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# Born With Nothing and Better Off That Way: Bruce Springsteen's Evolving Hero

Michele R. DeVinney

*Indiana University-Purdue University Fort Wayne*, devinnem@ipfw.edu

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BORN WITH NOTHING AND BETTER OFF THAT WAY:  
BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN'S EVOLVING HERO

Michele R. DeVinney

Sponsor: John Minton

Department of Liberal Studies

Indiana University-Purdue University Fort Wayne

The music of Bruce Springsteen has long been regarded and heralded as the voice of the working-class hero. Over the years, that hero has changed, taking on more worldly and culturally expansive dimensions. By examining two of his albums, 1978's *Darkness on the Edge of Town* and 1995's *The Ghost of Tom Joad*, the tone and perspective of those characters—transcending Springsteen's own autobiographical context—can be fully appreciated. The lyrical content and musical tone of the respective collections, and the close analysis of both, demonstrate that Springsteen captures not only his own personal evolution but the changing social and political climate that he perceives, giving us a glimpse into the diversity and isolation that exists across the American landscape.