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Politics of the Portrait of the Self in Bob Dylan's *Chronicles Volume One*

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Letter of Recommendation

Top Raj Rai has completed this thesis entitled “Politics of the Portrait of the Self in *Bob Dylan’s Chronicles Volume One*” under my supervision. He carried out his research from Dec 2018 till July 2019. This thesis meets the required standards to justify the award for Master in English. I hereby, recommend his thesis be submitted for viva voce.

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Letter of Approval

This thesis entitled "Politics of the Portrait of the Self in *Bob Dylan's Chronicles Volume One*" submitted to the Central Department of English has been approved by undersigned members of research committee.

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Abstract

The current research analyzes the twist and turn of the 'identity' of the biggest living musical artist Bob Dylan in his book Chronicles volume one. It attempts to investigate the mystery behind his multiple images, his hidden intention and aims to resolve the curiosity posed on his puzzled behavior in order to confirm and reveal his true self. The doppelganger nature of Dylan's character in Chronicles has evoked deep thirst on the researcher to explore the kind of self portrayal strategy chosen by the artist. Hence, the researcher argues on Bob Dylan's intention in Chronicles which is comprised of a strategy to subdue his identity crisis by applying his own version of self portrayal strategy. The researcher uses Sidonie Smith and Julia Watson idea of autobiography and Suzette A. Henke notion of Scriptotherapy, Linda Anderson's notion of autobiography and Paul Ricoeurs idea of hermeneutics of self. As a result: the researcher comes up with following key findings: An artist should not be confined and fixed on the basis of an absolute image and value; their space and privacy must be valued; politics behind portrait of Dylan's self is for the purpose of self healing, enlightening, motivating, awareness and surviving mainstreams culture.

Keywords: self, identity, ambivalent, mainstream culture; grand narratives; space; multiplicity; voice of generation

Bob Dylan is one of the most celebrated prominent icons in musical history whose musical and lyrical mastery has contributed in preserving folk tradition, enhancing mass awakening and resisting injustice and inequality. But he is also controversial at the same time when it comes to his indifferent nature, identity and inconstant musical taste. Many worshipped him as an idol while many accused him as an escapist, rock scene of death, rule breaker and ambiguous persona. Behind all these

accusations everybody wants to know the real Dylan inside out. Therefore, one and only key to access Bob Dylan's universe is through his autobiography *Chronicles* which clearly depicts him as a person in reality. *Chronicles* presents Dylan's insights, his life and struggle in musical career but at the same time it lacks authenticity by shadowing his origin, public concern and highlighting only his self interest. He is often charged for not revealing his specific identity whether as a truly inclined folk artist, rock and roll artist, writer, lyricist, performer or voice of the generation. *Chronicles* invites a huge question on Bob Dylan's choice for only highlighting his creative identity as Bob Dylan and consciously not his original identity (Robert Allan Zimmerman). Therefore, this research argues that *Chronicles* is comprised of politics to subdue his identity crisis by employing his self portrait strategy. *Chronicles* attempts to survive Dylan's identity from misrepresentation or being misled and advocates in reinstating his creative image with an authoritarian power. Therefore the research mainly focus on Bob Dylan's intention in *Chronicles* and aims to resolve the curiosity posed on his puzzled behavior in order to confirm and reveal his true self. The objective of this research is to reveal Dylan's real face behind all the rumors surrounding his nature, image and allegations. This research mainly contributes to settle down Bob Dylan's well wishers and his critics confusion regarding his ambiguous status, interest and nature. In addition, it will also contribute to develop a new perspective of observing an artist especially through their own lens and without the influence of exterior view points.

Bob Dylan's childhood experience in *Chronicles* indicates that he is unstable in one specific geographical location until the location that promised him the better quality of dream on the field of his interest. He was born in a country village 'Duluth' as Robert Allan Zimmermaon may 24, 1941 where his father originally belonged to;

grown up in Hibbing (Minnesota) where time stuck slow; thereafter freed himself in Minneapolis for primary education. He belongs to middle class family where his stubborn father (who belief hard work is everything) wants him to pursue education to make fortune in mechanical engineer. Instead he involves mostly finding right path that can excel his musical thirst and as a result he struggles even to get a decent grade in school. Finally one day he decides to hitchhike New York City to label his fortune on music following his master Woody Guthrie's footsteps without any of his family's consent (256). Dylan transforms his identity into Bob Dylan: 'Bob' from his childhood nickname 'Bobby' and surname which is inherited from his uncle's family 'Dillon' (modified into Dylan) to add a poetic value with the special influence from poet Dylan Thomas (78). The contradictory relationship between his father's dream with his own; the abandonment of his root identity, family and home for the sake of his creative identity reflects his opposing nature against the societal chain, ritual and orderly constraints from the very early. *Chronicles* is also an example of rejoicing the freedom of adding new 'titled' image as a writer or autobiographer and also an excuse to clear the doubt posed on Dylan's ambiguous image.

Chronicles is divided into five chapters: The first two "Marking Up the Score," and "The Lost Land" attempts to present Dylan's way to New York city; his debut album contract with Leeds Music and an encounter with the city culture. The third Chapter "New Morning" includes his struggle against public rage, media while thriving to create a private space for his self and his family in Woodstock; resentment on his father's death and the marker of Dylan's comeback album "New Morning". Forth chapter "Oh Mercy," presents his shift to New Orleans where he struggles with new musician to reinstate his creative process with the epiphany of musical change. The final chapter "River of Ice," returns to an early age in New York City marking

the withdrawal of his first signed contract with Leed and Columbia Music Company. The overview of subtitles hints as if it only cares in representing Dylan's major experience with his journey to musical height but at the same degree; it is also embedded with Dylan's honesty in exposing his shift in behavioral quality with genuine reason emphasizing on an indirect clue of representation.

Bob Dylan invites wide propositions and discourse among the mass media, public and musical history because of his reluctance and indifferent nature and inconstant musical taste. *Chronicles* offers an answer to the entire allegation posed on his ambivalent nature. He has exposed in *Chronicles* about his changed name subsequently like Robert Allan Zimmerman, Bob Dylan, Elston Gunn, Blind Boy Grunt, Bob Landy, Robert Milkwood Thomas, Tedham Porterhouse, Lucky Wilbury, Boo Wilberry, Jack Forest, Sergei Petrov etc. Similarly profession wise, some believed he is true folk artist who will carry the folk legacy whereas other believed him as a poet or song writer; many trusted him as the voice of his generation. Later, he is backfired for standing binary to all these previous note which are as follows: he is seen blending folk music into rock flavor (folk rock); for example in albums like *Highway 61 Revisited*, *Blonde and Blonde*, *The Basement Tapes*; his trade mark lose specificity when his musical priority transformed into rock and roll, blues and mostly electric music; his music and lyrics loosed the grip of traditional mark (rhymes, rhythm, verse and beats). As a result, in *Chronicles*, he is tagged as convention breaker, escapist when his lyrics advocated voice for underprivileged during civil right movement but his action did not (116-20).

Bob Dylan was born and raised during the peak of Second World War which enhanced mass awakening and encouraged the assurance of each individual's value, right of choice and freedom of expression. The revolution against societal chain,

constraints, race, inequality and demand for transparency were echoing everywhere during 1960. It was the same time when beats, hippies, transgender, minorities emerged with the demand to institutionalize counter culture sets of principle which was new and challenging to the prevailing societal phenomena. Bob Dylan marks the biggest historical events in *Chronicles: Vietnam war (1954-1975)*, assassination of (John F. Kennedy (Nov 22, 1963), Malcolm X (Feb 21,1965), Martin Luther King(4th April 1968) which took place on the similar historical date. Dylan claims in *Chronicles*: “Maoists, Marxists, Castroites- leftist kids who read Che Guevara instruction booklets were out to topple the economy” (114). The impact of new principle was massively advancing to encroach and throw away the western crown of principle. When the public rage in America was like wildfire and every minorities voice came into the surface; Dylan attempted to encapsulate the situation on his lyrics like: “Master of war”, “Knocking on a Heavens Door”, “Times they are a changing”, “With God on our side”, “It’s Alright Ma (I’m Only Bleeding)”, “Mr. Tambourine Man”, “Only a Pawn in Their Game”, “Hard Rain’s a Gonna Fall”, “Gates of Eden” and numerous other heartrending lyrics to satirize the system responsible for all the chaos. Such spellbinding lyrics one after another shaped his overnight popular image as a spokes person for minorities. Although he denies the title of spokes man for the generation, which took an overnight disparity twisting public and his opinion. He confessed: “I’m not a spokesperson of anything or anybody and I m only a musician” (119).

The dilemma of crisis choked musical environment and its genre as well. Initially Dylan is seen carrying the legacy of folk preservation as he told “Folk music was embedded like a religion to him” (27). He truly followed his folk master Woody Guthrie’s footmark dedicating his debut album song “A Song to Woody,” which

shaped his image as truly inclined Folk artist. But Dylan later changed his way with certain upgrades on folk mood, attitude and imagination because of which he was charged of breaking away from traditional folk style. Dylan defends it saying: “As for me what I did to break away was take simple folk changes and put new imagery and attitude to the set of ordinances that evolved into something different that had not been heard before” (67). Similarly, *New York Times* review about Dylan’s performance charged him exclaiming; “he breaks all the rules in the song writing except that of having something to say.” But Dylan in response argues: “I didn’t mean to break them; It is just that what I was trying to express was beyond the circle” (97). In this way Dylan’s action did shocked his followers and his image remained inconsistent throughout his life for which he was charged as an ambiguous personality.

Dylan has earned well amount of fan followers, similarly at the same degree numerous critics who disagree with his indifferent nature, inconsistent image and often takes an excuse to criticize his work and nature of being. Here, in his book *Chronicles* too, critics have expressed their mixed opinions about how they look at the book and what is the overall impression on them. Critics like Richard Hishmeh on *Modern Language Studies* review of *Chronicles Volume One* argues:

This is the autobiography of Bob Dylan, and decidedly not that of Robert Allan Zimmerman. This refusal to uncover the real Zimmerman beneath the phony Dylan again reiterates the impossibility of such an endeavor, not as many have suggested, Dylan conscious unwillingness to reveal his true self. (102)

Here, Richard puts question on Dylan’s decision to hide Robert Allan Zimmerman (his true self) and barter it with the false mask of Dylan in the name of autobiography.

This informs that the basic norms of autobiography are also devalued intentionally. Richard claims that it is Dylan's conscious unwillingness to curtain his true self. So at one point, Richard sounds quite logical based on the *Chronicles* especial emphasis on Bob Dylan's story, but Robert Allan is not completely masked. It often appears time and again in a form of flash back and in a reflection of his private affairs.

Similarly, Tim Riley in *The Another Side of Bob Dylan* attacks Dylan's nature by observing *Chronicles*. According to Tim Riley:

Dylan is a pokerfaced, bigotry attitude, bohemian, escapist the rock scene of death and his book *Chronicles* is an attempt to pardon or evacuate him from his oddness, "Perhaps Dylan is one of those song writers who throw a couple of hundred songs away chasing a decent piece of prose. (12)

Tim's charge attack on Dylan's nature is monolithic shadowing his creative and positive aspects. The way Tim exaggerates Dylan's nature presents his disclaimer against Dylan's wellbeing. Not exactly as Tim says; but Dylan's ability to write songs is genius which has shaken the world for many decades and ruled the top of chart buster. For example; in *Chronicles* Dylan puts lights on his ability in producing lyrics instantly, he says: once I get caught up with the title of a song melody and rest of lyrics comes in together naturally. The song "What Was It You Wanted?" was quickly written. I heard the lyrics and melody together in my head and it played itself in a minor key" (172). He said while writing "Dignity" lyrics "It's like I saw the song right in front of me and overtook it, like I saw all the characters in this song" (169). This proves that he has visions of creating songs, melody, lyrics and story immediately. An artist of such deep historical, poetic and literature knowledge as described latter in Dylan's quest for literature in this paper proves Tim's argument as a falsified statement.

Unlike Tim, James Bense review of *Chronicles* in his *Journal of Mind and Behavior* explores Bob Dylan's behavior but through his experience with Pankake in the light of Emerson's "Trancendentalism". James claim; "Dylan's initial reactions to Pankake undermining Dylan on Woody Guthrie's music reveal a paradoxical situation that corroborates what Emerson envisions about an individual seeking of an unattained but attainable self" (128)). It is true, in *Chronicles*, Dylan felt insulted and dead when Pankake told him "You're trying hard, but you'll never turn into Woody Guthrie. You better think of something else" (250). Dylan felt insulted with Pankake's undermining remark because he seriously envisions Guthrie in his music.

Similarly, John Michael's review of Stanley Cavell *In Condition Handsome and Unhandsome* illuminates this relationship, which is about recognizing, being attracted to a new sense of ourselves through what we admire in other" (260-67). Connecting Bense and Cavell's argument in the light of Emerson's idea corroborates logical comparison to Dylan's character. Dylan himself revealed many times in his autobiography about gaining an immediate sense of self awareness while listening to Guthrie's music. Dylan even confesses reading Guthrie's *Bound For Glory* heightened his devotion as an author. Dylan asserts: "I listen all afternoon to Guthrie as if in trance and I felt like I had discovered some essence of self command, that I was in the internal pocket of the system feeling more like myself than ever before" (224). Such honest confessions of Dylan prove that he seriously envision Guthrie's footsteps which confirms Bense and Cavell's claims based on Emerson's idea of 'attainable but unattained self'.

Stephan Snaevarr in *Dylan as a Rortian* compares Dylan with a pragmatic philosopher Richard Rorty who thought that we could recreate our selfhood by

inventing new vocabularies; there is no such thing as authentic self in Rortian book says Stephen. Connecting with Dylan, Stephen asserts:

Dylan as protean person, his identity is also of ever changing nature who has been recreating himself throughout his career. He can be and adjust to any character and situation changing his name from Robert Allen Zimmerman to Bob Dylan, being for a while a folk hero then becoming a rock icon afterward a country singer, a Christian, a Jew, and so forth. (39)

Author Snaevarr also claims; “Dylan has many voices, and they are like masks; there is no authentic voice or self behind the masks” (39). The overall impression of Snaevarr towards Dylan marks concern on his multiple image and character which is compatible with Richard Rorty’s opinion. But at the same time such multiplicity and inconsistent voices contribute to destroy Dylan’s genuine identity. In this way, Snaevarr expresses his worry on losing Dylan’s authenticity.

Janet Gezari in *Bob Dylan and Tone behind the Language* defends Dylan’s reluctance when he was termed as a voice of the generation during the 1960. According to Gezari, “Calling Dylan the voice of a generation diminishes him. Every great poet is the voice of his own generation, and of generations to come. Dylan is quintessentially an American voice” (481-2). The statement suggests that Gezari supports Dylan’s disregard for the title as the voice of generation because it limits and confines Dylan’s artistic value to a particular historical time and situation. Gezari emphasizes is that Dylan’s lyrical mastery is to the level of serious poetry that fits every generation. Dylan’s music and lyrics is typically a perfect American voice that echoes forever.

Likewise, Paul Davies mark *Chronicles* reflecting the theme of Dylan’s famous song line “There’s no Success like failure, and that failure’s no success at all”,

claiming Dylan's resentment for his success by failing to organize his family.

According to Davies:

Dylan's success in failure may be unique, and a unique way of breaking cultural palings, but it's also just as true to say that failure (for the sake of failure) is no success at all. For that does not achieve anything. But Dylan's ineptitudes in *Chronicle* have the power to disarm the audience, even to disarm the most critical listener. (166)

The above line suggests, Dylan's great achievement by ruining up all his private belongings maybe his strategy to break cultural convention, but at the same time Davies emphasize; any big gain out of the big loss especially family, home, parents, love, and children is worth no success at all. Davies also agrees that Dylan has immense writing potentiality to twist and turn any meaning upside down, as the line of the lyrics "There's no success, like failure" suggest; success and failure are both worthy and unworthy at the same time. His book *Chronicles* and his lyrics has that power to shake the emotive faculty of any critical mind.

Dylan's performance is also a matter of huge criticism since it consists of performance variation, negligence and carelessness. Critics like Davies pull out Dylan's most awkward and criticized moment of breaking performance rules though he admires Dylan's skill for balancing equal height in most of the faculty of his musical boundary. On this note Paul Davies asserts:

It is clear that Dylan has managed to reach the highest standards in all departments of his enterprise, while at the same time defying or inverting normal expectation. Dylan is sometimes held by his detractors to perform as someone arrogantly aloof from his audience, as if he saw himself as the source

of wisdom and them as ignorant. But like that of Elliot, Sartre, or Beckett,

Dylan art- his verbal art especially is actually an art of failure. (165)

According to Davies, Dylan's abnormal behavior ruins audience expectation. He acts as if he does not care the presence of the audience. For example; Bob Dylan received boos and shouts from audience (Newport festival 1965) by playing electric instruments against the public expectation. Four week after the event, he publically announces leaving acoustic folk forever for the sake of electric (folk is where Bob Dylan is loved the most by public). Once he went black out without voice in front of 30000 audiences uttering nothing disappointing heavy crowd waiting for hours to have him perform (153). Dylan in *Chronicles* agrees, "My performances were an act and the rituals were boring me, my live performances never seemed to capture the inner spirit of the song" (146). This clarifies that the pressure of performance on the hesitant artist like Dylan enhances the loss of the real spirit of the song because of which he admits his live performance and rituals has bored him.

As mentioned above, Davies has pulled out Dylan's most awkward and criticized moment of breaking musical rules and ruining public expectation but at the same time on the different note Davies also accepts Dylan's secret behind success. He says, "The success of Dylan's art depends, indeed, wholly upon such a confluence. Dylan obviously intends his performance to be a readable picture and gesture, and his records invite a reading of delivery as well as of words" (162-63). This settles Davies agreement at this point that the success behind Dylan's art is constituted by all the mixture of expression working as a whole (his lyrics, music, performance and nature). Dylan's role challenges cultural doctrine and opens space for unexpected and unscheduled things as mentioned above. Of all the allegation on Dylan's performance, Davies settles his confusion with the knowledge that Dylan's performance gesture has

embedded message or picture which he intentionally inscribes therefore his performance has variations which looks unusual at first glance but captivates as soon as it takes shapes.

On the similar note, Louis A. Renza in his review essay *Absolutely Bob Dylan* remarks; “In Dylan’s case, the “performing artist” position almost sounds like a self evident truism” (124). This proves that not only his lyrics but also his awkward and unusual performance as Davies claims depicts a unique representation and a secret behind his success.



This picture is the performance gesture of a song “Tangled up in Blue” which was taken by Ken Regar during Minnesota concert on Sept 17, 1975.

Louis P. Masur is mostly indebted to the early review of a critic “Greil Marcus on Bob Dylan work. He borrows Marcus pick on Dylan’s insight that reveals why he became the preeminent rock critic of his generation. Marcus asserts:

What matters most is Bob's singing. He's been the most inventive singer of the last 10 years, creating his language of stress, fitting five words into a line of 10 and 10 into a line of five, shoving the words around and opening up spaces for noise and silence that through assault or seduction or the gift of good timing made room for expression and emotion. (114)

Here, Louis agrees with Greil Marcus critical review on Bob Dylan’s behind success story consisting of above mentioned unique ability with performance dynamics and

techniques but the word like assault, gift of good timing puts his immense dedication and consistent training on the shadow. Marcus review clearly embodies negative influence. Marcus definition of Dylan's success fails when Dylan's most prestigious gift or assets like poetry, lyrics or song writing is ignored and evaluated only on the basis of his performance.

Louis P. Masur in the review of *Tangled up in Dylan* claims, "Somehow, Dylan endured, and long ago escaped the myth that enveloped him. He has simply continued to do his job, which is not to be a cultural icon, or a source of redemption, or a hope for the future, but to be a songwriter" (115). The implied meaning indicated by Louis is like the moral of Dylan's famous lyrics "The Ballads of Frankie Lee and Judas Priest" advocating that one should never be where one does not belong. This implies that Dylan should not go beyond songwriting pretending being one of social demigod and he must avoid confusing other.

In *Satan Whisper: Bob Dylan and Paradise Lost*; author Aiden Day claims the theme of the song "Like a Rolling Stone" enquires into the state a person may find themselves in if they are forced to live outside the law, outside the convention at tutelage, they have to end with identity crisis" (278). Similarly, in the song "Dark Eyes" he adds that the theme of song carries self referential meaning where the attributes of the self in 'Dark Eyes' are instinct with a negativity that disturbs him and the element of self or I belongs to the speaker (279). Here, what Aiden Day has aim to focus is "Like a Rolling Stones" is his self resentment of facing identity crisis by violating the social constraints and law. Both the song reflects his self and epiphany. Now let us export some lines of these two lyrics and compare to what Aiden day has claimed:

You have gone to the finest school alright,

miss lonely'

but nobody has ever taught you how to live on the streets

How does it feel ?

To be without a home?

Like a complete unknown?

Like a rolling stone? (Bob Dylan. com)

As rightly said by Aiden Day the lyrics evokes Dylan's situation of facing identity crisis because of his ignorance in following the social convention and musical law.

Also, let's look at the refrain of the lyrics, "The Dark Eyes":

Oh the gentleman are talking and the midnight moon is on the riverside

They are drinking up and walking and it is time for me to slide

I live in another world where life and death are memorized

Where earth is strung with lover pearls

and all I see are dark eyes. (Bob Dylan. com)

Dark Eyes emphasizes on dual eyes; one that rejoices present and neglects the past, whereas the other that mourns for bitter reality of the past which has assured the promising present. Aiden Day claims that the latter is the speaker eyes who can envision the other world of sacrifice unlike the present world that has masked the reality. An absurd image like, the earth is strung, another world, cock is crowing, soldiers in prayer, revenge as sweet, nature's beast etc suggests disorder, surreal image, a gothic picture of the world for which Aiden claims as speakers negative disturbance. The speaker emphasizing, 'I see all those things' reflects Aiden's argument where I is a self referential code justifying Dylan perception of the disordered image of the world which he has been enveloping in other lyrics as well like "Hard Rain's gonna fall" and "It's Alright, Ma (I'm Only Bleeding)".

These are among many critics who have criticized Bob Dylan's book *Chronicles Volume One*, his identity and intention attached to it. Summing up, Richard Hismeh charges Dylan for his intention to hide real Zimmerman and introduce Bob Dylan on *Chronicles* whereas Tim Rileigh argues *Chronicles* as a means to self justify and pardon Dylan from his oddness. James Bense on the other hand marks on the doom of Dylan's image when imitating Woody Guthrie's completely and Stephen Snaevarr questions the reliability of Dylan's authentic self jeopardized by his multiplicity. On the different note, Janet Gazeri supports Dylan's ignorance on his image as "voice of generation". Similarly, Paul Davies and Aiden Day marks Dylan success as failure at the same time when Dylan's lyrics evoked his emotion of facing identity crisis. Paul Davies on the different note highlights Dylan standing binary to public expectation by breaking the musical boundary and embarrassing audience while Louis P. Masur supports Dylan's behavior assuring that the same habit of Dylan is an artistic dynamics which balances his success.

All such claims on Dylan's *Chronicles*, his image and nature is surrounded by a question of identity mystery which seriously demands clarification liable to Dylan's critic and fan followers. Therefore, this thesis argues that *Chronicles* attempts to subdue Dylan's identity crisis by applying his own version of self portrait strategy. To reveal how and why Dylan has incorporated his self portrait politics in *Chronicles*; the researcher incorporates Sidonie Smith and Julia Watson's idea of autobiography, Suzzette A. Henke idea of scriptotherapy, Paul Ricoeur's idea of hermeneutics of self, and Linda Anderson's notion of autobiography.

Sidonie Smith and Julia Watson quotes; "Autobiography is a historically situated practice of self representation. In such texts, a narrator selectively engages their lived experience through personal story telling" (14). In context of the

Chronicles too, Bob Dylan pulls out the specific history of his personal experience beginning as a fresh musician, following his immense popularity as a protest singer and his declined image as an ambiguous and mysterious figure. Lejeune argues; “the author of an autobiography implicitly declares that he is the person he says he is and that the author and the protagonist are the same” (qtd. in Anderson 3). Similarly Bob Dylan in *Chronicles* as an author indirectly portrays himself as a person he is who is the protagonist and author at the same time. This will be proved in the proceeding analysis of the self of Bob Dylan which are in detail discussed below.

The underlining question is on “how Dylan portrays his self in the *Chronicles*”? To reveal the secret, the researcher applies Paul Ricoeur’s hermeneutics of self as a base to expose the self of Bob Dylan. Ricoeur’s hermeneutics of the self is based on topics of human self and human action which helps in unraveling the question ‘who,’ that is, and ‘Who is the self?’ Ricoeur argues; “recourse to analysis is the price to pay for the hermeneutics characterized by the indirect manner of positing the self” (17). This means that the self is not transparent and explicit and cannot be directly accessed, so analytic philosophy is the proper means to gain an indirect access to self knowledge. Similarly, Bob Dylan’s *Chronicles* is comprised of an implicit portrayal of his self because it does not directly presents his concern whereas, his shared experience in *Chronicles*, his priority and constant emphasis to justify his image evokes his hidden intention. The analytic philosophy proposes questions such as who is the speaker or agent of an action? Of whom does one speak in designating person? Such questions contribute in the hermeneutics of indirect self by accessing who of the self through what of the experience. For example from *Chronicles*, the answer to the proposed question is: Bob Dylan is the speaker and agent of action in his book; Dylan designates himself as an author to narrate his life story. In such

manner the analytic questions of hermeneutics brackets the self of the investigation. Therefore, Ricoeur considered that analytic philosophy is the richest in promise and result of bringing out the knowledge of self (17).

Bob Dylan uses the first person singular pronoun such as I, my, me, mine in his autobiography as a self referential code to narrate his story but they are not sufficient to determine Dylan's inner self as it's position is only the narrating I, "The I who wants to tell, or is coerced into telling, a story about himself" (Smith and Watson 59). Ricoeur argues; "To say self is not to say I. The I is posited or is deposed. The self is implied reflexively in the operations, the analysis of which precedes the return toward this self" (18). So the idea of Ricoeur 'self' is hidden, implied indirectly in the text and only the analysis of it can reveal the promising result. Agreeing with Ricoeur's idea of analysis, let us analyze Dylan's hidden portrayal of his self through evidences provided in *Chronicles*.

The first is the language Dylan chooses to describe and denounce other artist in *Chronicles*. Dylan describes "Billy the butcher as one who looked like he came out of nightmare alley wearing an overcoat which was too small for him, buttoned tight across the chest; similarly Tiny Tim "A male singer who play ukulele and sang like a girl" (11) and Billy the interviewer who dressed Ivy League like he could have come out of Yale- medium height, crisp black hair (7-8). Similarly about Elvis Presley, Dylan writes; "nobody listens to him; its been years since he has done hip things and taken song to another planet" (34). These are few examples of many and the implied intention is the glorification of Dylan's self with the use of humor and wit. It resembles Dylan's real habit of describing someone who he dislikes.

Throughout the autobiography, Dylan discusses about numerous books, great writers, philosophers including Nietzsche, Byron, Shelley, Poe, Long fellow, Freud,

Alexander the great, Eliot and their impression in his life. He says: “I trained my mind to do this, had cast off gloomy habits and learned to settle myself down. I read all of Lord Byron’s *Don Juan*, and concentrated fully from start to finish. Also Coleridge’s *Kubla Khan*, I began cramming my brain with all deep kinds of poems” (56).

Likewise, Dylan shares about his skills of writing songs lyrics which is very simple for him; he says; “one line of the song brings up another like when your left foot steps forward and your right drags up to it” (169). Such expression describes Dylan’s capacity and skills achieved through his scholar habits.

Another good example of Dylan’s portrayal of self is the inclusion of a big sized photo on the cover of the *Chronicles* under the title Bob Dylan. It reminds the reader that they are about to venture Bob Dylan’s story. Such are the facts that the *Chronicles* has embedded as an indirect approach to Dylan’s self. Dylan has also used all the essential autobiographical elements like memory, experience, identity, embodiment and agency to constitute his autobiographical subjectivity. Smith and Watson argues; “the writer of autobiography depends on the access to memory to tell the retrospective narrative of the past and to situate the present within that experiential history” (16). Similarly, Bob Dylan withdraws his collected memory in *Chronicles* triggering on his harsh struggle in musical journey during political turmoil in 1960 and his exposure to fame and popularity, then again a struggle to reinvent his image after facing identity crisis.

Chronicles most importantly brings the reference of mainstream and media’s attack on Dylan’s identity. He expresses complete disapproval of mainstream culture by saying “I wasn’t anti popular culture or anything and had no ambitions to stir things up. I just thought of mainstream culture as lame as hell and a big trick” (35).

Here is an example of mainstream attack he experienced at the age of thirty; when he was presented honorary Doctorate degree at Princeton University:

During the convocation speaker addressed me as a “Disturbed conscience of young America” repeatedly. It was like jolt, I couldn’t believe it! tricked once more. The speaker could have emphasized a things about my music, When he said to the crowd that I prefer isolation from the world, it was like he told them that I preferred being in an iron tomb with my food shoved in a tray. The sunlight was blocking my vision, but I could still see the faces gawking at me with such strange expression. I was so mad I wanted to bite myself. (133)

Another shock was when Russian newspaper “Pravada” called him, “a money hungry capitalist” (133). Dylan argues in *Chronicles*; “mainstream promise had made me feel naked, gave unfair advantage to some and left other squeezed out, if this channel opportunity is a law of life, than I don’t want to pursue that path” (42-3). Dylan asserts: “whatever counterculture was, I’d seen enough of it. I am sick of the way my lyrics had been extrapolated and their meaning would be subverted into polemics,” (120). He also brings reference of his kin attack: “I went to Jerusalem, got myself photographed at the western wall wearing a skullcap. The image was transmitted worldwide instantly and quickly all the great rags changed me overnight to Zionist,” (122). Therefore, all these facts as described in *Chronicles* are root cause for Dylan’s hatred towards mainstream culture. *Chronicles* highlights numerous such misrepresenting and misleading act to explain how Dylan was provoked to ignore everything. This gives a hint that Dylan in *Chronicles* has an intention to clear the doubt posed on his image.

Popular culture like TV, magazine, interview newspaper, radio has framed him with the misleading and wrong title representing him like Ghost of Dylan, Evil

Possessed, Obsessed Dylan, Lost conscience, escapist, anarchy singer etc. As a result, during the civil right movement; whenever he shifts his location, his new location would be printed on the local newspaper and even though he confess; “I’m not a spokesperson of anything or anybody and I m only a musician”. Later the news headline would spread like wildfire that “Spokes man Denies that He is a Spokesman” (119). He adds: The reporter would enter my house anytime and outside the house would be the filled by agonized demonstrators. *Chronicles* addresses such propaganda mainstream media created against his image in a motive to redirect public rage turn against him. Dylan shares the harsh experience of the situation in the following ways:

We moved to New York City since Wood stock turned into nightmare, a place of Chaos. Demonstrators found our house and paraded up and down in front of it chanting and shouting, demanding for me to come out and lead then somewhere-stop shirking my duties as the conscience of the generation. They would stare at me when they saw me, eventually we tried moving west-tried different places but reporters would come sniffing around in hopes to gain some secret- maybe I’d confess my sin. Our address would be printed at local press and the same thing would start up. I wasn’t going to let anyone in the house. My house was chaotic inside as well as outside. (118)

Because of such traumatic experience; he decides: “I want to get out of the rat race, demolish my identity, send a deviating signal, crank up the wreaking train, create some different impression; My outer image would have to be something a bit more confusing, a bit more humdrum” (121). Thus, such harsh situation influenced Dylan for the need of politicizing his image by adopting masked life and remaining bemused.

Dylan's resentment in *Chronicles* was in the response of his jeopardized image as Big Bubba of Rebellion, High Priest of Protest, the Czar of Dissent, the Duke of Disobedience, Leader of freeloader, Kaiser of Apostasy, Archbishop of Anarchy, The Big Cheese, Rock scene of death, escapist, etc (120). So the above confession confirms his concern and responsibility to clear the doubt posed on his image. Dylan also says, "I could never sit in the room and just play all by myself. I needed to play for people and all the time" (16). This confession evokes Dylan's concern towards public which confirms Ricoeur's notion of respect towards other; it says, "an action could not be held to be good unless it were done on behalf of others" (190). This locates the responsible and ethical self of Bob Dylan. It also suggests Dylan the kind of artist who eagerly wants to face public unlike the media who describes Dylan as a hesitant figure to ignore public. Such submission of Dylan towards public interest suggest that *Chronicles* is liable to answer all the misconception on Dylan's image alarming public to know the fact before they go against their idol. In Ricoeur's notion such confessions are the ethical and moral determination of action which constitutes selfhood (18).

Dylan argues: "My fame was immense, but it was like having some weird diploma that will not get you into any college" (155). He encountered a motorcycle accident in 1966 and until 1974, Dylan rest and toured many places since his injured hand did not allow him to perform like before. Now he has to adopt a new style to remain in the game so he started following established customs which did not work at first. He felt almost that his career has come to full stop. His performance rituals were boring him. He was not able to connect with the audience and once went black out in front of the 35000 audience. He realized that the previous style was not appreciated and concludes that "It is good to be known as a legend and people will pay to see one,

but for most people once is enough. You have to deliver goods, not waste your time and everybody else” (147). He says: “he was sick of mirage and thought that it was time to break off until he discovered a new jazz technique from Leonie Johnson which he thinks now of mastering and it was working perfectly (155-158). Dylan knew things and trends were changing and challenging the tradition and was conscious enough to upgrade in order to sustain and escape the routine musical environment. Genres like blues, Rock and Roll taught different formulaic approach for vocal technique as Dylan was fishing for one, which helped conjure his performance stamina. Bob Dylan says that “I had a gut feeling that I had created a new genre, a style that didn’t exist as of yet and one that would be entirely my own” (155). The style was electric which can replace voice and word by melody. This is how he ended up shaving himself from hopelessness or do or die situation.

Even though Bob Dylan transforms himself into new musical surroundings; he is always indebted towards folk music and is often witnessed crediting folk style. He says “folk is what speaks to me directly, folks are truth about life, folk makes a believer out of u” (95). He adds: “The folk music scene had been like paradise that I had to leave, like Adam had to leave the garden, it was just too perfect” (293). Such confession proves Dylan’s regret and unwillingness to leave folk music but had to, in order to survive. Dylan also reveals the real reason in leaving folk tradition is because, it was out of date, had no connection to the actualities, the trends of the time (236). The honesty of Dylan to speak about the reason of leaving folk music signals his intention in clearing the doubt about the confusion of public since they know Dylan better in folk genre. According to Anderson; “intentionality signals the belief that the author is behind the text, controlling its meaning; the author becomes the guarantor of the intentional meaning of the truth of the text” (3). In the same manner, Dylan wants

to clear the misconception about his changed musical taste and he is the guarantor, controller of his intentional meaning which means to clear the doubts of the public about his musical change. According to Linda Anderson; “The intention guarantees the truth of writing” (2-3). It means that the text like *Chronicles* is worth reliable and the idea it shares is trustworthy.

Chronicles not only measures Dylan’s fame and musical height but it also speaks the price Dylan has paid to achieve one. Dylan abandoned his home and family very early for the quest of musical thirst. During his struggle, he faced connection and credential and economic crisis; his band continuously left him for no reason and had to learn how to adjust and play alone anyhow; he was outcast and homeless time and again. Even at the peak of his musical height, he faced misleading tags and allegation. He experienced identity crisis and had to struggle again and again to reinvent his doomed identity. In order to survive in musical field, he was forced to adjust to new musical atmosphere though he loved folk music so much. He faced many obsessive and traumatic experience of hiding against the agonized demonstrator. Dylan writes; “my house was being battered, burnt, ravens constantly croaking ill omens at our door; my children had no safe place to play” (121). He had to shift his location several times as he confessed his desire to escape the pigeonholes of celebrity and to secure breathing room for his family” (120). Only Dylan understands the harshness of struggling alone in New York City without anyone’s support. Only he knows the pain and misery of losing parents without even hearing their voices for ages therefore he constantly remember and hallucinates about his parent’s and childhood memory in a form of flashback.

Dylan in *Chronicles* is seen continuously confessing, “I am not a spokesperson for anything or anybody and that I was only a musician”(119). This highlights his

struggle of making people understand of their misconception following Dylan's identity as a spokesperson when they do not want to understand at all. It means he is simply a musician and do not want to lead the crusade. The trauma of explaining each people he meets in the restaurant, radio, tv, department and grocery stores, garden or anywhere gawking and staring at him posing same question "can we talk further upon things that's happening"? reveals his reason of getting fatigue by clarifying same things again and again. He confesses "I am sick of the way my lyrics had been extrapolated and their meaning would be subverted into polemics" (120). Similar situation is also described in his song titled "Blowin' in the wind" in the lines which advocates his fatigueness:

How many roads must a man walk down, before you call him a man
 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. (Bob Dylan.com)

All these facts about the honest confession of Dylan corroborates Ricoeur's notion of self constancy where he argues; "self constancy is for each person that manner of conducting himself or herself so that other's can count on him" (165). Bob Dylan's emphasis is the same since he is a public figure and he is accountable for his action towards his fan follower since they are counting on him and are confused about the truth of Dylan's world because it is manipulated by the mainstream media. In order to save his self against the giving up of public, Dylan has to be responsible towards his action and the realization of it comes with responsibility only. Ricoeur asserts:

The term responsibility unites both meaning “counting on” and “being accountable for”. It unites them adding to them the idea of a response to the question “where are you”? asked by another who needs me. This response is the following: “Here I am” a response that is the statement of self constancy. (165)

In this way, self constitutes its shapes especially from otherness, the otherness from which self has never been separated according to Ricoeur (18). An otherness outside Bob Dylan especially public who makes him realize of his responsibility. It is a kind of otherness that is not the result to comparison but otherness of a kind that can be constitutive of selfhood as such (Ricoeur 3). Besides this, Ricoeur argues; “It is the identity of the story that makes the identity of a character” (148). It is proved when Bob Dylan selectively engages his story telling in the virtue of portraying himself with the identity of Bob Dylan which informs him as a complete musically dedicated artist other than his real identity Robert Allan Zimmerman. This proves that the *Chronicles* is decidedly the story of Bob Dylan as musician not as a person. Therefore such analysis contributes to the hermeneutics of self of Bob Dylan in *Chronicles*.

After analyzing the portrayal of self of Bob Dylan; it demands the answer for the final underlying question; what must be the intention or hidden politics behind portrayal of the self of Bob Dylan. The answer behind the politics is “scriptotherapy” through which Dylan has made a deal to heal his pain and suffering by expressing his emotion in words. In the line of Suzette A. Henke; scriptotherapy can work as therapeutic intervention for those suffering from traumatic or obsessional memories (qtd. in Smith and Watson 22). “Speaking or writing about trauma becomes a process through which the narrator finds words to give voice to what was previously unspeakable” (22). Dylan *Chronicles* thus speaks his unspeakable, his inner conflict

and emotion. The politics behind the self portrayal rescues Dylan's image and frees him from unnecessary charge. It attempts to enlighten those who are concerned but confused about Dylan's whereabouts. It is destined to motivate and aware others towards the secret game of mainstream cultures and show business.

Finally, the derived conclusion and the key finding is: *Chronicles* demands personal space and freedom which Dylan enjoys revitalizing throughout the book. An artist too have right to dream for a peace and secure private life. The autobiography advocates on resisting mainstream culture who impose their grand narratives to define others image in their underlined rules to confine them. An artist should not be fixed and confined on the basis of an absolute image. The politics behind the self portrayal is motivated towards surviving mainstream and grand narratives, self healing, enlightening, motivating and awareness. Hence, Dylan in *Chronicles* intends to subdue his identity crisis by applying his own version of self portrayal theme.

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