

Dylan & Shakespeare: *The True Performing of It*
Ongoing and Out-takes 3
With thanks to Harrison Hewitt for alerting me to this, below

Relevant portion from The Rolling Stone 1977 Interview (published January 1978)

Dylan sounds very relaxed, and off-hand, after his opening question back to Cott asking what Renaldo said, that is. Another exception is one emphatic “no”. Dylan uses “exactly” as a defensive mechanism, Still, rather than me try to describe all that, I’ll append the relevant portion of the interview at the foot of the page.

Rewritings are revealing in what is added and what omitted as well as what is changed.

[Note: Cott’s words are in bold \(not Dylan’s\) in the printed *Rolling Stone* interview \(which says quite a lot, I think\)](#)

NOTE: The bits in red are what was said but not printed, and the bits struck through were not spoken, but were printed.

What interested me about that scene was that there were two women and you had to decided how much you loved each of them. Now, in “King Lear” by Shakespeare, Cordelia has to say how much she loves her father and the other two sisters say ‘ I love you 100%’ and the daughter Cordelia says, ‘I love you as much as I should love you, considering I am your daughter.’That to me is true love.

Dylan: Right. What does Renaldo say?

Renaldo says the same thing as Cordelia.

Edit: Dylan seems unsure, they talk at cross purposes and it isn’t resolved coherently. Cott presents all this as:

Strangely, the scene where the two women confront Renaldo reminds me of ‘King Lear,’ in which each of the daughters has to say how much she loves her father. (This is not what was said)

Back on track now:

Dylan: You're right. Renaldo sees himself as ~~Cordelia~~ **King Lear**. There's a similarity to it...yeah

Cott: I knew there was something about it. you see, I interpreted some of the *Basement Tapes* as being concerned with ideas from *King Lear*: "Too much of nothing /Can make a man abuse a king":

Dylan: Exactly, exactly

Cott: I wrote a review of that once. I don't know if you ever read it...

Dylan: I didn't read it.

Cott – Just as well. But , the idea of: "Oh what dear daughter 'neath the sun/Would treat a father so,/To wait upon him hand and foot/And always tell him, 'No'?" To me... is what "King Lear" is about to me.

Dylan: Exactly. In the later years it changed, **father to mother** from "king" to "clown."

Cott – whose later years, yours or his, King Lear's?

Dylan: his

Cott: King Lear's. He had a fool around him, too,

Dylan: That's true

Cott: and when the fool leaves..

Dylan: ...he falls apart

Cott: ,,Cordelia comes back. She ~~l~~ Cordelia takes the place of the fool, clearly, you know he's in-between and he takes hers.

Dylan: That's exactly true, but the roles are all interchangeable.

Cott: As in "Tangled Up in Blue" and as in your movie.

Cott: It's like your movie – it's like "King Lear" a little bit, isn't it?

Dylan: Yes, it is.

Cott: I didn't know that you were interested in "King Lear", particularly.

Dylan (pause) Mmmm

Cott: I always thought you were but every time I read it, people thought it was pretentious, saying that. It's interesting that...what about "Tears of Rage"? That's a "King Lear" song

Dylan: Exactly.

Cott: What about "Too Much of Nothing"? (inaudible, possibly: clearly it's a play about something comes from nothing) and your song is 'nothing comes from nothing' "Too much of nothing can make a man abuse a king." Were you reading that play at the time or what?

~~Were you specifically influenced by *King Lear* when you wrote songs like "Tears of Rage"?~~

Dylan (emphatically)No,—Songs like that were **It's all** based on the concept that one is one.

"...and all alone and ever more shall be so." You know that line? I don't understand that rhyme? Was it about God? It's about God isn't it?

Dylan: Exactly. ~~What comes is gone forever every time.~~

Cott: But one is difficult to deal with, so Christians gave us the Trinity.

Dylan: The Christians didn't bring in anything – it was the Greeks.

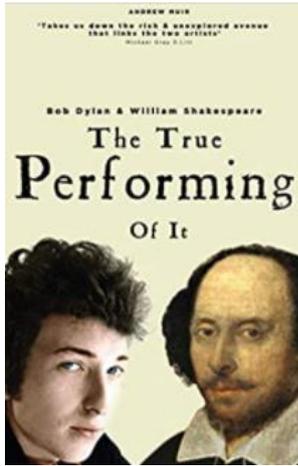
Note – there is much changed in the religious discussion too. Dylan starts by saying *There weren't any Christians* and *Jesus was a Jew*, for example, which, interestingly for the time, is omitted in the printed interview. .

Audio link - = http://www.a-muir.co.uk/Dylan/cott_77.mp3

Interview as printed: <https://www.rollingstone.com/music/music-features/bob-dylan-the-rolling-stone-interview-58625/>

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Updated and new e-book: *Dylan & Shakespeare: The True Performing Of It.*

Andrew Muir's bonus 10,000 words on Dylan, Shakespeare and *Rough & Rowdy Ways* is, as we critics would have it, BRILLIANT!! And given that he wrote it when *Rough & Rowdy Ways* was still very new, then it's even MORE brilliant! Not least for what is by far the best, most thoughtful reading of that epic track 'Murder Most Foul' that I've read - and I've read many. Truly, it's wonderful. What a scholar! *Michael Gray, D.Litt.*

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