"Seeing the Real You at Last"[1]: Semifiction and the Epistemology of Celebrity in *Rolling Thunder Revue: A Bob Dylan Story by Martin Scorsese*

Nathaniel T.C. Sutherland
Charlottesville, VA

Bachelor of Arts in English Literature, Penn State University, 2017

A Thesis presented to the Graduate Faculty
of the University of Virginia in Candidacy for the Degree of
Master of Arts

Department of English

University of Virginia
May 2021

Why do audiences trust some celebrities while regarding others as manufactured, undeserving of more than the slightest suspension of disbelief? Given that the broad public perception of celebrity in the early twenty-first century has, in the words of theorist Sharon Marcus, "become synonymous with an empty renown that has no basis in merit or achievement," wherein "fans lack judgment, all celebrities are pseudo-celebrities, and the press can only participate in hoaxes or debunk them," the claim that audiences ever trust any celebrity may seem laughably naïve.[2] However seriously audiences may take celebrities, aren't those audiences generally more inclined to approach celebrity with cynicism rather than faith? Taking Bob Dylan, once among the most famous people on the planet and a major influence on the American counterculture of the 1960s and '70s, as a case study, this thesis investigates the epistemology of celebrity, its effects on audiences and its relevance to contemporary American society. Seeking to differentiate fact from fiction, we will interrogate Dylan's mercurial relationship with his various audiences, their continued trust in a figure known for tongue-in-cheek dishonesty, and the cinematic trickery Martin Scorsese employs to bind his film's audiences to Dylan's deceptions.

How do publics reconcile a celebrity's commercial success with their supposed authenticity? Why do we as audiences revere some stars while mocking others? What empowers certain celebrities to become cultural icons while others languish in relative obscurity, their 'fifteen minutes' gone in a flash? Why do audiences care so deeply about some celebrities that those celebrities become essential to those audiences' very beings? Such questions are at the heart of Martin Scorsese's 2019 film *Rolling Thunder Revue: A Bob Dylan Story by Martin Scorsese*, an alleged documentary about Bob Dylan's legendary bicentennial tour through the antique theaters and nigh-forgotten civic centers of New England and the old South. In our attempt to address these thorny questions, we will begin by examining authenticity as such and its relationship to America's

popular music industry. From here, we will explore the ways in which Bob Dylan has straddled the paradox between authenticity and commercialism, taking special note of the moves Dylan makes to manufacture an authentic image. Next, we will take a deep dive into the filmic seas of Martin Scorsese's latest documentary about Dylan's career, untangling fact from fiction as we uncover the many masked faces and semifictions which together constitute Scorsese's movie. Finally, we will consider the implications and potentially deleterious effects of contemporary celebrity culture on democratic politics.

Certainly, not all celebrities demand our attention to the same degree, begging the question: Just what quality separates those celebrities, like Bob Dylan, whom audiences understand as sincere – and so, trust – from those celebrities the public sees as mere distractions? Indeed, despite garnering over twenty million unique views on YouTube since its September 2020 release, Paris Hilton's official documentary *This Is Paris* failed to change public opinion about the heiress as vapid; likewise, when *Paper* magazine decided in November 2014 to publish nude photos of Kim Kardashian, they managed to 'break the internet' without generating any particular trust for Kardashian among her audiences.[3, 4] And yet, our world is also one where Bob Dylan convincingly constructed himself for his early audiences as a rootless drifter jumping from boxcar to boxcar across the American south even as his songwriting elevated him to fame's peak.[5] Regardless of the predominant contemporary understanding of celebrity as insignificant, in certain cases audiences bestow particular celebrities with the sort of trust usually reserved for one's closest confidants. What is it about certain celebrities that allows them to harness the trust of their audiences while other celebrities remain at a distance? That is, what differentiates a celebrity like Bob Dylan from one like Paris Hilton or Kim Kardashian?

When phrased like this, the most obvious answer to this question is, quite simply, gender. This is not at all to suggest that only male celebrities have merit, nor that masculinity necessarily implies trustworthiness; much rather, at issue here is how audiences perceive a celebrity, and a celebrity's gender goes far in shaping audiences' perceptions. Sharon Marcus, always astute about gender, argues that "those who dismiss celebrity culture may be more motivated by unconscious gender bias than by reasoned assessment." Marcus notes that when members of the public are asked "to name celebrities who deserve their fame […] the results will yield many more examples of men admired mostly by men than women admired mostly by women," and that, when surveyed in 2010, far more respondents pointed to female celebrities like Kim Kardashian than to their male counterparts when asked for examples of "the silliness of celebrity culture."[6] The media, controlled as it is predominantly by men, only reinforces this narrative through its reporting, as "[t]he more feminized the fan base, the less seriously the press takes the star: millions of women must be wrong."[7] As a scholar of the nineteenth century, Marcus turns to history to further her argument: "during the many decades when the term *celebrity* comprised a host of august men, it had mostly positive connotations and was strongly associated with merit."[8] As more women become celebrities, celebrity itself was quickly disentangled from merit, and accordingly the connection between celebrities and the trust of their audiences began to wane.

However compelling an explanation gender may provide, alone it an insufficient answer to the question at hand. After all, while gender perceptions certainly precondition audiences to laud certain celebrities and deride others, examples of disrespected male celebrities abound: just think of Carrot Top.[9] What other factors, then, contribute to certain celebrities gaining the trust of their audiences while others remain fit for little more than tabloids and gossip columns? Just as gender biases influence the amount of trust audiences place in celebrities, so too does an audience's

perception of a celebrity's *authenticity* affect that celebrity's ability to garner the trust of that audience. Whereas for stars like Paris Hilton and Kim Kardashian, style is substance, Bob Dylan's substance is itself his style – or, at least, the appearance of substance is.

For literary theorist Lionel Trilling, authenticity must be viewed in relation to sincerity.[10] Trilling reads sincerity as a lack of pretense, suggesting that as the medieval world gave way to modernity authenticity, which Trilling defined in terms of individuality, overtook sincerity as a publicly valued trait. As anthropologist Richard Handler puts it, Trilling understands authenticity as "[having] to do with our true self, our individual existence, not as we might present it to others, but as it 'really is,' apart from any roles we play."[11] Emerging at the point when one's individual identity became more pertinent socially than one's place in a "divine hierarchy," the concept of authenticity arose as a way to pose questions about possible incongruities between an individual's inner life and their outer appearance.[12] Authenticity, in contrast to sincerity, is of such value today, according to Trilling, because it emphasizes "individual selfhood" rather than "social relationships."[13] As such, "authentic culture is one original to its possessors, one which exists only with them."[14] Following this, Trilling notes that modern art need only appear authentic to interest its publics: "As for the audience, its expectation is that through its communication with the work of art, which may be resistant, unpleasant, even hostile, it acquires the authenticity of which the object is the model and the artist the personal example."[15]

Other theorists have complemented Trilling's analysis of authenticity as such with considerations of authenticity in the music industry specifically. In the analysis of Frankfurt School critical theorists Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno, a culture industry of corporations, performers, and marketing teams creates not audiences but consumers who worship at the altar of pseudoindividuality, always clamoring for more of the same, resulting not in art but the endless

repetition without meaningful difference of artifice.[16] Walter Benjamin hoped that mass production would result in a homogenized culture wherein the authenticity of art and music would be threatened with mechanization and a loss of aura.[17] Modernization and the profit motive have given rise to the mass consumption not of art but of artifice produced according to predetermined, uniform, ideological formulae.[18] While Sharon Marcus may argue that modernization and mass reproduction actually provides celebrity with a version of the same aura Benjamin hoped was being lost, particularly in the age of social media, she agrees in principle that authenticity is at risk of being obscured by "the halo of the multiple," her term for this iteration of Benjamin's aura.[19] Joshua Gamson, too, views popular music, like all vectors of contemporary celebrity, as unavoidably manufactured by marketing teams and entertainment industry insiders, regardless of the musician's merit; Gamson goes further still by insisting that all but the rarest of statistical outliers among a celebrity's audiences understands how the publishing industry works.[20] How, then, do some musicians manage to establish authentic images in the minds of their audiences?

In the context of the mid-twentieth century American music industry, audiences judge a celebrity's authenticity along three primary vectors. Firstly, the genre of music that an artist performs matters. Audiences tend to distinguish between more saccharine pop music manufactured by corporate interests and marketing teams and music that "grew from the grassroots" or sprang from "an untainted cultural tradition," with only the latter being viewed as authentic.[21] If the artist operates in a genre steeped in countercultural mores, like rock or punk, audiences additionally require that artist to adopt "a subaltern position in relation to the culture industry" by composing and performing their own original material before they will deem that artist authentic.[22] Secondly, audiences care about an artist's image: slick performers whom audiences understand as market-tested and constructed to please appear less authentic than artists who project an aloof image

seemingly unconcerned with audience approval.[23] Finally, audiences will only deem an artist authentic if they perceive that artist as unconcerned with profit; although an artist may achieve great success, audiences will still perceive them as genuine as long as they appear to make music for themselves first and audiences second.[24] Bridging the gaps between these three vectors of authenticity in the music industry is what sociologist Andrea Cossu calls the "centrality of performance."[25] That is, "the moments when artists appear on stage are crucial moments, when they project to the public some concrete sense that they are exactly who they claim to be and have the competence to sing, play, and move as rock artists."[26] Artists whom audiences view as authentic perform themselves even as they perform on stage, "revealing [their] artifice as art" through the repeated, continual process of creation.[27] Certainly, we can say as much of Bob Dylan.

As a member of the mid-twentieth century folk revival, Bob Dylan – born Robert Zimmerman on May 24, 1941, in Duluth, Minnesota and raised in a nearby mining town on the Mesabi Iron Range called Hibbing – was primed from the start to appear authentic before his audiences. Greil Marcus, distinguished critic and historian of rock music, writes of American folk music, "[i]t was the sound of another country – a country that, once glimpsed from afar, could be felt within oneself. That was the folk revival."[28] In other words, the folk revival was more a feeling of authenticity, of inner truths, than it was a particular social scene, though it was, of course, also that. Marcus explains that as a subculture the folk revival, "an arena of native tradition and national metaphor, of self-discovery and self-invention," not only allowed but encouraged its performers and their audiences to cultivate authentic images: "It was a place of the spirit, where authenticity in song and manner, in being, was the highest value – the value against which all forms of discourse, all attributes inherited or assumed, were measured."[29] Dylan himself, never one to speak

of scenes or subcultures, instead concerns himself with folk music as such, but his sentiments echo Marcus's:

> Folk music was a reality of a more brilliant dimension. It exceeded all human understanding, and if it called out to you, you could disappear and be sucked into it. I felt right at home in this mythical realm made up not with individuals so much as archetypes, vividly drawn archetypes of humanity, metaphysical in shape, each rugged soul filled with natural knowing and inner wisdom. Each demanding a degree of respect. I could believe in the full spectrum of it and sing about it. It was so real, so more true to life than life itself. It was life magnified.[30] [*Sic*]

As Dylan's analysis evinces, folk music loses none of its authenticity despite abandoning certain measurable facts about the material world in favor of metaphor, spirit, transcendental truths greater than any of reality's occluded minutia.

Within the tradition of the folk revival, Greil Marcus testifies, "[o]ne could make oneself up, as Bob Dylan did […] but only if, whatever one's sources, the purest clay was always evident, real American red earth."[31] Dylan's success in the folk scene, then, affirmed his ability to appear authentic to his audiences, particularly as he had not yet began composing and performing his own material. In Marcus's reading, Bob Dylan "symbolized" for a generation of audiences "an entire complex of values, a whole way of being in the world" that prioritized "the county over the city, labor over capital, sincerity over education, the unspoiled nobility of the common man and woman over the businessman and the politician, or the natural expressiveness of the folk over the self-interest of the artist."[32] Furthermore, Dylan's music always stresses two core values "that could not be made into slogans or summed up by programmatic exposition or romantic appreciation" above all else: "peace and home […] located […] in the purity, the essential goodness, of each

listener's heart."[33] Dylan began his career by leveraging the empathy and authenticity inherent in the folk genre; his devotion to the American songbook's most obscure and forgotten corners, not to mention his willingness to engage with topical political issues, particularly civil rights, both tropes common to the folk revival but rare in the day's popular music scene, only solidified his image.

After first rejecting the notion that he was intentionally "anti-popular culture" and insisting further that he "had no ambitions to stir things up" even with his most topical protest songs, Dylan informs readers of his autobiography, *Chronicles: Volume One*, that he "just thought of mainstream culture as lame as hell and a big trick."[34] In his earliest days Dylan "had no songs in [his] repertoire for commercial radio anyway."[35] The themes prevalent in the material Dylan performed at the start of his career – "debauched bootleggers, mothers that drowned their own children, Cadillacs that only got five miles to the gallon, floods, union hall fires, darkness and cadavers at the bottom of rivers" – were common enough in the folk tradition, canonical even, yet such themes were incongruous with the saccharine material constantly churned out by the corporate songwriting machinery at Tin Pan Alley; as Dylan himself put it, such songs as he was singing "weren't for radiophiles."[36] In Dylan's mind, popular music should adhere to certain commercial tropes, something his own songs, for all their power, refused to do, as he makes clear in the his autobiography:

> There was nothing easygoing about the folk songs I sang. They weren't friendly or ripe with mellowness. They didn't come gently to the shore. I guess you could say they weren't commercial. Not only that, my style was too erratic and hard to pigeonhole for the radio, and songs, to me, were more important than just light

> entertainment. They were my preceptor and guide into some altered consciousness of reality, some different republic, some liberated republic.[37]

Put another way, the songs Dylan sang felt like someone had lived them, and their verisimilitude, in turn, reflected positively onto him. Greil Marcus, commenting on the uneasy relationship between the folk revival and art, writes that although "art was the speech of the folk revival," the movement "did not believe in art at all" but instead equated "a certain kind of life" with art such that "ultimately […] life replaced" art.[38] In the paradigm of the folk revival, "[i]t is not the singer who sings the song but the song that sings the singer, and therefore in performance it is the singer, not the song, that is the aesthetic artifact, the work of art."[39] In this milieu, musicians were performing themselves as much as, if not more than, the songs they sang. It was thus not only the songs Dylan chose to sing but the very fact of his choosing to sing them that granted him authenticity in the eyes of the audiences encountering his work. As usual, Bob Dylan puts it best: "You have to believe. Folk music, if nothing else, makes a believer out of you."[40]

As for writing and performing his own music, Dylan pioneered the practice among commercially successful musicians in the twentieth century. Upon signing with Columbia Records in 1961, Dylan was forced to publish his songs through slick corporate publishing houses like Leeds Music and, later, Witmark Music, "an old line-style publishing company – the epitome of Tin Pan Alley, which published the standards 'When Irish Eyes Are Smiling,' 'The Very Thought of You,' 'Jeepers Creepers,' countless other hit songs."[41] At Tin Pan Alley, armies of songwriters were employed by radio stations and record companies to manufacture the next hit; once written, the songwriters worked frantically to sell their songs to as many different performers as possible so as to milk each hit for the maximum profit margin. Authentic as it was in the eyes of its audiences, folk music, owned by everyone and no one at once, would also fit into this paradigm –

at least until Dylan and his contemporaries, particularly the Beatles, shattered the system by performing their own songs.

Interviewed in 1985 by Cameron Crowe, Dylan drives this point home: "Tin Pan Alley is gone. I put an end to it. People can record their own songs now."[42] Not only did Dylan personally reject the prevailing conditions concerning the creation of his art; Dylan's rejection drove revolutionary change within the music industry in large part because even the heads of corporate publishing houses could not deny the aura created when Bob Dylan sang a song like "Blowin' in the Wind" himself.[43] Such a personal song could be adequately covered by any number of musicians, yet without Dylan's raw urgency, the song loses much of its power; that even those record executives committed to the corporate songwriting structure, like Artie Mogull, could see the song's vitality when performed by its author speaks to the radical power of Dylan's work and to the influence he had upon the industry.[44] Tin Pan Alley, part of the culture industry Horkheimer and Adorno identify and defined by the "pseudoindividuality" inherent in the "murky harmony between universal and particular," fell beneath the weight of Dylan's authentic image.[45] That is, though Dylan's songs were universal enough that anyone could successfully record them, the particularity of his voice enlivened his work with a real individuality of the sort Horkheimer and Adorno found missing in the commercial schlock coming out of Tin Pan Alley.

Bob Dylan also epitomizes the paradox central to the understanding of authenticity in the music industry. Even as his art was "produced, promoted, and sold by extremely successful and sophisticated multinational corporations," he maintained the illusion that it remains noncommercial.[46] A glimpse at three salient events in Dylan's career – his willingness to alienate his folk-centric fanbase by flirting with pop music and electric instrumentation at the Newport Folk Festival in 1965; his retreat in 1967, at the height of both his fame and the counterculture of

which he was a part, into the relative obscurity of rural New York; and his decision in 1975 to eschew a more profitable stadium tour in favor of a travelling, carnivalesque musical minstrel show performing in small theaters and auditoriums across New England – evince both Dylan's masterful ability to craft and perform his image so as to appear unconcerned with his audiences' expectations and his continuing apathy toward commercial concerns.

In 1965, Dylan would again demonstrate his penchant for performing authenticity, unburdened by his audiences' expectations and intent only on creating his art his way, when he seemingly abandoned his folkie roots and began playing the rock and roll of his youth with a fully amplified, electric band. That year had seen the release of two new Dylan albums, the half-acoustic, half-electric *Bringin' It All Back Home* and the fully electric *Highway 61 Revisited*, neither of which pleased the folk purists who had rocketed Dylan to stardom. To that audience, the mere thought that anyone, much less a folk hero like Bob Dylan, could plug a guitar into an amplifier and play rock music on the sacred stage of the Newport Folk Festival, that beating heart of the folk revival, was blasphemy. Although he later clarified that he was bothered by the poor sound quality and not the music itself, Pete Seeger, who only two years earlier had performed a duet alongside Dylan on the very same stage, allegedly threatened to cut the power to Dylan's equipment with an axe.[47] The story has endured in rock and roll legend because, regardless of Seeger's true intentions, the sentiment that the sound should be cut was shared by so many in the crowd, particularly those most devoted folkies who had fought for seats nearest the stage, who were unable to see past the shock of the new to the artist beneath.

Dylan's willingness to alienate his fans by following his own inner muse continued into 1967, the so-called Summer of Love wherein all the countercultural forces his own music had helped spur would coalesce for one brief, shining moment, when rather than claim his throne atop

the cultural hierarchy, Dylan instead chose to retreat from the limelight. On July 29, 1966, Dylan crashed his motorcycle, and the crash became an excuse for a hiatus from touring between 1966 and 1974 as he secluded himself for the next fifteen months with members of The Band in a house they dubbed Big Pink in Woodstock, New York.[48] Dylan confounded his audiences' expectations still further when his seclusion finally ended with a trip to Nashville in October of 1967, where he would record the "sparse, poetic" *John Wesley Harding*.[49] This album, a far cry from the garage rock furor of *Highway 61 Revisited* or 'that thin, wild mercury sound' of *Blonde on Blonde*, was recorded with such Nashville luminaries as Bob Johnston, Charlie McCoy, and Kenny Buttrey and verged on country music, albeit a variety of country music which shared more commonalities with old, out-of-fashion acts like Hank Williams and the Carter Family than with, say, then-popular Marty Rollins, leaving many fans perplexed.[50, 51] Nevertheless, Dylan maintained his artistic integrity, choosing to please himself rather than his fans, and in so doing solidified his authentic image.

As the summer of 1975 faded into autumn and Bob Dylan gathered a ragtag troupe of musicians, playwrights, poets, and performers for what would become the first leg of the Rolling Thunder Revue, he was only a year removed from his first widespread public appearances since ending his eight-year seclusion with a massive concert tour. Unlike that tour, where he had played alongside the Band to packed stadiums, the Rolling Thunder Revue was designed from the start as something of a circus or travelling minstrel show where music would be the main attraction but by no means the only draw; part of the charm for Dylan would be in playing small, intimate venues far removed from the colossal sports arenas that usually held such events in the mid-1970s. When interviewed for Martin Scorsese's 2019 retrospective, *Rolling Thunder Revue: A Bob Dylan Story*

by Martin Scorsese, concert promoter Jim Gianopulos describes the tour as a "disaster" and a "catastrophe," stressing the tour's financial failures:

> Well, I told 'em we should be playing to 20,000-seaters, but instead, you know, they wanted to play all these small joints. Now you've got 16 to 18 people onstage, and you've got 15 people on the backend. Buses, hotel rooms, catering, and you're only playing to houses with 3,000 seats, so you're gonna hemorrhage money. We were in the red before we even got on the road.[52]

However, when asked the same question, Dylan himself offers a more considered response. Agreeing that the venture was unsuccessful "if you measure success in terms of profit," Dylan argues that "in many ways" the Rolling Thunder Revue was "very successful," as it fostered just the "sense of adventure" Dylan was seeking.[53] This decoupling of success from profit and commercial motivations, characteristic of Dylan's career, again bolsters his authentic image.

However much each of these career moves contributed to Dylan's authentic image, each was, at its root, performative in nature, designed to create a reality through imitation and repetition. Dylan's decision to go electric at Newport in 1965 was a calculated one, intended at once to open new audiences and to promote sales of his two newest, electric albums; that it also confirmed his authenticity was, for Dylan and his record label, a happy coincidence.[54] Although reports differ as to the extent of his injuries following his motorcycle accident, most observers agree that after the rocky reception he received from audiences during his 1966 world tour Dylan would have retreated from the stage for a period regardless.[55, 56] Most tellingly, Jim Gianopulos, the supposed concert promoter so disappointed in the Rolling Thunder Revue's financial return, in reality had no connection whatsoever to the tour, or even to Dylan's career prior to his appearance in Scorsese's film; though the tour did, by all accounts, fail to turn a profit, Mr. Gianopulos has actually served

as President and CEO of Paramount Pictures since 2017.[57] An appearance of authenticity, rather than authenticity as such, has allowed Bob Dylan and others like him to cultivate among audiences a sense of trust, a shared certainty wherein a lack of sincerity undermines neither truth nor reality as those audiences see it but instead interpellates those audiences into subject positions ripe for manipulation.

In order to unpack the complex tangle of epistemological implications that obtains when audiences take a celebrity's authentic image not only as the basis for trust relations but also as a framework for all interactions with the real, we must turn our attention much more closely to the facts, fictions, and semifictions of Martin Scorsese's presentation of the Rolling Thunder Review in his 2019 film, *Rolling Thunder Revue: A Bob Dylan Story by Martin Scorsese*.

Audiences walked into theaters – or, more commonly for the Netflix original film, took to their couches – to watch *Rolling Thunder Revue: A Bob Dylan Story by Martin Scorsese*, expecting an informative documentary demythologizing the events surrounding one of the more mythic periods in Bob Dylan's storied career; even those professional critics less hip to Dylan's history, like Richard Roepert of the *Chicago Sun-Times*, initially encountered the film as a straight documentary, a concert film in the vein of Scorsese's own *Last Waltz*.[58] Between Scorsese's history of creating lovingly curated, honest documentaries about such luminary musicians as George Harrison, the Rolling Stones, and the Band, not to mention of Dylan himself, and Dylan's own carefully cultivated image as authentic and trustworthy, many audiences were primed to accept the documentary at face value. Scorsese and Dylan, however, had other plans for the project: rather than presenting audiences with a straight retelling of historical events, the two celebrity artists opted instead to capture the authentic feeling of the Rolling Thunder Revue without miring themselves in questions of historicity or sincerity. As we have already seen with the film's

portrayal of Jim Gianopulos, Scorsese and Dylan instead created what Netflix's marketing department calls "an alchemical mix of fact and fantasy" wherein those semifictions around which Dylan had built his career since the earliest days could again take center stage.[59]

Before we turn toward Scorsese's supposed documentary film, however, we must first analyze the form itself. Scholars and film theorists have long debated the meaning of the term documentary, leading to the emergence of various competing, if often overlapping, definitions. For John Grierson, an early Scottish documentarian who coined the term in 1926, a documentary is simply any "creative treatment of reality."[60, 61] Grierson's English counterpart Paul Rotha largely agreed, writing that the term "defines not subject or style, but [an] approach […] to cinema [which] differs from that of story-film not in its disregard for craftsmanship, but in the purpose to which that craftsmanship is put."[62] Though accepting that documentaries are "usually informed by a particular point of view," film scholar Paul Wells insists that a documentary is "a nonfiction text"; Frank Beaver and Timothy Corrigan concur, with David Bordwell and Kristin Thompson asserting that "documentary film purports to present factual information about the world outside the film."[63] Central to all of the above definitions is the understanding that at its core, the documentary form attempts to portray reality as it really exists; while each film is inevitably colored by the filmmakers' perspectives, each frame positioned according to the filmmakers' narrative choices, documentaries remain rooted in true events, their authenticity unmarred by the artistic impulses of screenwriters and actors. Within this conceptual framework, certain cinematic conventions arose, giving birth to the language of documentary, including the use of archival footage, expert testimonial presented via voiceover narration and 'talking head' interviews, and *cinema verité* camerawork designed to focus viewers' attention on the subject rather than the cinematography.[64]

Critic turned *Nouvelle Vague* director Jean-Luc Godard, however, views this conception of documentary as flawed and incomplete. For Godard, documentary and fiction overlap in profound ways: "All great films tend towards documentary, just as all great documentaries tend towards fiction."[65] Drawing from the work of film theorist André Bazin, who believed that since film is metonymic of reality, it always partakes of documentary, Godard views documentary as one of two "poles" around which all cinematic production revolves, an opinion he articulates with Keatsean eloquence:

> Beauty - the splendour of truth - has two poles. There are directors who seek the truth, which, if they find it, will necessarily be beautiful; others seek beauty, which, if they find it, will also be true. One finds these two poles in documentary and fiction. Some directors start from documentary and create fiction […]. Others start from fiction and create documentary[.][66]

Asked by Godard if he intended through his work to "restore dignity to the documentary," filmmaker François Reichenbach echoed Godard's own sentiments, replying: "I want to overtake fiction, not so much because reality goes further than fiction but because it implies it. In this, I am a documentarist. All great films, I believe, have an essential tendency towards documentary."[67] For Reichenbach, "the interesting thing in documentary […] is not picturesqueness or strangeness. Not primarily, anyway. The thing of prime interest is actuality, reality."[68] Even so, both Godard and Reichenbach acknowledge that reality "implies" fiction and vice versa. Here scholar Joshua Gamson's notion of the semifictional may be useful in its relation to documentary generally and to *Rolling Thunder Revue: A Bob Dylan Story by Martin Scorsese* specifically.

Writing about the ways that publicists mold their celebrity clients' images for public consumption, Gamson examines the "semifictional" relationship obtaining between celebrities and

their audiences in ways that reflect interestingly onto the documentary form. Gamson sees celebrities as inhabiting "a realm between fact and fiction" defined by a "semi-independence from truth" which is "much more easily controlled than 'real life' but looks much like it."[69] Semifiction is not about "developing lies" so much as it is about "developing performances of celebrity selves."[70] The semifictional "represent[s] a version of celebrity selves that is more explicitly staged than behaved: the actor is playing himself for the camera" rather than behaving naturally.[71] In Gamson's reading, celebrities and their handlers incorporate fiction, which he loosely defines as "anything from embellishment to fabrication," into their images "as a sales device" for several reasons.[72] That said, pure fiction would not serve celebrities well, either, without an anchor in the truth. For one thing, "truth makes the selling job easier, especially if the product is genuinely outstanding or in demand."[73] For another, audiences "are looking for events that really have happened and people who act like people" such that "having a basis in truth provides a protection of 'facts'."[74]

While Gamson views the turn to semifiction as "a practical resolution to [a] competitive environment," essentially a market solution to a market problem, the concept holds weight beyond celebrity studies when applied to documentary.[75] Whether applying Godard's understanding of the form as essential to all filmmaking or Paul Wells's more concrete definition of documentary as a nonfictional text presented from a particular perspective, every conceptualization of the documentary form places it firmly within the realm of semifiction. That is, because documentaries are produced as art from a specific point of view, they cannot escape the narrative impulses of their creators; inevitably, what a documentary presents as reality only 'looks much like it.' When viewing any given documentary, then, audiences are left to wonder not whether everything the

film presents as facts are actually true but, much rather, to what extent the narrative has been fictionalized.

When *Rolling Thunder Review: A Bob Dylan Story by Martin Scorsese* premiered in June of 2019, critics immediately understood that Dylan and Scorsese had created a documentary more heavily reliant on semifiction than most others. On the whole, the critical response was positive, with reviewers lavishing praise on the concert footage; however, the fictionalized elements generally fell flat, confusing critics and leaving them cold. In the *New York Times*, Manohla Dargis deems the fictionalizations "more-or-less amusing and distracting," but asserts that the scenes cutting between Dylan's performances and his audiences' reactions render the point moot: "if you don't hop on the documentary's signifying train, it doesn't really matter" because, for her, the music is everything.[76] At *Slate*, Sam Adams insists that "the movie's made-up characters offer little in the way of ecstatic truths" and the "fabricated chunks […] don't add anything meaningful" even as he, like Dargis, praises the main event, the performances of Dylan and his ragtag Rolling Thunder troupe, as "astounding."[77] Writing in the *New Yorker*, Richard Brody concurs: "For the concert footage alone, Scorsese's 'Rolling Thunder Revue' is exhilarating and even essential viewing. […] Yet there's much more to Scorsese's film than the concerts, and not for the better."[78] For all of these critics, Scorsese and Dylan have indulged excessively in fictionalization, as if the film "is built around the desire to show something, to say something, to reveal something of Dylan's process – but not too much."[79] These critics understand the impulse toward semifiction as an evasion of sorts; in their eyes, the spectacle at play in Scorsese's film undermines the reality and power of Dylan's performances. By contrast, Godard once wrote, following François Truffaut, that cinema "is spectacle – Melies – and research – Lumiere. […] The documentary side is: a man in a particular situation. The spectacle comes when one makes this man a gangster or a secret

agent."[80] Whether the film in question is an action thriller, a romantic comedy, or, indeed, a traditional documentary, reality and fiction meld at the cinema. Scorsese, himself a noted film historian, undoubtedly had this idea in mind when crafting his concert documentary.

Although Scorsese presents his film as a documentary and adheres to the form's cinematic language, he alerts attentive viewers from the first frame that playfulness, trickery, and semifiction would define his take on Bob Dylan's fabled Rolling Thunder Revue tour. Scorsese opens the documentary with neither the voice of Bob Dylan or any contextualization of the times being portrayed; although those things would soon follow, Scorsese instead chose to begin his film with a quotation from "The Vanishing Lady" (1896), a short film by stage magician-turned-filmmaker Georges Méliès, wherein Méliès uses the magic of film to make it appear as if his assistant had vanished and reappeared.[81, 82] To accomplish this illusion, Méliès directs his assistant to a chair, covers her entirely with a sheet, and rips the sheet away to reveal the disappearance – a feat accomplished by cleverly editing the film so that viewers would think that there had not been a cut between Méliès covering his assistant with the sheet and removing it to reveal an empty chair. Whereas audiences in 1896, as yet unaccustomed to a filmic language not yet codified, did not notice the cut, attentive eyes cannot miss it today, as the magician's leg has moved between shots and the sheet clearly conceals a smaller area when covering an empty chair than it does when obscuring the assistant. By opening with this quotation, Scorsese is signaling at least two things simultaneously: firstly, that this supposed documentary would, like the Méliès film, contain its fair share of sleight of hand and movie magic; and, secondly, that whatever chicanery would follow, Scorsese wanted at least the most attentive audiences to get the joke. Indeed, once Méliès has finished his trick, Scorsese inserts an intertitle reimagining the film's title as *Conjuring the Rolling*

Thunder Re-Vue, this language again emphasizing the stage magic quality of the film audiences were about to experience.[83]

After informing his audience of his intentions and attempting to draw them into his gag, Scorsese brings his audience back to the summer of 1975, when the nation's giddy preparations for its bicentennial celebration were building steam. Drawing from archival footage, Scorsese places his audiences at the foot of the newly-constructed World Trade Center in New York, where a street vendor hocks cheap bicentennial hats to tourists. When an interviewer asks the man selling hats whether he feels patriotic, he replies in the negative, asserting that "people like bicentennial hats, I sell 'em bicentennial hats."[84] As we have seen previously with respect to Bob Dylan, the appearance of authenticity – in this case, authentic patriotism – is an attempt to generate trust among the vendor's audience, the tourists who are his potential customers. From here, Scorsese shows audiences an old man dressed as Uncle Sam and waving a Confederate battle flag, who entrances a small crowd with a version of "The Star-Spangled Banner" set to new music; soon enough, the crowd learns that this Uncle Sam is yet another profiteer whose racket involves selling lyric sheets for a dollar apiece.[85] Like the hat salesman, this man's schtick demonstrates the divide between appearance and reality while at the same time showcasing that strange mixture of cynicism and possibility that characterized the mid-1970s in America. By including both figures at the start of the film, Scorsese is again signaling to his audiences that everything is not as it appears, that image and reality often diverge, that fiction and fact intermingle more freely than we would like to admit.

Scorsese includes Dylan in his intricate setup, too, concluding this opening sequence by intercutting a performance of "Mr. Tambourine Man" from a stop on the Rolling Thunder Revue with a 1969 speech Richard Nixon gave announcing plans for a national bicentennial celebration.

As Dylan invites a mysterious music man to conjure a world through song into which listeners could follow, Nixon expounds on the historical importance of the American project, arguing above Dylan's dulcet tones and "jingle jangle" guitar that "we act not just for ourselves, but for all mankind."[86, 87] In a new interview from Dylan recorded specifically for Scorsese's film, Dylan counters Nixon's optimism, claiming that times had changed by 1975, after Nixon had resigned and "Saigon had fallen": "People had seemed to have lost their sense of conviction for just about anything."[88] Even as Nixon is asking the public to aspire "to move forward in the realm of the American spirit," an older Dylan, his face cracked and worn with experience, reminds us that by 1976, the American spirit was ragged, tired from failure and strife both domestic and international: "Lot of arguments about why America was chased out of Vietnam in such a humiliating way. Two people tried to shoot the president in one month."[89] With this stark juxtaposition between optimistic projection and cynical reality, Scorsese again showcases the truth that things are not always as they appear even as the director acknowledges that some audiences will view the film as a cynical failure for its decision to present fiction as fact.

That Scorsese and Dylan chose "Mr. Tambourine Man" from amongst all the songs Dylan performed on the Rolling Thunder Revue to frame the film also speaks to the film's semifictional nature. The song is about "an artist, at his wit's end, looking for respite from his distress if only for a night, and turning to a shadowy musical spirit to play him a song that he will follow."[90] Taking a verse almost at random, we notice the willingness with which the song's protagonist abandons his senses to the singer's magic:

> Take me on a trip upon your magic swirling ship
>
> My senses have been stripped
>
> My hands can't feel to grip

My toes too numb to step

Wait only for my boot heels to be wandering

I'm ready to go anywhere, I'm ready for to fade

Into my own parade

Cast your dancing

Spell my way, I promise to go under it.[91]

This verse evinces the singer's yen for entertainment which is at once meaningful and transporting, emphasizing his willingness to lose his senses and fall under the art's emotive spell. The song's chorus, too, contributes to this effect:

Hey, Mr. Tambourine Man, play a song for me

I'm not sleepy and there is no place I'm going to

Hey, Mr. Tambourine Man, play a song for me

In the jingle jangle morning, I'll come following you[92]

Given that no less an authority than Scarlet Rivera, the violin virtuoso who accompanied Dylan on the Rolling Thunder Revue, has called Dylan himself "Mr. Tambourine Man," and that during the Rolling Thunder Revue Dylan would often introduce himself onstage in the third person, like "the return of a beloved but bygone act, as if the Bob Dylan doing the talking were not the same person who had just performed," we can read Scorsese's use of "Mr. Tambourine Man" as a framing device for his film; the filmmaker invites his audiences to inhabit the part of the song's protagonist and suspend the senses, at least for the film's duration.[93, 94] That is, while Scorsese and Dylan obviously want audiences to realize that a joke is afoot, the artists also want audiences to enter into that joke willingly, with the same carefree abandon the song's singer feels toward the magical artistry of music.

To continue our investigation into the alchemical mix of fact and fiction that is *Rolling Thunder Revue: A Bob Dylan Story by Martin Scorsese* – and of Dylan's entire career – we must now turn our attention to Dylan's use of white face paint while performing, as evidenced already in the opening footage of "Mr. Tambourine Man." Scholars and critics have offered many explanations for Dylan's use of whiteface makeup, perhaps the most immediately striking aspect of the tour, visually speaking; none of their explanations, however, have been quite so outlandish as that which Scorsese and Dylan endorse here.

Without so much as a hint that the content of her interview had been written by screenwriters, actress Sharon Stone spins a tale about meeting Bob Dylan outside a show one night. Claiming that her "mom wanted to see this tour," Stone insists that, out of mortification at having to attend a concert with her mother at nineteen, she "rebelliously […] wore a KISS t-shirt" to the show.[95] In Stone's telling, as the doorman was refusing to honor their tickets, Bob Dylan himself approached the venue's main entrance unrecognized.[96] After facing similar difficulty with the doorman, Stone claims, several of Dylan's entourage appeared from within and convinced the bouncer to let Dylan enter.[97] Looking over his shoulder, Dylan then beckoned to Stone and her mother to "come on," soon prompting a conversation about Stone's KISS shirt:

> [H]e saw my shirt, and he was like, "Do you like them?" and then I realize he wanted to talk about KISS. I think I was trying to sound like I was smart, so I started saying, "Well, you know, I think they paint their faces in kabuki style." And he said, "Oh, I bet Izumo no Okuni never spat blood into the audience." And I was like, "Okuni?" And he's like, "Izumo no Okuni." And, you know, that's one of the guys who started kabuki. So.[98]

Despite Stone's convincing delivery, everything about this story, from Dylan's familiarity with the kabuki tradition to the influence of KISS on Dylan's adoption of white face to the relationship between Dylan and Stone, reeks of playful falsehood. For one thing, though Dylan had by the mid-1970s developed a keen interest in international artforms, he had never been associated with kabuki before this documentary.[99] Indeed, Dylan would not travel to Japan until 1978, two years after the conclusion of the Rolling Thunder Revue; given the penchant for authentic artistic experiences that we saw when considering his relationship with Tin Pan Alley, it seems unlikely that Dylan would draw from sources so foreign to his experiences when domestic models were closer at hand.[100]

Reminiscing in his autobiography about the travelling shows so important to his childhood in rural Hibbing, Minnesota, Dylan writes: "There were three-ring circuses that came to town a few times a year and full tilt carnivals complete with human oddities, showgirls, and even geeks. I saw one of the last blackface minstrel shows at a county carnival."[101] Historian Sean Wilentz notes that Dylan's career has been replete with circus imagery, from the lyrics to "Ballad of a Thin Man" to "the various sideshow scenes from his film *Masked and Anonymous*" to responses he's given in interviews such as those "included in the Martin Scorsese documentary *No Direction Home*" and one released "on Dylan's official Web site in conjunction with the release of *Together Through Life* in 2009."[102] Rather than modeling his tour on kabuki theater, then, the roaming troupe of troubadours that was the Rolling Thunder Revue took its inspiration from the vaudevillian forms of Dylan's youth.

Still, the connection between these influences and KISS may not be as farfetched as it initially appears: KISS, marketed toward a younger demographic than their contemporaries in the hard rock scene, shared with both circuses and minstrel acts a certain cartoonish quality. Noting

that minstrel acts remained popular worldwide as late as the 1920s, Sharon Marcus emphasizes that such acts "featured white performers in blackface makeup who pretended to dance, sing, speak, and dress like cartoonish distortions of black people."[103] According to Marcus, scholars have traced "the affinities between cartoonists and minstrel performers, both of whom exaggerated traits in order to create buffoonish, distorted types."[104] On film, Dylan's painted face never appears buffoonish, yet a disconnected, cartoon quality somehow remains. That is, the makeup masks Dylan, both highlighting the performative quality of the stage show and suggesting hidden depths in the artist himself. Even as audiences experience Dylan as a constructed figure always already distanced from them, those same audiences cannot help but feel like Dylan is letting them in on a secret. Only by marking himself as a cartoonish caricature can Dylan register as authentic.

Not content to leave the story there, Scorsese and Dylan reinforce the connection between KISS and Dylan's use of whiteface makeup on the Rolling Thunder Revue. Taking advantage of Scarlet Rivera's involvement with the film being limited to archival footage, Dylan ropes the violinist into his yarn in the following pokerfaced interview:

> Scarlet Rivera was some piece of work. Mostly, people'd just stay away from Scarlet. But, uh, not me. Her boyfriend at the time was the leader of KISS, and she took me over to Queens to see them play. They were playing in a small club with face paint on, and I thought that was kind of interesting. I kind of filed that away somewhere.[105]

Dylan's story here is just as fabricated as Stone's above. For one thing, Scarlet Rivera and the members of KISS never ran in the same circles, much less dated; for another, by the time Rivera and Dylan met, KISS had long since graduated from small clubs in Queens to venues like the Manhattan's Beacon Theater.[106] Yet to write off Dylan's interview entirely would be a mistake.

Although KISS themselves were not important to Dylan's vision in the summer of 1975 as the Rolling Thunder Revue began to take shape, the highly theatrical world of glam rock certainly was.[107] Among Dylan's closest collaborator during the tour itself was guitarist Mick Ronson.[108] A longtime sideman for David Bowie, Ronson had been instrumental in constructing Bowie's Ziggy Stardust persona; that Dylan adopted a glam rock aesthetic with Ronson's introduction to his sphere comes as no surprise.[109] Still, even Ronson's intervention into Dylan's musical minstrel act only goes so far toward explaining the tour's odd aesthetics.

During the tour itself, Dylan informs Larry "Ratso" Sloman, a reporter for *Rolling Stone*, that he had envisioned a sort of musical *commedia dell'arte*.[110] Indeed, just as *commedia dell'arte* troupes performed not only with painted faces but with masks, so too did Dylan during the Rolling Thunder Revue. Recalling his own experience as an audience member at the tour's New Haven stop, historian Sean Wilentz notes that Dylan sometimes wore a translucent plastic mask atop his painted face, and though the white makeup is far more evident throughout the film, Scorsese included several lingering shots wherein Dylan's additional plastic mask can be seen clearly. When asked his thoughts about the masks several decades after the tour's conclusion, Dylan himself, never one to give a straight response when he could avoid it, answers with what may well be the film's funniest one-liner. Looking into the camera without a mask, Dylan deadpans: "When somebody's wearing a mask, he's gonna tell you the truth. When he's not wearing a mask, it's highly unlikely."[111] Greil Marcus, for whom "the mask comes to seem like a precondition for any revelation of a true face," would concur, adding that such a masked face "neither invites nor can endure a gaze that lasts very long."[112] For Dylan as for Marcus, masks not only provide protection for their wearer but also represent a precondition for revelation. Without masks, they argue, there

can be no truth; just as we can no longer separate Robert Zimmerman from his persona as Bob Dylan, the mask itself becomes reality.

In Marcus's reading, "few performers have made their way onto the stage of the twentieth century with a greater collection of masks than Bob Dylan."[113] Identifying a mercurial quality to Dylan's performance of self, Marcus emphasizes the importance of masks to Dylan's career from the very start:

> From the balladeer who first presented himself not as the son of a respectable middle-class Jewish family from northern Minnesota but as a vagabond runaway who had no idea if his parents were dead or alive, to the dandy who when controversy over his turn to the pop arena had erupted declared that his investment in folk music had been a con from the start, he was, it was sometimes said, a different person every time you saw him.[114]

By the time Dylan donned the whiteface and translucent masks during his performances on the Rolling Thunder Revue, it had already become a "cliché," as *New Yorker* film critic Richard Brody puts it, that Dylan had always been a "slippery and malleable figure whose first trick may have been the pseudonym under which he made his fame" and whose personality remains veiled behind his various performative masks.[115]

Whether Dylan's mask on any given night were literal or metaphorical, its function remained the same. As Greil Marcus understands it, a mask is "not merely a disguise" intended to hide "risible feelings"; in his view, the mask sometimes serves to "protect those who might gaze upon the real face of whoever wore it from awful sights – or even that the mask was a kind of defense against the mirror, protecting the wearer from his or her own face."[116] And yet, for Marcus, masks conceal their wearer from more senses than sight alone, especially in the case of a singer

like Dylan: "The mask hides the voice no less than the face, and the voice it makes you might call Yankee Midwestern, though it is also Appalachian, mountain-still, a speech made as much of silences as of words, and the silence is the edge."[117] Aligning the phenomenon of masks with the American experiment in particular, Marcus further argues that "the mask […] is the face of a new nation where all are presumed free to invent themselves, to make themselves up out of nothing, just as, with each unspoken wish or finished act, all are making up their country."[118] In Marcus's reading, masks represent the potential for reinvention, the possibility for the voiceless to have a voice, the prerequisite for sociality: masks are the necessarily semifictional medium through which we perform ourselves before others. That is, we become known through our masks; our semifictional presentations of self become our authentic selves in reality.

Later in the film, Scorsese again attempts to allow his audiences a glimpse behind the film's many masks, editing together solo interviews from Stone and Dylan into another kind of conversation. As Stone describes how, on a modeling job in an unnamed park, she became reacquainted with Dylan, who calls her "KISS," the songwriter divulges his early skepticism that this girl from "the middle of nowhere" would become a movie star.[119] Pretending to remember Stone, Dylan's voice betrays just a hint of bemusement: "I think I met her with her mother. She was a nice girl. She was so young anyway, you know. But she seemed old for her age."[120] With a subtle joke, Dylan has all but told astute viewers that this entire sequence has been invented for the film: by saying that Stone seemed 'young for her age,' Dylan is pointing to the fact that even the first words out of Stone's mouth, that she met Dylan when she was nineteen, were a lie, as she was actually seventeen in the autumn of 1975.[121] Dylan fails to maintain the stoic demeanor that has defined him throughout the film in large part because he knows that Stone really was too young for the part she's taken as his groupie.

Still, Stone doubles down, telling the camera that Dylan soon invited her along for the remainder of the tour, where she was utterly seduced by Dylan's laconic charm:

> A couple of days later, he said, "You know, hey, how about if you just come on the road with us?" And I thought, "And do *what*?" "You know, you could help out with the costumes and help out backstage and stuff." It was one of the first shows. I was backstage, Joan Baez had asked me to iron her shirt. A second later, I hear, "Hey…Sharon." And there was this really decrepit old piano shoved off to the side, and Bob was kind of hunched over it. And he gives me that look. He's like, "I wrote a song about you." ["Just Like a Woman" begins playing.] And he gets to the line "and she makes love just like a woman / but she breaks just like a little girl." I just broke out crying, you know? Full-on tears. I think T-Bone [Burnett]'s the one who told me the song was ten years old.[122]

While this story is undoubtedly apocryphal in its specifics, with Stone's involvement suspect at best, it contains more than a grain of truth. That is, although Dylan never seduced a young Sharon Stone by intimating that he had written "Just Like a Woman" just for her, we can readily imagine Dylan using this ploy on others, particularly given that the Rolling Thunder Revue occurred in the wake of Dylan's separation from his wife Sara Lownds. In that way, the story serves as a sort of double mask: on one level, Stone stands metonymically for a host of girls and women attracted by Dylan's mystique during this tumultuous period; on another, the story itself passes without mention of Lownds or their impending divorce, thus masking the very real emotional pain that Dylan hoped to escape on the road.

In the end, though, what critics found so confusing, even frustrating about Scorsese's film was not merely the multitude of masks the film presented nor the kaleidoscopic layers of

semifiction to which they gave rise; instead, their discomfort arose from a fear that their trust in Bob Dylan and in Martin Scorsese had been misplaced. When the interviewer, Dylan's manager and the film's co-producer Jeff Rosen, asks the singer to explain what the Rolling Thunder Revue was about "at its core," Dylan responds that he doesn't "have a clue, because it's about nothing": "It's just something that happened forty years ago, and that's the truth of it. […] I don't remember a thing about Rolling Thunder. It happened so long ago; I wasn't even born. So, what do you want to know?"[123] Acknowledging that the man being interviewed and the man wearing whiteface and singing "Mr. Tambourine Man" in small theaters and civic halls across New England's tiny theaters had no more in common than that whitefaced singer and the Greenwich Village bohemian singing folk songs alongside Joan Baez in 1964, that the man responding to the interviewer's question had yet to don his current mask in the heady days leading up to the American bicentennial, Dylan offers his perspective nevertheless. By doing so, Dylan is at once lying and announcing that fact proudly. That is, as *Time* film critic Stephanie Zacharek points out, we realize that in continuing to speak after admitting that he cannot remember anything, all he can do is lie.[124] For critics who cannot help but see Bob Dylan as the earnest, authentic folksinger of their own youths, being presented with that other, trickster side of Dylan's personality so forcefully is an affront.

Their concerns may well be justified, at least to an extent: although Dylan has always been a masked trickster, and although Scorsese does what he can to signal the film's fictions, some portion of the audience was bound to accept Dylan's tongue-in-cheek lies as genuine history. Dave Thompson, writing in *Goldmine Magazine*, argues that "'Fake News' is everywhere and the fact is, the vast majority of people who watch this movie probably won't be able" to differentiate.[125] Zacharek doubles down on this idea in her *Time* review of Scorsese's film, observing that "in a

world where cries of 'Fake news!' are themselves often fake, we have every reason to be wary of tricksters and grifters, of snake-oil salesmen and rambling preachers."[126]

Scorsese, aware of the political climate and foreseeing this complaint, attempted to forestall criticism through his incorporation of Jack Tanner, a fictional U.S. Representative played by Michael Murphy. Tanner, the protagonist in famed director Robert Altman's political mockumentary miniseries *Tanner '88*, tells a charming story about Jimmy Carter's love of Dylan's music, explaining that, at the time of the Rolling Thunder Revue, "Dylan was considered the enemy" by his congressional colleagues and reveling in the supposed fact that the future President had gotten him tickets to see the singer in Niagara Falls.[127] Perhaps because, as film critics, they were already familiar with the character and so were in on the joke from the start, Representative Tanner was the fictionalized element which the film's reviewers seemed to most enjoy; several took great pleasure in informing readers that Scorsese had made a guest appearance alongside Murphy in Altman's 2004 sequel, *Tanner on Tanner*, and none complained that Carter, not yet President during the tour, was hardly likely to have had tickets for a show so far from Georgia.[128, 129] For Scorsese, however, the inclusion of Representative Jack Tanner represented far more than a knowing nod to cinephiles: Tanner symbolized an acknowledgement of the dangers inherent when a semifictional authenticity attaches to a celebrity politician rather than to a celebrity entertainer.

Representative Tanner rose to prominence within the 1988 Democratic primary of Altman's imagination after releasing a campaign ad featuring candid footage of the representative speaking extemporaneously and feelingly about how he was the only candidate to whom the American public could relate, not only because he was willing to engage with thorny policy questions but also and importantly because unlike his opponents he could claim the right to

generational leadership by virtue of his ability to answer honestly which Beatle was his favorite.[130] As with much of Altman's body of work, *Tanner '88* is a satire, presenting the American political process as inherently semifictional, success determined more by a candidate's marketing skills than their political talents; that Tanner's rise, unsuccessful or not, derives specifically from his ability to appear authentic with respect to celebrity musicians idolized by a generation of voters speaks volumes.[131] That is, though voters knew little more about Tanner than which Beatle he preferred, willfully ignoring his policy proposals and instead focusing on his image as a man of integrity, the Michigan representative manages to pose a credible run for the nomination against better known and better funded candidates because the voters feel like they know him. As celebrity theorist Joshua Gamson puts it: "Political participation and the search for authentic voices are seen as ludicrous endeavors [in contemporary America]. A postmodern engagement in political celebrity is fundamentally disengaged from politics."[132] In this age of partisan division and post-truth cries of 'fake news!', Scorsese's incorporation of the fictional representative allows the filmmaker – and, by extension, Dylan as well – to warn audiences against investing too completely in celebrity worship. A joke about your favorite musician, they seem to be telling us, is one thing; politics is for keeps.

And yet, in the case of *Rolling Thunder Revue: A Bob Dylan Story by Martin Scorsese*, the danger of connecting celebrity and politics remains at a distance, held apart by the film's art. Unlike the politicians and pundits screaming about 'fake news,' all the while manufacturing outrage for their own purposes, Dylan and Scorsese hope that their lies will entertain, possibly even enlighten their viewers. And, after all, beneath each lie was a fundamental truth about Dylan, about the tour, about America on the cusp of its 200th birthday. Despite its many fictions, the film, like the tour itself, captures an explosive burst of creative energy within an emotional landscape

defined as much by its painful past as by its promising future, and, in so doing, the film embodies the tour's history; theirs is a documentary in feeling if not in fact. Even Zacharek, the *Time* critic so worried about 'snake-oil salesmen' in the age of 'fake news,' acknowledges that Scorsese's film "is one of the most truthful" films of 2019, despite its many playful lies.[133] Acknowledging the difference between believability and truth, Zacharek cannot help but "surrender to pleasure and illumination" when watching the film: though she knows that much of the film's narrative arc relies on fiction, she still feels illuminated..[134] "In Bob we trust," Zacharek opines, and, after watching this film, it would be hard to disagree.[135] Scorsese has cast Dylan as the travelling troubadour, a masked mystery as likely to spin you a tall tale as he is to tell you the unaltered facts. Watching the film, this hardly matters. Dylan's aura of authenticity only grows more intense with his and Scorsese's trickery. As Dylan himself avows, a masked man is far more likely to tell you the authentic truth than one who pretends to walk unmasked through today's ever-shifting world wherein reality often seems as thin and mercurial as Dylan's music.[136]

Dylan is not alone in this assessment. Theorists of celebrity have warned for decades that celebrity culture endangers democracy.[137, 138] Because "politics is spoken in the middle-range language of semifiction," Joshua Gamson argues, "citizens continually encounter the stuff of politics as celebrity, both directly and through [media] commentary" such that "the audience for politics is converted into an audience for celebrity."[139] When politics and celebrity meet, policy ceases to matter, and personality reigns; semifictional personalities vie for public attention and name recognition makes far more difference for a politician's candidacy than do their positions on the issues of the day. Fearful of alienating the electorate, politicians routinely rely on polling data even for such trivial decisions as where to take a family vacation.[140] Politicians' accents appear and disappear depending on the targeted demographics, with politicians aping the strategies of

entertainment stars and their marketing teams in largely successful efforts to convince voters that candidates share their values.[141] For their part, voters, by and large, seem content with this system, content to feel as if they could share a beer with their preferred candidate even if that candidate refuses to take a position on any important policy. Gamson, who offers public "skepticism and publicity literacy" as potential safeguards against the worst excesses of celebrity culture, nonetheless doubts that even these tools can "protect from the dangers to informed democratic participation" presented by celebrity culture.[142] As Gamson writes, "when audiences play with celebrity, they are playing with the dilemmas of democratic power."[143] Indeed, even a cursory look at the state of contemporary U.S. politics confirms the theorists' fears.

Following Donald Trump's darkly triumphant speech at the 2016 Republican National Convention, CNN's Alisyn Camerota interviewed former Speaker of the House Newt Gingrich, asking him if the Republican nominee had not painted too bleak a picture of American crime. When Gingrich then cited a rise in violent crime in cities like Chicago and Washington, D.C. as justifications for Trump's pessimistic speech, Camerota accurately argued that Gingrich's assertions were invalid in light of violent crime having, in fact, fallen nationwide. The two sank into the predictable pattern of cable news, yelling over one another. Amidst this cacophony, though, Gingrich pounces on Camerota after the journalist claims that she was citing facts rather than spouting an opinion:

> But what I said is also a fact: The average American feels… When you can walk into a nightclub and get killed, when you can go to a party at a county government building and get killed, people don't think their government is protecting them. When you have Baltimore, when you have policemen ambushed in Dallas […]. People are frightened. People feel like their government has abandoned them.[144]

She counters that facts don't support that feeling, but this only lights up Gingrich's eyes, and he then delivers the deathblow: "As a political candidate, I'll go with how people feel, and I'll let you go with the theoreticians."[145] Appearance, rather than reality, is for Gingrich the stuff of politics, and Mr. Trump's presidency seems to bear this theory out. In our current political landscape where politics has become a part of popular culture, feeling trumps fact.

Even after rejecting Mr. Trump's particular brand of nationalist politics at the ballot box in 2020, American voters across the political spectrum seem more than willing to embrace celebrities in the political sphere. Since the inauguration of Joe Biden as Trump's successor, polling has consistently shown that voters would support such celebrities as Caitlyn Jenner and Matthew McConaughey for high political office, despite their failures to offer the public any policy proposals whatsoever, and the data shows no signs that this trend is receding.[146, 147] As long as celebrities maintain such a stranglehold on the hearts and minds of Americans of all political persuasions, our democracy is in danger. Where the epistemology of celebrity is concerned, life truly imitates art: if politicians can harness the style of celebrity, why should they bother with the substance of politics?

Whereas Dylan and Scorsese used their film to explore the nature of truth itself, conveying the feeling of the tour and its motivations unmoored by the weighty anchor of facts, celebrities entering the political sphere employ these same tactics to an arena with life-or-death consequences for many. Dylan and Scorsese bend truth in the service of entertainment; the worst thing that a viewer can take away from their film is a false belief about an event even those who were present can barely remember. Politicians, whether they started as celebrities or not, engage with the American public through the medium of celebrity culture and in doing so cannot help but present themselves in a veil of semifiction. The ability to untangle these knotty threads of semifiction, to

distinguish appearance from reality, always a necessary skill in a democratic society, has never been more urgently required. In a celebrity culture like ours, it could spell the difference between demagoguery and true democracy. As Bob Dylan says at Martin Scorsese's prompting, anyone pretending to speak in public without a mask is all but sure to be lying.[148]

---

[1] Dylan, Bob. "Seeing the Real You at Last." *Empire Burlesque*. Columbia, 1985.

[2] Marcus, Sharon. *The Drama of Celebrity*. Princeton UP, 2019, pp. 192.

[3] D'Addario, Daniel. "'This Is Paris' Exposes Paris Hilton's Trauma But Can't Crack Her Personality: TV Review." *Variety*, 7 September 2020.

[4] Hershkovits, David. "How Kim Kardashian broke the internet with her butt." *The Guardian*, 17 December 2014.

[5] Dylan, Bob. *Chronicles: Volume One*. Anchor, 2011, pp. 8.

[6] Marcus, Sharon. *The Drama of Celebrity*. Princeton UP, 2019, pp. 173.

[7] Ibid.

[8] Ibid., pp. 174.

[9] Wolk, Josh. "Carrot Top gets no respect." *Entertainment Weekly*, 16 May 1997.

[10] Handler, Richard. "Authenticity." *Anthropology Today*, vol. 2, no. 1, 1986, pp. 2.

[11] Ibid., pp. 3.

[12] Ibid.

[13] Ibid.

[14] Ibid., pp. 4.

[15] Trilling, Lionel. *Sincerity and Authenticity*. Harvard UP, 1971, pp. 100.

[16] Horkheimer, Max and Theodor Adorno. *Dialectic of Enlightenment: Philosophical Fragments*. 1947. Trans. by Edmund Jephcott. Ed. by Gunzelin Schmid Noerr. Stanford UP, 2002.

[17] Benjamin, Walter. "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction." 1936. Trans. by Harry Zohn. *Marxists.org*, 1998.

[18] Gardner, Robert Owen. "Tradition and Authenticity in Popular Music." *Symbolic Interaction*, Vol. 28, No. 1, Winter 2005, pp. 135.

[19] Marcus, Sharon. *The Drama of Celebrity*. Princeton UP, 2019, pp. 127.

[20] Gamson, Joshua. *Claims to Fame: Celebrity in Contemporary America*. U of California P, 1994, pp. 148.

[21] Ibid, pp. 136.

[22] Ibid.

[23] Firth, Simon. "Rock: Authenticity and commercialism." *Encyclopeida Britannica*, 1999.

[24] Ibid.

[25] Cossu, Andrea. *It Ain't Me, Babe: Bob Dylan and the Performance of Authenticity*. Routledge, 2016, pp. xvi.

[26] Ibid.

[27] Firth, Simon. “Rock: Authenticity and commercialism.” *Encyclopeida Britannica*, 1999.

[28] Marcus, Greil. *The Old, Weird America: The World of Bob Dylan’s Basement Tapes*. Picador, 1997, pp. 21.

[29] Ibid., pp. 19.

[30] Dylan, Bob. *Chronicles: Volume One*. Simon & Schuster, 2004, pp. 236.

[31] Marcus, Greil. *The Old, Weird America: The World of Bob Dylan’s Basement Tapes*. Picador, 1997, pp. 19.

[32] Ibid., pp. 20.

[33] Ibid.

[34] Dylan, Bob. *Chronicles: Volume One*. Simon & Schuster, 2004, pp. 35.

[35] Ibid.

[36] Ibid., pp. 34.

[37] Ibid.

[38] Marcus, Greil. *The Old, Weird America: The World of Bob Dylan’s Basement Tapes*. Picador, 1997, pp. 27.

[39] Ibid.

[40] Dylan, Bob. *Chronicles: Volume One*. Simon & Schuster, 2004, pp. 256.

[41] Ibid. 291.

[42] Dylan, Bob. Interview by Cameron Crowe in accompanying booklet, *Biograph.* Columbia, 1985.

[43] Aspden, Peter. “One man killed the pop song.” *Financial Times*, 8 October 2010.

[44] Ibid.

[45] Horkheimer, Max and Theodor Adorno. *Dialectic of Enlightenment: Philosophical Fragments*. 1947. Trans. by Edmund Jephcott. Ed. by Gunzelin Schmid Noerr. Stanford UP, 2002, pp. 125.

[46] Firth, Simon. “Rock: Authenticity and commercialism.” *Encyclopeida Britannica*, 1999.

[47] *No Direction Home: Bob Dylan*. Directed by Martin Scorsese, performances by Bob Dylan, Pete Seeger, Dave Van Ronk, Allen Ginsberg, Joan Baez, and Suze Rotolo, Paramount, 2005.

[48] Wilentz, Sean. *Bob Dylan in America*. Anchor, 2011, pp. 134-6.

[49] Ibid., pp. 136.

[50] Ibid, pp. 128.

[51] Sanders, Daryl. *That Thin, Wild Mercury Sound: Dylan, Nashville, and the Making of* Blonde on Blonde. Chicago Review Press, 2018.

[52] *Rolling Thunder Revue: A Bob Dylan Story by Martin Scorsese*. Directed by Martin Scorsese, performances by Bob Dylan, Sam Shepard, Ronnee Blakley, Larry Sloman, Allen Ginsberg, Martin Von Haselberg, Sharon Stone, and Michael Murphey, Netflix, 2019, 2:11:27.

[53] Ibid., 2:11:56.

[54] *No Direction Home: Bob Dylan*. Directed by Martin Scorsese, performances by Bob Dylan, Pete Seeger, Dave Van Ronk, Allen Ginsberg, Joan Baez, and Suze Rotolo, Paramount, 2005.

[55] Wilentz, Sean. *Bob Dylan in America*. Anchor, 2011, pp. 104.

[56] Hill, Michael. “50 years later, Bob Dylan’s motorcycle crash remains mysterious.” *Seattle Times*, 27 July 2016.

[57] Seitz, Matt Zoller. "Rolling Thunder Revue: A Bob Dylan Story by Martin Scorsese." *RogerEbert.com*, 12 June 2019.

[58] Roepert, Richard. "'Rolling Thunder Revue' revisits a tour when Bob Dylan sang, drove the bus – and even had fun." *Chicago Sun-Times*, 10 June 2019.

[59] *Rolling Thunder Revue: A Bob Dylan Story by Martin Scorsese*. Directed by Martin Scorsese, performances by Bob Dylan, Sam Shepard, Ronnee Blakley, Larry Sloman, Allen Ginsberg, Martin Von Haselberg, Sharon Stone, and Michael Murphey, Netflix, 2019.

[60] Deacon, Desley. "'Films as foreign offices': transnationalism at Paramount in the twenties and early thirties." *Connected Worlds: History in Transnational Perspective*, edited by Ann Curthoys and Marilyn Lake, ANU E Press, 2005, pp. 151.

[61] Grierson, John. "The Documentary Producer." *Cinema Quarterly*, 2.1, Autumn 1933, pp. 8.

[62] Rotha, Paul. "The Role of the Director." *Cinema Quarterly*, 2.2, Winter 1933-4, pp. 78.

[63] "Definitions of Documentary." *DocumentarySite*, 1 Feb 2020.

[64] "Documentary Conventions." *DocumentarySite*, 1 Feb 2020.

[65] *Godard on Godard: Critical writings by Jean-Luc Godard*, edited by Jean Narboni and Tom Milne, Da Capo Press, 1972, pp. 132.

[66] Ibid., pp. 181.

[67] Ibid, pp. 93.

[68] Ibid, pp. 94.

[69] Gamson, Joshua. *Claims to Fame: Celebrity in Contemporary Culture*. U of California P, 1994, pp. 101.

[70] Ibid.

[71] Ibid.

[72] Ibid., pp. 77.

[73] Ibid.

[74] Ibid.

[75] Ibid., pp. 78.

[76] Dargis, Manohla. "'Rolling Thunder' Review: A New Ballad of Bob, Sung by Marty." *New York Times*, 11 June 2019.

[77] Adams, Sam. "Scorsese's Rolling Thunder Energy." *Slate*, 13 June 2019.

[78] Brody, Richard. "'Rolling Thunder Revue,' Reviewed: Martin Scorsese's Slippery Concert Chronicle of Bob Dylan's Concert." *New Yorker*, 14 June 2019.

[79] Ibid.

[80] *Godard on Godard: Critical writings by Jean-Luc Godard*, edited by Jean Narboni and Tom Milne, Da Capo Press, 1972, pp. 181.

[81] *Rolling Thunder Revue: A Bob Dylan Story by Martin Scorsese*. Directed by Martin Scorsese, performances by Bob Dylan, Sam Shepard, Ronnee Blakley, Larry Sloman, Allen Ginsberg, Martin Von Haselberg, Sharon Stone, and Michael Murphey, Netflix, 2019, 0:00:09.

[82] Dargis, Manohla. "'Rolling Thunder' Review: A New Ballad of Bob, Sung by Marty." *New York Times*, 11 June 2019.

[83] *Rolling Thunder Revue: A Bob Dylan Story by Martin Scorsese*. Directed by Martin Scorsese, performances by Bob Dylan, Sam Shepard, Ronnee Blakley, Larry Sloman, Allen Ginsberg, Martin Von Haselberg, Sharon Stone, and Michael Murphey, Netflix, 2019, 0:00:46.

[84] Ibid., 0:01:15.

[85] Ibid., 0:01:19-0:01-58.

[86] Dylan, Bob. "Mr. Tambourine Man." *Bringin' It All Back Home*. Capitol, 1965.

[87] *Rolling Thunder Revue: A Bob Dylan Story by Martin Scorsese*. Directed by Martin Scorsese, performances by Bob Dylan, Sam Shepard, Ronnee Blakley, Larry Sloman, Allen Ginsberg, Martin Von Haselberg, Sharon Stone, and Michael Murphey, Netflix, 2019, 0:02:46.

[88] Ibid., 0:03:15.

[89] Ibid., 0:03:22.

[90] Wilentz, Sean. *Bob Dylan in America*. Anchor, 2011, pp. 97.

[91] Dylan, Bob. "Mr. Tambourine Man." *Bringin' It All Back Home*. Capitol, 1965.

[92] Ibid.

[93] *Rolling Thunder Revue: A Bob Dylan Story by Martin Scorsese*. Directed by Martin Scorsese, performances by Bob Dylan, Sam Shepard, Ronnee Blakley, Larry Sloman, Allen Ginsberg, Martin Von Haselberg, Sharon Stone, and Michael Murphey, Netflix, 2019, 0:54:24.

[94] Wilentz, Sean. *Bob Dylan in America*. Anchor, 2011, pp. 144.

[95] *Rolling Thunder Revue: A Bob Dylan Story by Martin Scorsese*. Directed by Martin Scorsese, performances by Bob Dylan, Sam Shepard, Ronnee Blakley, Larry Sloman, Allen Ginsberg, Martin Von Haselberg, Sharon Stone, and Michael Murphey, Netflix, 2019, 0:49:20.

[96] Ibid.

[97] Ibid.

[98] Ibid.

[99] Wilentz, Sean. *Bob Dylan in America*. Anchor, 2011, pp. 138-9.

[100] Sugano, Toshiyuki. "Up close and personal: Why Dylan is so big in Japan." *Japan Times*, 22 May 2011.

[101] Dylan, Bob. *Chronicles: Volume One*. Simon & Schuster, 2004, pp. 234.

[102] Wilentz, Sean. *Bob Dylan in America*. Anchor, 2011, pp. 169.

[103] Marcus, Sharon. *The Drama of Celebrity*. Princeton UP, 2019, pp. 167.

[104] Ibid.

[105] *Rolling Thunder Revue: A Bob Dylan Story by Martin Scorsese*. Directed by Martin Scorsese, performances by Bob Dylan, Sam Shepard, Ronnee Blakley, Larry Sloman, Allen Ginsberg, Martin Von Haselberg, Sharon Stone, and Michael Murphey, Netflix, 2019, 0:51:15.

[106] Dove, Ivan. "KISS Rock Quartet Brings Excitement." *New York Times*, 23 March 1975.

[107] Pareles, Jon. "Bob Dylan's Glam Hootenanny: Returning to Rolling Thunder." *New York Times*, 5 June 2019.

[108] *Rolling Thunder Revue: A Bob Dylan Story by Martin Scorsese*. Directed by Martin Scorsese, performances by Bob Dylan, Sam Shepard, Ronnee Blakley, Larry Sloman, Allen Ginsberg, Martin Von Haselberg, Sharon Stone, and Michael Murphey, Netflix, 2019, 0:51:15.

[109] Wilentz, Sean. *Bob Dylan in America*. Anchor, 2011, pp. 147.

[110] *Rolling Thunder Revue: A Bob Dylan Story by Martin Scorsese*. Directed by Martin Scorsese, performances by Bob Dylan, Sam Shepard, Ronnee Blakley, Larry Sloman, Allen Ginsberg, Martin Von Haselberg, Sharon Stone, and Michael Murphey, Netflix, 2019, 0:47:15.

[111] Ibid., 0:32:08.

[112] Marcus, Greil. *The Old, Weird America: The World of Bob Dylan's Basement Tapes*. Picador, 1997, pp. 215.

[113] Ibid., pp. 212.

[114] Ibid., 212-3.

[115] Brody, Richard. "'Rolling Thunder Revue,' Reviewed: Martin Scorsese's Slippery Concert Chronicle of Bob Dylan's Concert." *New Yorker*, 14 June 2019.

[116] Marcus, Greil. *The Old, Weird America: The World of Bob Dylan's Basement Tapes*. Picador, 1997, pp. 47.

[117] Ibid., pp. 50.

[118] Ibid., pp. 176.

[119] *Rolling Thunder Revue: A Bob Dylan Story by Martin Scorsese*. Directed by Martin Scorsese, performances by Bob Dylan, Sam Shepard, Ronnee Blakley, Larry Sloman, Allen Ginsberg, Martin Von Haselberg, Sharon Stone, and Michael Murphey, Netflix, 2019, 1:24:50.

[120] Ibid.

[121] Andrews, Travis M. "A guide to all the fake stuff Martin Scorsese put in his new Bob Dylan documentary." *Washington Post*, 18 June 2019.

[122] *Rolling Thunder Revue: A Bob Dylan Story by Martin Scorsese*. Directed by Martin Scorsese, performances by Bob Dylan, Sam Shepard, Ronnee Blakley, Larry Sloman, Allen Ginsberg, Martin Von Haselberg, Sharon Stone, and Michael Murphey, Netflix, 2019, 1:24:50.

[123] *Rolling Thunder Revue: A Bob Dylan Story by Martin Scorsese*. Directed by Martin Scorsese, performances by Bob Dylan, Sam Shepard, Ronnee Blakley, Larry Sloman, Allen Ginsberg, Martin Von Haselberg, Sharon Stone, and Michael Murphey, Netflix, 2019, 00:04:45.

[124] Zacharek, Stephanie. "Martin Scorsese's Bob Dylan Film *Rolling Thunder Revue* Is One of the Most Truthful Movies You'll See in 2019." *Time*, 12 June 2019.

[125] Thompson, Dave. "Scorsese, Dylan and the Rolling Thunder Revue." *Goldmine*, 13 June 2019.

[126] Zacharek, Stephanie. "Martin Scorsese's Bob Dylan Film *Rolling Thunder Revue* Is One of the Most Truthful Movies You'll See in 2019." *Time*, 12 June 2019.

[127] *Rolling Thunder Revue: A Bob Dylan Story by Martin Scorsese*. Directed by Martin Scorsese, performances by Bob Dylan, Sam Shepard, Ronnee Blakley, Larry Sloman, Allen Ginsberg, Martin Von Haselberg, Sharon Stone, and Michael Murphey, Netflix, 2019, 1:53:50.

[128] Rizov, Vadim. "*Rolling Thunder Review: A Bob Dylan Story by Martin Scorsese:* Tangled Up in Tanner." *Filmmaker Magazine*, 10 June 2019.

[129] Hoffman, Jordan. "Martin Scorsese's Bob Dylan 'Doc': What's True, and What's Fiction?" *Vanity Fair*, 12 June 2019.

[130] "The Dark Horse." *Tanner '88*, written by Garry Trudeau, directed by Robert Altman, HBO, 1988.

[131] Jameson, Richard T. "Television: Tanner '88: For Real Is for Now." *Film Comment* Vol. 24, No. 3, May-June 1988, pp. 74.

[132] Gamson, Joshua. *Claims to Fame: Celebrity in Contemporary Culture*. U of California P, 1994, pp. 192.

[133] Zacharek, Stephanie. "Martin Scorsese's Bob Dylan Film *Rolling Thunder Revue* Is One of the Most Truthful Movies You'll See in 2019." *Time*, 12 June 2019.

[134] Ibid.

[135] Ibid.

[136] *Rolling Thunder Revue: A Bob Dylan Story by Martin Scorsese*. Directed by Martin Scorsese, performances by Bob Dylan, Sam Shepard, Ronnee Blakley, Larry Sloman, Allen Ginsberg, Martin Von Haselberg, Sharon Stone, and Michael Murphey, Netflix, 2019, 0:32:08.

[137] Marcus, Sharon. *The Drama of Celebrity*. Princeton UP, 2019, pp. 76.

[138] Gamson, Joshua. *Claims to Fame: Celebrity in Contemporary Culture*. U of California P, 1994, pp. 193.

[139] Ibid., pp. 190, 192.

[140] Ibid., pp. 187-9.

[141] Kornfield, Meryl. "GOP candidate from New Jersey accused of pandering after he transforms into cowboy for Texas run." *Washington Post*, 28 March 2021.

[142] Gamson, Joshua. *Claims to Fame: Celebrity in Contemporary Culture*. U of California P, 1994, pp. 193.

[143] Ibid., pp. 195.

[144] Siegel, Ethan. "Newt Gingrich Exemplifies Just How Unscientific America Is." *Forbes*, 5 August 2016.

[145] Ibid.

[146] Haberman, Maggie. "Caitlyn Jenner Is Exploring a Run for Governor of California." *New York Times*, 8 April 2021.

[147] Russo, Giovanni. "Matthew McConaughey, governor of Texas? Voters seem all right with the idea, a poll found." *New York Times*, 19 April 2021.

[148] *Rolling Thunder Revue: A Bob Dylan Story by Martin Scorsese*. Directed by Martin Scorsese, performances by Bob Dylan, Sam Shepard, Ronnee Blakley, Larry Sloman, Allen Ginsberg, Martin Von Haselberg, Sharon Stone, and Michael Murphey, Netflix, 2019, 0:32:08.

Works Cited

Adams, Sam. “Scorsese’s Rolling Thunder Energy.” *Slate*, 13 June 2019.

Andrews, Travis M. “A guide to all the fake stuff Martin Scorsese put in his new Bob Dylan documentary.” *Washington Post*, 18 June 2019.

Aspden, Peter. “One man killed the pop song.” *Financial Times*, 8 October 2010.

Benjamin, Walter. “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction.” 1936. Trans. by Harry Zohn. *Marxists.org*, 1998.

Brody, Richard. “‘Rolling Thunder Revue,’ Reviewed: Martin Scorsese’s Slippery Concert Chronicle of Bob Dylan’s Concert.” *New Yorker*, 14 June 2019.

Cossu, Andrea. *It Ain’t Me, Babe: Bob Dylan and the Performance of Authenticity*. Routledge, 2016.

D’Addario, Daniel. “‘This Is Paris’ Exposes Paris Hilton’s Trauma But Can’t Crack Her Personality: TV Review.” *Variety*, 7 September 2020.

Dargis, Manohla. “‘Rolling Thunder’ Review: A New Ballad of Bob, Sung by Marty.” *New York Times*, 11 June 2019.

Deacon, Desley. “‘Films as foreign offices’: transnationalism at Paramount in the twenties and early thirties.” *Connected Worlds: History in Transnational Perspective*, edited by Ann Curthoys and Marilyn Lake, ANU E Press, 2005, pp. 139-157.

“Definitions of Documentary.” *DocumentarySite*, 1 Feb 2020, https://www.documentarysite.com/2020/02/01/definitions-of-documentary/

“Documentary Conventions.” *DocumentarySite*, 1 Feb 2020, https://www.documentarysite.com/2020/02/01/documentary-conventions/

Dove, Ivan. “KISS Rock Quartet Brings Excitement.” *New York Times*, 23 March 1975.

Dylan, Bob. *Chronicles: Volume One.* Simon & Schuster, 2004.

Dylan, Bob. "Mr. Tambourine Man." *Bringin' It All Back Home*. Capitol, 1965.

Dylan, Bob. "Seeing the Real You at Last." *Empire Burlesque*. Columbia, 1985.

Firth, Simon. "Rock: Authenticity and commercialism." *Encyclopeida Britannica,* 1999.

Gamson, Joshua. *Claims to Fame: Celebrity in Contemporary America*. U of California P, 1994.

Gardner, Robert Owen. "Tradition and Authenticity in Popular Music." *Symbolic Interaction*, Vol. 28, No. 1, Winter 2005, pp. 135-44. *JSTOR.*

Godard on Godard: Critical writings by Jean-Luc Godard, edited by Jean Narboni and Tom Milne, Da Capo Press, 1972.

Grierson, John. "The Documentary Producer." *Cinema Quarterly,* 2.1, Autumn 1933, pp. 7-9.

Griffin, Sid. *Shelter Form the Storm: Bob Dylan's Rolling Thunder Years*. Jawbone, 2010.

Haberman, Maggie. "Caitlyn Jenner Is Exploring a Run for Governor of California." *New York Times,* 8 April 2021.

Handler, Richard. "Authenticity." *Anthropology Today*, vol. 2, no. 1, 1986, pp. 2–4. *JSTOR*.

Hershkovits, David. "How Kim Kardashian broke the internet with her butt." *The Guardian,* 17 December 2014.

Hill, Michael. "50 years later, Bob Dylan's motorcycle crash remains mysterious." *Seattle Times,* 27 July 2016.

Hoffman, Jordan. "Martin Scorsese's Bob Dylan 'Doc': What's True, and What's Fiction?" *Vanity Fair*, 12 June 2019.

Horkheimer, Max and Theodor Adorno. *Dialectic of Enlightenment: Philosophical Fragments*. 1947. Trans. by Edmund Jephcott. Ed. by Gunzelin Schmid Noerr. Stanford UP, 2002.

Jameson, Richard T. “Television: Tanner ’88: For Real Is for Now.” *Film Comment* Vol. 24, No. 3, May-June 1988, pp. 73-5.

Kornfield, Meryl. “GOP candidate from New Jersey accused of pandering after he transforms into cowboy for Texas run.” *Washington Post*, 28 March 2021.

Marcus, Greil. *The Old, Weird America: The World of Bob Dylan’s Basement Tapes*. Picador, 1997.

Marcus, Sharon. *The Drama of Celebrity*. Princeton UP, 2019.

No Direction Home: Bob Dylan. Directed by Martin Scorsese, performances by Bob Dylan, Pete Seeger, Dave Van Ronk, Allen Ginsberg, Joan Baez, and Suze Rotolo, Paramount, 2005.

Pareles, Jon. “Bob Dylan’s Glam Hootenanny: Returning to Rolling Thunder.” *New York Times*, 5 June 2019.

Rizov, Vadim. “*Rolling Thunder Review: A Bob Dylan Story by Martin Scorsese:* Tangled Up in Tanner.” *Filmmaker Magazine*, 10 June 2019.

Roepert, Richard. “‘Rolling Thunder Revue’ revisits a tour when Bob Dylan sang, drove the bus – and even had fun.” *Chicago Sun-Times*, 10 June 2019.

Rolling Thunder Revue: A Bob Dylan Story by Martin Scorsese. Directed by Martin Scorsese, performances by Bob Dylan, Sam Shepard, Ronnee Blakley, Larry Sloman, Allen Ginsberg, Martin Von Haselberg, Sharon Stone, and Michael Murphey, Netflix, 2019.

Rotha, Paul. “The Role of the Director.” *Cinema Quarterly*, 2.2, Winter 1933-4, pp. 78-9.

Russo, Giovanni. “Matthew McConaughey, governor of Texas? Voters seem all right with the idea, a poll found.” *New York Times*, 19 April 2021.

Sanders, Daryl. *That Thin, Wild Mercury Sound: Dylan, Nashville, and the Making of* Blonde on Blonde. Chicago Review Press, 2018.

Seitz, Matt Zoller. “Rolling Thunder Revue: A Bob Dylan Story by Martin Scorsese.” *RogerEbert.com*, 12 June 2019.

Siegel, Ethan. “Newt Gingrich Exemplifies Just How Unscientific America Is.” *Forbes*, 5 August 2016.

Sugano, Toshiyuki. “Up close and personal: Why Dylan is so big in Japan.” *Japan Times*, 22 May 2011.

“The Dark Horse.” *Tanner ’88*, written by Garry Trudeau, directed by Robert Altman, HBO, 1988.

Thompson, Dave. “Scorsese, Dylan and the Rolling Thunder Revue.” *Goldmine*, 13 June 2019.

Trilling, Lionel. *Sincerity and Authenticity*. Harvard UP, 1971.

Wilentz, Sean. *Bob Dylan in America*. Anchor, 2011.

Wolk, Josh. “Carrot Top gets no respect.” *Entertainment Weekly*, 16 May 1997.

Zacharek, Stephanie. “Martin Scorsese’s Bob Dylan Film *Rolling Thunder Revue* Is One of the Most Truthful Movies You’ll See in 2019.” *Time*, 12 June 2019.