

Reprise Editor's Introduction

Nothing Synthetic about It: Translating Bob Dylan's Domestic and International Civil Wars

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You can always come back, but you can't
come back all the way.

— Bob Dylan, "Mississippi"

I was thinking of a series of dreams
Where nothing comes up to the top
Everything stays down where it's wounded
And comes to a permanent stop

— Bob Dylan, "Series of Dreams"

At age 19, hailing from the Minnesota mining town of Hibbing, Bob Dylan arrived in New York City's Greenwich Village and began (in music critic and Dylan biographer Robert Shelton's words) "sopping up influences like a sponge."¹ As he did so, the idea of writing his own songs began to crystallize.² He became a habitu  of the Village's coffeehouse district, where he played traditional folk songs and found comrades and associates among discussers of music, theater, literature, film, and dance. He saw foreign art films.³ He mingled with choreographers, filmmakers, theater directors, and folk singers—among them the folksinger Dave Van Ronk, who became a key early mentor.⁴ Van Ronk not only paved the way for him to play at the Gas Light Poetry Caf  (a leading light among Village folk venues), but also, as Dylan tells it in his 2004 memoir *Chronicles: Volume One*, introduced him to a man named Ray Gooch, who often let

Dylan bunk on his sofa.⁵ Ray was an aristocratic native son of Virginia, a “non-conformist, a nonintegrator and a Southern nationalist.”⁶ In Ray’s extensive library, Dylan found—and read around in—works by Gogol, Balzac, Maupassant, Hugo, and Dickens, as well as writings by Pericles and Thucydides, Byron and Shelley, Longfellow and Poe, and many others.⁷ Elsewhere, he was reading news accounts of a now elderly Picasso; this was an artist who had “fractured the art world and cracked it wide open,” and it dawned on Dylan that he would like to try the same thing with music.⁸ Dylan also found kith among writers of “topical songs” (songs based on “real events” drawn from newspapers), and he himself began writing topical songs but worried he was still “a composer without anything to say.”⁹

As a songwriter in search of something, and no doubt inspired by newspaper songs as well as Ray’s Civil War talk, Dylan went to the New York Public Library and scoured microfilmed newspapers from around 1855 to 1865: the *Chicago Tribune*, the *Brooklyn Daily Times*, the *Pennsylvania Freeman*, the *Memphis Daily Eagle*, the *Cincinnati Enquirer*, and others. According to *Chronicles*, he “crammed [his] head full of as much of this stuff as [he] could stand and locked it away in [his] mind.”¹⁰

What was it that Dylan found in those microfilmed Civil War-era pages? “If you turned the light towards it, you could see the full complexity of human nature. Back there, America was put on the cross, died and was resurrected. There was nothing synthetic about it. The godawful truth of that would be the all-encompassing template behind everything that I would write.”¹¹

If in *Chronicles* Dylan frames himself as moving toward emergence as a “poet musician,” then this moment at which he takes up a specifically American muse cannot help but remind us of two nineteenth-century American poets.¹² In his 1844 essay “The Poet,” Ralph Waldo Emerson wrote, “[y]et America is a poem in our eyes; its ample geography dazzles the imagination, and it will not wait long for metres.”¹³ A decade later, prefacing a book written to deliver the American meters of Emerson’s call, Walt Whitman introduced *Leaves of Grass* by claiming, “[t]he Americans of all nations at any time upon the earth have probably the fullest poetical nature. The United States themselves are essentially the greatest poem. ... Here is not merely a nation but a teeming nation of nations.”¹⁴ The Dylan of *Chronicles*, in taking America as his all-encompassing template, frames himself as a speaker of, and on behalf of, America in a Whitmanian tradition. Indeed, Dylan, like Whitman, has claimed to “contain multitudes.”¹⁵

Hence, it is fitting that Dylan’s interpreters have frequently gravitated toward America as a lens for apprehending Dylan, and toward Dylan as a lens for apprehending America. We see this in Greil Marcus’s classic 1997 book *Invisible Republic: Bob Dylan’s Basement Tapes*, republished in 2011 under the title *The Old, Weird America: The World of Bob Dylan’s Basement Tapes*.¹⁶ Here Marcus speaks of Dylan’s albums *Highway 61 Revisited* (1965) and *Blonde on Blonde* (1966) as “records [that] rank with the most intense outbreaks of twentieth-century modernism; they join the whole Gothic-romantic traverse of American self-regard.”¹⁷ But Marcus’s book centers on the recording of

Dylan's fabled and much-bootlegged *basement tapes* of 1967, which Marcus refers to as "a laboratory where, for a few months, certain bedrock strains of American cultural language were retrieved and reinvented."¹⁸ In a similar vein to Marcus's *old, weird America* thesis, we see a quest for finding the mutually illuminating reciprocity between Dylan and America in Sean Wilentz's landmark study *Bob Dylan in America*.¹⁹ Wilentz's introduction presents readers with the questions that pushed him to write his book: "What do [Dylan's] tangled influences tell us about America? What does *America* tell us about Bob Dylan—and what does Dylan's work tell us about America?"²⁰ Wilentz argues that Dylan is "not simply someone who comes out of the United States, or whose art does, but also [is] someone who has dug inside America as deeply as any artist ever has."²¹ He discusses Dylan's famed Rolling Thunder Revue tour of 1975–1976 in reference to weird carnival-circuit sword swallows, fortune tellers, and geeks, framing Dylan's own persona as always allied with the figure of "the all-American carnny."²² Elsewhere, *Dylan in America* references the musician's experience with the Civil War newspapers and calls it a "breakthrough."²³ Small wonder, then, that (as Wilentz recounts) Allen Ginsberg once described Dylan as "an answering call or response to the kind of American prophecy that Kerouac had continued from Walt Whitman."²⁴

But if Dylan finds himself in the same stream of American prophetic tradition as Whitman, his place in that stream has been on a different level. For Whitman, the United States of 1855 were specifically *United* (as if every component of America were an individual line or foot or rhyme or caesura within the unity of a single American poem), while the template of Dylan's Civil War America has been divided—America put on a cross, spirit and flesh torn from each other, and then resurrected in a specifically nonsynthetic way. "There was nothing synthetic about it"—this is Dylan's phrase in *Chronicles*. But what does the phrase mean? Alessandro Carrera—who has translated Dylan's *Tarantula, Lyrics: 1962–2001*, and *Chronicles* into Italian—refers to the crucifixion–resurrection passage in general as "an impervious linguistic wall," and he singles out the phrase *There was nothing synthetic about it* for a special citation. Speaking of the conundrum of translating it, Carrera wonders, "Did Dylan mean there was nothing chemical, nothing prefabricated or artificial in the way America ran to its crucifixion? Or did he mean there was nothing, in the process of the whole Civil War, pointing toward a synthesis?"²⁵ In light of Dylan's remarkable claim regarding this image as an all-encompassing template for his work, the stakes for decoding this passage are high and beyond the scope of this issue of *Journal of Transnational American Studies'* annual *Reprise* section. However, I do want to devote some of the present introduction to contemplating—in American and transnational contexts—how we might read the all-encompassing template of America's crucifixion and nonsynthetic resurrection. In this image, I see something of Picasso's cubism, the island of Guam (Guåhan), and the question of translation.

Though I am certainly the least of those who could ever be called a dylanologist (and humility in the face of the sublime quantity and often quality of writing on Dylan

compels me to acknowledge I am probably *not even a dylanologist*), I would see Dylan's template as allied with the lyrics I have selected as this introduction's epigraphs: The template involves a nonsynthetic resurrection wherein spirit and flesh have never been fully reunited, a resurrection in which America can always come back but can't come back all the way, an awful resurrection wherein the components stay down where they're wounded. And rather than arriving at some type of restorative healing, the fragments exist in a state of interrupted synthesis, so that the process comes to a permanent stop, with the components remaining individual, separate, perpetually in their torn-apart state.²⁶ The image of a nonsynthetic resurrected America is leavened by recourse to Dylan's allusion to Picasso, who according to Dylan "fractured the art world and cracked it wide open," a description of Picasso's impact on the art world, to be sure, but also an allusion to *how* Picasso fractured and cracked it open—by means of cubism, and not the "synthetic" cubism of 1912 to 1914 (which involved "flattening out the image and sweeping away the last traces of allusion to three-dimensional space") but the original "analytical" cubism of 1908 to 1912, which hinged on a "structured dissection of the subject, viewpoint-by-viewpoint, resulting in a fragmentary image of multiple viewpoints and overlapping planes."²⁷

An America conceived along these lines may be thought of as the *nonintegrated* States of America (not to say *United States of America*) that have become, a century and a half after the country died on the Civil War's cross, metonymized by *Chronicles's* own epitome of the "nonintegrator," the Southern nationalist Ray Gooch. Ray is not an anomaly but rather a synecdoche of nonintegrative American States in which everyone and everything has remained a nonintegrator, never synthesizable into an integrated image but always a structured dissection, a fragmentary image of multiple viewpoints. Today, Dylan's all-encompassing and nonintegrative template of an America perpetually at war with itself remains as relevant as ever, both to his oeuvre and to America—e.g., his seventeen-minute song on JFK's assassination ("Murder Most Foul" on the 2020 album *Rough and Rowdy Ways*), and the American public's more general Talkin' American Civil War II Blues of the 2020s.²⁸

Further, I would suggest that if landmark work in Dylan studies has helped us see America in Dylan and Dylan in America, then landmark work in Transnational American Studies offers us a way of further contemplating Dylan's nonsynthetic States of America. As Amy Kaplan repeatedly argued in the 1990s and 2000s, no study or image or template involving America will be complete or even marginally adequate in the absence of an awareness of the reciprocities between the US domestic and international spheres. Had she turned focus to Dylan, Kaplan might have argued that (to borrow language from Marcus) Dylan's "weird but clearly recognizable America" calls out for transnational exegesis all the more forcefully for its weirdness—that even in its most apparently homegrown instantiations, Dylan's weird America has weird correlates abroad.²⁹ Dylan's weird, nonsynthetic America of the unending civil war is ineluctably bound to the weird nonsynthetic America of the United States's persistent international wars, with America's civil wars being surprisingly international and its

international wars being unexpectedly civil, with civil and international wars perhaps often mediated by the same masters of war. In her introduction to the edited collection *Cultures of United States Imperialism* (1993), Kaplan wrote against the idea “that America ... can be understood as a domestic question, left alone, unique, divorced from the international conflicts ... in which that national identity takes shape.”³⁰ Instead she saw US imperialism and “international relations” more generally as a hinge for the “negotiating [of] intranational relations” as they play out in “culture at home.”³¹ Kaplan’s most famous example of the sometimes Rube-Goldberg relation between the foreign and domestic pertains precisely to a US American body politic that remained nonsynthesized in the wake of the American Civil War. Her chapter “Black and Blue on San Juan Hill” discusses late nineteenth and early twentieth-century representations that framed “the Spanish-American War as a continuation and resolution of the Civil War,” with “the advent of an imperial war abroad narrowly avert[ing] another civil war at home, this time a race war between whites and blacks.”³² As she explained regarding Theodore Roosevelt’s depictions of the Rough Riders and the Battle of San Juan Hill in Cuba: even as “the United States sought the unification of a white nation” via the image of former Yankees and former Confederates united on the battlefield of an imperial war, “Roosevelt instead found [in Cuba] evidence of anarchy in the blurring of racial boundaries.”³³ Indeed, for as much as some domestic components of the United States may have wished to see the Spanish-American War precipitate a North–South synthesis at home, Kaplan portrayed US empire as leading not to “a new synthesis” but to an “anarchy of empire” characterized by “internal contradictions, ambiguities, and frayed edges.”³⁴ There is nothing synthetic about it, internally or externally. Rather, Dylan’s perpetually nonsynthetic post–Civil War America has been a weird pile-up, with crucial components and relations lying in anarchy and ruin across spatial and temporal borders.

Take the trappings of Dylan’s 1975–1976 Rolling Thunder Revue tour, for instance. Brought along to write the script for a movie that was supposed to be made during the tour, the playwright Sam Shepard described the revue’s series of performances as taking place during the era of New England’s “festering ... Bicentennial madness, as though desperately trying to resurrect the past to reassure ourselves that we sprang from somewhere.” “Inside all of this,” in Shepard’s account, “Rolling Thunder is searching for something too.... To find some kind of landmarks along the way. It’s not just another concert but more like a pilgrimage.”³⁵ In his 1977 volume *Rolling Thunder Logbook*, Shepard includes scenes presumably taken from the tour’s uncompleted film, with one scene set on Plymouth Rock, apparently filmed in a wax museum amid “a full-scale setting of the landing of the *Mayflower*, complete with rocking boat [and] computerized rainfall.”³⁶ A Cowboy (played by musician Jack Elliot) talks to a Wizard (played by Allen Ginsberg, who was also along for Dylan’s revue). Elliot the Cowboy tells Ginsberg the Wizard that he has come to Plymouth Rock “all the way from the Far West” because he has heard that it (Plymouth Rock) “was undiscovered territory. You know, a new land. Open country. All that kinda stuff.” Ginsberg

replies, “Well, it is, isn’t it?”³⁷ Here we have Frederick Jackson Turner’s frontier thesis meeting its antithesis but resolving into no synthesis.³⁸ Following this inverted and temporally pastiched version of US westward expansionism, Shepard’s *Rolling Thunder Logbook* offers another movie scene—the “Alchemist Scene,” during which the Alchemist (played by Dylan) speaks with the Emperor (played by Ginsberg). Ginsberg tells Dylan, “I’m a little concerned for the Empire,” and Dylan asks, “Why is that?” Ginsberg answers, “[e]veryone’s going bankrupt, and seeing as how I’m the Emperor, I feel it’s my duty to bail them out in some way.”³⁹ The Ginsberg–Dylan dialogue conveys an acute sense of 1970s US American malaise, as bicentennial celebrations festered beneath palls left by Watergate and the Vietnam War, which had ended in April 1975 with the fall of Saigon.⁴⁰ The Rolling Thunder Revue was finding its American landmarks: the *Mayflower* at Plymouth Rock, a continent traversed from east to west and then doubling back on itself but denying that the original traverse had ever happened, and a bankrupt Empire.

Another Rolling Thunder landmark: the island of Guam. In Shepard’s account, the band that accompanied Dylan for the Rolling Thunder Revue operated out of a dressing room marked with the word *Guam*.⁴¹ Wilentz reports of the band: “The motley congregation took the band name Guam, which, depending on which source you believe, signified either a place that none of the band members had ever visited or the island from which U.S. bombers had taken off on their first set of runs over Vietnam in 1965, under the official military name Operation Rolling Thunder.”⁴² Certainly, with a supporting band calling themselves Guam, the Rolling Thunder Revue cannot help but allude to the Vietnam War’s Operation Rolling Thunder. The inevitability of this allusion becomes even clearer in consideration of some of Evyn Lê Espiritu Gandhi’s recent work, which is not about Dylan but which discusses the island of Guam, the US military’s Operation Rolling Thunder, and Guam’s more general Vietnam-era status as a symbol of US aggression in the eyes of the North Vietnamese and international communists.⁴³ Hence, a Transnational Americanist who knows the score will ask regarding Dylan’s Rolling Thunder: What allegories of anti-imperial critique do we find in a tour linking the *Mayflower*, manifest destiny, and Guam as the base from which the United States flew bombing missions over North Vietnam? Yet Dylan unravels such allegories before they have a chance to coalesce, offering alternative genealogies for the Revue’s name: “I was just sitting outside my house one day ... thinking about a name for this tour, when all of a sudden, I looked into the sky and heard a *boom!* Then, *boom, boom, boom, boom,* rolling from east to west. So I figured that should be the name You know what Rolling Thunder means to the Indians? Speaking truth.”⁴⁴ Although the comparison is inevitable, Dylan won’t let his tour be pinned down as an allusion to the Vietnam War.

Here we might reimagine Shepard’s “Alchemist Scene.” Now, the Anti-imperial Transnational Americanist speaks to Dylan using the words of Ginsberg: “I’m a little concerned about the Empire,” wherein the concern is not that the Empire is crumbling but that it persists despite the cracks. In response to this critique of Empire, Dylan asks,

“Why is that?” But now, rather than a request for information and perhaps an implicit offer to help, the question is a dismissal as well as an assertion that his music and his tour will not be made to work on the Anti-imperial Transnational Americanist’s farm. The Dylan who implies that his revue’s name is an allusion to actual booming thunder (rather than to the Vietnam War) is not a Dylan that is aligned with the late-life Mark Twain who became a leader in the American Anti-Imperialist League.⁴⁵ Rather, this is a Dylan whose drive against moralizing is cut from the same cloth as the 1880s Twain, who put readers on notice at the beginning of *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*: “Persons attempting to find a Motive in this narrative will be prosecuted; persons attempting to find a Moral in it will be banished; persons attempting to find a Plot in it will be shot.”⁴⁶ Consistent with this opening notice, we have the novel’s back pages: the final chapters of Twain’s novel famously seem to demonstrate that during the raft journey Huck has not attained the moral maturity that would permit him to see Jim’s humanity but rather is willing to go along with the idea of holding Jim’s freedom hostage in an episode of boyish hijinks.⁴⁷ Analogous to the apparent moral recanting of Twain’s back pages, we hear Dylan’s 1964 song “My Back Pages,” in which the musician seems to revoke the pious cries for equality that he voiced on his two previous albums: “‘Equality,’ I spoke the word / As if a wedding vow / Ah, but I was so much older then / I’m younger than that now.”⁴⁸ Dylan has been so wary of reinforcing his early image as a protest singer that, even when presented by an interviewer in the 1990s with a softball question on whether kids in America have too much access to guns, he refused to take a swing: “Toy guns. They have more toy guns than real guns, really... They get ‘em at the toy store.”⁴⁹ In Dylan’s hands, the *Mayflower* and Guam may both be American but will not be synthesized into a coherent view of America, while the terms *Rolling Thunder* and *Guam* remain unavowable as a coherent reference to the United States’s role in the Vietnam War.

Thus, while transnational Americanists find in Dylan the clear foreign–domestic linkages that have been emphasized by classic work in Transnational American Studies, his work and statements do not unambiguously lend themselves to the anti-imperialist ideology critique that was crystallized by Amy Kaplan and Donald E. Pease’s edited volume, *Cultures of United States Imperialism*.⁵⁰ But the feeling would likely be mutual. Intellectual debts to the Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies would argue against the New Americanists of the 1990s and 2000s wanting Dylan on their team in the first place. Dylan, or someone very like him, became an exemplum in Stuart Hall’s 1981 explanation of how “this year’s radical symbol or slogan will be neutralised into next year’s fashion”: “Today’s rebel folksinger ends up, tomorrow, on the cover of *The Observer* colour magazine.”⁵¹

Or ends up in 1970 on the stage at an Ivy League university receiving an honorary doctorate. In *Chronicles*, Dylan tells of being “given a Honorary Doctorate degree [sic]” at Princeton University while “looking out over a crowd of well-dressed people.”⁵² To Dylan’s profound dismay, the speaker reading his citation observes, “[t]hough he is approaching the perilous age of thirty, he remains the authentic

expression of the disturbed and concerned conscience of Young America.”⁵³ The content of the citation conveyed the precise image Dylan was trying to shake. He resented Joan Baez’s song “To Bobby,” which called out to him, played on the radio “like a public service announcement,” to “be an advocate, lead the crusade.” All the while, as he recounts in *Chronicles*, “[r]eporters would shoot questions at me and I would tell them repeatedly that I was not a spokesman for anything or anybody and that I was only a musician.”⁵⁴ But if the content of the Princeton citation was off, the form of citation was exactly what Dylan wanted: “I was glad I came to get the degree, though. I could use it. Every look and touch and scent of it spelled respectability and had something of the spirit of the universe in it.”⁵⁵

To the degree that he could, Dylan was consciously running toward the political neutralization that, in Hall’s view or that of some New Americanists, would vitiate the form and content of an artist or a piece of art.⁵⁶ In *Chronicles*, Dylan avers: “I don’t know what everybody else was fantasizing about but what I was fantasizing about was a nine-to-five existence, a house on a tree-lined block with a white picket fence, pink roses in the backyard. That would have been nice. That was my deepest dream.”⁵⁷ Elsewhere, he has recalled, “[l]ook, if the common perception of me out there in the public was that I was either a drunk, or I was sicko, or a Zionist, or a Buddhist, or a Catholic, or a Mormon—all of this was better than Archbishop of Anarchy.”⁵⁸ Was Dylan allegianceless? See the first line of the penultimate verse in his 2020 song “Key West (Philosopher Pirate)”: “I play both sides against the middle.”⁵⁹

What type of transnationalism, then, belongs to Dylan? In 2011 Winfried Fluck anatomized Americanist transnationalism into two broad categories of the aesthetic and the political. “In aesthetic transnationalism,” Fluck suggested, “the word transnationalism is basically a code word for an America reinvigorated by an aesthetic plenitude made possible by cultural flows and exchange,” a “celebration [on the part of critics] of movement and diversity for their own sake.”⁶⁰ Within the realm of political transnationalism, he saw “two models competing with each other.” The first involved “a move beyond the borders of the nation-state to collectivities not subsumed by the nation-state—whether borderlands, the Black Atlantic, the Pacific Rim, the American hemisphere, diasporic communities, or urban networks. Such a move will increase the size of those on the margins who have not been interpellated, because they have been excluded from the American nation-state to start with.”⁶¹ The second form of political transnationalism, said Fluck, found its paragon in Donald Pease’s treatment of the Marxist Trinidadian historian C. L. R. James’s detention on Ellis Island. Fluck argued that Pease, in his analysis of James, had presented us with a transnationalism that is “the counterprogram to ... the American nation-state” and “has managed to transform trauma into a source of disinterpellation” from the US nation-state, resulting in “a new international communality constituted by ‘transnational’ subject positions.”⁶² Fluck offers us a clear transnationalist anatomy: aesthetic, political of the margins, and political of disinterpellation. But to me it would seem anatomically incorrect to locate Dylan within this anatomy. Certainly, a dylanologist will be interested in Dylan’s famous

Manchester Free Trade Hall concert of 1966, but the fact that Dylan traveled or exerted influence *transnationally* will be taken as a matter of course rather than as a source of aesthetic awe. Elsewhere, scholars may be enthralled by the details of Dylan's 1978 performances at Nippon Budokan Hall in Tokyo, but eccentric would be the dylanologist who approached those performance as a means of demonstrating Dylan's role in swelling the numbers of those who identify with a counterhegemonic transpacific. And when it comes to Dylan as a figure exemplifying or promoting disinterpellation from the American nation-state and thereby evoking transnational subject positions? He's not interested in being the archbishop of that generation. He'd sooner you call him a Mormon.

Dylan's misfit within modes of Americanist transnationalism stems from his alternative transnational genealogy. Whereas the field of American Studies has only lately arrived at transnationalism as a means of struggling against its own founding investments in American exceptionalism, other fields have taken transnationalism as a given.⁶³ Studies of modernism, for instance, as well as translation studies and world literature, have depended on transnationalism from the outset.⁶⁴ Dylan's is also a built-in transnationalism—always a nonsynthetic America at home that is inextricably linked to a nonsynthetic American presence in the world. Tellingly, US audiences first saw Dylan in the movies in D. A. Pennebaker's 1967 film *Dont Look Back*, a documentary based on Dylan's 1965 tour in England. The film opens with "Subterranean Homesick Blues" playing while Dylan stands in an alleyway flipping through lyric cue cards for the camera while Allen Ginsberg loiters in the background. The scene was filmed near London's Savoy Hotel, but the alleyway could be in London or San Francisco or New York, and (if you didn't know who they were) this skinny kid and his hirsute associate could be American freight train-jumpers or internationally roving philosopher-pirates.⁶⁵

Dylan's transnationalism has innumerable manifestations, and one major manifestation involves the notion and practice of translation. Alessandro Carrera, previously noted here as an important translator of Dylan into Italian, has said that translating Dylan can never be a mere question of translating his writings: "Dylan ... is not a writer. ... Dylan's writing is a supplement to his voice and [usually] does not have full autonomy. ... Translating Dylan means translating his voice, so much so that every Dylan translation sounds like the by-product of the (impossible) translation of his voice."⁶⁶ Carrera's description of translating Dylan—involving the sublime yet impossible quest to find transcultural equivalencies beyond the written and semantic—undergirds a major trend we see regarding Dylan's place in the world. This phenomenon frames certain musicians as the so-called Bob Dylans of their home countries, or incarnate translations of Dylan into other national grammars. As Heather Stur has detailed in her essay "Borderless Troubadour: Bob Dylan's Influence on International Protest during the Cold War," Trịnh Công Sơn has been called the Bob Dylan of Vietnam, Boris Grebenshchikov the Bob Dylan of Russia, and Cui Jian the Bob Dylan of China. Because I myself had heard Iwan Fals referred to as the Bob Dylan of

Indonesia, I decided to drop the phrase “the bob dylan of” into *Google Books* and found that the nations of the world abound with musicians who have been discussed as Bob Dylan’s incarnate translations. We see mention of the Bob Dylan of Senegal, Chile, the Rif (a region in northern Morocco), Cuba, the Philippines, Brazil, Finland, Malaysia, Indigenous music of the Americas, Japan, the Low Countries (including Belgium, the Netherlands, and Luxembourg), Taiwan, Haiti, the Balkans, the German Democratic Republic, Australia, Trinidad, South Africa, Greece, the Soviet Union, France, Papua New Guinea, Catalonia, Sweden, Ireland, Canada, and Turkey.

Bracketing for the moment some thorny questions begged by the above list, it is further important to observe that, aside from incarnate translators, Dylan’s numerous textual translators have undertaken to convey the semantic and nonsemantic valences of his voice into many national, regional, and world languages. For example, Dylan’s language-to-language translators have transfigured his experimental book *Tarantula* (1971), various collections of his lyrics, and his memoir *Chronicles* each into at least twenty languages, with the latter book appearing in at least twenty-nine.⁶⁷ Further, several English-language works written *about* Dylan have been translated into numerous non-English languages, with books by Greil Marcus appearing in at least nine non-English languages.⁶⁸

Translation is a major, built-in, and practical component of Dylan’s transnationalism. And if translation is perpetually happening in practice, it is also conceptually relevant to his nonsynthetic project. Compare the violence of Dylan’s foundational template of America crucified with what Lawrence Venuti calls “the violence of translation.”⁶⁹ Venuti writes, “A translator is forced not only to eliminate aspects of the signifying chain that constitutes the foreign text, starting with its graphematic and acoustic features, but also to dismantle and disarrange that chain in accordance with the structural differences between languages, so that both the foreign text and its relations to other texts in the foreign culture never remain intact after the translation project.”⁷⁰ Translation takes a text, eliminates it, and reconstitutes or resurrects it. But this is a resurrection, as in the case of Dylan’s America, in which the subject of resurrection is never itself again—with its *old way of being* irreconcilable with its *new way of being*, and with its myriad components incapable of fully coming together. This image resonates with what we see elsewhere in translation studies, where translation is said to be asymptotic, or resembling geometry’s figure of the asymptote—wherein a pair of lines on a graph experience a coming-together that is infinitely in-progress and hence infinitely deferred.⁷¹ If the asymptote is said to resemble a translated text’s attempt at arriving at its source text, it also resembles the unsynthesizeable components of Dylan’s founding template, the resurrected post-Civil War America that is not the same but a translation of what it was before.

In considering violence, I am not particularly worried about discursive or translational violence against Dylan and his oeuvre. Dylan’s professed template is one of violence, of crucifixion, and (according to my reading at least) he has recently

described his six decades of artistic practice vis-a-vis putting together a Frankenstein monster, a composite that can be stitched together and revived but can never be fully synthesized: “All through the summers and into January / I’ve been visiting morgues and monasteries / Looking for the necessary body parts / Limbs and livers and brains and hearts.” To what end, Dylan? “I want to bring someone to life - is what I want to do / I want to create my own version of you.”⁷² From the green summer of his youthful “A Hard Rain’s a-Gonna Fall” (1963), into a later-life December characterized by such albums as *Modern Times* (2006) and *Tempest* (2012), and now proceeding on borrowed time into the darkness of an unexpected January, Dylan’s project has centered on *dismemberment* and *rememberment*. One assumes he would more likely take inspiration than offense from the violence inherent in an Italian translator’s dismemberment of the phrase “[d]on’t think twice, it’s alright” and rememberment of it as “non credere che vada bene,” which may be back-translated into English as “don’t think that it’s all right.”⁷³

Another violent aspect of Dylan-in-translation is more concerning, namely, the sense of exhaustion that attends the list of Dylan’s translations incarnate. No doubt many of the planet’s so-called Bob Dylans have felt honored to be taken as Dylan’s in-the-flesh translations, but it is inevitable that many (even among those who feel honored) will sense the condescension involved in the incessant comparison. Frustration surfaces at several points among commentators. One senses the eye-roll when a music critic introduces Zhu Yuexin “as the ‘Bob Dylan of Taiwan’” and then adds parenthetically, “(yes every country has one).”⁷⁴ There is something mordant when, after introducing readers to the physically tortured Víctor Jara as “the Bob Dylan of Chile,” Dave Zirin claps back, “or is Dylan the Víctor Jara of the United States?”⁷⁵ We hear the complaint overtly from Rossa Ó Snodaigh (of the Irish folk band Kíla), who has written: “‘the Bob Dylan of blah’... Crediting musicians and music with this kind of introduction invalidates their musical contributions.”⁷⁶ There is little that *Reprise* can do to address this problem in Dylan translation, aside from recognizing the thorniness of the issue and amplifying, here in the introduction, voices of those who have understandably bristled at it. Further worth pointing out: Many *Bob-Dylan-of* comparisons may hinge on the image of Dylan-as-protest-singer, an image Dylan has rejected since the 1960s.

A related translational problem is more within the purview of *Reprise*, as a forum dedicated to republishing and bringing reinflected attention to work that is relevant to studying American culture transnationally. In translation studies, we hear of “the three percent problem.” Having inspired the name of an influential academic blog (*Three Percent: A Resource for International Literature at the University of Rochester*), the phrase points toward a vastly unequal mode of informational, epistemic, and aesthetic exchange between English and non-English languages.⁷⁷ We see this inequality in the following rough figure: among all publications in English, only about three percent are translations. This contrasts with the corresponding figures for non-English language traditions, which often see publication outputs in which

translated works make up a considerably higher percentage. For instance, the *Three Percent* blog reports that translations have made up about forty-five percent of fiction titles in an average year in the Netherlands, while in France nearly a third of published literary works are translations.⁷⁸ Venuti has discussed these trends (low translation rates into English, with high translations rates from English into other languages) as buoying up “aggressively monolingual” cultures in the UK and US.⁷⁹ Elsewhere, Marlene Hansen Esplin explains it this way: “English-speaking readers have very limited access to or knowledge of texts from non-Anglophone languages and cultures,” as “major publishers ... act as cultural gatekeepers by barring foreign texts and authors from entering the global English-language literary marketplace.”⁸⁰ How does the three percent problem relate to Dylan? I am not in the position to create a statistic on the percentage of English-language publications on Dylan that are translations from other languages, but a look at the Dylan-related English-language publications on one of the Internet’s most thorough Dylan sites convinces me that the three percent problem is still more acute in Dylan studies than it is in general English-language publishing.⁸¹

In showcasing translations of writing by four figures who have in various ways commented on Dylan, this edition of *Reprise* works against the grain of the three percent problem, both generally and in Dylan studies specifically. Just as significantly, *Reprise 2023* underscores translation as a major valence of Dylan’s transnationalism, especially to the degree that translation tends to be structurally homologous with Dylan’s all-encompassing artistic template of crucifixion and nonsynthetic resurrection.

First among the documents published here are two brief essays by the prominent Indonesian journalist and editor Goenawan Mohamad, titled “Dylan” and “Bandits,” which originally appeared in 2016 and 2014, respectively, in the Indonesian news and culture magazine *Tempo*, which Goenawan himself founded in 1971.⁸² These essays are published here in English as “Dylan” and “Bandits,” as rendered by Goenawan’s longtime English-language translator Jennifer Lindsay.⁸³ Second is the German Dylan scholar Heinrich Detering’s 2015 book chapter “Odysseus in Liverpool: Bob Dylans ‚Roll On John,‘” translated by the University of Tübingen graduate student Hannah Kontos and appearing in *Reprise* as “Odysseus in Liverpool: Bob Dylan’s ‘Roll On John.’”⁸⁴ Third is Ana C. Cara’s 2018 Spanish-language essay “¿Qué tienen en común Jorge Luis Borges y Bob Dylan? Sobre el elevado arte de la poesía popular.”⁸⁵ Cara, who is a native of Argentina and is Professor Emerita of Hispanic Studies at Oberlin College, has self-translated her essay for *Reprise*, where it is published as “On the High Art of Folk Poetry: What Jorge Luis Borges and Bob Dylan Have in Common.” Finally, *Reprise* is publishing a revised version of a 2010 Japanese-language essay titled “Bob Dylan: 私たちの時代の始まり” or, “Bob Dylan: The Beginning of Our Times.”⁸⁶ The essay was written by Yoshiaki Sato, who has been one of Dylan’s major translators into Japanese, with credits including *The Lyrics: 1961–2012* and Dylan’s 2022 book *The Philosophy of Modern Song*. The revised 2023 English version of Sato’s essay appears here as “The Ever-Changin’ Times and Myth of Bob Dylan,” translated by Mary Knighton, professor

of modern American and Japanese literature and culture at Aoyama Gakuin University in Tokyo.

In publishing these translations, I am not interested in offering *the Indonesian perspective, the German perspective, the Hispanophone perspective, or the Japanese perspective* on Dylan, as if one person or one essay could ever be the synthetic voice of a generation, or of a language tradition, or of a national or transnational culture. The essays here are necessarily nonsynthetic vis-à-vis the cultures and nations associated with their source languages. And, as published in *Reprise* 2023, they are nonsynthetic in relation to each other, refusing to offer some type of idealized, coherent *international or transnational perspective* on Dylan.

As we corresponded regarding her translations of Goenawan's essays, Jennifer Lindsay reminded me in passing that Goenawan and Dylan were born the same year, 1941.⁸⁷ The vicissitudes of both men's careers as cultural innovators, cultural brokers, and cultural institutions would repay a larger comparative essay, but it suffices here to say that by the time Goenawan wrote "Dylan" in the 2010s, both men had become known for artistic and social engagement. Now, in October 2016, Goenawan was reflecting on the trajectory of Dylan's career and the meaning of the musician's Nobel Prize in Literature, which had been announced earlier that same month. Goenawan opens "Dylan" by stating that he does not understand Dylan and then quoting, as exhibit A, from the difficult book *Tarantula*, drawing out the way Dylan's words function not as "vessels of meaning" but as evocations of affect through repetition, consonants, and syllable length. Goenawan perceives that in Dylan "the chaotic is not tamed by the ordered" while "the ordered continues to exist among the chaotic." He also claims that what once looked like Dylan's protests have now been transformed into haunting poetry. Likewise, Dylan's old image as "a young rebel" has been transformed into someone who speaks with the authority of—and more authority than—the sermons of rabbis, preachers, and evangelists, consistent with Rob Wilson's thesis on Dylan as a singer in the jeremidic tradition.⁸⁸ A second essay by Goenawan, "Bandits" (2014), is a reflection on the transnational trope of the rebel/bandit/outlaw, and this figure's sublimation into the figure of hero. The essay is included here not because it directly centers on Dylan but because it briefly mentions him as the writer of the soundtrack for the 1973 film *Pat Garrett & Billy the Kid*. Dylan's brief mention does not suggest an equivalency between Dylan and the iconic bandits Ken Arok of Java, Ned Kelly of Australia, Phoolan Devi of India, Hassanpoulia of Cyprus, Salvatore Giuliano of Italy, or Billy the Kid of the American West. Instead, Dylan is the bandit-to-hero's soundtrack writer, and the essay's broad strokes are useful for thinking about Goenawan's later 2016 reflections on Dylan's trek from rebel to Nobel laureate.

Following Goenawan's essays is a book chapter by Heinrich Detering, a retired professor of modern German literature and comparative literature at the University of Göttingen in Germany and author of two monographs on Dylan: *Bob Dylan* (2009) and *Die Stimmen aus der Unterwelt: Bob Dylans Mysterienspiele* (2016). In "Odysseus in Liverpool: Bob Dylan's 'Roll On John,'" Detering insightfully discusses the final track on

Dylan's 2012 album *Tempest*, which as the chapter details is an Odyssean mythologization of John Lennon's 1981 murder. Drawing on sources ranging from dylanologist Scott Warmuth's Pinterest posts to the late Princeton professor Robert Fagles's 1996 translation of Homer's *Odyssey*, Detering examines how Dylan's song takes Lennon's memory on a journey—not from bandit to hero, but from hero to legend and saint, a splicing of Odysseus and Saint John the Revelator. As Detering demonstrates, relying on Fagles's modernizing translation of the *Odyssey* permits Dylan to build his song on a foundation made up of a “combination of Beatles quotations and the classical epos.” Detering contemplates one of the song's phrases, addressed to John Lennon (“You've been cooped up on an island for too long”) and reveals that this phrasing is largely lifted from Fagles's translation of Homer. One wonders how this question of confinement to an Odyssean island might also be read in relation to Jessica A. Schwartz's recent discussions of an “archipelagic American music studies,” wherein Dylan's 2017 commentary on “rock and roll [as] atomic powered” becomes a springboard for examining musical traditions and US nuclear testing in the Indigenous Pacific.⁸⁹ Such a view would offer further valences to what Detering refers to as *Tempest's* overarching project of becoming “a monumental painting of American death.”

If Lennon and Dylan have been compared as two of the great songwriters of the post-World War II era, Dylan's receipt of the Nobel Prize in Literature (“for having created new poetic expressions within the great American song tradition”) has opened him to a wider world of comparisons, as we see in Ana C. Cara's book chapter “On the High Art of Folk Poetry: What Jorge Luis Borges and Bob Dylan Have in Common.”⁹⁰ This chapter reads Dylan's indebtedness to folk music in tandem with Borges's interest in, writing of, and performance of the traditional Argentine song form of the milonga. No doubt Dylan's wide recognition as a literary writer of song has facilitated Cara's illuminating discussions of Borges's lesser-known dedication to the genre of song, but of equal importance in Cara's essay is the way Borges's commentary on song may function as an answer to traditional literary writers who, upon learning of Dylan's selection for the Nobel Prize, cast aspersions on the literary quality of his work.⁹¹ As Cara recounts, the erudite Borges claimed not to be stooping when he took up writing milongas but rather to be stretching toward the heights. At another point Borges critiqued an elitist bias that compels us to identify a poorly wrought sonnet as art while denying that same aesthetic designation to a well-wrought milonga. Elsewhere in her essay, Cara recounts Borges's statement, “[t]ruly fine poetry must be read aloud Poetry always remembers that it was an oral art before it was a written art. It remembers that it was first [a] song.” On a related note, Cara looks toward *Tarantula*, Dylan's most prominent foray into non-sung poetry, and informs readers that the book itself, through its title, remembers that prior to poetry its entire contents were song. “Dylan's title,” suggests Cara, “alludes to Federico García Lorca, who also fashioned much of his poetry ... after traditional gypsy songs, and regularly wrote about the guitar.” Cara recounts García Lorca's comparison of the guitar to a spider, a

tarantula, and thus implies that Dylan's *Tarantula* remembers that it was always, first, a collection of songs native to the strumming of a six-string.

Finally, we read Yoshisaki Sato's essay "The Ever-Changin' Times and Myth of Bob Dylan." Sato's original essay appeared in a Bob Dylan special issue that was published in May 2010 by the Japanese cultural journal *Gendai Shiso*. Much has happened between 2010 and 2023, for Dylan but also for Sato—including the publication of Sato's translations of *The Lyrics: 1961–2012* and *The Philosophy of Modern Song*. Hence, when I approached him about contributing a previously printed essay, Sato determined that if a translation of his 2010 essay were to be published, it would need to be as much a revision as a translation. To this end, Sato and Mary Knighton collaborated to translate and revise the source essay in a process that Sato described as a sort of dance between writer and translator.⁹² In his song "Mississippi," Dylan sings, "[y]ou can always come back, but you can't come back all the way." Earlier in my introduction I framed this axiom as relevant to Dylan's vision of America crucified and nonsynthetically resurrected. But as is indicated by Venuti's reflections on translation and violence, the lyric is also relevant to translation from source text to target language, even if in the case of translation it might be rendered, "[y]ou can always come back, but you can't come back the same." The nonsynthetic resurrection of Sato's 2010 essay exemplifies this notion and points toward the same dynamic in translation generally.

Sato's essay is cosmogonic, telling "the creation myth of our times with Dylan as its trickster hero." The post-World War II narrative recounted by Sato has the virtue of being both zoomed-out and complex, positioning Dylan within multiple musical, political, and cultural currents, while showcasing Dylan as "tramp[ing] all over the purity claims" of the US right and left, "not to mention ideological posturing on all sides." Sato's is a mythology in which Dylan's lyrics and musical performances transformed not only American culture but world culture (including Japanese culture, though Sato's global concerns are too broad to single out any one culture). Yet for all of Dylan's cultural and aesthetic influence, Sato remarks that his songs do not offer the coherence we may usually associate with high art. Rather, in Dylan we have met "the flurry of dense and disconnected images overlapping and cascading one after the other." We have met, in other words, a series of dreams (American and planetary dreams) where nothing comes up to the top, a series that has nothing synthetic about it. And yet in concluding his essay, as if to suggest that even nonsynthesis cannot become our own coherent synthesis of Dylan's project, Sato observes that the Bob Dylan of the 2020s "adopts a stance rarely seen in today's bitterly divided America, one that bridges rifts and fuses oppositions. Ever a dynamic presence in American culture, Dylan continues to transcend his own myth while sustaining belief in the unifying power of our song."

Notes

This introduction is dedicated to the memory of Mark Purves, a friend who in 1996 introduced me to the Beats in Rexburg, Idaho; who in 2003 in Charlottesville, Virginia, offered me my first glimpse of what it means to be a Dylan fanatic; and who tragically died in Provo, Utah, in September 2023, as I was writing about Dylan’s vision of America’s crucifixion and resurrection. “Let it come, as it will, and don’t / be afraid. God does not leave us / comfortless, so let evening come.”—Jane Kenyon, “Let Evening Come,” in *Let Evening Come: Poems* (St. Paul, MN: Graywolf Press, 1990), <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/46431/let-evening-come>.

- ¹ Quoted in Stephen Petrus and Ronald D. Cohen, *Folk City: New York and the American Folk Music Revival* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015), 265.
- ² Petrus and Cohen, *Folk City*, 249; Bob Dylan, *Chronicles: Volume One* (2004; reprint, New York: Simon and Schuster Paperbacks, 2005), 51.
- ³ Petrus and Cohen, *Folk City*, 256.
- ⁴ Petrus and Cohen, *Folk City*, 250, 259.
- ⁵ On Van Ronk and the Gaslight Poetry Café, see Petrus and Cohen, *Folk City*, 259–60; on Van Ronk and Gooch, see Dylan, *Chronicles*, 27. Seth Rogovoy has observed that the Ray Gooch of Dylan’s memoir is presumably a composite character or a historical person whose name has been changed; Seth Rogovoy, *Bob Dylan: Prophet, Mystic, Poet* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2012).
- ⁶ Dylan, *Chronicles*, 26.
- ⁷ Dylan, *Chronicles*, 36–41.
- ⁸ Dylan, *Chronicles*, 55.
- ⁹ Dylan, *Chronicles*, 82, 84.
- ¹⁰ Dylan, *Chronicles*, 86; on conversations with Gooch, see Dylan, *Chronicles*, 73–76.
- ¹¹ Dylan, *Chronicles*, 86.
- ¹² Dylan, *Chronicles*, 98.
- ¹³ Ralph Waldo Emerson, “The Poet,” in *The Essential Writings of Ralph Waldo Emerson*, ed. Brooks Atkinson (New York: Modern Library, 2000), 304.
- ¹⁴ Walt Whitman, *Leaves of Grass* (Brooklyn: n.p., 1855), iii.
- ¹⁵ Whitman, *Leaves of Grass*, 55; Bob Dylan, “I Contain Multitudes,” *Bob Dylan 2020*: <https://www.bobdylan.com/songs/i-contain-multitudes/>.

- ¹⁶ Greil Marcus, *Invisible Republic: Bob Dylan's Basement Tapes* (New York: Henry Holt, 1997); and Greil Marcus, *The Old, Weird America: The World of Bob Dylan's Basement Tapes* (1997; updated edition, New York: Picador, 2011).
- ¹⁷ Marcus, *The Old, Weird America*, xix.
- ¹⁸ Marcus, *The Old, Weird America*, xxi.
- ¹⁹ Sean Wilentz, *Bob Dylan in America* (2010; reprint, New York: Anchor, 2011).
- ²⁰ Wilentz, *Bob Dylan in America*, 8.
- ²¹ Wilentz, *Bob Dylan in America*, 12.
- ²² Wilentz, *Bob Dylan in America*, 171.
- ²³ Wilentz, *Bob Dylan in America*, 301.
- ²⁴ Quoted in Wilentz, *Bob Dylan in America*, 53.
- ²⁵ Alessandro Carrera, "Oh, the Streets of Rome: Dylan in Italy," in *Highway 61 Revisited: Bob Dylan's Road from Minnesota to the World*, ed. Colleen J. Sheehy and Thomas Swiss (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2009), 100.
- ²⁶ For a discussion of this dynamic in terms of melancholia, see Eric Lott's chapter "Just Like Jack Frost's Blues: Masking and Melancholia in Bob Dylan's 'Love and Theft'"; Eric Lott, *Black Mirror: The Cultural Contradictions of American Racism* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2017), 195–207.
- ²⁷ "Synthetic Cubism," *Art Terms* (Tate Museum's online glossary), accessed 10 Oct. 2023: <https://www.tate.org.uk/art/art-terms/s/synthetic-cubism>; "Analytical Cubism," *Art Terms* (Tate Museum's online glossary), <https://www.tate.org.uk/art/art-terms/a/analytical-cubism>.
- ²⁸ Bob Dylan, "Murder Most Foul," *Bob Dylan 2020*: <https://www.bobdylan.com/songs/murder-most-foul/>; and Ron Elving, "Imagine Another American Civil War, but This Time in Every State," NPR, January 11, 2022: <https://www.npr.org/2022/01/11/1071082955/imagine-another-american-civil-war-but-this-time-in-every-state>.
- ²⁹ Marcus, *Old, Weird America*, 121.
- ³⁰ Amy Kaplan, "'Left Alone with America': The Absence of Empire in the Study of American Culture," in *Cultures of United States Imperialism*, ed. Amy Kaplan and Donald Pease (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1993), 7.
- ³¹ Kaplan, "'Left Alone,'" 14.
- ³² Amy Kaplan, *The Anarchy of Empire in the Making of U.S. Culture* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002), 122, 124. For the chapter's original appearance, see Amy Kaplan,

“Black and Blue on San Juan Hill,” in *Cultures of United States Imperialism*, ed. Amy Kaplan and Donald Pease (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1993), 219–36.

³³ Kaplan, *The Anarchy of Empire*, 127–28.

³⁴ Kaplan, ““Left Alone,”” 16; Kaplan, *The Anarchy of Empire*, 14.

³⁵ Sam Shepard, *The Rolling Thunder Logbook* (1977; reprint, London: Sanctuary, 2005), 46.

³⁶ Shepard, *The Rolling Thunder Logbook*, 40.

³⁷ Shepard, *The Rolling Thunder Logbook*, 39.

³⁸ Frederick Jackson Turner, *The Frontier in American History* (New York: Holt, 1921).

³⁹ Shepard, *The Rolling Thunder Logbook*, 49.

⁴⁰ See Donald Brown, *Bob Dylan: American Troubadour* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2014), xxi–xxii.

⁴¹ Shepard, *The Rolling Thunder Logbook*, 19.

⁴² Wilentz, *Dylan in America*, 148.

⁴³ Eryn Lê Espiritu Gandhi, *Archipelago of Resettlement: Vietnamese Refugee Settlers and Decolonization across Guam and Israel-Palestine* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2022), 37–38.

⁴⁴ Larry Sloman, *On the Road with Bob Dylan: Rolling with the Thunder* (New York: Bantam Books, 1978), 55–56.

⁴⁵ On Twain’s anti-imperialism, see Leslie Diane Myrick and Gary Scharnhorst, *Cartoons and Caricatures of Mark Twain in Context: Reformer and Social Critic, 1869–1910* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2024), 43–62. For a window into the anti-imperial Twain’s place in Transnational American Studies, see Shelley Fisher Fishkin, “Collaboration in Transnational American Studies,” in *The Routledge Companion to Transnational American Studies*, ed. Nina Morgan, Alfred Hornung, and Takayuki Tatsumi (New York: Routledge, 2019), 9–27.

⁴⁶ Mark Twain, *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (1884; 125th anniversary edition, Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010), xliii.

⁴⁷ On the ending of *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, see Leo Marx, “Mr. Eliot, Mr. Trilling, and *Huckleberry Finn*,” *The American Scholar* 22, no. 4 (autumn 1953): 423–40; and Victor A. Doyno, *Writing Huck Finn: Mark Twain’s Creative Process* (1991; reprint, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 1993), 223–28.

⁴⁸ Bob Dylan, “My Back Pages,” *Bob Dylan* 1964: <https://www.bobdylan.com/songs/my-back-pages/>.

- ⁴⁹ “Bob Dylan & Carlos Santana Interview” (Seattle, 1993), *DailyMotion*, <https://www.dailymotion.com/video/xm80iv>.
- ⁵⁰ Amy Kaplan and Donald E. Pease, eds., *Cultures of United States Imperialism* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1993).
- ⁵¹ Stuart Hall, “Notes on Deconstructing ‘the Popular,’” in *People’s History and Socialist Theory*, ed. Raphael Samuel (London: Routledge, 1981), 235. On New Americanist transnational politics, see Winfried Fluck, “Crossing National Borders: American Exceptionalism and Transnational American Studies,” in *American Studies Over Seas 1: Narrating Multiple America(s)*, ed. Edgardo Medeiros da Silva et al. (New York: Peter Lang, 2022), 351–63. For a brief discussion of some commentary from the Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies on folk songs, popular culture, and commercialism, see C. P. Lee, “Like the Night: Reception and Reaction Dylan UK 1966,” in *Highway 61 Revisited: Bob Dylan’s Road from Minnesota to the World*, ed. Colleen J. Sheehy and Thomas Swiss (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2009), 83. By the year Hall published his comment about a neutralized folksinger appearing on the cover of *The Observer*, Dylan had appeared at least twice on this periodical’s cover; see “The Observer, the Review, UK,” *Come Writers and Critics: The Bob Dylan Paper Site*, https://www.bobdylan-comewritersandcritics.com/pages/mags_fichiers/the-observer.htm.
- ⁵² Dylan, *Chronicles*, 132–33.
- ⁵³ Dylan, *Chronicles*, 133.
- ⁵⁴ Dylan, *Chronicles*, 199. Dylan discusses the Baez song as if it had already been released in 1970 when he received his honorary doctorate. I assume this is an anachronistic reference to Baez’s “To Bobby,” released in 1972.
- ⁵⁵ Dylan, *Chronicles*, 134. For an intriguing overview of the Vietnam War-era politics behind Dylan’s receipt of his honorary degree of Doctor of Music, see Sean Wilentz, “Dylan at Princeton and ‘Day of the Locusts’: A History,” *The Princeton University Library Chronicle* 78, no. 1 (autumn-winter 2020), 12–21.
- ⁵⁶ Although it is clear that the New Americanists never en masse took up Dylan as a spokesperson of their generation, it is worth pointing out that in Rob Wilson’s dexterous readings Dylan has offered a “counterimperial vision of America,” as argued in Wilson’s chapter “Becoming Jeremiah Inside the U.S. Empire”; Rob Wilson, *Be Always Converting, Be Always Converted: An American Poetics* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2009), 169.
- ⁵⁷ Dylan, *Chronicles*, 117.
- ⁵⁸ Jeff Burger, ed., *Dylan on Dylan: Interviews and Encounters* (Chicago: Chicago Review Press, 2018), 444.
- ⁵⁹ Bob Dylan, “Key West (Philosopher Pirate),” *Bob Dylan* 2020, <https://www.bobdylan.com/songs/key-west-philosopher-pirate/>.

- ⁶⁰ Winfried Fluck, “A New Beginning? Transnationalisms,” *New Literary History* 42, no. 3 (2011), 369, 370.
- ⁶¹ Fluck, “A New Beginning?” 372.
- ⁶² Fluck, “A New Beginning?” 374.
- ⁶³ On transnationalism’s relation to American exceptionalism, see Yogita Goyal, “Introduction: The Transnational Turn,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Transnational American Literature*, ed. Yogita Goyal (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 1–15; and Alfred Hornung and Nina Morgan, “Introduction: Recognizing Transnational American Studies,” in *The Routledge Companion to Transnational American Studies*, ed. Nina Morgan, Alfred Hornung, and Takayuki Tatsumi (New York: Routledge, 2019), 2.
- ⁶⁴ Anne-Marie Mai has observed that “it feels as if all the literatures in the world” are in Dylan’s work, and has traced the worldliness of Dylan’s work back to Johann Wolfgang von Goethe’s 1820s “idea that a modern world literature would replace the boundaries between national literatures”; Anne-Marie Mai, “World Literature,” in *The World of Bob Dylan*, ed. Sean Latham (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021), 159, 161.
- ⁶⁵ D. A. Pennebaker, dir., *Dont Look Back* (1967; reprint, The Criterion Collection, 2015).
- ⁶⁶ Carrera, “Oh, the Streets of Rome,” 95.
- ⁶⁷ These tallies are based on the thorough but likely incomplete entries found on “The Bob Dylan Books” page of *Come Writers and Critics: The Bob Dylan Paper Site*, <https://www.bobdylan-comewritersandcritics.com/pages/books/bob-dylan-books.htm>.
- ⁶⁸ See entries for the thirty-six non-English languages listed on “The Bob Dylan Books.”
- ⁶⁹ Lawrence Venuti, *The Translator’s Invisibility: A History of Translation*, ebook edition (London: Routledge, 2017), 13.
- ⁷⁰ Venuti, *The Translator’s Invisibility*, 14.
- ⁷¹ “About,” *Asymptote*, <https://www.asymptotejournal.com/about/>.
- ⁷² Bob Dylan, “My Own Version of You,” *Bob Dylan 2020*: <https://www.bobdylan.com/songs/my-own-version-of-you/>
- ⁷³ Carrera, “Oh, the Streets of Rome,” 96.
- ⁷⁴ Mark Ellingham, Orla Duane, and James McConnachie, eds., *World Music—Volume 2: Latin & North America, Caribbean, India, Asia and Pacific* (London: Rough Guides Ltd., 2000), 240.
- ⁷⁵ Dave Zirin, *Welcome to the Terrordome: The Pain, Politics, and Promise of Sports* (Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2007), 83.
- ⁷⁶ Rossa Ó Snodaigh, letter to the editor, *Rhythm: Global Sounds and Ideas*, Aug. 2000, p. 8.

- ⁷⁷ Chad W. Post, “To Be Translated or Not to Be: Part II,” *Three Percent: A Resource for International Literature at the University of Rochester*, Feb. 12, 2008, <http://www.rochester.edu/College/translation/threepercent/2008/02/12/to-be-translated-or-not-to-be-part-ii/>.
- ⁷⁸ Chad W. Post, “To Be Translated or Not to Be: Case Studies—The Netherlands,” *Three Percent: A Resource for International Literature at the University of Rochester* 18 Feb. 2008: <http://www.rochester.edu/College/translation/threepercent/2008/02/18/to-be-translated-or-not-to-be-case-studies-the-netherlands/>; and Chad W. Post, “To Be Translated or Not to Be: Case Studies—France,” *Three Percent: A Resource for International Literature at the University of Rochester*, Feb. 25, 2008, <http://www.rochester.edu/College/translation/threepercent/2008/02/25/to-be-translated-or-not-to-be-case-studies-france/>.
- ⁷⁹ Venuti, *The Translator’s Invisibility*, 12.
- ⁸⁰ Marlene Hansen Esplin, “Translation Activism Meets Amazon Crossing,” *Transfer: e-Journal on Translation and Intercultural Studies* 14, no. 1–2 (2019), 101–02.
- ⁸¹ See the 878 English-language items listed among “The Bob Dylan Books” on the website *Come Writers and Critics*, <https://www.bobdylan-comewritersandcritics.com/pages/books/bob-dylan-books.htm>. In response to an email, Michel Pomarede of the *Come Writers and Critics* website wrote that most translations of works about Dylan are from English to other languages, with only a very few being from other languages into English. He was, however, able point to two English translations that originally appeared in French: Philippe Margotin and Jean-Michel Guesdon, *Bob Dylan: All the Songs* (New York: Black Dog and Leventhal Publishers, 2015); and François Guillez, *Bob Dylan in the 2020s: Rough and Rowdy Ways, Shadow Kingdom, and All That Philosophy* ([United States]: Tangible Press, 2023). Michel Pomarede to Brian Russell Roberts, Oct. 14, 2023. Mikiko Tachi has usefully offered an overview of (and numerous translated excerpts from) the Japanese press’s reception of Dylan in the 1960s and 70s; Mikiko Tachi, “Bob Dylan’s Reception in Japan in the 1960s and 1970s,” in *Highway 61 Revisited: Bob Dylan’s Road from Minnesota to the World*, ed. Collen J. Sheehy and Thomas Swiss (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2009), 106–21.
- ⁸² On Goenawan Mohamad’s background and founding of *Tempo*, see Brian Russell Roberts and Keith Foulcher, eds., *Indonesian Notebook: A Sourcebook on Richard Wright and the Bandung Conference* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2016), 207–11.
- ⁸³ “Dylan” originally appeared in *Tempo* on October 23, 2016; “Bandit” originally appeared in *Tempo* on October 5, 2014. For these original publication dates, see Goenawan Mohamad, “Dylan,” in *Catatan Pinggir 12*, ed. Uu Suhardi (Jakarta: Tempo Publishing, 2017), 393–96; and Goenawan Mohamad, “Bandit,” *Catatan Pinggir 11*, ed. H. Sapto Nugroho and Uu Suhardi (Jakarta: Tempo Publishing, 2017), 387–90. The English-language versions published in *Reprise* are based on Lindsay’s translations as they appeared the subsequent week in the English-language edition of *Tempo*.

- ⁸⁴ Heinrich Detering, “Odysseus in Liverpool: Bob Dylans ‚Roll On John’”, in *Weltliteratur interkulturell: Referenzen von Cusanus bis Bob Dylan*, ed. Heike C. Spickermann (Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag Winter, 2015), 129–40.
- ⁸⁵ Ana C. Cara, “¿Qué tienen en común Jorge Luis Borges y Bob Dylan? Sobre el elevado arte de la poesía popular,” in *Palabras Enlazadas: Estudios en Homenaje al Profesor Lászió Scholz*, ed. Zsuzsanna Bárkáyi and Margrit Santosné Blastik (Szeged, HU: Jate Press, 2018), 87–98.
- ⁸⁶ Yoshiaki Sato, “Bob Dylan: 私たちの時代の始まり,” *Gendai Shiso* (May 2010): 96–103.
- ⁸⁷ Jennifer Lindsay to Brian Russell Roberts, July 21, 2023.
- ⁸⁸ Wilson, *Be Always Converting, Be Always Converted*, 166–207.
- ⁸⁹ Jessica A. Schwartz, “Rock ’n’ Roll (Archipelagic American Music Studies),” *American Music* 40, no. 4 (Winter 2022): 553, 554.
- ⁹⁰ Sara Danius, “Prize Announcement” (The Nobel Prize in Literature 2016), *The Nobel Prize*, <https://www.nobelprize.org/prizes/literature/2016/prize-announcement/>.
- ⁹¹ Christian Holub, “Bob Dylan’s Nobel Prize for Literature: Authors React,” *Entertainment Weekly*, Oct. 13, 2016, <https://ew.com/article/2016/10/13/bob-dylan-nobel-prize-authors-react/>.
- ⁹² Yoshiaki Sato to Brian Russell Roberts, Oct. 10, 2023.

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