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Notes

Introduction

- 1 "Notes toward a Supreme Fiction," *The Collected Poems of Wallace Stevens* (New York: Vintage Books, 1990), p. 407. One can of course adopt different existentialist-oriented readings of Dylan's works. For example, in *Invisible Now: Bob Dylan in the 1960s* (London, UK: Routledge: 2013; released in the United States as a paperback, 2016), John Hughes argues that Dylan's songs especially of the 1965–67 period resist the interpretive acts that they simultaneously invite from listeners. The songs thus propagate an epistemological "indeterminacy" of meaning and an existential "uncertainty" of self that have Dylan expressing a state of endless "becoming." On the basis of this vision, the goal of his interpretation-resistant songs is for us "to take responsibility for ourselves" or "force us into autonomy" (pp. 184, 185). I argue throughout the present book that these songs consistently sidestep such a quasi-existential ethical charge, and instead work (positively) for him to experience what Hughes otherwise insightfully terms their orbiting around "the very groundlessness of subjectivity" (p. 183).
- 2 "I Shall Be Free No. 10" on *Another Side of Bob Dylan* (1964). Many critics dispute the attribution of Dylan's lyrics as poetry. See, for instance, Sam Leith, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/comment/personal-view/3642416/Bob-Dylan-is-a-genius-but-hes-no-poet.html/>. Conversely, see Jeffrey Side, "Ambiguity and Abstraction in Bob Dylan's Lyrics," <http://www.argotistonline.co.uk/Side%20essay%202.htm/>. The issue perplexes Dylan's "literary" identity, and came to the fore especially after Dylan received the 2016 Nobel Prize for literature. See, for instance, "Does Bob Dylan Deserve a Nobel Prize?" by Geoffrey Himes, September 27, 2016, at https://www.pastemagazine.com/articles/2016/09/does-bob-dylan-deserve-a-nobel-prize.html?utm_source=PMNL&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=160927/. But Dylan clearly works in a hybrid genre and composes what to me defines "literature" in the best sense: works that lead listeners into reflecting on their off-centered verbal images and uncannily writ scenarios; and which give precise expression to the world, society, intimate relations, and the self as enduring enigmas.
- 3 Louis A. Renza, "Bob Dylan's 116th Dream: Reflections on the Lyrics," *Auto/Biography (a/b)* 23:2 (Winter 2008): 226–44. For another discussion of this issue, see <https://www.poets.org/poetsorg/text/bob-dylan-im-poet-and-i-know-it/>.
- 4 For example, Matthew Burn, an engineer for Dylan's 1989 album *Oh Mercy*, recalls that, "For [Dylan], the song wasn't ready to be a song until the lyrics were in place. It wasn't necessarily about the melody or the chords. The only thing that made any difference to Bob was whether what he was saying was in place. Quite often, he'd rewrite even one line. Even by the time we were mixing, he'd suddenly say, 'Y'know, I've just rewritten that line, can I re-sing it?' . . . The treatment of the song was secondary. If the lyrics were in place, then it was sort of, 'Well, what's appropriate?'" <http://www.uncut.co.uk/features/life-with-bob-dylan-1989-2006-30130/>.

- 5 Geoffrey H. Hartman, *Criticism in the Wilderness: A Study of Literature Today* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1980), pp. 270, 272–73 (his emphasis). Cf. John Hughes' position noted in note 1 above, in which he also argues for the Dylan song's halting interpretation. But my argument is that this moment of indeterminacy in the song has autobiographical repercussions of a special kind that, as it were, constitutes a *second* blockage of the would-be interpreter.
- 6 Hazard Adams, "Georges Poulet," *Critical Theory since Plato*, ed. Hazard Adams (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc., 1971), p. 1212.
- 7 Adam Phillips refers to this view of Freudian wish as the ground of conventional biographies and autobiographies—objective knowledge about a person's life—in *Becoming Freud* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014), pp. 1–28 *passim*.
- 8 "Something There Is about You" from *Planet Waves* (1974).
- 9 For example, Buber states that, "Every [Thou] in the world is doomed by its nature to become a thing or at least to enter into thinghood again and again. In the language of objects: everything in the world can—either before or after it becomes a thing—appear to some I as its [Thou]. But the language of objects catches only one corner of actual life. The It is the chrysalis, the Thou the butterfly. Only it is not always as if these states took turns so neatly; often it is an intricately entangled series of events that is tortuously dual." Martin Buber, *I and Thou*, trans. Walter Kaufmann (Kindle Edition: Amazon Digital Services LLC, 2011), p. 69.
- 10 Not a few critics have plausibly discussed Bob Dylan and his songs in terms of his Jewish background. Thanks to his mid-life conversion to an evangelical brand of Christianity, other critics persist in interpreting his early songs as proto-Christian and/or later ones as still Christian. But Dylan may or may not hold firmly to either religionist belief-system. Cf. "Well I'm sitting in church/In an old wooden chair/I knew nobody/Would look for me there" ("Marchin' to the City," 1997). For general Jewish understandings of Dylan's works, see, for example, <http://www.aish.com/ci/a/Bob-Dylans-Jewish-Odyssey.html/>. Also see especially Seth Rogovoy's *Bob Dylan: Prophet, Mystic, Poet*, to which I will have occasion to refer in the present book. Rogovoy traces a good number of Dylan's songs to his Jewish upbringing and to a Judaic context. For repeated "Christian" readings of the songs, see those offered by Kees de Graaf at <http://www.keesdegraaf.com/index.php/98/bob-dylan-song-analysis/>; also David Weir, another critic who finds Christian "God" themes in most of the Dylan songs that he treats. See, for example, <https://bobdylansonganalysis.wordpress.com/2016/03/16/tempest/>. To my mind, the best because least reductive book on Dylan's "religious" leanings as regards his songs is Michael J. Gilmour's *The Gospel According to Bob Dylan: The Old, Old Story for Modern Times* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2011). Based on Dylan's lyrics, performances, and other biographical events, Andrew McCarron adopts a traditional spiritual-autobiographical reading of Dylan's career. In particular, he interprets it according to three decisive autobiographical moments that McCarron deems akin to psychological studies showing a person's "spiritual awakening and experience of transcendence that liberates [the person] from negative circumstances by creating an altered and redemptive inner picture of the self." For example and related to the present study, McCarron sees Bob Dylan seeing the "light" after his motorcycle accident in 1966, with "the spiritual growth" subsequently expressed especially in *The Basement Tapes* song "I Shall Be Released" and "the poetic depths of Jewish scripture" that limns his *John Wesley Harding* songs. *Light Come Shining: The*

Transformations of Bob Dylan (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017), pp. 8, 64, 66). In contrast, I see the “Dylan” of the song-lyrics finessing all such orthodoxical positions.

- 11 Sean Wilentz’s *Bob Dylan in America* (New York: Doubleday, 2010) remains one of the best sources for the social-historical-musical review of Dylan’s entire career. Also see Michael Denning’s insightful critical discussion of Dylan’s major foray into a performative musical politics in his mid-1970s’ Rolling Thunder Revue: “Bob Dylan and Rolling Thunder,” *The Cambridge Companion to Bob Dylan*, ed. Kevin J. H. Dettmar (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), pp. 28–41. British critics have led the way in taking Dylan’s songs as serious literary events. See especially Christopher Ricks, *Dylan’s Visions of Sin* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2003), Aidan Day, *Jokerman: Reading the Lyrics of Bob Dylan* (Oxford, UK: Basil Blackwell, 1988), Michael Gray, *Song and Dance Man III: The Art of Bob Dylan* (New York: Continuum, 2000), and the collection of essays on Dylan’s work edited by Neil Corcoran, “Do You Mr. Jones?: Bob Dylan with the Poets and Professors” (London: Pimlico, 2003).
- 12 Besides connoting something wholly made, “invent” etymologically means “to come upon.” Stanley Fish makes his still-compelling argument about interpretive communities in *Is There a Text in This Class? The Authority of Interpretive Communities* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard UP, 1980). See, for example, “Indeed, it is interpretive communities, rather than either the text or the reader, that produce meanings and are responsible for the emergence of formal features” (p. 14).
- 13 Spoken by the character Hilda in *The Marble Faun*, Chapter XLI.
- 14 Quoted in Phillips, *Unforbidden Pleasures* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2016), p. 96.

Chapter 1

- 1 *The Concept of Irony*, ed. and trans. Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989), 182.
- 2 “Dylan was beginning to experiment seriously with the contour of language itself while at the same time [to] explore the deeper levels of the human experience, realizing that things were never as black-and-white as they originally might have appeared.” Oliver Trager, *Keys to the Rain: The Definitive Bob Dylan Encyclopedia* (New York: Billboard Books, 2004), p. 14. Yet from many “folk” critical viewpoints, in making a decisive move toward self-autonomy in his lyrics, Dylan also succumbed to the lure of gaining fortune and fame associated with the US American culture industry, that is, with the very capitalist system the “folk” movement consistently worked to protest.
- 3 Mike Marqusee, *Wicked Messenger: Bob Dylan and the 1960s*. Revised and Expanded edition of *Chimes of Freedom* (London: Seven Stories Press, 2005), p. 112.
- 4 *Bringing It All Back Home* illustrates a compromise between Dylan’s folk-acoustical arrangements of songs (the first side of the album) along with their associated social-political ethos, and his electric arrangements (the second side), more appealing to a mass-media, middle-class and mostly white rock ‘n’ roll audience. This dual format has become erased with the advent of recent technological media.

- 5 One might protest that Dylan's earlier "protest" songs don't exhibit any such ambiguity. Yet taken to propagate a "civil rights" ethos, even a song like "Blowin' in the Wind" finally leaves "the answer . . . blowing in the wind." Similarly, his "The Times They Are A-Changin'," supposedly a pro-youth-generation anthem of the mid-1960s appearing before *Another Side of Bob Dylan*, arguably promises cycles of social change rather than some definitively progressive one. Cf. Stephen H. Webb, *Dylan Redeemed: From Highway 61 to Saved* (New York: Continuum, 2006), esp. pp. 38–46, who takes issue especially with what he regards as Marqusee's forced "liberal" readings of Dylan's early songs.
- 6 Marqusee, *Wicked Messenger*, p. 94.
- 7 *Wicked Messenger*, p. 99.
- 8 Larry David Smith, *Writing Dylan: The Songs of a Lonesome Traveler* (Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 2005), p. 58.
- 9 Elizabeth Brake focuses on Dylan's apparent illustration of Hegel's notion of "negative freedom" in "To Live Outside the Law, You Must be Honest," Freedom in Dylan's Lyrics," *Bob Dylan and Philosophy: It's Alright, Ma (I'm Only Thinking)*, Peter Vernezze and Carl J. Porter, ed. (Chicago: Open Court; Popular Culture and Philosophy, 2006), p. 83. Brake also notes how Dylan's "work suggests an imperative of self-realization . . . [He] offers an epistemology of the self, an account of how we come to know it, rather than a metaphysics, or an account of what the self is" (p. 84).
- 10 At the time of *Another Side of Bob Dylan*, Bob Dylan began associating with Allen Ginsberg and had already been taken with Jack Kerouac's work. Kerouac had written *The Subterraneans*, the carefree heroine for which happens to be part African American. In a 1958 *Partisan Review* article entitled "The Know-Nothing Bohemians," Norman Podhoretz cited how Kerouac and the Beats generally tended to patronize "American Negroes" for having "been able to retain a degree of primitive spontaneity," which arguably (and ironically) served as "an inverted form of keeping the nigger in his place." <https://docs.google.com/file/d/0B4m7usTbpXWHZlJMaWFhWWY1dzQ/edit/>, pp. 310–11. In Chapter Two of *Bob Dylan in America*, Sean Wilentz describes Bob Dylan's relation with Ginsberg during this period and also his encounter with and possible influence by Kerouac's writing. Wilentz also refers to James Baldwin's view of Kerouac's work as "patronizing and ignorant in its projections about American Blacks" (p. 65).
- 11 Perhaps inadvertently, although Bob Dylan has admitted to being an avid baseball fan on more than one occasion, the title also amounts to a baseball pun. In old baseball lingo, "bringing it" refers to a pitcher's throwing hard and fast to a batter notably located at "home" plate. Metaphorically, then, the title could additionally mean telling the truth straight, hard as it might be for others to take.
- 12 At the time, a good example of this would be how government officials blamed the hippies for social unrest while "new left" revolutionaries blamed not only the government but also the druggies for maintaining the social status quo.
- 13 "Some Other Kinds Of Songs . . . Poems by Bob Dylan" were the liner notes printed on the reverse side of the *Another Side of Bob Dylan* album. In it, the Dylan persona comes to see how even at the unconscious level, political practice, both in its strict and loose sense, amounts to a game of one-upmanship where the other in effect keeps saying to him, "I could make you crawl/if i was payin' attention." The game exists for no other reason than just to "make you crawl" or "to win,/that's all."
- 14 Perhaps an allusion Bob Dylan's early, brief disguise in New York City as a Guthrie-esque ephemer who in fact was of middle-class, mid-western roots.
- 15 See <http://www.bartleby.com/235/335.html/>.

- 16 Cf. D. H. Lawrence: "Solemnity is a sign of fraud," "Him with His Tale in His Mouth," *Reflections on the Death of a Porcupine and Other Essays* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press; Midland Book, 1963), p. 127.
- 17 Dylan both conspicuously *and* subtly announced that rejection at the 1965 Newport Folk Festival where he "went electric" with some songs, but after which he sang an acoustic version of "It's All Over Now, Baby Blue."
- 18 Around the time Dylan first aired "It's All Over Now, Baby Blue," the more usual autobiographical references interpreters thought of for "Blue" were to peers like David Blue and the blue-eyed Paul Clayton. See Oliver Trager, *Keys to the Rain*, p. 321. Cited in Ian Bell, *Once Upon a Time: The Lives of Bob Dylan* (Edinburgh: Mainstream Publishing Company, 2012), p. 407, Pete Seeger claims he heard the song as a farewell to the folk-scene crowd. A reductive autobiographical reading is always possible as well. In her 1975 song "Diamonds and Rust," for instance, Joan Baez memorably cites the color of Dylan's eyes: "As I remember, your eyes/Were bluer than robin's eggs." In my view, Dylan's autobiographical self-references occur on an entirely different plane.
- 19 Tim Riley, *Hard Rain: A Dylan Commentary* (New York: Vintage Books, 1993), p. 108, reads this "orphan" image in passing as possibly "an externalization of the singer," hence referring to Dylan over against the "you" or former lover. But Dylan here plays the card of the uncanny or becoming-homeless, turning it back on to the reader/"you." On one hand, he imagines the song's listeners as *right now* envisioning his/its disappearance from their codes of understanding. In that way, he becomes "Yonder" to them, along with the insecurity or orphan-like status to which that reduces them. On the other hand, he imagines *himself* being orphaned or reduced to homeless status by such listeners.
- 20 Davis Inman, "Behind The Lyric: 'Maggie's Farm,' Bob Dylan" *American Songwriter*, February 14, 2011 at <http://www.americansongwriter.com/2011/02/behind-the-lyric-maggies-farm-bob-dylan>.
- 21 "Maggie's Farm" was one of the songs Bob Dylan presented in electric format at the 1965 Newport Folk Festival, causing endless controversy among his fans.
- 22 One of the few Dylan commentators to concern himself with this song's self-referential turn, Aidan Day argues that the "She" equates with "the autonomy of imagination" that ironically undermines the song's title: "'She' does not belong to 'me,' but the other way around." Day, *Jokerman*, pp. 90, 91.
- 23 Cf. Stephen Scobie, *Alias Bob Dylan Revisited* (Calgary: Red Deer Press, 2003), pp. 131–32. Scobie also agrees with the "muse" reading of "She Belongs to Me" (p. 131).
- 24 The Poe "Raven" allusion evokes something akin to the meaningless reiteration of "nevermore."
- 25 To repeat my earlier assertion: the hybridity of the Dylan art work consists not just in its singular cluster of lyric, music, and vocal elements, but as well in its wedding poetic art to spiritual-existential point.
- 26 *Bringing It All Back Home* Jacket notes available at <http://bobdylan.com/albums/bringing-it-all-back-home/>.
- 27 Mike Marqusee terms the song the "prototype for a thousand trippy anthems" (*Wicked Messenger*, p. 198). Dylan's association with Allen Ginsberg at the time lends credence to this reading, especially given his appearance in the background of Dylan's cue-card introduction to "Subterranean Homesick Blues" in the film *Don't Look Back*. Ginsberg often publicly expressed his belief in the spiritual effects of psychedelic drugs. For other possible sources of the song, see Trager's summary, *Keys*, p. 440.

- 28 Shelton, *No Direction Home: The Life and Music of Bob Dylan* (New York: Beech Tree Books, 1986), p. 313. Sean Wilentz makes the same connection of the Tambourine Man figure as Dylan “again” addressing “his muse.” *Bob Dylan in America*, p. 97. Aidan Day, *Jokerman*, pp. 21, 19, and John Hinchey, *Like a Complete Unknown: The Poetry of Bob Dylan’s Songs 1961-1969* (Ann Arbor: Stealing Home Press, 2002), pp. 94–95. Cf. Stephen Scobie thesis about Dylan’s prophetic role in *Alias Bob Dylan*, pp. 26 and 129–31. Regarding this song, Scobie specifically argues that Dylan at once internalizes the Tambourine Man as a muse figure (with or without prophetic abilities) and identifies with him in passing, if not fully. In either case, Scobie denies the separation that Aidan Day sees between speaker and protagonist in this song.
- 29 Another, closer-to-home precedent for the mise en scène of “Mr. Tambourine Man” might be Emily Dickinson’s “Heart not so heavy as mine.” *The Poems of Emily Dickinson*, ed. by R. W. Franklin (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press, 1999), #88.
- 30 Cf. Kierkegaard’s phenomenological difference between the medium of music and of language: “If the elemental originality of the sensuous-erotic [i.e., the aesthetic] in all of its immediacy insists on expression, then the question arises as to which medium is the most suitable for this. The point that particularly must be kept in mind here is that it insists on being expressed and presented in its immediacy. In its mediacy and in being reflected in another medium, it falls within language and comes under ethical [i.e., public] categories. In its immediacy, it can be expressed only in music.” *Either/Or*, Vol. 1, trans. Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1987), p. 64.
- 31 Marqusee who sees “Mr. Tambourine Man” as Dylan’s “unironic pursuit of transcendence,” and also faults it for its “escapism” from social issues. *Wicked Messenger*, pp. 126–27. My position is that Dylan would recover the primacy of the existential or private relation to his art from its American capitalist or musical-industrial environment.

Chapter 2

- 1 Trager, *Keys*, p. 254.
- 2 An annotated online site has it that the name possibly constitutes a partial allusion to one of Blind Willie McTell’s pseudonyms. See http://www.geocities.com/temptations_page/DylGuide.html#hwy61/.
- 3 Oliver Trager, *Keys*, refers to “Howard” as a “folk figure,” but if so my argument still works: Dylan’s exposing the “folk” movement as somehow turning into a capital [*sic*] enterprise.
- 4 Twain ends his autobiographical *Life on the Mississippi* tracing the River back to (a Dylanesque) Minnesota. The work also happens to engage issues of Twain’s vocation as a former steamboat apprentice-pilot, which in turn serves as an implicit metaphor of his early experience as a writer. Highway 61 in fact passes through Samuel Clemens a.k.a. Twain’s birthplace, Hannibal, Missouri.
- 5 The verse where “Gypsy Davey with a blowtorch he burns out their camps/With his faithful slave Pedro behind him he tramps” sketches a similarly compromising First-to-Third World relationship. “Gypsy Davey,” an ironic revision of a Woody Guthrie figure in one of his songs, here uses others to elevate his own importance. “Davey” evokes the American soldier fighting in Vietnam and thus personifying a country that, with puppet-government support (“his faithful slave Pedro”), destroys

- Vietnamese villages. Far from being a socially marginal gypsy, he purportedly wreaks his havoc to protect [*sic*] the American way.
- 6 On the album's version, one can also hear these lines to read "the old folks home *in* the college": where people get educated to make money, which amounts to trying to define and thereby restrict the "soul."
 - 7 *Bob Dylan: The Story Behind Every Track: All the Songs*, ed. Phillipe Margotin and Jean-Michel Guesdon (New York: Black Dog & Leventhal Publishers, 2015), p. 195. The entry for "Ballad of a Thin Man" also speculates about who the Jones figure might have been (pp. 195–96).
 - 8 Trager, *Keys*, p. 24.
 - 9 *All the Songs*, *ibid.*, p. 195.
 - 10 To my knowledge, Bob Dylan has never explicitly endorsed "Zen Buddhist" positions, although his direct acquaintance with Allen Ginsberg's eclectic "mystical" ruminations and also Jack Kerouac's Buddhist writings likely made its way into Dylan's awareness during this period. Indeed, Kerouac expressed Buddhist beliefs in *Desolation Angels*, to which some critics think Dylan alludes in the very title of "Desolation Row." Steven Heine's book on Dylan, *Bargainin' For Salvation: Bob Dylan, a Zen Master?* (New York: Continuum, 2009), p. 31, points out the "zen" connection with Dylan's many enigmatic sayings throughout his songs. Heine emphasizes Dylan's "spiritual" quest in Zen Buddhist terms that overlap with what I think Dylan's songs allegorically trace in a more Western and less formal version of that quest. Heine also notes how "Zen literary records expressing transcendental insight into the absurd of human existence help to explain how Dylan's puzzling words consistently critique the limitations of self amid the failings of social institutions as part of his ongoing quest for spiritual fulfillment" (p. 22; also see pp. 66 ff.).
 - 11 The lines read: "You have a lot of nerve/To say you are my friend/If you won't come out your window." The critical tendency is to regard both songs in Dylan's "put-down" genre, which arguably comes to a head in "Like a Rolling Stone." Trager notes, for instance, that most critics especially see "Can You Please Crawl Out Your Window?" as an expression of Dylan's anger toward a woman stuck on someone else. This aggressive relation either to a man or to a woman clearly comes through in his performance of the song. *Keys*, pp. 92–93.
 - 12 Most Dylan critics regard the song as his breakthrough vocational work, freeing him and subsequently other singers from the constraining protocols of subject-matter and performance common to popular rock 'n' roll songs and other kinds of popular music at the time. Greil Marcus devotes an entire book to the song's revolutionary effect on the music world and the times at large: *Like a Rolling Stone: Bob Dylan at the Crossroads* (New York: Public Affairs, 2005). Mike Marqusee argues for "the song's intimate rage and almost amoral assertion of personal autonomy: a defiant response to a world that insisted on tearing away that autonomy at every turn" (*Wicked Messenger*, p. 163). Wilfrid Mellers, *Darker Shade of Pale: A Backdrop to Bob Dylan* (London: Faber and Faber, 1984), p. 140, judges the song a put-down of "Miss Lonely," stripping away her pretenses, yet also allowing a positive hope for a new beginning. Like other critics, Mellers points to Dylan's later comment, which I cite in the epigraph to Chapter 5, that Dylan's third-person prenominal in his songs really referred to himself (quoted in Mellers, p. 141). Also see Lawrence Epstein's argument about this song and "Ballad of a Thin Man" at http://thebestamericanpoetry.typepad.com/the_best_american_poetry/dylan_watch/, accessed May 22, 2009.

- 13 Hinchey, *Complete Unknown*, p. 136; Tim Riley, *Hard Rain*, p. 121.
- 14 *Complete Unknown*, p. 26.
- 15 From this point through the rest of this book, I place quotation marks around “nothing” to signify Dylan’s staging the diminishing distinction between the self as something and its self as “nothing.”
- 16 *Poems of Emily Dickinson*, #1611. In a different “religious” context, Bryan Cheyette takes note of Dylan’s later expression of his “identityless identity” vis-à-vis “the Hebrew God” in the *Infidels* album’s song “I and I.” Cheyette, “On the ‘D’ Train: Bob Dylan’s Conversions.” *“Do You Mr. Jones?”: Bob Dylan with the Poets and Professors*, ed. Neil Corcoran (London: Pimlico, 2003), pp. 249–50.
- 17 Wallace Stevens, “The Snow Man,” *Collected Poems*, p. 10.
- 18 Also cf. another possible reference for his early belief in communication via his songs: “In the NYC subways, trains were named with letters or numbers. Trains that were locals usually had a double letter name, hence there was an EE train, which straphangers naturally called “the Double E.” The Double E would have stopped at West 4th St. station, and Dylan would have been familiar with it.” “Flagging Down the Double Es,” http://www.edlis.org/twice/threads/double_ees.html
- 19 The words read “so hot” in the outtake version.
- 20 Clinton Heylin, *Revolution in the Air: The Songs of Bob Dylan, 1957-1973* (Chicago: Chicago Review Press, 2009), p. 203. All references to Heylin will be from this work unless otherwise noted.
- 21 Dylan included the song’s lyrics in his published collections of songs (from *Writings and Drawings* through *Bob Dylan Lyrics 1962-2001*) in the section of *Blonde on Blonde* songs.
- 22 Heylin, *Revolution*, p. 261.
- 23 Among other critics, John Hinchey notes this connection in *Like a Complete Unknown*, p. 148. In a self-evident hermeneutic stretch yet with experimental esprit, one might argue that the song’s title perhaps also evokes the Queen Jane (i.e., Seymour) in British history, third wife of Henry VIII, who finally gave him a male heir to his throne, Edward VI, a religiously contentious Protestant king who died at a very young age. Dylan arguably plays on this allusion insofar as his Queen Jane figuratively gives birth to contentious progeny of a different kind.
- 24 As if in ironic confirmation, Clinton Heylin terms “From a Buick 6” nothing more than album-filler or “light relief” in *Highway 61 Revisited* (*Revolution*, p. 252).
- 25 An outtake to this song has her coming down the highway “with her dynamite and her thread,” suggesting her double function of inducing crisis as much as assuaging it for him.
- 26 Lawrence Wilde sees “Desolation Row” using Eliot’s technique of collage and simultaneously subverting his “commitment to the idea of ‘high art’ accessible only to a gifted elite.” Wilde deploys Theodor Adorno’s view of “revolutionary art” to show how songs like “Desolation Row,” even as they reach a popular music audience, comprise “expressionist” critiques of Western capitalist society. In that sense, they baffle appropriations as commodity-cultural products while simultaneously promulgating “the aspiration to liberty and social harmony.” “The Cry of Humanity: Dylan’s Expressionist Period,” *The Political Art of Bob Dylan*, ed. David Boucher and Gary Browning (Charlottesville, VA: Imprint Academic, 2009), pp. 129, 133 *passim*.
- 27 Marqusee regards the opening lines this way, also claiming that they suggest Dylan’s sense of how the mass media was turning him into a spectacle as well. *Wicked Messenger*, p. 147.

- 28 Einstein, of course, also played the (non-electric) violin.
- 29 In a 1910 essay, "Observation on 'Wild' Psychoanalysis," Freud himself, unlike many of his followers, dismissed literal sexual activity as a cause of and/or a means to cure human neuroses.
- 30 Lawrence Wilde also argues that Dylan targets both types of the "poetic." See n. 26 above. Wilde takes "Desolation Row" for a place of liberation and escape from the competitive capitalist world as sketched in the previous stanza. It seems to me, however, that Wilde thus turns "Desolation Row" into yet another alibi for *not* facing "Desolation" as such. Strangely enough, Allen Ginsberg apparently takes the Eliot-Pound-fighting line straight: "You know, that's one of Dylan's fucked-up lines, I'm afraid . . . Eliot and Pound were friends, they weren't 'fighting in the captain's tower.'" He also takes the "calypso singers" as genuine minstrels whom he thinks Dylan is extolling. "The Allen Ginsberg Project" at <http://ginsbergblog.blogspot.no/2012/06/allen-ginsberg-criticizes-bob-dylan-mmp.html/>. Marqusee similarly accepts the countercultural binary: "The contrast between the hollowness of elite art and the soulfulness of popular expression surfaces as an explicit theme in 'Desolation Row'" (*Wicked Messenger*, p. 157).

Chapter 3

- 1 Both John Hinchey and Christopher Ricks, for example, argue that the song represents human "lust" or erotic "desire." John Hinchey, *Like a Complete Unknown*, pp. 216–17, and Christopher Ricks, *Dylan's Visions of Sin*, pp. 151–53.
- 2 Other critics have noted Dylan's allegorization of women along spiritual lines, although not in the sense I am here trying to formulate. Cf. Lawrence Epstein's observation about Dylan's "allegorical love songs": "On the literal level, these songs are about Dylan's love for a woman. On the allegorical level, they are about Dylan's relationship with some aspect of God, represented by the woman." December 1, 2008, *The Dylan Watch*, article by Lawrence J. Epstein on "Red River Shore" at http://thebestamericanpoetry.typepad.com/the_best_american_poetry/dylan_watch/.
- 3 David Yaffe argues that the "Queen of Spades" refers to Bob Dylan's idealization of black female blues and gospel artists, associating them with the quintessence or authenticity of the kind of art he seeks for himself. Dylan's "aretha" reference in his prose-poetic work *Tarantula* makes the "Queen of Soul" allusion viable in this song as well. Both show him attempting to "merge[] sexual desire with an urge to get inside the meaning of the blues, through an erotic 'co-existence.'" *Bob Dylan: Like a Complete Unknown* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011), p. 76. My take is that Dylan here turns the black female singer/song into a trope for an unself-conscious mode of both composing and performing lyrics from which he himself feels socially but not spiritually barred.
- 4 Heylin, *Revolution*, p. 312, links Dylan's reference specifically to Brian Jones of the Rolling Stones, but surely it can refer to any sensationalist contemporary peer.
- 5 An appropriate circular image, rags were collected as materials to make paper, hence serving as a roundabout reference to writing and for Dylan composing the present song itself.

- 6 Dylan's view of touring changes late in his career. A British newspaper notes this about him: "[Dylan] also lives to tour," having "played around 100 gigs every year since 1988. 'A lot of people can't stand touring,' he once said, but to me it's like breathing. I do it because I'm driven to do it." <http://www.mirror.co.uk/celebs/news/2009/05/05/bob-dylan-the-truth-about-the-reclusive-music-legend-115875-21332529/>.
- 7 McGuire had become popular for singing a politically motivated, apocalyptic song that received much radio play at the time, "Eve of Destruction" (1964).
- 8 In this section I will refer to her as the speaker's imagined addressee, and to "her" in scare quotes to signify Dylan's personification of the musical-lyrical medium's potential to help disclose his goal.
- 9 *Revolution*, p. 284.
- 10 Tim Riley points out the "drug slang" of "rainy day women," *Hard Rain*, pp. 130–31. Oliver Trager does the same, also noting the difficulty in determining "whether Dylan was making an unrepentant statement of hipsterism [with a drug allusion] or merely having some fun at his audience's . . . expense." He further notes how "multiplying the two numbers [in the title] equals four twenty—stoner's code for prime time to fire up a joint." *Keys*, pp. 508, 509.
- 11 See <http://www.jesus-is-lord.com/translat.htm/>. "Fifty-four men . . . were put in charge of the [translation] project. At least forty-seven of them took active part in the work, which began in 1604 and included in 1611." Robert Pogue Harrison, "The Book from Which Our Literature Springs," *The New York Review of Books*, LIX:2 (February 9, 2012), p. 44. For that matter, one supposedly can count forty-seven miracles in the canonical Gospels.
- 12 See Michael Coyle and Debra Rae Cohen's essay on *Blonde on Blonde* in *The Cambridge Companion to Bob Dylan* essay on *Blonde on Blonde*, ed. Kevin J. H. Dettmar, p. 144. Trager, *Keys*, p. 509, also cites the Salvation Army-like performance and the connotation of persecution behind the imagery.
- 13 Trager, *Keys*, p. 368. Trager also judges the song as at best "A minor, sloppy blues," influenced by Lightning Hopkins' song that begins much the same in "Automobile (Blues)": "I saw you riding around in your brand new automobile."
- 14 Cf. Heylin, *Revolution*, pp. 289 ff.
- 15 The most notable of these precedents is perhaps "Hot Biscuits and Sweet Marie" (Lincoln Chase), a song famous for its iteration of "caught between the devil and the deep blue sea." Bob Dylan has played this song on his XM radio show, 2008. A TV theme song entitled "White Horses" and sung by Jackie Lee had conspicuously escapist lyrics that echo the "six white horses" image in "Absolutely Sweet Marie" (see below): "On white horses let me ride away to my world of dreams so far away. Let me run. To the sun/To a world my heart can understand. . . . Far away. Stars away." <http://www.cfhf.net/lyrics/white.htm>. <http://www.hsutx.edu/sixwhitehorses/history.html>.
- 16 Hinchey, *Complete Unknown*, p. 186.
- 17 White horses were also used for Hindu religious occasions and wedding events. See <http://www.heberlestables.com/staticpages/index.php/Hindu/>.
- 18 James Kugel, *How to Read the Bible: A Guide to Scripture Then and Now* (New York: Free Press, 2007), p. 516, relates this passage to *The Song of Songs* and messianic hope. Dylan would later record this song with The Band on *The Basement Tapes*. Andy Gill, *Don't Think Twice: Bob Dylan, The Early Years* (New York: Thunder Mouth

- Press, 1998), p. 105, also associates the six-horses image with "Coming Round the Mountain."
- 19 See, for instance, the long poem entitled *Six White Horses* by Candy Geer, inspired by the death of John F. Kennedy and the reaction of the young John John. http://www.etsy.com/view_listing.php?listing_id=27679560/. Johnny Cash recorded a song entitled "Six White Horses" (written by Tommy Cash) in 1969, which has the horses drawing a funeral carriage. Cash also recorded a similarly titled but differently themed gospel song that included an addressed figure named "Marie," and in which a parent senses his son's death: "Come here and look through the window Marie/Open up the shutters, tell me what you see/Was that his knock that I heard at the door/Or is it six white horses coming down the road." http://www.hotlyrics.net/lyrics/J/Johnny_Cash/Six_White_Horses.html. Michael Gray argues that with the "penitentiary" association, the horses suggest that "the narrator" here "declares himself to be on some kind of death row" (*Song & Dance Man III*, p. 396).
 - 20 In contrast, John Hinchey associates the captain with the mythological figure Charon of the River Styx, which again constitutes an allusion to death. *Complete Unknown*, p. 221.
 - 21 The Persian drunkard perhaps alludes to the Persian philosopher Zoroaster's effort to get to the essence of good and evil by transcending mundane relations to existence. Zoroaster is also known as "Zarathustra," Nietzsche's prophet of the superman who affirms life in the face of an "absolutely" tragic nothing of existence.
 - 22 Among the most astute apologists for this song, Christopher Ricks has argued that it does not reference women in general but "a woman" in particular. Ricks, whose argument is of course much more intricate than my paraphrase of it here, gave one version of this paper as an inaugural talk as "Dylan and Misogyny" at the 2006 Dartmouth College Conference, "Just a Series of Interpretations of Bob Dylan's Lyrics." Also see Hinchey, *Complete Unknown*, p. 180, and Trager, *Keys*, p. 357 ff. Trager argues that the song in fact criticizes "sexist men as much as the woman, or women, who let them down." For a "sort of" defense of Dylan's misogynistic inclinations from a more recent feminist viewpoint, see <http://tigerbeatdown.com/2010/02/10/sooner-or-later-one-of-us-must-know-in-defense-of-bob-Dylan/>. Most biographically minded critics assign the ostensible genesis for the woman in "Just Like a Woman" to Edie Sedgwick, with whom Bob Dylan allegedly had an affair during this period.
 - 23 This artistic skepticism about his own art perhaps accounts for why some critics claim that Dylan adopts an "anti-exegetical" stance throughout *Blonde on Blonde* as a whole. See Michael Coyle and Debra Rae Cohen, "Blonde on Blonde," pp. 145, 147.
 - 24 According to Clinton Heylin, a further obstacle to interpreting the song is its faulty transcriptions from "existing tapes." *Revolution*, p. 290.
 - 25 Heylin transcribes the phrases as: "Cold black glass don't make no mirr'r/Cold black water don't make no tears" (p. 291).
 - 26 Trager, *Keys*, p. 609.
 - 27 Taken from Lawrence's *Look! We Have All Come Through!*, digitalized volume at http://archive.org/stream/havecomelookweth00lawrrich/havecomelookweth00lawrrich_djvu.txt/.
 - 28 Hinchey, *Like a Complete Unknown*, pp. 199, 200.
 - 29 Michael Coyle and Debra Rae Cohen, "Blonde on Blonde," p. 145 (their emphasis).
 - 30 Philip Larkin, "Big Victims: Emily Dickinson and Walter de la Mare," *Required Writing: Miscellaneous Pieces 1955-1982* (New York: Farrar, Straus, Giroux, 1984; rpt.

- from London: Faber and Faber Ltd., 1983), p. 195 (my emphasis). Larkin goes on to theorize about Dickinson in a way that could further apply to Dylan: "The price she paid was that of appearing to posterity as perpetually unfinished and wilfully eccentric."
- 31 Michael Gray cites Dylan's "fawning, schmaltzy guitar-work" regarding the song's musical arrangement. *Song and Dance Man III*, p. 147. Where "Norwegian Wood" more or less concerns a sexual situation that never gets consummated, Dylan's song supposedly concerns the abrupt aftermath of the speaker and woman's active sexual encounter. Supporting the biographical-intertextual reading of the song, friends of mine early on noticed the metaphorical homonym of "Jamaican rum" and "Norwegian Wood." But I would claim that this is one more instance of Dylan's imagining/composing on two levels at once.
 - 32 Sidestepping the possible issue of prostitution, John Hinchey argues that the persona's gum-giving "functions on two levels, both within the game of love—as a mocking and/or self-mocking gift—and . . . as a kind of amulet, a protective time-out from the game itself." *Like a Complete Unknown*, p. 209.
 - 33 A related "gum" allusion appears in "Subterranean Homesick Blues" (1965) where it suggests being a clean-cut, middle-class, ergo nonrevolutionary "kid": "Try to avoid the scandals/Don't wanna be a bum/You better chew gum."
 - 34 In his film for the tour of the Rolling Thunder Review (1978), *Renaldo and Clara*, Dylan lets both Baez and Sara speculate that Dylan meant the one and not the other in this song. A number of critics have noted how Sara's patronymic, "Lowndes," resonates in "Lowlands." But one can equally argue that certain images in the song, for example about her "Spanish manners," spring from his relationship with Baez.
 - 35 Quoted in Ricks, *Visions of Sin*, p. 101. Tony Attwood also finds the song "plodding" and comprising a "set of images that conjure up . . . nothing." "Sad-Eyed Lady of the Lowlands": the meaning of the music and the lyrics," posted on December 19, 2015 by Tony Attwood, <http://bob-dylan.org.uk/archives/1846/>.
 - 36 The phrase perhaps also consists of a specific allusion to the self-certain (messianic) left and right political credos being bandied around in the United States during the mid-1960s.
 - 37 The critical temptation is to see this reference in biographical terms since it also happens to signify the approximate locus of Joan Baez's home. From my viewpoint, such a connection only serves to distract attention away from the song's inward autobiographical movement.
 - 38 In the earlier "Joan Baez, Part Two," Dylan writes that he had preferred the realism of social grit in songs to mellifluous vocal and musical renditions of folk topics. That was until, persuaded by others to listen to Joan Baez singing in a specific instance ("Let her voice ring out," they cried), he was struck dumb by it: "I felt my face freeze t' the bone/An' my mouth like ice or solid stone." Yet what he encountered through her voice amounts not to *her* as such but to that person once removed by his imagination, the "Part Two" self or "Baez" as conduit to an experience of otherness he *now* designates as "beauty." This beauty also enveloped others and himself without a specifiable message or reference to external factors: "I did not begin t' touch/'Til I finally felt what wasn't there." This indefinite definition [*sic*] of a musical-lyrical poesis is also synonymous with Edgar Allan Poe's definition of poetic work. See http://www.bjorner.com/WFMH%20-%20Album%20Liner%20Notes.htm#_Toc284489499/.

- 39 Cf. Lawrence Epstein: "'Visions of Johanna' (1966) was the first [sic] of Dylan's allegorical love songs. In that song Dylan is with the earthly Louise while yearning for the spiritual Johanna. The exact nature of Johanna's Godliness is not clear in the song. . . ." December 1, 2008, *The Dylan Watch*, article by Lawrence J. Epstein on "Red River Shore" at http://thebestamericanpoetry.typepad.com/the_best_american_poetry/dylan_watch/.
- 40 Day, *Jokerman*, p. 115. Day was one of the first critics to note Dylan's promiscuous switching of "personal pronouns and names" (p. 116).
- 41 Day, *Jokerman*, p. 121. One also has to take note of Bob Dylan's incessant tinkering with a "published" song's musical style, which occurred during this period and in his late "Never Ending Tour." The *Cutting Edge* bootlegs (2015) show such performative tinkering in actual fact.
- 42 Day, *Jokerman*, p. 114. In his later critical works on Dylan, Day retracts this earlier "carnavalesque" view of Dylan's poetics. For example, see Day's paper delivered at the 2006 Dartmouth College Conference on Dylan at <http://www.dartmouth.edu/~2006dylancon/>.
- 43 "The Philosophy of Composition," *Edgar Allan Poe, Essays and Reviews*, ed. G. R. Thompson (New York: Library of America, 1984), p. 19.
- 44 Critics like Day and Michael Gray among others conjecture that "Johanna" might refer to "Gehenna" in the Jewish Bible, and by extension to "Armageddon" of the New Testament. But as a former student in my Dylan course at Dartmouth College remarked that connection doesn't fully account for what follows in the song.
- 45 Another Dartmouth student in my course on Dylan's lyrics brought my attention to the possible slang reference of this scene. "D train" could be downtown slang for a blow-job or else as in "detrain" meaning "to get off." The D train in actual fact refers to another subway line that stops at W. 4th St. station. http://www.edlis.org/twice/threads/double_ees.html accessed January 24, 2009.
- 46 Emily Dickinson, #1656, Franklin edition.

Chapter 4

- 1 Jim James used these verses on the song he completed with the title "Nothing to It." Other musical artists like Elvis Costello eventually turned Dylan's handwritten, incomplete lyrics into complete songs, which T. J. Burnett produced for the 2014 album *Lost on the River: The New Basement Tapes*. <http://www.daysofthecrazy-wild.com/exclusive-bob-dylans-hand-written-lyrics-nothing-check-em-now/>, accessed April 14, 2016.
- 2 Heylin, *Revolution*, p. 333; his emphasis.
- 3 Marcus's phrase echoes Richard Poirier's American scene and its representation in American literature as a "World Elsewhere."
- 4 Greil Marcus, *The Old, Weird America: The World of Bob Dylan's Basement Tapes* (New York: Picador, USA, 1997), pp. 130, 138, 139, 89.
- 5 Paul Williams, *Performing Artist 1960-1973*, p. 229.
- 6 Clinton Heylin, *Behind the Shades Revisited* (New York: William Morrow, 2001), p. 305.
- 7 Heylin, for example, holds that "Tiny Montgomery" demonstrates Dylan's "love for nonsense" (*Revolution*, p. 333). Sid Griffin simply notes that Dylan is "singing

- some absurd stuff here.” Griffin, *Million Dollar Bash: Bob Dylan, the Band, and the Basement Tapes* (London [UK]: Outline Press Ltd., 2007), p. 177. Oliver Trager claims that the song concerns “sending an enigmatic message to a friend,” yet that begs the question: exactly *what* message? Trager, *Keys*, p. 628.
- 8 Gill, *Don't Think Twice*, p. 120.
 - 9 *Don't Think Twice*, p. 120.
 - 10 Marcus notes that “Tiny Montgomery” might refer to a stock-car racer in the Northern California region.
 - 11 The reference is to a war vehicle of the Second World War. Amazon.com refers to a book by Steven Zaloga that “guides the reader through the early 1930s development of the half-track, its first deployment in action in the Philippines in 1941 and its varied and vital role in international deployments since World War 2.” http://www.amazon.com/Infantry-Half-Track-1940-73-New-Vanguard/dp/1855324679/ref=sr_1_2?ie=UTF8&s=books&qid=1264714285&sr=1-2/.
 - 12 Heylin, *Revolution*, asserts that what Dylan actually sings on the recording (as opposed to the official copyrighted text) is “Grease that gig/And play it blank” (p. 333), which pretty much restates his making the performance slippery (and fun) to pin down and say, in effect, nothing of serious moment.
 - 13 Heylin, *Revolution*, pp. 352, 353. Trager also cites Marcus’s notion that “Quinn the Eskimo” concerns “deliverance from nothingness, about a hero’s conquest of boredom” (*Keys*, p. 506). Sid Griffin makes the “nursery rhyme” connection (*Million Dollar Bash*, pp. 210, 211), and Riley with drugs (*Hard Rain*, p. 167). Most critics note the song’s explicit allusion to the then well-known actor Anthony Quinn who had starred as an Eskimo in the 1960 movie *The Savage Innocents*.
 - 14 Aidan Day, *Jokerman*, pp. 49–51. Employing a more traditional notion of spiritual autobiography, Andrew McCarron regards this song as directly expressing Dylan’s desire for “spiritual growth” or “the realization of a deeper self” via “union with a supreme power” (*Light Come Shining*, p. 64).
 - 15 See Trager, *Keys*, p. 506.
 - 16 Paul Williams regards “Goin’ to Acapulco” as a “love song” in which Dylan expresses a “modest hedonism” (*Performing Artist*, p. 229).
 - 17 One can argue that this stratagem marks all of the other *The Basement Tapes* songs given their unofficial scene of writing and performing.
 - 18 Williams, *Performing Artist*, p. 230, offers the following off-color meanings.
 - 19 Griffin, *Million Dollar Bash*, pp. 210, 191; Trager, *Keys to the Rain*, p. 694. Certain aspects of the song no doubt justify such judgments. Michael Gray isolates one specific line, “Take me down to California, baby,” claiming that it “stands out” for its complete irrelevance. Gray, *Song & Dance Man*, p. 160.
 - 20 Marcus senses this double meaning when he comments that “Yea! Heavy and a Bottle of Bread” is “full of riddles, all coming from the pull of Dylan’s serious, bitter demeanor against the apparent nonsense of his words” (*Weird America*, p. 267).
 - 21 See Gill, *Don't Think Twice*, p. 117, Ricks, *Dylan’s Visions of Sin*, p. 112, and Marcus, *Weird America*, p. 259.
 - 22 This same line could of course also refer to Dylan’s own exhaustion in pushing his song to express his spiritual goal to others.
 - 23 Oliver Trager considers it “one of Dylan’s most insane compositions thanks to the campy delivery of delightfully incomprehensible lyrics” (*Keys*, p. 424).
 - 24 See *Chronicles I*, pp. 116–18.

- 25 In conventional autobiographical terms, the counselor reference probably applies to Albert Grossman, at whose house Bob Dylan was staying while recording *The Basement Tapes*.
- 26 Dylan adds the modifier “long” in one recorded performance of the song.
- 27 *Revolution*, p. 350.
- 28 Tim Riley makes this “rhyming” rationale in *Hard Rain*, p. 159.
- 29 Gill, *Don't Think Twice*, p. 118. Paul Williams also agrees with this reading: “the song is about the American nation as seen from the perspective of the founding fathers, an expression of their pain at how she (personified as female, Liberty) has turned her back on the ideals in which she was conceived” (Williams, *Performing Artist*, p. 232). Cf. Riley, *Hard Rain*, p. 163, and Marcus, *Weird America*, p. 212.
- 30 *Weird America*, pp. 212, 215.
- 31 Dylan acknowledged this Shakespearean allusion in his notes to the song's collection on *Biograph*. Also see Riley, *Hard Rain*, p. 163.
- 32 Marcus refers to these lines to show how this song typifies what *The Basement Tapes* songs all concern: “It's a road where a certain nihilism lies within the freedom and hilarity of a perfectly written, perfectly arranged song—‘Million Dollar Bash,’ say—that casts off all meaning” (*Weird America*, p. 79).
- 33 See, for instance, Heylin, *Revolution*, pp. 343–44. The song's sources tend to corroborate this reading. For instance, the “sugar for sugar” phrase appears in “James Alley Blues,” a 1927 song by Richard “Rabbit” Brown “warning about one of New Orleans' more dangerous thoroughfares” (Gill, *Don't Think Twice*, p. 119). As I note, this is not the last time Dylan will refer to another artist's blues song with apocalyptic overtones stemming from real floods like the one in 1889 in Johnstown Pennsylvania or, as in Brown's song, the devastating 1927 one in the Mississippi delta (Griffin, *Million Dollar Bash*, p. 197).
- 34 Heylin, *Revolution*, p. 336.
- 35 Heylin advances the possible biblical connection along with the sexual reading. *Revolution*, p. 377.
- 36 Tim Riley makes the last suggestion in *Hard Rain*, p. 162.
- 37 For example, the Doors's debut album (which included the song “The End”) was released in January, 1967, the Beatles' *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band* in June, 1967, the Rolling Stones' *Their Satanic Majesties Request* in December, 1967.
- 38 Dylan has consistently included this song in *The Basement Tapes* section in his *Lyrics* collections despite the fact that, as Clinton Heylin notes (*Revolution*, pp. 272–73), it was likely composed two years earlier when Dylan played it with The Band a.k.a. The Hawks. Two years later, The Band recorded the song in *The Basement Tapes* sessions, which possibly accounts for the final 1970 copyrighted version collected in the *Lyrics* books.
- 39 Trager, *Keys*, p. 395. The fact that today pay phones have become *passé* only adds fuel to this Dylan-framed communication problem.
- 40 Sid Griffin sees the persona as giving “ultimate rural advice to a neighbor,” especially in the line advising “you” to “Take heed” of how “Nothing is better, nothing is best.” More generally, Andy Gill claims the song concerns “somebody being held accountable for nondelivery; but it's flexible enough to accommodate a number of interpretations” that range “from a simple drug-deal gone wrong to more serious political deceit.” Terming the song a monologue, Oliver Trager calls attention to Dylan's “confessional stump-preacher mode” in the “middle section” in which one

- can hear him “trying to persuade a congregation to acknowledge but forgive a murky betrayal of some vague origin—Judas’s, perhaps.” Griffin, *Million Dollar Bash*, p. 213; Gill, *Don’t Think Twice*, p. 122; Trager, *Keys*, p. 449.
- 41 Griffin, *Million Dollar Bash*, p. 220. Williams, *Performing Artist*, p. 228 makes the “biblical” connection. Heylin terms the song a “folkloric nursery rhyme” (*Revolution*, p. 379). Tim Riley speculates generally that “Apple Suckling Tree” has country-music longings that will surface on Dylan’s next album *John Wesley Harding* (*Hard Rain*, p. 160).
- 42 Marcus, *Weird America*, p. 242. The entry for this song in *All the Songs*, ed. Margotin and Guesdon, characterizes it as a “grotesque tale” (p. 258). Trager also regards the song in more serious terms as “veer[ing] from the disorderly to the augural in an eye blink” (*Keys*, p. 15).
- 43 *Revolution* p. 380. Heylin’s other transcribed lines I think underscore this same reading: “like bats out of hell” suggests that everyone is leaving him alone “underneath the apple suckling tree,” or in the zone of what might result in his eventually encountering the “Tree” of brute existence.
- 44 Most Dylan critics agree that “Minstrel Boy” belongs in *The Basement Tapes* era, although Dylan later placed it in the *Self Portrait* section of his 2004 updated *Lyrics* book. The only Dylan recording available to date is his Isle of Wight performance in 1969. The song was copyrighted in 1970. He had aggressively stated this attitude—meaning he still expected the opposite to be the case—in the *Blonde on Blonde* song “Most Likely You Go Your Way (and I’ll Go Mine).”
- 45 *Revolution*, p. 323.
- 46 Griffin, *Million Dollar Bash*, p. 211. Griffin also notes that the reference to healing the sick in the song clearly comes from the Bible (p. 212). Andy Gill, *Don’t Think Twice*, p. 123, notes that Richard Manuel was nicknamed “Homer.” Gill adds further information about the song’s title deriving from the comic routine at the Apollo Theater in Harlem during the 1940s and 1950s, which focused on the “various confusions between the characters stuck on opposite sides of the door never being resolved by the door being opened.”
- 47 Cf. Marcus’s view that the song concerns “how hard it is to maintain friendships,” with Dylan addressing friends to whom he gives informal names in the song like “Jim” and Mouse.” *Weird America*, p. 258.
- 48 An Old Testament example appears in Ezekial 37: “The hand of the LORD was upon me, and carried me out in the spirit of the LORD, and set me down in the midst of the valley which was full of bones, And caused me to pass by them round about: and, behold, there were very many in the open valley; and, lo, they were very dry.”
- 49 *Don’t Think Twice*, p. 114.
- 50 *Weird America*, pp. 64–65.
- 51 The fishing “hook” also metaphorically signifies Dylan’s own “fishing” for what made him a distinctive artist back then. He uses the image of fishing again in “Apple Suckling Tree.”
- 52 The ever-informative Heylin notes that Dylan apparently wrote this song in 1967 but reworked it in 1973. The original version was “Just another discarded ditty” relying “on the usual wordplay and slurred diction to obscure any pretense to a deeper meaning.” Heylin further notes the “dramatic reworking” of the song’s later version, but as to why he doesn’t speculate. *Revolution*, pp. 336, 337.

- 53 Here the “biographical” reduction of this attitude, for example to Bob Dylan’s restlessness in his pastoral “Woodstock” community, only serves to block the *Basement* song’s essentially subjective orientation.
- 54 Marcus sees the song synonymous with “looking for your girlfriend in a whorehouse” (*Weird America*, p. 247), Heylin views it as a “drinking song” (*Revolution*, p. 337), Gill a “cowboy farce” (*Don’t Think Twice*, p. 121), and Griffin even as a song narrated by “a randy sailor on shore leave in a bisexual bar” (*Million Dollar Bash*, p. 302).
- 55 Ezekial 1:4,5, 16, quoted in Rogovoy, *Prophet*, p. 113. Michael Gray hears echoes not only from Ezekial but also from the Book of Dan. 7:9-10 where the prophet sees “the Ancient of days” at the Last Judgment: “His throne was like the fiery flame, and His wheels as burning fire . . . ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him: the judgment was set, and the books were opened.” Gray, *Dylan Encyclopedia* (New York: Continuum, 2006), p. 708. Trager hints at an apocalyptic theme from the New Testament Book of Revelation: “The narrator is a mysterious, shady Messiah figure . . . prophetically returning to settle an old (and final?) score with humanity” (*Keys*, p. 616).
- 56 Rogovoy, *Prophet*, p. 114.
- 57 Gill, *Don’t Think Twice*, p. 123. Gill suggests that the image of the fiery wheel could also refer to Dylan’s motorcycle accident, which led to his doing *The Basement Tapes* in the first place. Robert Shelton, *No Direction Home*, p. 318.
- 58 Dylan will later resort to the same conceit pertaining to one level of meaning in his title for *Blood on the Tracks*.
- 59 Clinton Heylin suggests this line of reading when he cites the song’s initial “mem’ry” line as a direct allusion to Rimbaud’s *A Season in Hell*. *Revolution*, p. 347.
- 60 Technically, this might be better viewed as a revision of Socratic “recollection” or Platonic “anamnesis” into what Kierkegaard termed “repetition,” or recollecting the existential truth forward.
- 61 *Old, Weird, America*, pp. 143, 144.
- 62 John Herdman, *Voice without Restraint* (Edinburgh: Paul Harris Publishing 1982), p. 54; Muir, *Troubadour: Early & Late Songs of Bob Dylan* (Bluntishman, Cambridge shire, UK: Woodstock Publications, 2003), p. 158.
- 63 Gill, *Don’t Think Twice*, p. 115.
- 64 “Escalation of the Vietnam War officially started on the morning of January 31, 1965 when orders were cut and issued to mobilize the 18th Tactical Fighter Squadron from Okinawa to Da Nang Air Base.” Wikipedia, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Operation_Flaming_Dart, accessed June 9, 2010. The January 30 date also happens to mark when Hitler assumed the Chancellorship of Germany, with of course dire human consequences for Jews. Given Dylan’s own Jewish background, the date could thus be a roundabout, conventionally understood autobiographical reference. But perhaps more specifically autobiographical is the fact that he first came to New York City in late January of 1961, in effect thus marking his vocational birth.
- 65 Ricks regards the song as a near parody of Gentry’s “Ode” and as expressing the “sin” of “classic boredom” and “pointlessness” (*Dylan’s Visions of Sin*, pp. 129, 128).
- 66 Tony Attwood at “Untold Dylan: The meaning behind the music and words of Bob Dylan” on “I’m not there,” posted on February 16, 2016 at [http://bob-dylan.org.uk/archives/2052/](http://bob-dylan.org.uk/archives/2052http://bob-dylan.org.uk/archives/2052/).
- 67 Trager, *Keys*, pp. 559, 560, terms Dylan’s song a “tongue-in-cheek amalgamation of tradition and oddball fantasy,” an interpretation supported by his singing it

- while “barely containing his laughter” or “as if straining not to blow the joke.” But Paul Williams argues that the song comes across like a “symphony,” with Dylan addressing Christianity in serious terms. Both Heylin and Williams suggest that Dylan might be expressing true sentiments under the influence of drugs. Sid Griffin rejects this referential reduction and holds out for the song’s religious significance, even regarding it as Bob Dylan’s “publicly beginning his quest for Salvation.” Griffin, *Million Dollar Bash*, pp. 183, 184, 186; Williams, *Performing Artist*, pp. 234–35; Heylin, *Revolution*, pp. 334–35.
- 68 John Herdman makes overtures to this inward-turning Dylan when remarking that “Behind Dylan’s prophetic utterances of doom directed towards society lies . . . personal fear . . . about his own salvation. Now for the first time [*sic*], instead of projecting that fear outwards in apocalyptic imagery, he begins to examine its source within his own consciousness” (*Voice without Restraint*, p. 96).
- 69 From the excellent edition of Dylan’s songs, *The Lyrics: Since 1962*, eds. Christopher Ricks, Lisa Nemrow, and Julie Nemrow (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2015), p. 422.

Chapter 5

- 1 See Mellers, *Darker Shade of Pale*, pp. 151–52.
- 2 Williams, *Performing Artist*, p. 239.
- 3 Riley, *Hard Rain*, p. 176.
- 4 Cf. the discussion of “Fourth Time Around” in Chapter 3. Earlier examples include “Restless Farewell” on *The Times They Are A-Changin’* and “It Ain’t Me, Babe” on *Another Side of Bob Dylan*. I read a late Dylan song like “Honest with Me” from *Love and Theft* along the same lines.
- 5 In objecting to what he considered this over-reading of the John Wesley Harding photograph, Allen Ginsberg once told me and several students at Union College (Schenectady, New York, Fall, 1967) that no such pictures existed since the scene was photographed with a Polaroid camera near Woodstock, New York, at which he himself was present a week or so before the album was released. Even so, the photograph obviously could have been doctored in the interim, and in any case faces arguably appear there. Clinton Heylin also sees them, in fact those of the Beatles. *Bob Dylan: Behind the Shades Revisited*, p. 284. What also should one make of Dylan’s wearing the *Blonde on Blonde* jacket on an album cover purporting to differentiate itself from conspicuous rock ‘n’ roll precedents? Is it a layered “don’t rush to conclusions” warning?
- 6 Gill, *Don’t Think Twice*, pp. 126–27, 128; Riley, *Hard Rain*, p. 172. Robert Shelton noted the connection between “Harding” and Dylan’s situations in *No Direction Home*, p. 392. Also see Hinchey, *Complete Unknown*, pp. 228–29.
- 7 Ian Bell, however, regards the real, historical outlaw John Wesley Hardin as in fact backgrounding Dylan’s song. See *Once Upon a Time*, pp. 489–98.
- 8 Heylin quotes Bob Dylan about his apparent *absence* of intention in composing the song: that it “was the one song that I had no idea what it was about, why it was even on the album.” Heylin holds that the “stand” that Harding-cum-Dylan supposedly takes remains ambiguous to the core. Heylin, *Revolution*, p. 368.
- 9 William Blake, “The Marriage of Heaven and Hell” at http://www.levity.com/alchemy/blake_ma.html/.

- 10 John Hughes regards these liner notes “as a zany, mazy, dream-like parable about the interpretive illusions of seekers after truth,” a quest that the *John Wesley Harding* songs provoke in the album’s listeners (*Invisible Now*, p. 178).
- 11 “Shute” pronounced “shoot” can reference “Shit!” as in “Oh shoot!,” a common US euphemism formerly used in “polite” society. <http://www.phrasemix.com/phrases/oh-shoot/>. Cf. Dylan’s use of “Judas Priest,” discussed later, in “The Ballad of Frankie Lee and Judas Priest.” “Chute,” another word pronounced as “Shute,” also references “A person who is generally an asshole [*sic*] and/or white trash. They like to fight everyone.” <http://www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=shute/>.
- 12 Hinchey, *Complete Unknown*, p. 247; Trager, *Keys to the Rain*, p. 683, here quotes from a work by Robin Wittig. Andy Gill insists that the song’s reference to prophets has a specific autobiographical meaning. Where other critics like Wilfred Mellers regard the messenger as a symbolic figure, say as “the devil disguised as an angel, who cannot speak truth but only flattery,” Gill like Hinchey thinks the messenger refers to “Dylan himself, the bringer of harsh home truths” to his audience. *Don’t Think Twice*, pp. 134, 135.
- 13 Williams asserts that “the closing lines” might be both “sarcastic” and “sincere,” given that the “after-the-crash” album’s songs convey “if not good news, then at least encouraging messages,” including straightforward “folk truths” (*Performing Artist*, p. 246).
- 14 Rogovoy, *Prophet*, p. 120. Rogovoy goes on to claim that Dylan’s song ends with “a scene right out of Exodus,” and that the song’s Moses allusions specifically refer to Dylan’s finding comfort in the biblical story after his rejection by the folkies and leftists (p. 121). Robert Shelton regards the “Eli” reference as also lining the song with prophetic intimations: “Eli” can mean “God is high,” pointing back to Dylan’s feeling compelled to tell others the truth of the Lord. *No Direction Home*, p. 394. I would contend that at this point in his career, Dylan here and elsewhere in his songs inscribes existential midrashim of biblical passages both from the Torah and the New Testament.
- 15 Scaduto, *Bob Dylan*, p. 256.
- 16 Such rejection, for example, defines the vitriolic thrust of “Most Likely You Go Your Way (And I’ll Go Mine)” on *Blonde on Blonde*.
- 17 Gill also connects this “good news” with “the Christ story,” as does Scaduto. Gill, *Don’t Think Twice*, p. 135; Scaduto, *Bob Dylan*, p. 256. Yet Dylan’s “good news” is ecumenical, in the sense that it indicates a secular transcendence of simplistic responses to the riddle of existence. For a different view, see Mellers: “Clearly he won’t bring any [good news] and they know he won’t; once more, there is no revelation” (*Shade of Pale*, p. 157). But the Dylan speaker does say that the “few words . . . opened up his heart.”
- 18 Hinchey (*Complete Unknown*, p. 242) thinks “the hobo is the singer,” but I would maintain only if one appreciates the separation of present and past selves. Gill denies the connection of Dylan and the hobo (*Don’t Think Twice*, p. 133). Scaduto connects them, but assumes that Dylan here “has recognized that you must stand alone in order to find Self” (*Bob Dylan*, p. 255).
- 19 Heylin, *Revolution*, p. 370.
- 20 Gill sees the song delivering “The album’s most straightforward moral parable,” although he doesn’t regard the hobo figure as Dylan’s alter ego (*Don’t Think Twice*, p. 133).
- 21 The latter phrase might also constitute a pun on how like “Miss Lonely” in “Like a Rolling Stone,” he too resisted facing “nothing.”

- 22 Like Trager (*Keys*, p. 209), Wilfred Mellers and Heylin see the “moralistic coda” as “not Christian, but appeal[ing] only to individual conscience,” eschewing other men’s codes (*Shade of Pale*, p. 157; Heylin, *Revolution*, p. 352).
- 23 *Hard Rain*, p. 180.
- 24 *Performing Artist*, pp. 244–45.
- 25 Williams, *Performing Artist*, p. 245. Gill terms the song a “simple parable” disclosing the “addictive behavior” of Dylan’s seeking success via “Judas” Grossman and the “music business” that he represented. *Don’t Think Twice*, pp. 131, 132. See Shelton, *No Direction Home*, p. 393, and Trager, *Keys*, p. 26.
- 26 Stephen Scobie reads both characters differently: “Frankie Lee would be a very secular Christ: he borrows money, he confesses to ‘foolish pride,’ he is a gambler, he dies raving, and there is no suggestion of salvation or resurrection. Conversely, several of Judas Priest’s actions are Christ-like: he lends money generously, he lives in Paradise, he holds his dying friend in his arms. The reversal is incomplete, however. Frankie Lee is still innocent, and Judas and the house he inhabits are still very sinister.” *Alias Bob Dylan*, p. 176.
- 27 Signifying the hours in a day, “twenty-four” also doubles as a pun for “all of the time,” the illusory perpetual pleasures promised to Frankie/Dylan.
- 28 Tim Riley wonders, “Where does the neighbor boy’s guilt come from, and why is it ‘concealed’? And why does Dylan have this unexplained fourth character, who appears in only one verse, utter the song’s subtext: ‘Nothing is revealed’?” *Hard Rain*, p. 141. But the “boy” is the still, small self left over for Dylan from his preceding agon.
- 29 This and the preceding quotation are from Trager, *Keys*, p. 165. John Hinchey leans toward a less autobiographical view of the song, including any self-reference to Dylan’s vocational situation. He regards the drifter as an “everyman” feeling guilty about he knows not what. He doesn’t think the drifter is “an aspect of the singer,” but that he represents “a fellow man” (*Complete Unknown*, p. 242).
- 30 *Bob Dylan*, p. 254. On the lightning image as a spiritual intervention, also see Shelton, *No Direction Home*, p. 393, and Mellers, *Shade of Pale*, p. 157.
- 31 Cf. Gill who takes the conventional spiritual-autobiographical view of these passages. For example, he claims that the lightning image constitutes an “apostolic intervention”: while others pray, Dylan’s “conversion around the time of the accident” leads him into a “relationship with his god” as a “personal, one-to-one affair, untainted by the interference of the organized churches” (*Don’t Think Twice*, p. 132).
- 32 See Heylin, *Revolution*, pp. 362–63.
- 33 *Hard Rain*, p. 178. Cf. Marqusee, *Wicked Messenger*: “But where both Hill and Guthrie were in day-to-day contact with working people and their organizations, Dylan’s relationship with his audience was comparatively estranged and increasingly problematic for him. This disturbing truth is one of the underlying themes of *John Wesley Harding*” (p. 250).
- 34 *Prophet*, pp. 119, 120. While both Rogovoy and Scaduto suppose that the song raises the issue of spiritual salvation, Paul Williams claims that it resists one’s “throwing any ‘meaning’ matrix over it” (*Performing Artist*, pp. 239, 241).
- 35 Typically the complaint poem concerns a lover/poet figure: “This poet must express his grief (and his humility), explain the reality of his suffering, profess some worthwhile goal (in this case to help other lovers), identify his enemy, complain about Fortune, cite his masters (Chaucer, Boethius), plead for mercy, and so on.” <http://www.lib.rochester.edu/camelot/teams/lcintro.htm/>. This genre is also related to that

of the “dream vision” where a narrator gains a “knowledge (often about religion or love)” that allows him to transcend his sorrow. <http://encyclopedia.thefreedictionary.com/dream+vision/>, accessed February 23, 2011. A good example of such poetry is Geoffrey Chaucer’s *The Book of the Duchess*.

- 36 *Don’t Think Twice*, p. 128. Trager, *Keys*, agrees with the “Paine” award reference but regards Dylan’s Paine [*sic*] in a more positive light: as still “a symbol for freethinking in reference to the American philosopher’s famous declaration that his own mind was his church.” Paine also would have disagreed with how “his ideas [had become] twisted into dogma” by certain politicians and businessmen (*Keys*, pp. 19, 20). Hinchey maintains that the damsel represents “Miss Liberty” or American “freedom” now figuratively placed “in chains.” The Paine figure represents “the heritage of that religiously independent male will that has always seen itself as the guardian of liberty.” Paine’s apology at the end, then, “is positively Blakean in its grisly hypocrisy.” *Complete Unknown*, pp. 233, 234, 235.
- 37 This is how Wilfrid Mellers sees the figure (*Shade of Pale*, p. 153), although he finds Paine’s liberation of Dylan to be somewhat ineffectual.
- 38 It is probably not amiss to see Dylan’s “damsel” as the prototype for the Guess Who’s 1970 song “American Woman.”
- 39 Critics otherwise take this apology for an admission of weakness on Paine’s part, which backs up the negative reading of his allegorical significance. Cf. Mellers, *Shade of Pale*, p. 153, who suggests that Paine’s apology signifies his inability to continue his revolutionary political program.
- 40 See, for instance, Shelton, *No Direction Home*, p. 394, Heylin, *Revolution*, pp. 373–74, and Gill, *Don’t Think Twice*, p. 132. Such critical viewpoints exhibit the problems assignable to the Genetic Fallacy. The so-called actual occasion that may have initiated writing a poem or lyric does not define the work that ensues.
- 41 *Shade of Pale*, p. 156.
- 42 Paul Williams speculates that the “landlord” could refer to “his manager, his record company, his audience; in the context of” the album as a whole, “we may also hear him singing to his country, to the powers that be, and not just in this town or this nation but in this world, this life” (*Performing Artist*, p. 244).
- 43 Oliver Trager cites Jon Landau’s review in *Crawdaddy* about how this line refers to Dylan’s changed view of others in authority generally. He’s saying, “I will recognize you but you are going to have to deal with me. This is a truly incredible transformation in attitude when seen in contrast with ‘Ballad of a Thin Man’” (quoted in *Keys*, pp. 129–30).
- 44 Damian Balassone, *Dylan and the Bible* at <http://damianbalassone.wordpress.com/2014/05/23/dylan-and-the-bible-1962-67/>.
- 45 While Paul Williams notes that the line “eats but is not satisfied” finds its biblical source in Leviticus 26 (Trager includes Deuteronomy), he finally regards the “I” not as God but Dylan himself “as empathetic (human) observer” of others abjectly lost in pursuit of false values. *Performing Artist*, p. 246; cf. Riley, *Hard Rain*, p. 182.
- 46 Trager, *Keys*, p. 308. Trager nonetheless feels the song leans more to biblical warning than promise of redemption. He reads the song as Dylan’s “way of sending a message from the wilderness of his upstate idyll of how ill the city and, by extension, American society (both defined by and composed of immigrants) seemed to him.”
- 47 Gill, *Don’t Think Twice*, p. 134. Though he interprets the last lines of the song to imply “a hope of grace,” Robert Shelton remains “confounded” by “I Pity the Poor

- Immigrant,” seeing it as a “love-hate debate between [Dylan’s] own . . . good side and the acquisitive, opportunist, insatiable element” (*No Direction Home*, p. 594).
- 48 Quoted in Scaduto, *Bob Dylan*, p. 249.
- 49 *Bob Dylan*, p. 255. Hinchey more pointedly regards the song as a “self-projection,” so that in the final line Dylan expresses an effort “to purge himself of his self-regard” (*Complete Unknown*, p. 246).
- 50 Here again we see an example of the double irony Dylan deploys throughout the *John Wesley Harding* songs. In one moment he shies away from expressing countercultural sentiments; in another, as here, he does just that in presupposing an anti-war position.
- 51 Hinchey cites Ricks (*Visions of Sin*) on the final line’s biblical pun, “comes to pass,” as something that transpires and “ceases to be.” This pun “accents” the “vanity” of “gladness” coming to pass, “so that his ill-founded happiness does not merely ‘shatter like the glass’ but constitutes its own shattering” (*Complete Unknown*, p. 246). Also cf. Henri Bergson on Lucretius’ *De Rerum Natura*: “There is no indignation and no trace of anger—only deep pity for men who fail to see wherein happiness lies [i.e., in ‘philosophy’ that ‘has risen above competition’] and who therefore do themselves great harm.” *The Philosophy of Poetry: The Genius of Lucretius*, trans. Wade Baskin (New York: The Wisdom Library, 1959), p. 49.
- 52 Søren Kierkegaard, *The Sickness Unto Death*, trans. Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980), p. 22.
- 53 Michael Gray, *Song and Dance Man III*, p. 159; Rogovoy, *Prophet*, p. 122. Gill, too, senses the secular-apocalyptic allusion in the song (*Don’t Think Twice*, p. 131).
- 54 Riley further notes that what “Hendrix really did was set a new standard for Dylan covers, and transform what you took away from Dylan’s original” (*Hard Rain*, p. 179).
- 55 *Wicked Messenger*, p. 254. Also see Heylin, *Revolution*, p. 266.
- 56 Scaduto, *Bob Dylan*, pp. 254, 255.
- 57 See Heylin, *Revolution*, p. 366; Trager, *Keys*, p. 342.
- 58 Trager, *Keys*, p. 9; see Gill, *Don’t Think Twice*, p. 130, who also links the businessman image to Dylan’s manager at the time, Albert Grossman.
- 59 Day, *Jokerman*, p. 132.
- 60 Trager makes this Eliot connection in *Keys*, p. 9. The line from Stevens’ “Notes toward a Supreme Fiction” appears in the “It Must Change” section, line 250 (ii.11), where it refers to those, presidents and servants alike, incapable of recognizing the absolutely new that occurs in and through poetic change. So the Dylan’s song would break free from the very precedents it conjures up in attempting to trace an absolutely new poetic vision.
- 61 Heylin also thinks Hendrix’s version of “All Along the Watchtower” constitutes a misreading of Dylan’s more “worldly wise” version on *John Wesley Harding* (*Revolution*, p. 366).
- 62 See Christopher Ricks, for instance, *Dylan’s Visions of Sin*, p. 359. Heylin points out that Dylan himself suggested the circularity of the song, where the last line(s) could be the first. *Revolution*, p. 365.
- 63 Trager, *Keys*, p. 9; Day, *Jokerman*, p. 133.
- 64 Scaduto, *Bob Dylan*, p. 256; Shelton, *No Direction Home*, p. 394; Gill, *Don’t Think Twice*, p. 135. Also see Trager, *Keys*, p. 160; Riley, *Hard Rain*, p. 184.

- 65 The song's undercurrent of sexual *jouissance* adds to the song's private reference, that is, to a woman's private parts in the images of "cove," her "comin'" to him, and so on. The "bundle of joy" of course also accords with Gill's surmise about a "newborn" baby. But just as Dylan uses playing songs with The Band in *The Basement Tapes* to muse on his own vocational concerns, so he often trumps externally definable occasions to go more internal than might be considered socially seemly.

Epilogue

- 1 Andy Gill, *Don't Think Twice*, p. 137.
- 2 Among other critics, Oliver Trager notes this apparent deviation, *Keys*, p. 447.
- 3 Quoted in Scaduto, *Bob Dylan*, p. 260.
- 4 Lavinia Greenlaw characterizes the effect in the *Nashville Skyline* songs as one of "deferred feeling and deflected meaning." "Big Brass Bed: Bob Dylan and Delay," "*Do You Mr. Jones?*": *Bob Dylan with the Poets and Professors*, ed. Neil Corcoran, p. 76.
- 5 Bob Dylan hardly rebutted this take of the song. Heylin cites him as stating, "I could easily have changed that line . . . but I think the concept still woulda been the same. You see a fine-looking woman walking down the street, you start going, 'Well, what are you doing on the street? You're so fine, what do you need all this for?'" (Heylin, *Revolution*, p. 261). Cf. Trager, *Keys*: "Dylan caught some flak for sexism with" this song, which "can be interpreted as delivered by a condescending, if not creepy, pick-up artist on the make" (p. 595). Tim Riley has no patience with the song's alleged sexism, terming the song the "least worthy of defending" insofar as it "exacerbates the sexist streak held over since *Street Legal*" (*Hard Rain*, p. 272). But Donald Brown allows that Dylan's "vocal" performance of these patently "paternalist" lines "suggests he is winking at the song's stance." *Bob Dylan: American Troubadour* (New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 2014), p. 166.
- 6 <http://damianbalassone.wordpress.com/2014/05/27/dylan-and-the-bible-1980-81/>.
- 7 In "Teaching Dylan at Dartmouth College 1972-2010," collected in *Professing Dylan*, ed. by Frances Hunter (Memphis: Phillips Memphis), I discuss "Simple Twist of Fate" from *Blood on the Tracks* in this context. Unfortunately, this essay was printed with numerous typographical errors. A correct copy appears at <http://sites.dartmouth.edu/larenza/>.
- 8 This would not be the first time Dylan entertains the incompatibility of his poetic-artistic versus spiritual inclinations. With a somewhat different sense of "spiritual" in mind, Michael Gilmour spots it, for example, in the *Street-Legal* song "Where Are You Tonight? (Journey Through Dark Heat)," Gilmour, *The Gospel*, pp. 77–78.