrison's lyrics, such as "My Sweet Lord", "Awaiting On You All", "The Inner Light" and others. However, Christian

hymns based on traditional tunes and words are still sung, such as "Amazing Grace" and "Abide With Me". Protest songs have a tremendous impact upon society, and the political ones have proved to get the most attention. This can be seen in the various compositions of Bob Dylan, such as "Masters of War", "Talkin' World War III Blues" and the song with an ironical title, "With God On Our Side". His other lyric entitled "Blowin' in the Wind" has become an anthem for all protest movements in America, especially the political ones. Dylan's apocalyptic visions of the dangers of a nuclear war can be found in his other lyric entitled "A Hard Rain's A-Gonna Fall". John Lennon's attempt to solve the problem of war is described in his lyric entitled "Give Peace A Chance", which offered political action even in the American political arena. If ever there is a common theme in his solo songs, it is that universal peace and love as well as religious tolerance, can prevent the world's annihilation. Thus, we are enticed, when we hear the Beatles singing the famous song, "Imagine". The racial problem has surfaced even in popular lyrics. It is rather unfortunate, one feels, to hear the Ku Klux Klan express their racist feelings in such lyrics as "Nigger, Be A Nigger" and "Run, Nigger Run", only to be repudiated by modern black lyrics as that of James

Brown with a defiant title, "Say It Loud - I'm Black and I'm Proud" (1968), depicting the new black American consciousness and awareness of one's own identity. We also have Sly Stone's lyric with a defiant title, "Don't Call Me Nigger, Whitey!". However, sincere attempts to calm, if not to solve the racial tensions, appeared in the vocal renditions of Joan Baez during the Civil Rights movements, and in the mature political statements of Bob Dylan, as can be found in his lyrics entitled, "The Lonesome Death of Hattie Carroll" and "Only A Pawn In Their Game".

Good lyrics meet all the requirements essential for good poetry. Since lyricists have to work in a narrow compass, they give attention to compression and design. Modern lyrics also display that art and craft are indivisible. In them, we find the existence of sound-patterns that support the meaning. Imagery dwells in the lyrics, where similes are employed as explicit comparisons and metaphors as implicit ones, and even the rotation of clichés into newer light. As certain modern poems also include conscious obscurity, so also this element exists in certain modern songs. The song-writers also use rhyme and unrhymed schemes, and 'assonance' as well as 'consonance'. Their 'poetic diction' is in harmony with the

twentieth century that demands a language that is real and practical to suit the modern age. Modern songs not only radiate the dramatic force, but also colour, light and power.

Conscious obscurity lies mostly in drug lyrics. This in turn, brings in a sharp awareness of language. We can take two examples from the lyrics of the Beatles. The first one, possesses a symbolical title — "Lucy In The Sky With Diamonds". The symbol lies within the initials of the title itself. In the words "Lucy", "Sky" and "Diamonds", we get their initials — L.S.D. Thus, we get the message of a drug experience in the song. But at the same time, the song has got the innocent offering of a child's delight and pleasure. All that the Beatles as a group had attempted to do, is to re-open the nursery door to reveal a wonderful landscape which is more that of Hans Christian Andersen and Lewis Carroll than that of William Burroughs. The second lyric called the "Yellow Submarine" delights the children. But to adults who are well-versed in drug-terminology, know that a "yellow jacket" is a submarine-shaped barbituarate that submerges a person.

Bob Dylan's method of rhyme is a good one, for X.J. Kennedy has stated in his book, An Introduction To Poetry, that a good rhyme is not an expected one, but should have the capacity to surprise. This can be seen in many of Dylan's lyrics. In his lyric entitled "All I Really Want To Do", we can see that the whole song is involved in end rhyme, internal rhyme, masculine rhyme and feminine rhyme.

The songs composed by the Canadian poet, Leonard Cohen, have the consistency of modern verse, but unlike linear poetry, they are deeply immersed in rhythm, as in his song, "Suzanne".

Paul Simon's song, entitled "The Sound of Silence" is a symbolic picture of man's alienation from his fellow-men. The theme of man's alienation is emphasized in the tone of contrast, which can be seen in the very title of the song as well as in certain stanzas of the song. In developing the theme, prominent symbols are employed in the form of visual colours and the repercussions of the language. For shades of colour, we have "darkness" symbolizing loneliness, "night" as the state of the subconscious, "the halo of a street lam", symbolizing warmth and sympathy; and a "neon light" signifying the presence

of a crowd reaching out for the cold fingers of contemporary materialism. The repercussions of the musical language lies in diction itself and the auditory sensitiveness to the words. In this song, we can hear and feel the degrees of sound. Thus in the song, we have the words: "sound", "talking", "speaking", "echoed", "whispered" and "silence", which is the absolute negativeness of sound. Even the musical tune attached to the song is compatible to the theme. On this, we should note that, as there are "measures" in poetry, so also there are "bars" in music, where in both, there is a "falling rhythm" and a "rising rhythm". We should also note that a "pause" (.) (a deliberate silence) in vocal music, no matter how short it is, becomes a counterpart to a "silent stress" (^) in poetry. Therefore we can feel and hear that the melody and words blend perfectly well in this song, where musical notes linger a bit longer on the words "sound" and "silence" and where there is a "pause" in between. So the musical "pause" or the poetical "silent stress", covers the entire contrasting tone on the words "sound" and "silence".

In song-writing, Bob Dylan uses clichés, for a popular song cannot scorn a cliché. Such is the evidence of Dylan's genius with words, which is often a matter, as

T. S. Eliot said, of being original with the minimum of alteration. [Introductory Essay to London and The Vanity of Human Wishes (1930)]7. As an example, we have the love song of Bob Dylan entitled "I Threw It All Away", where we have the following lines:

So if you find someone that gives you all  
of her love,  
Take it to your heart, don't let it stray.

Bob Dylan stubbornly refuses to write down the phrase 'Take her to your heart' usually found in love-songs of the past decades, for he knows perfectly well that people would expect him to write the next usual phrase 'And take her in your arms'. He does not even write down the old phrase 'take it to heart'. Christopher Ricks in his book, The Force of Poetry, has the following comment on Dylan's love-song:

The trouble with a cliché like 'take it to heart' is that by now it's almost impossible to take it to heart. ...  
'Take it to heart' becomes 'Take it to your heart', just enough to take it into the heartfelt; it stands for 'all of her love'.

In another of Dylan's songs, entitled "Masters of War" we have the cliché "see through your eyes", which ordinarily means seeing through another person's point of view,

which is easier said than done and a very misguided thing to do too. Bob Dylan tactfully wrests the cliché, in order to bring in the sense which goes with sharp-eyed suspicion. So the phrase turns out to be 'seeing through things' and knowing the cunning and hypocrisy of the masters of war. On this, Christopher Ricks again comments:

The cliché has been alerted, and we are alerted to its clichéness, seeing the words from a new perspective, a different point of view, and seeing penetratingly through them.

These are only a few examples of clichés in the lyrics written by Bob Dylan, in addition to other critical aspects found in his lyrics. 'Make it new' commanded Ezra Pound, and this is what Dylan has done in the renovation of the state of language.

Another interesting trend in modern poetry is the tendency, if only occasionally, to turn poems and songs in the form of sly puzzles. John Lennon's power as a lyricist is greatest when he tears apart the actual texture of words and rearranges them into a sly puzzle. This can be seen in his lyric entitled "I Am The Walrus." In this song, Lennon's style of writing bears strong similarity to Lewis Carroll's apparently nonsense poem entitled,

"Jabberwocky", where Humpty Dumpty explains that there are puzzle-like words with the playing of the vowels and the consonants as well as packed-suitcase words.

Yet if there is a reconciliation of Poetry with Music, how can we preserve these lyrics? Mere printing of words freezes songs, for a song cannot stand the scrutiny of mere reading. It is for this reason, that Sir Walter Scott, who was a pioneer collector of Scottish folk ballads, was once reprimanded by one singer, for merely printing the lines of songs. It is for this same reason, that Pete Seeger's father goes on record by saying that: "A printed folk song is like a photograph of a bird in flight". And it is this same reason that prompted T.S. Eliot to comment, that the lyrics of Thomas Campion are not only to be read, but also to be sung in a Tudor musical setting. Thus the only way to preserve songs, is by printing the words and simultaneously placing them in their particular musical settings, similar to the manner of Ben Jonson's poem "To Celia". Moreover, since we are living in an age of science and technology, these lyrics can be preserved in a retrieval system in the music-libraries of the world, for the sake of the generations yet unborn.

Blake Morrison has commented in the Times Literary Supplement (May 15, 1981), that the lyrics of the Beatles, Bob Dylan and Leonard Cohen can be ranked with the poetry of Blake and Shelley. Their lyrics are indeed "The Poetry of Relevance" which is social relevance in particular. Dylan's various lyrics dwell on the social questions of our time. The Beatles sang of the "Nowhere Man" with an Audenesque style as in Auden's "The Unknown Citizen". Moreover the Beatles' "Nowhere Man" reflects the nihilistic trend in contemporary society. The rhetorical question in the song is left unanswered, for it is food for thought. The Beatles' lyric "Eleanor Rigby" reveals a sympathetic tone for the old and ordinary people, who face rejection in society and whose social and economic problems spring out from various sources. This song is a reminder of Blake's poem "London", which deals with the "oppressed characteristic victims". It focusses on the theme of people's loneliness, similar to the themes in Philip Larkin's poetry, Larkin seems to appreciate the ideas of the Beatles and cannot help mentioning "the Beatles' first LP" in his poem, "Annus Mirabilis". Moreover, regarding social relevance, if Shelley's hope and longing for a revolutionary change, lie in the question: "O, Wind,/If Winter comes, can Spring be far behind?"; the same hope

and longing lie in the 'answer' of Bob Dylan's lyric, where we have the lines: "The answer, my friend, is blowin' in the wind,/The answer is blowin' in the wind." Undeniably, the song of the Beatles entitled "Imagine" is only the hope of the Beatles for the coming in of a Shelley-type millenium. Leonard Cohen's song "Suzanne" can be accepted as a modern representation of Blake's harlot and Cohen's sympathy for Suzanne is the same as our sympathy for Thomas Hood's harlot in his poem, "The Bridge of Sighs".

Beside the song-writers and their lyrics mentioned in the previous chapters, possess the requisites of good poetry; perhaps some of them contain the best poetry of our times. There are times in life, when thousands of people feel exactly like what those songs say. Whether they are sad or happy songs, they are valid expressions of human poignancy and vulnerability, of human light heartedness and a strange warmth that can never be replaced by other works of art. If poetry is meant to explore the facets of the human soul in a language that evokes rather than states, then the modern musician-poets have done it. There is every reason, to assert that the selected songs should be accepted as modern poems. Although

prominent song-writers like Bob Dylan, the Beatles, Paul Simon and others, with the exception of Leonard Cohen, are primarily musicians, the words in their lyrics are exclusively poetic. This is what prompts the Indian critic, Mondon Bagchi, to state:

To ignore their poems as ordinary song lyrics would deprive modern poetry of its most exciting, most fascinating aspect. And possibly its most authentic.<sup>1</sup>

ENDNOTES

1. Youth Times , Volume VIII, No. 17, Feb.1-14, 1980.

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