DEMO DREAMSCAPES: *John Wesley Harding, Nebraska,* and Two Weird Americas

> "In 1968 I was into *John Wesley Harding*."
> Bruce Springsteen to Paul Williams (Cross 57)

> "We always did feel the same/We just saw it from a different point of view."
> Bob Dylan, "Tangled Up in Blue" (Dylan 333)

Outlaw protagonists in two Americas gone wrong, subverted audience expectations, theretofore unheard vocal timbres, and lots of harmonica solos dominate Bob Dylan's *John Wesley Harding* (1967) and Bruce Springsteen's *Nebraska* (1982). And that's just the beginning of the connections.

On first and second blushes, these two albums seem like incredibly close cousins in spite of the fifteen years between them. They were both animated by the ghost of Woody Guthrie. Guthrie died as Dylan was writing, and two weeks before he recorded, the songs that became *John Wesley Harding*; Springsteen was beginning to read and talk about Guthrie as Ronald Reagan ran for and was elected President in late 1980. The music of Hank Williams was frequently on Dylan's turntable in Woodstock during the autumn of 1967, just as it was on Springsteen's in Colt's Neck in the winter of 1981. In 1967—at Big Pink, on the train from Woodstock to Nashville, and in the Nashville studio where he had last recorded "that wild mercury sound" of *Blonde on Blonde* (Trager 51)—Dylan was consciously returning to his *Anthology of American Folk Music* roots, the very same roots that Springsteen discovered in 1981 after *The River* tour. Robbie Robertson and Steve Van Zandt told their respective collaborators something very similar—that less

was more, albeit fifteen years apart—when they heard the demo tapes that Dylan and Springsteen each initially viewed as starting points for full-band albums. And Jon Landau—the wizard behind the Bruce curtain—flew through this story of two albums and two epochs like some character right off of a Chagall canvas or out of the pages of a Harry Potter installment. He first appeared as a twenty-one year old rock critic who wrote an extensive and enthusiastic review of *John Wesley Harding* for *Crawdaddy* in 1968 (Landau 248-264); he then wrote his famous "I saw rock and roll future and its name is Bruce Springsteen" in 1974 (Graff 213); shortly thereafter he started becoming all that being Springsteen's "producer, manager, and friend" (Graff 212) has entailed for thirty years.

There are so many parallels that it is too tempting to call *Nebraska* Springsteen's *John Wesley Harding,* just as it has become clichéd to describe *Tunnel of Love* as his *Blood on the Tracks.* Such comparisons, which I am far from the first to invoke, suggest much about artistic influence and critical reception. Clearly Dylan's shadow keeps appearing for Springsteen. Or, perhaps more accurately, it does for writers and critics who keep seeing it behind *almost every* singer-songwriter who comes after Dylan. To many of us, Springsteen is the Boss and all that goes along with that title. Nonetheless, he cannot escape comparison with Dylan not only in recent studies such as Fred Goodman's The Mansion on the Hill: Dylan, Young, Geffen, Springsteen, and the Head-on Collision of Rock and Commerce (1997), Larry David Smith's Bob Dylan, Bruce Springsteen, and American Song (Praeger, 2002) and Bryan K. Garman's A Race of Singers (Chapel Hill, 2000) but also in almost every encyclopedia entry and short history of popular American music to be found. Just this spring, WFUV, the National Public Radio station at Fordham

University, conducted a Dylan versus Springsteen listener poll which Dylan won in a landslide.

This is as good a place as any to address, in a very general way, the Dylan-Springsteen nexus. Yes, John Hammond of Columbia Records signed both as folk singers; yes, when Springsteen appeared on the October 27, 1975 covers of *Time* and *Newsweek* the comparison was in both articles; yes, both were word machines; yes, Springsteen told Paul Williams that *John Wesley Harding* was an influence on him; yes, they played together at Roseland in 1994, in Cleveland the following year, and at Shea Stadium to close *The Rising* tour in 2003, publicly calling each other "buddy" and "brother"; and on and on and on. At the heart of the comparison is the old chestnut of privileging artists who *seemingly* originate forms over those who follow and imitate, even if the followers improve on the original.

A terrific example from long ago and far away appears in Alexander Pope's "Preface to *The Iliad*" (1715). Pope writes that Homer, "a great and fruitful Genius," will always be viewed as superior to Virgil, "a judicious and methodical [Genius]," because Homer's "Work is a wild Paradise" and, even more significantly, it preceded Virgil's. (Pope 439) The twenty-first century moral of the story is that, no matter how much love and theft he may have committed in his times, Dylan strode much of the Sixties (thanks, in enormous part to writers and critics and in small part to *John Wesley Harding*) as the Originator. Everyone since him—Springsteen included—has been A.D., a PostDylanist. Springsteen has inherited, acknowledged, and riffed upon Dylan's "wild Paradise," most directly in his wordplay-rich debut, *Greetings from Asbury Park, NJ* (1973), and then five albums and a decade later in his conscious nod to Dylan on *Nebraska.* Shortly after the

release of *Nebraska*, as he was preparing *Born in the U.S.A*. (1984), Springsteen once again encouraged the comparison by stating, "At the time I felt that maybe this [solo recording] is where the whole thing is going in some fashion. Maybe the idea is gonna be to just keep the thing real stripped down right now, almost like a *John Wesley Harding* type of thing." (Marsh 391)

Similarities recognized and anxieties of influence acknowledged, it is still the differences between *John Wesley Harding, Nebraska*, and their respective creators that are most illuminating. Mike Marqusee said it well when writing generally about the two artists in his "Afterword" to Chimes of Freedom: "Though [Springsteen's] work is unimaginable without the foundations Dylan laid, its development reflected different times and a different personality." (Marqusee 273) Those different personalities grow out of their Genius creators' biographies, their views of America, and the even greater differences between what their music implied—and continues to imply—to their respective and frequently overlapping audiences. In 1967 Dylan released an album that continues to be an eminently pleasing Coney Island of the mind; in1982 Springsteen released one that is the fine hammered steel of woe. Which of these works one prefers is, a matter of personal taste….but more of that later. First a few words about the albums and some of their differences.

Springsteen was not alone in being into *John Wesley Harding* in 1968—and long thereafter. Dylan's first studio album after *Blonde on Blonde* and his mysterious motorcycle accident was quietly released on December 27, 1967 ("'I asked Columbia to release it with no publicity and no hype because this was the season of hype,' Dylan later said"). (Williamson 81). It rose to number two on the charts in America and stayed there

for a month in its twenty-one week total run, and it had two spells totaling thirteen weeks at number one in Britain (ibid). Oliver Trager concisely describes its reception when he writes, "*John Wesley Harding* was a shock to the music industry and Dylan's fans alike….[It was] a total about-face from the humid, psychedelic, electrified rock 'n' roll impressionism that had marked his previous three efforts….As provocative as Dylan's electrification had been when he plugged in to perform rock 'n' roll at the Newport Folk Festival in 1965 a mere two and a half years earlier, the pensive acoustic strains heard on *John Wesley Harding* spun almost as many heads….It was as if Jackson Pollock had suddenly decided to paint like Grandma Moses or William Faulkner to write a haiku…" (Trager 340) Clinton Heylin states that the three straightforward single-day sessions at Columbia's Music Row Studios in October and November 1967 resulted in "Dylan's most perfectly executed album" (Heylin, Recording Sessions 69).

Michael Gray is only slightly less enthusiastic, describing "[t]his quiet, authoritative masterpiece" as "Dylan's last masterpiece of the 1960s." He then adds, "and in spirit it was most markedly not a part of the 1960s world at all." (Gray 6). What it was, in Gray's eyes and ears, was "a most serious, darkly visionary exploration of the myths and extinct strengths of America; its Calvinistic spirit gives it an eerie power in mixing the severely biblical with a surreal nineteenth century American pioneer ethos. Dylan comes across like a man who has arisen from the final holocaust unscathed but sobered, to walk across an allegorical American landscape of small, poor communities working a dusty fierce terrain." (ibid) In a similar vein, Greil Marcus described the album as "a quiet morality play, a sort of Puritan western….an occulted social drama" (Marcus 55) and Mikal Gilmore viewed it as an exploration of "the idea of America as a wounded

family" (Gilmore 293). Dylan himself, intentional fallacy be damned and listener beware, once called it "the first biblical rock album" (Shelton 389).

As is often the case in matters regarding Dylan, Paul Williams provides a helpful way in. After quoting five epigraphs from Dylan regarding *John Wesley Harding*, Williams writes, "Dylan has had a lot to say about *John Wesley Harding* over the years—the album *has* been something of an ink blot test for him, as it has certainly been for his listeners and critics. Amazing things have been found in these songs, which is a tribute to the power and suggestiveness of their language; at least part of Dylan's intent here, certainly, is to tease, to provoke the analytical mind and then dance away from its net, which of course only provokes it more." (Williams, Performing Artist 238) When he first heard the album in 1967, Williams felt provoked to call it "the most American record I've ever heard." (Williams, Watching the River Flow 30) Robert Shelton, Anthony Scaduto, Tim Riley, Ellen Willis, and dozens of other writers and critics weighed in with varying degrees of awe (in fact, the remainder of this paper could easily disappear in those critical responses; but, as Dylan would say, "the hour is getting late").

What *John Wesley Harding* is to others has been hinted; what, at times, it is to me, as yet remains unsaid. So please bear with me while I attempt to not speak falsely.

The first thing I noticed back in the day—and the thing that still jumps out at me—is how different Dylan's voice is from his *Blonde on Blonde* voice "with [its] slow-as-molasses Nashville twist" (Trager 532). He ended *Blonde on Blonde* with a beautiful dirge: "Sad-eyed lady of the lowlands/Where the sad-eyed prophet says that no man comes/My warehouse eyes, my Arabian drums/Should I leave them by your gate/Or, sad-eyed lady, should I wait?" His bouncy intro to *John Wesley Harding* sixteen months

later—"John Wesley Harding/Was a friend to the poor/He trav'led with a gun in ev'ry hand"—could not have been more different. Somehow, in Woodstock he had come to sound like Hank Williams crossed with Jimmie Rodgers as opposed to the nasal folksinger of *Blonde on Blonde*. Paul Williams called that new voice "powerfully expressive" (Williams, Performing Artist 243); in the second paragraph of Jean Strouse's *Commonweal* review Dylan's voice was described as "mellowed and [having] lost its earlier plaintive tone" (Strouse 89); and Bonnie Beecher, one of the girls from the north country who knew Dylan when he was Zimmerman, said, "[In 1960] he got this bronchial cough that lasted almost a year, and he wouldn't take care of it because he thought the rougher his voice sounded, the more [it was] like Woody Guthrie. I thought he had lost…that sweet voice altogether." (Heylin, Behind the Shades Revisited 289)

Along with that sweet voice came a sweeter Dylan, most obviously in *John Wesley Harding*'s final two songs, "Down Along the Cove" and "I'll Be Your Baby Tonight." But there was also something softer in even the darkest of his album's stories and parables. The anger and the edge that fueled so much of the 1965-66 trilogy was replaced by something else, something the then twenty-one year old Jon Landau described as "the myth of the moderate man….the product of an adult Dylan." (Landau 259) Paul Williams described the folk truths that run through *John Wesley Harding* ("Stay free from petty jealousies, live by no man's code, and hold your judgment for yourself"; "Don't go mistaking Paradise for that home across the road"; "There are many here among us who feel that life is but a joke, but you and I we've been through that and this is not our fate"; and "Each of us has his own special gift, and…if you don't underestimate me, I won't underestimate you") as "Poor Robert's Almanac. A little flat

on the printed page, perhaps, but inspired and inspiring (and truly helpful) when enclosed in music and performed with heart." (Williams, Performing Artist 246)

Dylan brought sweetness and heart to the very stark American landscape he surveyed in 1967. He said that *John Wesley Harding* was "a fearful album…dealing with the devil in a fearful way, almost." It contained dozens of Biblical references and employed a new, leaner writing style. Regarding the latter, Allen Ginsberg remembered that "[i]n '68 he was talking poetics with me, telling me how he was writing shorter lines, with every line meaning something. He wasn't just making up a line to go with a rhyme anymore; each line had to advance the story, bring the song forward….There was to be no wasted language, no wasted breath. All the imagery was to be functional rather than ornamental." (Heylin, Behind the Shades Revisited 287) Part of the function was rich, religious moralizing; part of it was playful hipster put-on (remember that the little neighbor boy in "The Ballad of Frankie Lee and Judas Priest", the album's centerpiece, "muttered underneath his breath, 'Nothing is revealed'"; the thief in "All Along the Watchtower" told us "No reason to get excited"; and the liner notes Dylan wrote were a shaggy dog story in which a character named Frank, who is introduced as the key to Mr. Dylan's new record, counsels moderation, patience, and a bit of goosing oneself all over the room to the three kings who visit him). For Dylan, public life was hardly all good in 1967. America was at war in Vietnam, racial tensions were high, and college campuses were heating up. At the same time, Dylan's personal life at Woodstock—as a husband and a parent and a musician making the music that came to be known as *The Basement Tapes*—fueled some kind of rebirth in him. He alchemized murderer John Wesley Hardin into a man who trav'led with a gun in every hand, never hurt an honest man, and never

made a foolish move. He rhymed moon and spoon in "I'll Be Your Baby Tonight" as he went on his way accordingly, reassuring his close-eyed lady of the highlands, "do not fear/Bring that bottle over here/I'll be your baby tonight."

Although Springsteen wanted *Nebraska* to resemble *John Wesley Harding*, his life in 1981 had almost nothing in common with Dylan's in 1967. Springsteen was living alone, watching the people he grew up with lose their jobs as unemployment reached 11%, and questioning not only his past and future but also America's. His deep tonal differences with the Dylan of *John Wesley Harding* were undeniable. Where Dylan made "a fearful album" and came out singing a country love song to a steel guitar accompaniment Springsteen had revisited his childhood and gone "inside [his characters'] heads, so you could hear and feel their thoughts, their choices" (Springsteen 138) only to ask, and twice at that, for deliverance from nowhere. *Nebraska* was, simply, "the most surprising album of …Springsteen's career" (Graff 254), particularly for an American audience that had just heard Buggles' "Video Killed the Radio Star" from their album, *Age of Plastic*, a few months earlier on something new called MTV.

There had been hints of Springsteen's new voice and its accompanying subject matter on *The River* (1980)—but only hints. For most of Springsteen's fans and all of the recording industry, he was, first and foremost, a rock and roller who sang anthems and got people dancing. His *Nebraska* voice, however, was, in the words of Howard Hampton, "preternaturally calm and steady" (Hampton 330). Jimmy Guterman wrote that Springsteen's vocals were "the least mannered of [his] career" and stated, "It's not just a new quiet voice that debuts on *Nebraska*. There's a new wild voice here, too." (Guterman 139) Those voices fit a new writing style that Springsteen described as "narrative,

restrained, linear, and musically minimal" (Springsteen 138). This might be part of what he meant by "a *John Wesley Harding* type of thing."

But where *Nebraska* drastically parted company with *John Wesley Harding* was its subject matter, what Springsteen described as "a theme that runs through the record": "the thin line between stability and that moment when time stops and everything goes to black, when the things that connect you to your world—your job, your family, friends, your faith, the love and grace in your heart—fail you. I wanted the music to feel like a waking dream and the record to move like poetry. I wanted the blood on it to feel destined and fateful." (Springsteen 138-9).

And so it does, particularly when, for example, the opening tracks of *Nebraska* and *John Wesley Harding* are put side by side. Although both albums' opening/title songs were based on historical criminals, Dylan's and Springsteen's takes could not have differed more. The actual John Wesley Hardin was a nineteenth-century Texas outlaw who served seventeen years for killing a sheriff and was subsequently gunned down shortly after being released from prison; Dylan turns him into a blend of Robin Hood, Woody Guthrie's Pretty Boy Floyd, and Dylan's own, best-imagined outlaw self. Springsteen, on the other hand, takes the story of Charles Starkweather (heartland serial killer of eleven in the late 1950s), disappears into him, and puts the following words, delivered without inflection, in his subject's head and his listeners' ears: "They declared me unfit to live, said into/that great void my soul'd be hurled/They wanted to know why I did what I did, well, sir, guess there's just/a meanness in this world." It is the first of many chilling moments on the album. Jim Sclavunos, drummer for Nick Cave and the Bad Seeds, described why *Nebraska* was such a shock to so many listeners: "I know that

Nebraska is really bleak and stark and minimal….I guess a lot of people who would have liked its rawness were probably turned off by the fact that it was Bruce; while the hardcore fans wanted another *Born to Run.* I still listen to it occasionally and the scope of music he covers is inspiring; one minute he sounds like Woody Guthrie or Dylan, the next John Lee Hooker….[T]he whole thing just sort of hums along in a really compelling way." (Jones 60)

"Compelling," yes; "hums," maybe; "obsessive," for sure. Jimmy Guterman states that he "love[s] *Nebraska* for its unconventionality, its dark humor, its obsessiveness, and its refusal to succumb to any rock'n'roll conventions despite being recorded by a very conventional rocker" and goes on to praise Springsteen for writing and singing "about being alone, about being desperate, about being brave enough to admit that there's no easy cure for desperation." (Guterman 134) Mikal Gilmore described it as "unlike any other work in pop-music history: a politically piercing statement that was utterly free of a single instance of didactic sloganeering or ideological proclamation….a record about people walking the rim of desolation who sometimes transform their despair into the irrevocable action of murder." (Gilmore 296-7) And Jim Cullen saw Springsteen's cast of *Nebraska* characters plunging into "a spiritual abyss," one that went far beyond the hardest economic times since the Great Depression. He found "the problem—and nature—of evil" to be the core of the album. (Cullen 182-3) Evil does seem ubiquitous and eternal; everywhere and always "sins lie unatoned," as Springsteen sang in "My Father's House." Even the smallest hopes—as in "Atlantic City" or "Highway Patrolman"—are so pitifully compromised as to be no better than illusions. To put a final

point on it and in keeping with his sense of America, himself and the world in 1981, Springsteen concluded *Nebraska* with "Reason to Believe."

The song has been much discussed. To Cullen it is "a litany of dead dogs, abandoned lovers, baptisms, and funerals, each punctuated by the assertion that 'at the end of every hard earned day/People find some reason to believe.' Far from the hard-won affirmation many observers took it to be, 'Reason to Believe' is the work of a man more troubled than inspired by the irrational faith of the sufferers he observes." (Cullen 184) Guterman describes the song as "a list of why everything is broken" and points out "All this belief? It strikes him as funny. If Springsteen had tried to convey that sentiment with the grand accompaniment of the E Street Band, I wonder whether fans would have bounced The Artist Formerly Known as Rock'n'Roll Future back to rock'n'roll past rather quickly. Springsteen never discussed this, but perhaps presenting this unexpected and unwanted thought—that there's no reason to believe—in an 'experimental' context gave him cover." (Guterman 138) Dave Marsh, who had reason to know, weighs in at length about what *Nebraska* in general and "Reason to Believe" in particular suggested about Springsteen to his rapidly growing audience: "You could say that *Nebraska*'s story begins with 'The River,' when Springsteen finally imagines a character asking, 'Is a dream a lie if it don't come true/Or is it something worse?' In Springsteen's universe, that is a very dangerous question because it dredges up an irreconcilable contradiction. And *Nebraska*'s characters have found the answer; it's about the only question to which they could respond in the affirmative. For these lost souls it's all over but the shrouding. In a vicious climate men go mad, turn crazy, and nothing is left to check their casual cruelty. Faith, hope, the possibility of redemption—all the concepts lurking behind Bruce's

'dream'—are nothing less than absurd. In 'Atlantic City,' the singer toys with the idea of reincarnation as a signal that he's ready to test its truth. In 'Reason to Believe' the idea of a life after death is seen as no more ridiculous than the idea that people will behave decently in this one." (Marsh 370) Marsh turns to biography to describe Springsteen and his work in 1982: "And that's the final context in which *Nebraska* must be understood: as a deeply personal exploration of the private demons tormenting Bruce Springsteen. *Nebraska* is a study in crisis, and while a portion of that crisis was professional and a portion was political, another part was personal." (371)

"Personal" is admittedly a very slippery word, both in terms of speculating about artists' lives and their works *and* in terms of our own subjective responses and needs. Personal concerns are at the heart of how we respond not only to Springsteen and Dylan but also to whatever matters to us. Larry David Smith concludes his study of Springsteen and Dylan with an extended psycho-biographical comparison which focuses, in equal parts, upon Dylan's privileged, middle-class upbringing in contrast with Springsteen's lower-class background and upon certain personality traits he sees in each of his subjects. Smith plays armchair psychologist and moves from differences in class and personality to different views of rebellion and freedom: "For Bob Dylan, the rebellion embodied the freedom in that by rejecting everything, one may have anything. For Bruce Springsteen, the perceived lack of freedom suppressed the rebellion in that the individual initiative necessary for insurrection proved to be his greatest challenge. Dylan's rebellion took him down a path of self-indulgence that yielded art of historic proportions. When his innovations crowded him, he rebelled yet again, leaving himself free 'to start over' and 'try any old thing.' His rebellion guaranteed his freedom. But rebellion did not come

easily for Dylan's musical little brother. Springsteen's freedom was constricted not by socioeconomic status or environment, but by a fundamental lack of trust. Rebels, you see, must trust themselves. In the absence of self-trust, there is no freedom. Through music, Springsteen transformed his self-concept and discovered personal faith. As he shared his emotional autobiography in song, he worked through his problems, channeling his feelings in a productive fashion. With his art being his only refuge, he developed his musical church and worshiped passionately for hours upon hours at a time. His source of freedom slowly became his prison….Springsteen's search for security and Dylan's confident rebellion come from opposite sides of the metaphorical railroad tracks, and it shows in their art." (Smith 239)

Even though something about Smith's language bothers me (perhaps it sounds too assured and pat), he is on to something—at least for me. And so is Mike Marqusee when he points out that "[f]rom the beginning Springsteen demonstrated a most un-Dylanlike warmth and capacity for empathy." (Marqusee 273) What those somethings contribute to, if you will, is my long-running desert island question regarding Dylan and Springsteen: if I could only pick one, who would it be?

Although Springsteen is the warmer, more passionate human being who leads with his heart, what this results in on *Nebraska* is an artist who is so alone from start to finish and empathizes so much at such a troubled time that he almost disappears, taking some of us with him. And although Dylan has always kept his distance, on *John Wesley Harding* he appears with his lady by his side from start to finish, coolly spinning yarns and offering parables and sharing visions that somehow leave us shaking our heads and smiling in spite of ourselves. So, yes, I love both Springsteen and Dylan. But if I'm ever

headed toward that desert island and have to pick between *Nebraska* and *John Wesley Harding*, I have to confess in 2005, as Springsteen did in 1968, I am into *John Wesley Harding.*

WORKS CITED

Cross, Charles R. and the editors of *Backstreets* Magazine. Backstreets: Springsteen The Man and His Music. New York: Harmony Books, 1989.

Cullen, Jim. Born in the U.S.A.: Bruce Springsteen and the American Tradition. New York: Harper Collins, 1997.

Dylan, Bob. Lyrics 1962-2001. New York: Simon and Schuster, 2004.

Dylan, Bob. John Wesley Harding. Columbia, 1967.

Garman, Bryan K. A Race of Singers: Whitman's Working Class Hero from Guthrie to Springsteen. Chapel Hill, North Carolina: University of North Carolina Press, 2000.

Gilmore, Mikal. "Bruce Springsteen: What Does It Mean, Bruce Springsteen Asked, To Be an American?" Ed. Editors of *Rolling Stone*. Bruce Springsteen: The *Rolling Stone* Files. New York: Rolling Stone Press, 1996.

Goodman, Fred. The Mansion on the Hill: Dylan, Young, Geffen, Springsteen and the Head-on Collision of Rock and Commerce. New York: Random House, 1997.

Graff, Gary. The Ties That Bind: Bruce Springsteen from A to E to Z. Canton, Minnesota: Visible Ink, 2005.

Gray, Michael. Song and Dance Man, III: The Art of Bob Dylan. London: Cassell, 1999.

Hampton, Howard. "Nebraska." The Rose and the Briar: Death, Love and Liberty in the American Ballad. Ed. Sean Wilentz and Greil Marcus. New York: Norton, 2005.

Heylin, Clinton. Bob Dylan: The Recording Sessions, 1960-1994. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997.

Heylin, Clinton. Bob Dylan: Behind the Shades Revisited. New York: Harper Collins, 2003.

Jones, Allan. "Thunder Road." Uncut April 2003: 60.

Landau, Jon. "John Wesley Harding." 1968. Bob Dylan, The Early Years: A Retrospective. Ed. Craig McGregor. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Da Capo Press, 1990. 248-264.

Marcus, Greil. The Old, Weird America: The World of Bob Dylan's Basement Tapes. New York: Picador, 2001.

Marqusee, Mike. Chimes of Freedom: The Politics of Bob Dylan's Art. New York: New Press, 2003.

Marsh, Dave. Bruce Springsteen: Two Hearts. New York: Routledge, 2004.

Pope, Alexander. Poetry and Prose of Alexander Pope. Ed. Aubrey Williams. Boston: Houghton, 1969.

Shelton, Robert. No Direction Home: The Life and Music of Bob Dylan. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Da Capo Press, 2003.

Smith, Larry David. Bob Dylan, Bruce Springsteen, and American Song. Westport, Connecticut: Praeger, 2002.

Springsteen, Bruce. Nebraska. Columbia, 1982.

Springsteen, Bruce. Songs. New York: Harper, 2003.

Strouse, Jean. "Bob Dylan's Gentle Anarchy." 1968. The Bob Dylan Companion: Four Decades of Commentary. Ed. Carl Benson. New York: Scribner Books, 1998.

Trager, Oliver. Keys to the Rain: The Definitive Bob Dylan Encyclopedia. New York: Billboard Books, 2004.

Williams, Paul. Bob Dylan: Performing Artist, 1960-1973. London: Omnibus Press, 1994.

Williams, Paul. Bob Dylan: Watching the River Flow. London: Omnibus Press, 1996.

Williamson, Nigel. The Rough Guide to Bob Dylan. London: Rough Guides, 2004.