



### Dreams and Dialogues in Dylan's "Time Out of Mind"

By Graley Herren

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### A study of Bob Dylan's album *Time Out of Mind* as a series of dreams—as murder ballads, religious allegory, and meditation on race and music in America

"Under Graley Herren's expert analyses, the songs on *Time Out of Mind* do not stand as merely timeless, but drenched in time, echoing against one another to reveal their resilience and profound timeliness. Multifaceted, this brilliant study shines a much-needed light on Dylan's prismatic, hybrid late style. Truly provocative." — Dr. Robert Reginio, Professor, Division of English, Alfred University, US

"Graley Herren delves into Bob Dylan's *Time Out of Mind*, an album whose songs are made up of dreamscapes. His journey into the lyrical genius of Dylan brings to the surface thoughtful and cultural relevant dialogues around violence, race and the liminal space between salvation and damnation." — Katherine Weiss, Associate Dean of the College of Arts and Letters, California State University, Los Angeles, US

"Almost every Dylan album deserves its own book. *Time Out of Mind* deserves several, though it's hard to imagine a better one than this, a work of serious literary criticism illuminating a seminal album— Dylan 'getting back in and fighting [his] way out of a corner' as he put it—from perhaps the richest vein of the artist's work, his brilliant and often neglected or shortchanged work from the past 25 years." — Kevin Barents, Professor, Arts and Sciences Writing Program, Boston University, US

*Time Out of Mind* is one of the most ambitious, complex, and provocative albums of Bob Dylan's distinguished artistic career. The present book interprets the songs recorded for *Time Out of Mind* as a series of dreams by a single singer/dreamer. These dreams overlap and intermingle, but three primary levels of meaning emerge. On one level, the singer/dreamer envisions himself as a killer awaiting execution for killing his lover. On another level, the song-cycle functions as religious allegory, dramatizing the protagonist's relentless struggles with his lover as a battle between spirit and flesh, earth and heaven, salvation and damnation. On still another level, *Time Out of Mind* is a meditation on American slavery and racism, Dylan's most personal encounter with the subject, but one tangled up in associations with the minstrelsy tradition and debates surrounding cultural appropriation. *Time Out of Mind* marks the culmination of several recurring themes that have preoccupied Dylan for decades, and it serves as a pivotal turning point toward his late renaissance in terms of both subject matter and intertextual approach.

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### About the Author(s) / Editor(s)

Graley Herren is a professor of english at Xavier University in Cincinnati. He has authored books on Samuel Beckett and Don DeLillo, and he is the editor of five volumes of the *Text & Presentation* book series.

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