Student Pieces: All of Them and More From Che to Dylan

Ben Moats
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From Che to Dylan

By Ben Moats

When Bob Dylan was asked during a 1965 San Francisco press confer-
ence whether he considered himself more of a singer or a poet, he responded with an
insidious grin saying that he saw himself as more of a song and dance man.

Dylan's response can likely be attributed to his irascible nature when dealing with the media. However, perhaps his response can more fully be accredited to his sim-
ple desire to avoid being labeled and compartmentalized: an aversion deemed appropriate not only by our nation's greatest songwriter, but also by Jesuit universities across the globe. What Bob Dylan apparently recognized is that he did not need to label himself as a poet or a song-
writer, and maybe he even underst-
ood that doing so would limit him as a human being. Perhaps the Jesuits' apprehension with compart-
mentalization stems back to a funda-
mental understanding of their savior: a man who was said to be neither solely human nor divine, but rather entirely both.

My own rally against personal segregation began very quietly and sometimes even unconsciously in a sleepy Nebraska town called Weeping Water. It was in this small community where I was nearly char-
acterized with many simple and often varying descriptions through-
out my adolescence. Some members of the community, for example, described me as an athlete, most specifically a basketball player, while others thought of me solely as a
student, perhaps because my mother was a teacher at the local high school. There was also a time when many of my classmates began calling me "Che," because of my
interest in the Argentine-born revolu-
tionist, while others went so far as to refer to me as Trevis or Ali Hakim. Two roles I played in our high
school musicals.

These are just a few examples of differ-
ing labels. I was given as a
Weeping Water High School student, but I do not feel remorse for this fact, and I do not believe the most funda-
mental Jesuit thinker would either.

Although being labeled can often lead one to undergo internal compartmen-
talization, this does not have to hap-
pen. In fact, we will all be labeled throughout our lives, so it is therefore
our job constantly to remind ourselves and others that we are not just our jobs, cars, clothes, religion, or hob-
bies, even though we are simultane-
ously all of them and more.

I was certainly guilty of some-
times forgetting my boundlessly branched nature, but I like to think
that none of these descriptions frus-
trated me, because I always knew that I was never just any one of
them. In high school and in my early
university life, for example, I spent
an ample amount of time practicing basketball, but what I truly wanted to be at the time was a writer. Now, as I write this, not having touched a basketball in several months, I think
of myself as no less of an athlete and no more of writer. If we all referred to ourselves as what we spent the
most time doing, then we would all have to be sleepers.

Today, what I would most like to spend the rest of my occupational life doing is playing music, but even when I practice or perform songs, I do not think of myself as a musician any more than I see myself as a per-
son who eats food or likes Christmas vacation. Furthermore, a college stu-
dent aspiring to be a musician could easily be labeled a d?ch?e, but I
trudge through this ridicule not because of misconceived concep-
tions of a rock n' roll lifestyle, but rather because music has reached
me on a much deeper level than
ever have some of the greatest
works of literature, art, and film. I
terhence hunger to produce songs that speak to people in a mysterious
and comforting manner.

More importantly, I strive to live
in un-compartmentalized, honest,
and fully human ways, ways that
remind me that we are not just our jobs, cars, clothes, religion, or hobbies, even though we are simultaneously all of them and more.  

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