Odysseus in Liverpool: Bob Dylan's "Roll On John"

HEINRICH DETERING
University of Göttingen

In the assessment of Dylan fan Dieter Lamping, Bob Dylan has combined modern poetry and popular music from early on.[1] Lamping, who is a comparatist, was able to turn his interest into a genuine subject for comparative literature in a manner convincing even for his colleagues.[2] This applies not only to Dylan's beginnings around 1960 but right up to the most recent album in 2012, with his *song poetry* making astonishing intertextual waves. Dylan conjoined very different forms and shades of nineteenth-century American popular culture with a written culture that in the course of his work of more than half a century comprises ever increasing time periods. His song worlds pervade not just folk songs, but also the *poètes maudits* of the nineteenth century and the Beat Poets of the twentieth century, Melville, Whitman and Mark Twain, T. S. Eliot and e.e. cummings, Petrarch and Dante, Blake, Brecht and Burns—and since he began to open up entirely new connections in his late work in 2001, he also took up the "Satires by Juvenal," Ovid's *Ars amatorial* and *Tristia*, Chaucer's epos and the late-romantic poems of the Southerner Henry Timrod, just to mention a few names, surprising to his listeners and interpreters.[3]

Dylan's highly idiosyncratic art of combinatorics and the pastiches and collages on his latest albums invest great effort to camouflage all traces, still marked in earlier works, and to merge all references in the purposely anonymized concert of voices from different times and cultures whose interacting consonance expresses an anthropological ground situation of happiness, isolation, revenge, hope or anxiety. In a recent interview Dylan stated that the world he crosses is replete with the voices of the dead requesting a voice. Hence despite all his masquerades, quotations, and roleplaying, he is "not a playwright. The people in my songs are all me."[4] This programmatically expressed identification also means: whoever or whatever says *I* in the songs, is a multitude of people, voices of the limbus of world literature.[5]

Dylan does not always make it easy for his listeners (and readers) to detect intertextual traces in his songs as he does in the last song of his critically acclaimed album *Tempest*.[6] Especially here, a detailed listening and reading is worthwhile of "Roll On John":

Doctor doctor, tell me the time of day
Another bottle's empty, another penny spent
He turned around and he slowly walked away
They shot him in the back and down he went

Shine your light
Move it on
You burn so bright
Roll on John

From the Liverpool docks to the red light Hamburg streets
Down in the quarry with the Quarrymen
Playing to the big crowds playing to the cheap seats
Another day in your life on your way to journey's end

Shine your light…

I heard the news today oh boy
They hauled your ship up on the shore
Now the city's gone dark, there is no more joy
They tore the heart right out and cut it to the core

Shine your light…

Put on your bags and get them packed
Leave right now, you won't be far from wrong
The sooner you go the quicker you'll be back
You've been cooped up on an island for too long

Shine your light…

Slow down you're moving way too fast
Come together right now over me
Your bones are weary, you're about to breathe your last
Lord, you know how hard it can be

Shine your light…
Roll on John roll through rain and snow
Take the right-hand road and go where the buffalo roam
They'll trap you in an ambush 'fore you know

Too late now to sail back home

Shine your light…
Tyger, Tyger, burning bright
I pray the lord my soul to keep
In the forest of the night
Cover him over and let him sleep
Shine your light…[7]

Though not named in the song, this is about John Lennon, Dylan's fellow traveler and rival in the 60s, the heroic age of new and intellectually ambitious rock music, to whose favorite heroes Lennon, the Beatles, and Dylan himself belonged. A lamentation of the dead in a slow, melancholically falling chord sequence and melody: twice in each stanza it moves to a subdominant, twice the stanza drops dully to the tonic. And since the melody line sets in with a third, it glides down over the minimally rising chord from the very first sound onwards. Only the refrain then rises once above the subdominant to the dominant, exactly matching the words "Move it on." From there, it falls back over the repeating subdominant to the basic chord, an octave lower in the penultimate chord than in the beginning and then again a third lower. In fact, this melody does nothing else than falling constantly: a lamentation of the dead.

On the 8th of December, 1980, a date generally known, John Lennon was shot in the back by a mentally disturbed fan: "They shot him in the back and down he went." Dylan, or to be more cautious: the speaker sings this obituary—this circumstance was the only surprising thing for critics about this album—with a twenty-three-year delay. He himself does not seem to recognize the delay, which makes the lamentation so peculiar. "I heard the news today, oh boy," he sings, with a quote from Lennon's and McCartney's *Sergeant Pepper* song "A Day in the Life," "[t]hey hauled your ship up on the shore." Today he had heard this news—yes, this is what he really said. Lennon is dead, he proclaims in the first stanza, and I need a doctor for this shock; "[d]octor doctor, tell me the time of the day." But in which world, in which time does this speaker actually live? Let us consider this the question not as rhetorical by way of trial and leave it pending for a moment.

For eight cross-rhymed quatrains, the speaker remembers and reminds his dead listener of scenes of the life of the person who is only addressed as "John," and of lines from some of his own songs. Eight stanzas which always end in the same refrain, in which the deceased is paradoxically and unreasonably invited to continue his journey: "Move it on […] Roll on John." The words "move" and "roll" do not only allude to the catch- and keyword of Rock'n'roll and to what was called the "the movement" in the 60s. They also create a chain of motifs that runs throughout the whole text, more precisely: throughout the first seven of the eight stanzas. For the person addressed here is primarily travelling, on the road, in motion. In regard to the image of a life

journey, the motif does not seem to be too difficult to understand. Following the well-known steps of John Lennon's biography, the journey progresses

> From the Liverpool docks to the red light
> Hamburg streets
> Down in the quarry with the Quarrymen
> Playing to the big crowds, playing on
> the cheap seats
> Another day in your life on your way to
> your journey's end.

And the journey is a composite of only days which one can imagine like the "day in the life" that the eponymous Beatles song depicts, this collage of news about violence, accidents, and war and everyday life, as widely obvious. Also imagining the journey time and again as a cruise, follows familiar traditions: "Sailing through the trade-winds bound for the south," thus the song presents his hero as a bold sailor; consequently, his death appears as an involuntary shore leave: "They hauled your ship up on the shore"; it is the same "they" used before to camouflage the single perpetrator. In the very first stanza, the violent death was evoked with expressions of motion, as the journey's end: "He turned around and he slowly walked away / They shot him in the back and down he went."

But which sense does it make in regard to the irrevocable ending of the cruise, to request repeatedly to continue the voyage or, as it was obviously interrupted, to resume it immediately? "Put on your bags and get em packed," the speaker avers, as if dead John would only have to quickly pack his properties, and he further intensifies the emphasis of his demand: "Leave right now you won't be far from wrong." Not only here and now the dead person should set forth, but he should also hurry up a bit: "The sooner you go, the quicker you'll be back." But where should he return to now? Definitely not to the place where he apparently is right now: "You've been cooped up on an island far too long." Should the island stand for the grave, the realm of the dead? And if the addressee should set off on the trip, why is he admonished not to proceed so impetuously? "Slow down you're moving too fast," the speaker warns, as if the ship had resumed full speed, and quoting another Beatles line he pleads: "Come together right now over me." What this exactly means remains mysterious.

For seven stanzas this pattern continues. It is only the eighth stanza in which tone and color change. It is only at this point that all requests and warnings directed to his friend are as in vain as they had been from the very beginning; it is only now that the lamentation of the dead sets in and the subtle, quiet plea which does not address the dead friend, but for the first time the surrounding mourners: "Cover him over and let him sleep." Only now Lennon is really dead. This is accompanied by two texts whose fragmentary quotes all listeners in Great Britain and the US alike immediately recognize: William Blake's *Tyger, tyger*, one of the most famous poems of English

Romanticism and the old, simple children's evening prayer *Now I lay me down to sleep*, equally well-known in the Anglo-Saxon language area as Luise Hensel's *Müde bin ich, geh zur Ruh* in Germany.

> Now I lay me down to sleep,
> I pray the Lord my soul to keep,

those were the beginning lines of this text of the eighteenth century (passed down in several variations).[8]

How different from the original, here not quoted context of Blake's poem! The first and fourth stanza fit Dylan's song, as if he had them already in mind while writing—evident in the repeated chorus line "you burned so bright" of the Blake quotation:

> Tyger! Tyger! burning bright
> In the forests of the night.
> What immortal hand and eye
> Could frame thy tearful symmetry?
> And then the fourth stanza:
> What the hammer? what the chain?
> What furnace was thy brain?
> What the anvil? what dread grasp
> Dare its deadly terrors clasp?[9]

In this way, surrounded by demons of Romantic night fantasies and the angels of Romantic piety, dead John lies on his bed at the end of the song, arrived at "your journey's end."

The pious final phrase "I pray the Lord my soul to keep" (is the singer letting the dead speak or is he praying for him, and also for himself?), bespeaks the explicit, what is suggested implicitly in the eight-time repeated refrain: a remarkable religious sublimation of the event. "Shine your light" is a classical expression of the gospel, and nobody knows this better than the song poet Bob Dylan who—in his Christian-evangelical phase in 1979—opened the refrain of his song "Precious Angel" with precisely this line:

> Shine your light, shine your light on me!
> Ya know I can't make it by myself
> I'm a little too blind to see

as the entreaty to the angel. "Shine your light," is now the request to John Lennon, he of all people as the author of the lines "Imagine there's no Heaven, and no religion, too!"

Also the calm, solemn melody, the sostenuto and the combined instruments of guitars, piano and the organ do not sound like *Sergeant Pepper* but much more like gospel traditions. Some pious bloggers did think less of John Lennon in regard to title and refrain of the song than of the favorite disciple Jesus or, even closer to Dylan's early evangelical songs, the prophet of the apocalypse of the New Testament, "St John the Divine." Not only was he quoted numerous times in Dylan's religious songs, but also appeared in person at least once:

> I left town at dawn
> With Marcel and Saint John
> Strong men, belittled by doubt,

ran the lines in "Journey through Dark Heat," the final song of the album *Street Legal* in 1978, when Dylan himself, still "belittled by doubt," had started the way of conversion.

Of course, the name "John" in this song refers to John Lennon first and last, there is no doubt about it in view of the pervasive quotes in his songs. But equally obvious he is called up as a holy man in the refrain on account of the gospel-line used eight-times, a Saint John of Liverpool and the *Red Light Hamburg Streets*—a peculiar saint, but a saint nevertheless. A martyr who cannot be gunned down by a crazy perpetrator for his sacral role, but by a nondescript crowd "them" and only after having ripped out his heart while still alive: "They tore the heart right out and cut it to the core." The last halfway obvious Beatles quote at the end of the penultimate stanza hints at even higher echelons: "Lord, you know how hard it can be." The line refers to the refrain of "The Ballad of John and Yoko":[10]

> Christ you know it ain't easy,
> You know how hard it can be.

But the song continues, as generally known, in John Lennon's own words:

> The way things are going
> They're going to crucify me.

Only in the last stanza, at the deathbed, John's holiness becomes visible, only now, when the salutation of the dead is hushed and he is mourned again using the third person singular, as in the opening stanza. In the course of seven stanzas, he is asked to continue the voyage, in the eighth stanza, he is bemoaned as the killed martyr, as the burning tiger in the dark forest of the world. Dylan's song does not simply consist of eight stanzas, but more of the sequence seven plus one: seven profane ones, and a sacral one.

The pair of motifs which governs all events in these stanzas, is not just the contrast between life and death, but between motion and standstill, compounded by the contrast between unlimited voyage and exitless incarceration, between "moving on" and "journey's end." "Sailing through the trade-winds bound for the south," is the motion we see John embarked on at the beginning of the third stanza—and inescapable in "that deep dark cave" at its end, three lines later. Because he had been corralled too long on an island ("cooped up on an island far too long"),[11] he should strike out hurriedly ("The sooner you go, the quicker you'll be back"). For only when the ship has been hauled on land—by "them," the intended murderers ("They hauled your ship up on the shore")—then it is "[t]oo late now to sail back home."

Those are old and familiar images, conventional since classical antiquity: unconstrained life as a voyage into the unlimited, the island and cave as captivity. But what should be the reference to John Lennon's life and death? "that … cave" intones the song, as if we knew what it meant. But in which basement, which cave should John Lennon have been held captive? And what does the allusion mean, he wore "rags on [his] back just like any other slave"? On which island was he captive—the British one, from which he emigrated to America "where the buffalos roam" (maybe an inappropriately humorous allusion to the comedy *Where the Buffalo Roam* with Bill Murray and Neil Young's the music)? But even if this was the meaning: what kind of sense does it make now, almost a generation later after he had met his violent death in precisely this America, to ask him to finally depart from his island?

None other than the constantly amazing Dylan-blogger and tracker Scott Warmuth, also discovered this track which leads to a solution; he announced his findings on his website pinboard in 2013.[12] They all originate from Homer's *Odyssey*, specifically from the renowned new translation, praised for its precise use of contemporary English, by Robert Fagles who taught at Princeton until his death in 2008.[13] Like before in the case of the extensive adaptations of Ovid's exile writings in the translation of Peter Green—which Dylan connected in such songs as "Workingman's Blues #2" with the subject and the cadences of the Western and labor songs—or his adaptations of Juvenal's satires, also in a new translation by Peter Green (inter alia on the album *Tempest*, immediately before the Lennon song), Dylan also profits here from the cadence of modernizing translations which permit him the carefree combination of Beatles quotations and the classical epos.

Let us have a closer look at the findings of Warmuth's pinboard. In the fourth canto of Homer's *Odyssee*, Menelaos asks Helena how Odysseus succeeded in entering Troy. And Helena reports, "what a feat that hero dared and carried off" (v. 271 f.): "Scarring his own body with mortifying strokes / throwing filthy *rags on his back like any other slave*, / he slipped into the enemy's city." Not out of menial humiliation this hero wore rags, *rags on your back just like any other slave*, but deliberately and purposely disguised as a slave: "all disguised," Helena avers, "a totally different man, a beggar […] That's how Odysseus infiltrated Troy" (4/275–76).

A little later, when his planned attack is threatened to fail in the last minute, because his fellow combatant Anticlus raises his voice in the body of the Trojan horse, Odysseus courageously shuts up Anticlus' mouth: "Odysseus *clamped* his great hands on the man's *mouth* / and shut it, brutally" (4/321–32)—"they clamped your mouth," is what we hear about the maltreated martyr John Lennon. When Dylan continues: "Wasn't no way out of that deep dark cave," then something becomes clear (overlooked by Warmuth) in the Homeric context which prison is meant. "In the One-Eyed Giant's Cave" is the title Fagle gives to the ninth canto of his translation.

Only for a short period of time, Odysseus and his men have to endure in the darkness and depth. When the rose-fingered dawn appears, "As soon / as young Dawn with her rose-red fingers shone once more / the rams went rumbling out of the cave" (9/487–89). When he is back on sea, safe and sound, the rescued mockingly shouts at the Polyphemus from the ship: "So, Cyclops, no weak coward it was whose crew / you bent to devour there in your vaulted cave" (9/531–32). At last, he adds coltishly: "Would to god I could strip you / of life and breath and ship you down to House of Death" (9/580–81). This, too, could be familiar to listeners of Dylan's *Tempest*, probably not from the epitaph for John Lennon, but from the blues of the "Early Roman Kings" (also referred to by Scott Warmuth):

> I can strip you of life
> Strip you of breath
> Ship you down
> To the house of death.

This is the way in which the freed Odysseus talks to his tormentors in Dylan's source; even the rhymes appeared as a random product in Eagle's prose version.

Similar to Odysseus' adventure, just a little less heroic, is that if King Menelaos who in the conversation with Helena quoted above reports his own adventures on sea. On his journey back from Egypt, he was stranded at the shore of the Island Pharos, and while being shipwrecked, he encountered Proteus himself in the most astonishing variations, a meeting announced by his daughter Eidothea who greets the ship–wrecked Menealos with the pitiful words: "Here you are, *cooped up on an island far too long*, / with *no way out of* it, none that you can find" (4/417–18). Menelaos himself repeats this impasse when he complains to the overpowering Proteus: "Here I am, *cooped up on an island far too long*, / with no way out of it, none that I can find" (4/523 –24). And he continues: "Once I reached *my ship hauled up on shore* / we made our meal and the god-sent night came down" (4/481–82). As punishment for his disobedience, Proteus had the king stranded. "Which god, Menelaus," he wants to know, "conspired with you / to *trap me in ambush*?" (4/419–20).

All of this reappears in Dylan's epic fragments of the sailor John Lennon—always with the same crucial difference in all cited allusions: when Menelaos returns safe and sound from his voyage, Dylan has his hero fail cruelly. No longer it is the hero

that lures the nature deity into the trap, but that anonymous crowd ("they") attacks him: "They'll trap you in an ambush before you know." When Menelaos finds his way back home from the island where he was "cooped up […] far too long," for John it is [t]oo late now to sail back home."

Even more it is Odysseus, admired by Menelaos, who does not only overcome all dangers—he emerges triumphant out of them. In the same way in which he dissimulated his own status for the exploration of Troy, only to defeat the city in bright victory, he leaves "that cave" as the conqueror of the frightening giant and can still mock Polyphemus. And "to sail back home": this is the basic motivation for his entire history, the odysseys and the eventual return home of a far-travelled man. By the way, this also applies to the song's speaker and his reference to the Odyssee in Dylan's earlier song "Seeing the Real You at Last," released on the 1985 album *Empire Burlesque*. The singer accosts the sirens who wanted to seduce him and to lead him astray with scorn:

> Well, I sailed through the storm
> Strapped to the mast
> But the time has come
> And I'm seeing the real you at last.

Quite the opposite is the situation of saint John in the final song of Dylan's *Tempest*: he really looks ragged and like a slave. He does not cover somebody else's mouth out of superior prudence but is silenced himself. He actually does not any longer find an escape out of the deep, dark cave. And his return home is forever denied. (Tried out in several versions in 1997, but only released in the eighth episode of the *Bootleg Series* in 2008, the distinctive gospel-like song "Marchin' to the City" sounds like a preliminary study of the reversal of the Odysseus narrative, with the stanza: "I'm chained to the earth / Like a silent slave / I'm tryin' to break free / Out of death's dark cave").[14]

Dylan's song elaborates this contrast most pointedly when he incorporates several fragments of a single adventure sequence from the ending of the fifth canto in his Lennon song. When Odysseus rescues himself narrowly to the shore of the Island of the Phaeacians, he feels following Fagle's translation: "Joy […] warm as the joy that children feel […] So warm, Odysseus' joy when he saw that shore" (5/436 and 441)—"there is no more joy," Dylan writes, "They tore the heart right out and cut it to the core." Then when Odysseus is once again torn away inadvertently, he complains: "now I've crossed this waste of water, the end in sight / there's no way out of the boiling surf" (5/452–53). Then, right before the end of the fifth canto, he believes to die: "A heavy sea covered him over then and there / unlucky Odysseus would have met his death" (5/479–80)—"Cover him over," Dylan sings at his hero's deathbed. Similar to the way in which Odysseus here prays to the river god in agony: "Hear me, lord, whoever you are, / I've come to you, the answer of my prayers – / rescue me from the sea (5/490-92, ditto), the lyrics here read: "I pray the Lord my soul to keep." Now, it is

not about the hero's rescue in this world, but about the otherworldly salvation. At the end of the fifth canto, Odysseus sighs: "I'm bone-weary, about to breathe my last"; when he has just narrowly escaped death. "Your bones are weary, you're about to breathe your last," Dylan sings to dead John and continues: "Lord, you know how hard it can be," the line re-interpreted as a prayer in the ballad of John and Yoko.

What can be observed in the narrowest space of this verse pair determines the intertextual web of the whole song, this parallel composition of classical antiquity and pop-culture. The almost intrusive reiteration of recognizable quotations from prayer, Blake and the Beatles drape the good side of a narrative whose deep structure John Lennon stages more discreetly as a counterfactual of a mythical creature, than as a Ulysses of the pop generation: as the hero who does *not* return home (and who, in this stylization, distances himself from the song poet John Lennon ever more towards a melodramatic dream image). Using this counterfactual method, Dylan merges in his epitaph on the dead companion two genres in such a way than the one embraces the other and recants it. By turning Odysseus' triumph into saint John's martyrdom, he transforms the heroic story into the legend.

But who tells the story, who is this singer? "Doctor, doctor, tell me the time o' day," he begins, "Another bottle's empty." One easily forgets this beginning because the Lennon story draws attention entirely to the hero. But like in the refrain, so is the "Doctor doctor" a sign of the genre: what the light is for the Gospel, that is the doctor for the Blues. This is equally operative in Dylan's work at the end of his evangelical period in the title song of the album *Shot of Love* in 1981:

> Doctor can you hear me, I need some medic aid
> I've seen the Kingdoms of the world, and
> it's makin' me feel afraid.

The narrator, who got drunk before the beginning of this song, who poor and disoriented calls for the doctor: he probably does not know where and in which time he is in. For him the news about John's death is still fresh and devastating, he still needs to learn to accept the unavoidable that out there, where we, the others are, does not bother anyone anymore. As in other song monologues from Dylan's late work, like "Floater" in *Love and Theft* in 2001, or "Workingman's Blues #2" in *Modern Times* in 2006, the speech act precedes action, and the singer is drawn indirectly as a figure by the linguistic movements of his monologue. This song with its nonsensical appeals to a long-dead person it is also a protocol of confusions and grieve work of his singer. Next to the death bed of the lamented, we see the lamenting singer.

Why exactly is this song, this private myth of a dead friend, placed in such an accentuated position at the end of the album *Tempest*? In my assumption it is positioned here because this album is so expansive, and treats blood and thunder, misery and doom so coldly and consequently that even the tenderly starting love song "Soon After Midnight" reveals itself as a sadistic sex offender on a second listening, because

in this world deformed by violence the motto "I play in blood, but not my own" prevails, because it pervasively crossfades the American world of the 20th century with *Murder Ballads*, Shakespeare's dramas and the *Early Roman Kings* (also the name of a gang of the suburbs); because in his title song "Tempest" Dylan has a whole panopticon of figures of American history go down the drain with the *Titanic* in a death dance of a macabre reversal of *The Tempest*[15] and because the John Lennon song follows the almost a quarter of an hour long title song like a quiet, gospel-colored epilogue.

As early as in *Tempest* the cruelly disappointed hope of "a golden age foretold" was contrasted with a religious, apocalyptic perspective; kneeling in front his steering wheel rendered useless by "the judgement from God's hand," the captain read "the Book of Revelations, and he filled his cup with tears," just like the bewailing psalmist in the Bible fills his own cup with tears. And among the many drowning people was a stowaway called "Blake."

"Tyger, tyger, burning bright": Thus ends in the next and last song of the album, the ballad of saint John, and the verse line merges with the children's prayer "I pray the Lord my soul to keep." Out of the monstrous panoramic doom of the album—from the "final run" of the Duquesne train via the murder-monologues "Soon After Midnight" and "Pay in Blood" to the dying scene of the sixteen hundred in "Tempest"—, out of this monumental painting of an American death this last song blows up a single victim on to a large scale. "There were many many others" the narrator of "Tempest" has just stated, "Nameless here for evermore / They'd never sailed the ocean / Or left their homes before." Now in "Roll On John," he bends over a single dead sailor; now himself sick, drunk, and disoriented ("Doctor doctor tell me the time of the day / Another bottle's empty, another penny spent"), the narrator encourages him with by this time senseless appeals to get up one more time and to continue his journey. It is at this moment that he finally recites the prayer for the dead.

In this concluding prayer the gospel, which has announced itself in the sound of the song and "Shine your light," turns into a last comfort and the play on genre takes on a religious dimension. Critics and fans have wondered for long why the album cover of *Tempest* depicts the Vltava figure of the magnificent Pallas-Athene-Fountain in Vienna. Yes, why that cover actually? In Dylan's extensively quoted passage of the fifth canto the cunning Odysseus is said that he would have been crushed by the waves without the protection of the goddess of wisdom: "his bones crushed / if the bright-eyed goddess Pallas had not inspired him now" (5/471). In the cave of Polyphemus, "that deep dark cave," Odysseus asks desperately: "would Athena give me glory?" (9/355); and behold, she stands next to him again. The Viennese Athene fountain depicts the grieving river goddess at the feet of Athene, her mouth opened in wail. Because the sailor Odysseus is lost this time, because he will never return home again, "too late now to sail back home": that is why Dylan has the goddess bewail him. This is why, he transforms the last of the murder stories of *Tempest* into John Lennon's legend of death and transfiguration. And this is why he gifts him with a children's prayer at last and gives the bloody album a tender ending.

Notes

[1] "A convincing combination of modern poetry and popular music has been best realized by some rock-musicians, first and foremost Bob Dylan. Hardly any other singer or lyricist has continuously taken up suggestions of modern poetry like him: such as Rimbaud, Brecht, Pound, T. S. Eliot or Ginsberg." Dieter Lamping, *Moderne Lyrik* (Göttingen, DE: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2008), 97.

[2] Inter alia in Dieter Lamping, ed. *Handbuch Lyrik, Theorie, Analyse, Geschichte* (Stuttgart, DE: Metzger, 2016).

[3] An overview in: Michael Gray. *The Bob Dylan Encyclopedia* (New York: Continuum, 2006); and Heinrich Detering, *Bob Dylan* (3rd expanded edition, Stuttgart, DE: Reclam, 2009), with further references.

[4] Dylan Talks, "Together Through Life," 2009, interview with Bill Flanagan, www.bobdylan.com/Features.

[5] See Heinrich Detering, *Die Stimmen aus dem Limbus. Bob Dylans späte Song Poetry* (München: Siemens Stiftung, 2012).

[6] In the meantime, I have published a detailed analysis of the entire album, cf. "'Hard Country': Bob Dylan's Album *Tempest*: *May Your Songs Always Be Sung*," in *Bob Dylans große Studioalben,* edited by Dieter Lamping and Sascha Sailer (Marburg, DE: Verlag LiteraturWissenschaft, 2021), 137–50.

[7] All quotations of the lyrics cited from Christopher Ricks, Lisa Nemrow, Julie Nemrow, ed. *The Lyrics* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2014), 926. Roll On John, M&T: Bob Dylan © Special Rider Music (with friendly authorisation by Sony/ATV Music Publishing (Germany) GmbH.

[8] More details on the informative website https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Qiki/Now_I_Lay_Me_Down_to_Sleep.

[9] William Blake: *The Tyger* (1794), cited from: Werner von Koppenfels and Manfred Pfister, ed. *Englische Dichtung von Dryden bis Tennyson* (Munich, DE: Beck, 2000), 208–210.

[10] The Beatles. "The Ballad of John and Yoko," cited from http://www.songtexte.com/songtext/the-beatles/the-ballad-of-john-and-yoko-13d28d51.html.

[11] "To coop up" refers to animals in a stall or pen, metaphorically transferred onto humans.

[12] Scott Warmuth, Pinterest pag. *http://pinterest.com/scottwarmuth/a-temptest-commonplace/.*

[13] Robert Fagles, trans., *Homer: The Odyssey* (New York: Viking, 1996). In Fagles, the hero is called "Odysseus," not the latinized "Ulysses." In the following, I only give the reference of song and verse.

[14] *Tell Tale Signs: Rare and Unreleased 1998–2006*, published in 2008; here, the second version of the song on disc 3 is cited.

[15] I analyze this connection more in detail in the essay "Bob Dylans Shakespeare" in *Shakespeare-Jahrbuch*, 151 (2015), 149–166.

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