



impetus to mass atrocity lies in a hubristic and ultimately totalitarian faith in human omnipotence. Jerome Kohn also focuses on Arendt, taking Bernstein's (1996) *Hannah Arendt and the Jewish Question* as his starting point, but with the goal of explicating the faculty of 'judgement' and, in particular, how this human faculty can be said to contribute to the generation of a 'common world.'

As with nearly all *Festschriften*, the essays and pieces that make up *Pragmatism, Critique, Judgment* are very diverse, offering analyses of disparate subjects from a variety of perspectives. There is a failing often observed in books of this sort: that the multiplicity of their contributions leads to a shallow, superficial effect. Yet this is not the case here. Rather, the diversity of this volume's contributions happily mirror the diversity of the man they were collected to honour, a man, as Benhabib and Fraser rightly note, defined by his patient refusal to limit himself to one line of thought or to a single concern. Thus, *Pragmatism, Critique, Judgment* is certainly marked by eclecticism, but certainly this eclecticism is of the very best sort.

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Dylan and Cohen: Poets of Rock and Roll

David Boucher

Continuum, New York & London, 2004, 261pp.

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The Political Art of Bob Dylan

David Boucher and Gary Browning (eds.)

Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke, 2004, 177pp.

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There's no question about it: Bob Dylan is a fascinating artist. I use the word *artist* here fully in the knowledge of its ambiguity: an artist is one who makes art, but we also use the word *artist* these days when we really mean *artiste* — a performer, or entertainer. That Dylan is a performer is unquestionable — the man performs almost ceaselessly, to the extent that we must wonder whether or not he has any time for life beyond performance. He spends so much time on the road, endlessly touring, that one might conclude he has the proverbial hellhound on his trail. We might, less dramatically, see this incessant desire for life



on the road as a pathological need for contact with an audience. Yet Dylan is an intensely private man, and even his greatest admirers would have to admit that his performances can be cold, dispassionate, almost technical exercises in (re)working his material. The sense that Dylan is an intensely private man has not been dispelled by the recent publication of *Chronicles*, the first volume of his autobiography, which manages to be both a fascinating account of scattered periods of Dylan's life, and at the same time a maddeningly superficial account of those periods, with little real revelation (hence, presumably, *Chronicles* and not *Revelations!*). Indeed, a close friend of mine, and a long time Dylan aficionado, believes that *Chronicles* is actually more fiction than autobiography, just another in the long line of masks Dylan appears to have woven for himself.

These curious ambiguities about the man as performer extend also to Dylan the artist. Dylan is not, after all, merely a performer — he is also a poet and a songwriter, though the themes and trajectory of his poetry and songs have travelled many roads, from the finger pointing, political ballads so influential in terms of the civil rights movement, to the intensely personal dissection of his failed marriage in *Blood on the Tracks*. In Dylan, the personal and the political have often sat side-by-side, and have sometimes even melded. Dylan has been called many times a spokesperson for his generation, and it is widely recognized that he publicly rejects this appellation. However, his rejecting this does not change the fact, as David Boucher acknowledges in his exploration of Dylan's work, that Dylan's voice has 'resonated in the mute souls of the disenfranchised, disconcerted, and disillusioned youth of the world.' (Boucher, 2004, 235)

However, as the title of the work indicates, Dylan is only half of Boucher's concerns in this exploration of two 'Poets of Rock and Roll.' The other is Leonard Cohen, also sometimes described as a spokesperson for his generation. Cohen may seem to wear the mantle of poet more readily than Dylan, since his trajectory takes him from published poet to rock and roller (or perhaps more correctly 'balladeer'), whereas Dylan's trajectory takes him, more traditionally perhaps, from folk music into rock, acquiring the mantle of 'poet' *en route*, so to speak. Yet the two artists clearly share much in common — both have been politically engaged (though in very different ways,) both have explored their private lives through their music, both have undergone periods of withdrawal from public life (though for different reasons) and both have, in different ways, found and explored forms of religion (*several* forms in Dylan's case, as one might expect).

It is, of course, the political edge associated with these artists' work that qualifies them for review in this particular journal, and Boucher devotes a chapter exclusively to a consideration of the political nature of their *oeuvre*. But of course, politics is not just what politicians do, and as we have learned from



feminism, the personal is, or at least can be, political. Politics, like art, is a contested domain, and it is not putting too fine a point on it to acknowledge that artists like Dylan and Cohen have helped to politicize issues, in part through challenging the consensus around what is deemed 'political', while also (Dylan's reservations aside) helping to politicize generations of music fans, either through directly political songs, or through reflecting wider counter-cultural moods, or even evoking such moods through a series of suggestive images.

Of the two artists dealt with by Boucher, I have to say that it is Dylan who remains, for this reviewer at least, the more fascinating of the pair. It is Dylan, rather than Cohen, who has sought to constantly re-evaluate, and to reinvent, his public persona so that, in some ways, Dylan's entire career can be seen as an exploration of what it is to be a 'public' person. Dylan's career spans the emergence of the rise and colonization of the public sphere by 'celebrity' and the media's (and, of course, academia's) fascination with this evasive concept. Dylan's constant reinvention of his public persona, his adoption of masks, his constant inconstancies, puts one in mind of Foucault, the 'Masked Philosopher', and his protean project of self-invention as a means of exploring the liminal regions of the discursively constructed 'self'. Foucault saw his project not merely as an aesthetic posture, but as a political act, and it surprised me that Boucher did not spend more time exploring Dylan in relation to Foucault (and possibly even Nietzsche, who is not mentioned at all in the course of the book).

Nevertheless, we get Dylan and Cohen read through various hermeneutic positions, and we also get a fascinating argument — the core of the book, I would suggest — drawing on the aesthetic theories of RG Collingwood, Michael Oakshott, and Federico García Lorca, as to how we should read the poetry of these artists, and how properly one should think about the questions one may pose to these artists' lyrics. If there is a complaint about the book, it is that the structure is episodic — each chapter deals with a different aspect of these artists' work, their social context, their politics, their poetics, their religious positions — and this sometimes makes for repetition of the facts of their lives and work. Nevertheless, this is a minor issue in what is a fascinating attempt, clearly written by an admirer of their work, to situate and explore the work of two of the most enigmatic and, in their different ways, politically engaged artists to emerge during that troubling and complex decade, the 1960s.

Boucher's fascination with Dylan extends also to his joint editing, with Gary Browning (founding member and General Editor of this very journal), of the collection of essays *The Political Art of Bob Dylan*, to which Boucher contributes the final chapter (essentially, an extension of the argument as to how Collingwood, Oakshott and Lorca's theories of aesthetics can illuminate Dylan's work). This collection began life as a panel discussion of



Dylan's politics at the Political Studies Association Annual Conference at the LSE in 2000, organized by one of the contributors to this volume, Lawrence Wilde. It brings together six authors from diverse intellectual backgrounds (literary criticism, popular culture and political philosophy) and seeks to demonstrate, as the editors put it, 'the immense possibilities of locating Dylan provocatively in different, but related discourses' (Boucher and Browning, 2004, 1).

The collection is fascinating on a number of different levels, not least of which is finding authors whose work one admires turning their attention towards a popular cultural icon such as Dylan. In this, they are more or less successful. Andrew Gamble's chapter, for example, though elegantly written and informed, not only by a knowledge of Dylan's work, but also by an admiration for his achievement as an artist, consists largely of an attempt to organize Dylan's extensive *oeuvre* under a series of themed headings ('Alienation and the American dream', 'The outlaw', etc). In part, the purpose of this seems to be to point up the continuities in Dylan's work so that again, by way of example, we find Gamble drawing our attention to the apocalyptic imagery that links the 1964 classic 'The Times They Are A-Changin'' to the 1999 Oscar-winning track 'Things Have Changed'.

What Gamble doesn't pick up on in linking these two tracks in this way is the shift in the perspective of the narrator that takes place between 1964 and 1999 — the earlier track places Dylan at the centre of the hurricane, while the latter seems more a reflection on the world after the hurricane has ripped through it. Dylan has aged since 1964, and the concerns of the young Dylan are not necessarily the concerns of the older Dylan. The later song could easily be read as an acknowledgement that the certainties espoused by the confident, finger-pointing young Dylan ('Your old road is rapidly ageing. Please get out of the new one If you can't lend your hand') are no longer as easy to hold on to as they once seemed to be (The 1999 song opens with the lines: 'A worried man with a worried mind, no-one in front of me and nothing behind.'). Of course, it's true that Dylan periodically performs both songs live even today, and sometimes in the same set, so maybe Gamble is right. However, I'm not sure what follows if he is. And a Foucauldian reading of Dylan would emphasize the discontinuities rather than the continuities.

And therein lies my ambivalence concerning the collection as a whole. Part of me thinks that this is a fascinating and intriguing set of readings of an iconic popular musician's work — and in these pages we find Kant (Richard Brown's chapter,) Lyotard (Gary Browning,) Adorno (one of the more intriguing interpretations, with Larry Wilde reading Adorno against the grain) and the aforementioned triumvirate, Collingwood, Oakeshott and Lorca, all brought to bear on Dylan's *oeuvre* — and part of me wonders who it is I'm learning more about as I read these essays. Is it Dylan himself, or the various



philosophers and intellectuals who are trained on his work like searchlights, illuminating this aspect and that nuance, or the authors of the essays themselves, given an opportunity to write intelligently, and from their various theoretical perspectives, about someone whose work they all clearly admire? All three possibilities are surely valid, both independently and in combination, and one hopes that this increases, rather than diminishes, the potential audience for this collection.

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Glimmer of a New Leviathan: Total War in the Realism of Neibuhr, Morgenthau, and Waltz

Campbell Craig

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It has become commonplace in recent years to speak of ‘American Realism’ as a distinctive theory of international politics — the hard-headed power politics of a superpower that grasps the enduring nature of international anarchy, and the need for great power politics of coercion and hegemony in global order. Not infrequently, this vision of Realism is contrasted to more sanguine or optimistic views that stress the need for increased cooperation and point to the evolution of transnational structures of authority such as the EU — a contrast popularly and pithily captured by Robert Kagan as a divide between the world of ‘power’ inhabited by the United States and the ‘paradise’ occupied by western Europe under its aegis. In these forms, ‘American Realism’ has become both an influential school of thought and a powerful political and rhetorical position.

Campbell Craig’s intellectual history of influential strands of Realist thinking in the United States in the post-WW II era compellingly demonstrates not only that the past of American Realism is vastly more complicated than its contemporary proponents acknowledge, but that it yields lessons for the future very different from those commonly invoked under the Realist flag. Focusing on three influential figures in the development of International Relations theory — Reinhold Neibuhr, Hans Morgenthau, and Kenneth Waltz — Craig shows how the views of each was fundamentally transformed by their engagement with a question largely (and peculiarly) absent in the thinking of