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Approaches to Direct Transformation through the Examples of Selected Rock Cover Songs

1. Introduction

Once you've read the dictionary,
every other book is just a remix.

The above statement is an example of a shower thought¹. It has been circulating the Web for many years now², making it difficult to pinpoint who the author was and where it was first posted. The quote is a joke, but as with so many other jokes it contains within it the kernel of a great truth – that every text can be regarded as a transformation and reinterpretation of the dictionary. As a consequence, one can readily associate the idea behind the joke with intertextuality.

Intertextuality is a concept that has been used in the world of literature and linguistics for some years now. It refers to the way in which one text can refer to another, either explicitly or implicitly. Intertextuality is not limited to literature alone; there are other dictionaries, so to speak. Intertextuality can be encountered in other art forms as well, including music.

¹ A sudden idea that comes to mind during an unrelated mundane activity.

² For instance, here: https://www.reddit.com/r/Showerthoughts/comments/33p4bp/once_youve_read_the_dictionary_every_other_book/.

An example of intertextuality in music is the lyrics of a cover song. A cover is a new version of an original song, performed by a different artist. The rules of covering a song are not fixed; the covering artist may change some words or add more lines to the song's lyrics. Since lyrics are also a type of a text, the idea behind intertextuality and its assumptions can be applied to covers as well. For the purpose of this paper, I selected, compared, and analysed a number of rock cover songs, considering in each case direct transformation.

2. Background and context

The idea of covering a song or track has been practised for as long as there has been a music industry. In the 20th century, which can be seen as the early days of the modern music and recording industry, it was a standard practise for different artists to record their versions of popular songs, especially those in English. Such an approach was commonplace in the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s, especially in the UK and the USA. Recording a cover provided an opportunity for new and budding musicians to gain popular recognition; if a song was already popular and widespread (it had already become a hit, in other words), recording a cover gave the other artist a chance to spark the interest of the public through an already known title but in a different arrangement. Many rock bands that entered the mainstream applied this practice when recording their debut albums³. In terms of being the source of inspiration, Chuck Berry⁴ and Bob Dylan⁵ are among those who have been covered the most by other artists.

Probably one of the most well-known instances in which a cover song surpassed the original version is the case of the track *All Along the Watchtower*. Written and recorded by Bob Dylan in 1967 for his eighth album⁶, it was covered by The Jimi Hendrix Experience⁷ only a year later. The most notable difference between the two versions is the genre in which each are portrayed: Dylan's version is folk-oriented, while Hendrix's transformation has a more rock sound to it. Hendrix replaced the acoustic

³ For example, the debut albums of bands such as Black Sabbath, AC/DC, Led Zeppelin, Deep Purple, The Rolling Stones, and The Doors all contain at least one cover song.

⁴ An American singer, guitarist, and songwriter who pioneered rock and roll.

⁵ An American singer, guitarist, songwriter, and poet.

⁶ *John Wesley Harding* (1967).

⁷ An American-English rock band led by Jimi Hendrix himself.

guitar with an electric one and completely dropped the harmonica. Albin Zak, a musicology scholar, claims that the adaptation is characteristic of three main points:

There are three basic strategies apparent in this transformation (of Dylan's version): (1) the intensification of essential musical gestures and formal divisions; (2) the introduction of pitch material dissonant with the pentatonic collection of the original; and (3) the tracing of a long-range, goal-directed melodic line over the call-and-response structure of the arrangement.⁸

Interestingly, Dylan himself was very impressed with the cover. In a 1995 interview, he said:

It overwhelmed me, really. He had such talent, he could find things inside a song and vigorously develop them. He found things that other people wouldn't think of finding in there. He probably improved upon it by the spaces he was using. I took license with the song from his version, actually, and continue to do it to this day⁹.

Dylan also said that whenever he is performing the song, he treats it like a tribute to Jimi Hendrix, despite it being his own piece of music¹⁰.

Another example of a successful cover comes from the British rock band Status Quo¹¹. Throughout their career, spanning seven decades, Status Quo has recorded numerous remakes of the works of different artists. Two particular covers in their catalogue stand out: *Rockin' All Over the World* and *In the Army Now*. Both adaptations have become more readily recognisable than the original versions.

In the case of RAOTW¹², the original track was written and recorded by the American guitarist, singer, and songwriter John Fogerty, formerly of Creedence Clearwater Revival¹³. Despite both artists being associated with

⁸ Albin Zak, "Bob Dylan and Jimi Hendrix: Juxtaposition and Transformation," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 57, no. 3 (February 2005): 631.

⁹ "A Midnight Chat with Dylan," Sun Sentinel, published September 28, 1995, accessed May 6, 2023, <https://www.sun-sentinel.com/1995/09/28/a-midnight-chat-with-dylan/>.

¹⁰ Jean-Michele Guesdon and Philippe Margotin, *Bob Dylan All the Songs: The Story Behind Every Track* (New York City: Black Dog & Leventhal Publishers, 2015), 289.

¹¹ A popular band formed in London, UK. They play boogie rock, hard rock, and pop rock.

¹² A commonly used abbreviation of the title of both the song and album (*Rockin' All Over the World*).

¹³ An American rock band formed in California that played roots rock, blues rock, swamp rock, and country rock. The band was highly popular in the 1960s and 1970s.

the rock genre, the two versions of RAOTW significantly differ from one another as they represent two separate rock subgenres. Fogerty's version is an example of roots rock, whereas Status Quo's version falls under the boogie rock category. The cover features a distinctive instrumental arrangement, characterised by an up-tempo beat and a strong rhythm section. Fogerty wrote and recorded the song for his second solo album¹⁴ in 1975. Status Quo recorded their own version in 1977 for their tenth studio album which they named after the song. This version became more popular than the original, peaking at #3¹⁵, whilst Fogerty's peaked at #27¹⁶. Moreover, Status Quo's version received additional recognition when it was chosen to open the Live Aid¹⁷ event. Additionally, the cover version has found worldwide use in the world of sports. The song is often played during football matches and other sports events¹⁸. In 1988, Status Quo re-recorded the song for Sport Aid¹⁹, titled "Running All Over the World" with slightly altered lyrics, replacing *rockin'* with *running*. What is more, to make the song more fitting to the theme of the event, the reference to *dancing shoes* in the line *Come on out with your dancing shoes* was replaced with *running shoes*. Despite it being only a slight change, it goes on to show that in terms of direct transformation, the other party may amend the lyrics either to their own liking, or to make them fit a particular situation, opportunity, or event. Furthermore, Francis Rossi²⁰ would also alter one line of the song during some concerts in the 1970s and early 1980s²¹. The original line in question goes as follows: *We're going crazy and we're going today*. The change would sometimes happen at the very beginning of the line: *Are we going stupid and we're going today*. This alteration is quite curious, as it results in something that is simultaneously a question and an affirmative in a single sentence. However, lyrics at times tend not to

¹⁴ Titled simply *John Fogerty*.

¹⁵ UK Top 10.

¹⁶ USA Top 40.

¹⁷ A multi-venue benefit concert was held on Saturday 13 July 1985 to raise funds for relief of the 1983–1985 famine in Ethiopia. Status Quo was the opening act. Many people saw it fitting to open such an event with this particular song.

¹⁸ In Poland, for instance, it can be heard during ski jumping events.

¹⁹ A sport-themed campaign for African famine relief, first started in 1986.

²⁰ The band's main vocalist and lead guitarist.

²¹ This change can be heard in this recording at around 29:13. Link: "Status Quo - Live! At The Glasgow Apollo, 30th April 1982 (Radio Clyde Broadcast)," YouTube, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T4aEEGaG8eo&t=213s> (accessed September 12, 2023).

follow the same grammatical structure as a complete sentence in written prose. This example illustrates that covers performed live can be subject to changes to the original lyrics.

Another single and cover song by Status Quo, which became one of their biggest hits, is the track *In the Army Now*²², included on their 1986 album of the same name. The original song was written, recorded, and released in 1981 by the South African-born Dutch duo Bolland&Bolland²³. Interestingly, the original version has a slightly different title: it is known as *You're In the Army Now*, whereas Status Quo dropped the phrase *You're*. The band recorded two versions of the song: one in 1986 and the other in 2010. The modern re-recording is a different interpretation. The original *You're In the Army Now*, as well as Status Quo's first version of the cover, are examples of an anti-war song, as evidenced by the lyrics at the beginning of the seventh verse:

*You've got your orders better shoot on sight
Your finger's on the trigger but it don't²⁴ seem right.*

However, the 2010 re-recording became a pro-army song. Status Quo altered the lyrics and re-recorded the song with the Corps of Army Music Choir. The difference is as follows:

*You've got your orders, better put things right
Your finger's on the trigger, now it's time to fight.*

This modification caused the song to convey a message that was completely contrary to that intended by the original authors.

Further on in this paper (in Section 4), I have included a comparison and analysis of covers made by two bands: Status Quo and The Red Hot Chili Peppers. In the case of Status Quo, I have compared the lyrics of the original version of *In the Army Now* with the 2010 re-recording²⁵. In the case of the latter, I have compared their cover of the song *Love Rollercoaster* with the original by Ohio Players.

²² Peaked at #2 and remained on the charts for 14 weeks.

²³ Rob Bolland and Ferdi Bolland.

²⁴ Deliberate use of don't instead of doesn't.

²⁵ To avoid confusion, I am referring to the "original" cover by Status Quo from 1986. The Bolland & Bolland version is in no way different from Status Quo's 80s version (apart from the slightly altered title).

3. Literature review

The term ‘intertextuality’ was coined in the late 1960s by Julia Kristeva, a Bulgarian-French semiotician, philosopher, and literary critic. Her idea of intertextuality lies in the assumption that all written texts are both interconnected and interdependent²⁶. She believes that all texts are based upon already existing texts, forming a sophisticated and complex network of different linguistic, cultural, and historical references and relevancies. Kristeva’s theory of intertextuality emphasizes the indispensable role of the reader in shaping and forming meaning based on a given text. People vary in age and come from different social, cultural, geographical, and linguistic backgrounds, so their interpretations of a text will certainly vary²⁷. In other words: readers decode texts according to the sources and experiences which they find familiar.

Several researchers have considered intertextuality, including Roland Barthes²⁸, Graham Allen²⁹, Elaine Martin,³⁰ and Mikhail Bakhtin³¹. Imad Abu Dayyeh is another likeminded academic, who writes,

The common principle is that, just as signs refer to other signs rather than directly to things, texts refer to other texts. The artist writes and paints, not from nature but from his or her predecessors[sic] ways of textualizing nature. Thus an intertext is a text lurking inside another, shaping meanings, whether the author is conscious of this or not³².

Dayyeh also states that the readers or audience also play a role in the reinterpretation, since the end effect depends on their knowledge and the established literary tradition³³.

²⁶ Julia Kristeva, *Desire in language: A Semiotic Approach to Literature and Art* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1980), 65–66.

²⁷ María Jesús Martínez Alfaro, “Intertextuality: Origins and Development of the Concept,” *Atlantis* 18, no. 1–2 (June–December 1996): 268.

²⁸ Roland Barthes, “Theory of the Text,” in *Untying the Text*, ed. R. Young (Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1981), 31–47.

²⁹ Graham Allen, *Intertextuality* (Abingdon : Routledge, 2022).

³⁰ Elaine Martin, “Intertextuality: An Introduction,” *TheComparatist* 35, no. 1 (May 2011): 148–151.

³¹ Mikhail Michajłowicz Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*, University of Texas Press Slavic Series (January 1982), ed. and trans. by Michael Holquist and Caryl Emerson.

³² Imad Abu Dayyeh, “Intertextuality in the Analysis of Text and Inter-Semiotic Translation,” *Bethlehem University Journal* 10, (1991): 77–79.

³³ *Ibid.*, 79.

The idea of intertextuality was further developed by Gérard Genette, a prominent French literary theorist. Genette undertook the effort to expand the theory. In his study, he identified intertextuality as part of a broader term – transtextuality. The idea behind this term points to the various relationships between different texts. According to Genette, transtextuality can be divided into five main types:

1. Intertextuality: this can be understood as the relationship between one text and another. It could be a single text or multiple others. This type involves quotations, allusions, and plagiarism. Moreover, it emphasises the interconnectedness of text and how they “co-operate” with each other;
2. Paratextuality: this type refers to the additional fragments of text that accompany a larger one. These fragments are represented by titles, subtitles, footnotes, prefaces, etc. Paratextuality provides the reader with more information and a broader context. It can also influence one’s interpretation of a text. Paratextuality can be further divided into peritextuality and epitextuality³⁴;
3. Metatextuality: this can be understood as a state of being aware of other existing texts. In other words, a reference to another text could be found within a different text. It can be represented as a form of explicit or implicit critical commentary³⁵;
4. Hypertextuality: according to Genette, this type can be explained as “any relationship uniting a text B (which I shall call the hypertext) to an earlier text A ([...] the hypotext).” He further explains that a metatext, like a certain page of a text, mentions a completely different text but not in the form of a commentary³⁶ – this could be a parody, spoof, sequel, or translation³⁷. Genette also added that text B would not exist without text A³⁸;
5. Architextuality: this type refers to the act of classification or categorization of texts within a broader literary system or genre. It is up to the readers’ perception and expectations of a text – it

³⁴ Sayyed Ali Mirenayat, and Elaheh Soofastaei, “Gerard Genette and the Categorization of Textual Transcendence,” *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences*6, no. 5 (September 2015): 535.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 535.

³⁶ Gerard Genette, *Palimpsests: Literature in the Second Degree*, (United States of America: University of Nebraska Press, 1997), 4–5.

³⁷ Mirenayat, and Soofastaei, “Gerard Genette and the Categorization of Textual Transcendence,” 536.

³⁸ Genette, *Palimpsests: Literature in the Second Degree*, 5.

is up to the reader, for example, to decide whether a poem is truly a poem, as the poem cannot state this fact by itself³⁹.

These five types of transtextuality provide a framework for analyzing the numerous ways in which a text interacts not only with one another but with its readers as well. By recognizing these different types of transtextuality in a particular text, one has the opportunity to gain a deeper comprehension of the text's meaning and significance.

Additionally, in terms of hypertextuality, Genette also introduced the process of 'transformation.' He identified two separate means of transformation: 'direct' (or 'simple') and 'indirect' (or 'complex'⁴⁰). A direct transformation could be, for example, retelling an original story in a new environment and age. As an example of this, Genette suggests the transformation of *Odyssey*⁴¹ to *Ulysses*⁴² (the setting of the latter is Dublin). In the case of the indirect transformation, Genette suggests the transformative process of *Odyssey* to *Aeneid*⁴³. In this case, Genette states that "Virgil does not transpose the action of the *Odyssey* [...]. Instead, he tells an entirely different story: the adventures of Aeneas, not those of Ulysses."⁴⁴ Despite the differences between a direct and indirect transformation, there is no assumption that the direct transformation is more similar to the original than the result of an indirect transformation. Genette points out that Joyce presented history in a completely different manner than Homer; however, Virgil told the story in a style more similar to Homer's⁴⁵.

4. Data analysis on the basis of selected cover songs

This article considers the direct transformation of a text in the context of selected songs and their rock covers. My goal was to study whether the cover songs differ from the original versions in terms of their lyrics and to break down this type of transformation into the several approaches a musical

³⁹ Ibid., 4-5.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 5-7.

⁴¹ An epic ancient Greek poem attributed to Homer.

⁴² A novel by the Irish writer James Joyce.

⁴³ An epic Latin epic poem written by the Roman poet Virgil.

⁴⁴ Genette, *Palimpsests: Literature in the Second Degree*, 5-7.

⁴⁵ Genette, *Palimpsests: Literature in the Second Degree*, 6.

entity might adopt when covering a piece of music. The transformative aspect of hypertextuality refers to one's individual approach to an original text and the relationship between the two texts; therefore, I believe this notion can be applied not only to prose, novels or poems but to music and lyrics as well.

The first part of the data analysis section concerns the differences between two versions of what are considered to be the same song. In terms of direct transformation, this particular song is an example of reinterpreting and updating a text to fit the context of the modern frame of reference. Over the years, *In the Army Now* has become an internationally recognisable song associated with all things military⁴⁶. The popularity and theme of the song led to the process of re-recording it with the Corps of Army Music Choir. For the purpose of the single, the band was invited to the Bulford Camp base of the 4th Rifles in Wiltshire to film a music video with its soldiers. All proceeds from the re-recording went to two charities: the British Forces Foundation and Help For Heroes. For it to happen, the group had to change the original lyrics to suit the then-current circumstances. The band could not record an anti-war/anti-army song with the armed forces to raise funds for an army-related charity. When listening to both versions, a significant change in the tone and meaning of the song can be noticed; the 2010 version praises military personnel and the call to arms⁴⁷. However, the band stated that they do not advocate war or conflict of any kind. Instead, they support the families of the allied troops injured in combat⁴⁸. Rick Parfitt⁴⁹ of the band even states:

We were talking to the troops and it just makes you realise the bravery of those guys. We were talking to a man who lost his legs. He's only 27 but he was chipper, laughing and joking. Their courage is amazing. We feel they're doing a fantastic job and showing incredibly[sic] bravery going and this is the least we can do to give something back⁵⁰.

⁴⁶ Additionally, it is considered one of the most popular songs of the 80s.

⁴⁷ One can only assume to defend one's country and nation.

⁴⁸ This can be found in the booklet included with the CD mini-album containing the single.

⁴⁹ Status Quo's former rhythm guitarist and second vocalist.

⁵⁰ "Status Quo: Back in the Army Now," British Forces Foundation, accessed September 10, 2023, <https://bff.org.uk/news/status-quo-back-in-the-army-now/>.

Below are the two versions of *In the Army Now* by Status Quo (the differentiating lyrics are in bold).

1986 lyrics

**A vacation in a foreign land
Uncle Sam does the best he can**

You're in the army now
Oh oh you're in the army, now

Now you remember what the draft man said
Nothing to do all day but stay in bed
You're in the army now
Oh oh you're in the army, now

**You'll be the hero of the neighbourhood
Nobody knows that you've left for good**

You're in the army now
Oh oh you're in the army, now

**Smiling faces as you wait to land
But once you get there no-one gives a damn**

You're in the army now
Oh oh you're in the army, now

Hand grenades flying over your head
Missiles flying over your head
If you **want to** survive get out of bed
You're in the army now
Oh oh you're in the army, now

Shots ring out in the dead of night
The sergeant calls - 'Stand up and fight!'

You're in the army now
Oh oh you're in the army, now

**You've got your orders better shoot on sight
Your finger's on the trigger but it don't seem right**

You're in the army now
Oh oh you're in the army, now
You're in the army now
Oh oh you're in the army, now

2010 lyrics

You're on your way to a foreign land
Now's the time to do what you can
You're in the army now
Oh oh you're in the army, now

Now you remember what the draft man said
Nothing to do all day but stay in bed
You're in the army now
Oh oh you're in the army, now

You'll be the hero of the neighbourhood
Counting the days till you're back for good
You're in the army now
Oh oh you're in the army, now

Smiling faces as you wait to land
Side by side, every woman and man
You're in the army now
Oh oh you're in the army, now

Hand grenades flying over your head
Missiles flying over your head
If you **wanna** survive get out of bed
You're in the army now
Oh oh you're in the army, now

Shots ring out in the dead of night
The sergeant calls - "Stand up and fight!"
You're in the army now
Oh oh you're in the army, now

You've got your orders, better put things right
Your finger's on the trigger, now it's time to fight
You're in the army now
Oh oh you're in the army, now
You're in the army now
Oh oh you're in the army, now

Night is falling and you just can't see
Is this illusion or reality?
You're in the army now
Oh oh you're in the army, now
You're in the army now
Oh ohyou're in the army now
Oh ohyou're in the army, in the army now
(reprise)

To help raise money to support those in need, the group had to alter specific lines of the song. There are four places that contain alterations to the lyrics, as seen in Table 1. The first noticeable change occurs in the first verse. The original lines of the song are as follows:

*A vacation in a foreign land
Uncle Sam does the best he can.*

The new version goes like this:

*You're on your way to a foreign land
Now's the time to do what you can.*

The irony suggested by spending a “vacation” abroad has been removed in favour of a serious statement about being deployed to a foreign country. The re-recording lacks any mention of Uncle Sam⁵¹. This change is quite understandable, as Uncle Sam is an American concept, whereas the re-recording is aimed at the British military forces. Such an alteration was necessary in order to adjust to the then-present situation: the entire cause was to support the military personnel of the United Kingdom; the Americanism of the original would have been inappropriate to the target audience. Instead, the second line sounds more like an encouragement offered to the deployed soldiers, as if the lyrical subject was encouraging them to do their best in the upcoming battle.

⁵¹ A national personification of the federal government of the United States.

Night is falling and you just can't see
 Is this illusion or reality?
 You're in the army now
 Oh oh you're in the army, now
 You're in the army now
 Oh oh you're in the army now
 Oh oh you're in the army, in the army now
 (reprise)

The second change appears in the third verse. The original lyrics are:

*You'll be the hero of the neighbourhood
 Nobody knows that you've left for good.*

These lyrics start optimistically, promising fame and glory, only to quickly change the tone of the verse to something more sinister. The second line is dark and gloomy, as it assumes the deployed soldiers will perish in the battle, never to return home. The new lyrics change the context of the third verse and make it more optimistic, though with a maudlin note:

*You'll be the hero of the neighbourhood
 Counting the days till you're back for good.*

Here the soldiers, to whom the lyrical subject of the song is addressed, are being assured that they will return home from the battle or war after an unspecified number of days. Moreover, the soldiers are encouraged that they are facing their final fight (*back for good*), bringing a more positive outlook for the future – there will not be any need for them to participate in another battle. However, the second line can be interpreted in another way as well. Perhaps the reason for being back for good is because they will arrive home alive but unfortunately wounded and crippled, excluding them from further tours of duty in the army. It seems that the lyrical subject is encouraging them to do their best in the upcoming battle. The second interpretation could relate to those for whom the charity is aimed and allow them to identify with the song's soldiers.

Another change appears in the fourth verse. The first version of the song is:

*Smiling faces as you wait to land
But once you get there no-one gives a damn⁵².*

Meanwhile, the re-recording looks like this:

*Smiling faces as you wait to land
Side by side, every woman and man.*

The second line in the original version conveys a rather harsh picture of reality: the soldier's fate is insignificant. The *no-one* entity in this line could be the federal government, the higher-ranking members of the army and/or random civilians who have nothing in common with the deployed soldiers (i.e. they are not the soldiers' relatives nor friends). In their eyes, the lower-ranking soldiers are just cannon fodder. However, the alternative line is devoid of such a notion. Here, the band opts to arouse the feeling of comradeship. In this version there are no dividing lines, as both men and women fight and stand together (*side by side*). The soldiers are not alone, as they are fighting and defending their nation collectively.

Finally, the last change in the song occurs in the seventh line. The original is:

*You've got your orders better shoot on sight
Your finger's on the trigger but it don't seem right.*

In the re-recording, however, one can notice significant changes to both lines:

*You've got your orders, better put things right
Your finger's on the trigger, now it's time to fight.*

In this case, the act of firing a weapon has been removed in favour of *doing the right thing* – because it rhymes with the original *sight*. The *right thing* in this line probably refers to defending one's country from the nation's enemies. The second line, however, still contains the gun

⁵² As mentioned earlier in the text, Rossi often sings *gives a shit* during live performances. This change can be heard on some of the band's recent live albums, for example *Down Down & Dirty at Wacken* (2018).

connotation by keeping the *finger on the trigger* line but with an altered second clause. Here, the soldiers are encouraged and spirited to action with the declaration that the culminating point has finally arrived – the battle has commenced. The afterthought of taking another person’s life (*but it don’t seem right*) is absent.

Nevertheless, this alteration of the lyrics did spark some controversy among fans. One user on Reddit⁵³ even stated:

In 2010 the band inexplicably, indefensibly, and idiotically re-recorded this anti-war song with re-written “pro-army” lyrics, accompanied by an in[s]ane, crass and vacuous music video which I’m fairly sure will go down in human history as one of the very worst music videos ever made⁵⁴.

Criticism of the new version has also made an appearance on a fan forum board. A user under the nickname *mortified* shared their thoughts on the matter:

I have to admit, I was disappointed with the changing of the lyrics when they re-recorded In The Army Now in 2010. It altered the entire meaning and intention of the song, pretty much turning it on its head. But then you could hardly record something intended to raise funds for the army and use an anti-war/anti-armed forces song⁵⁵.

After posting their opinion, another user, *markquo*, stated: “I just ask myself How[sic] did Rossi get it so wrong?”⁵⁶, to which there were more replies but with none adding anything to the topic of the re-recording. In another corner of the Internet, a comment criticising this version can be found on YouTube in the comment section of the official live rendition from a concert in Germany in 2017. A Polish user, *kuj2887*, stated: “And true –

⁵³ A social media platform and online community where people can engage in discussions and share content in various communities known as *subreddits*.

⁵⁴ “Status Quo - ‘In the Army Now’ [Rock],” Reddit, accessed May 6, 2023, https://www.reddit.com/r/Music/comments/c5wtmy/status_quo_in_the_army_now_rock/.

⁵⁵ “1986 return/comeback,” *Status Quo Forum*, accessed September 10, 2023, <https://statusquo.boards.net/thread/14077/1986-return-comeback?page=3>.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, accessed September 10, 2023.

because at some point the band sold out and made a pro-military version (glorifying military service), and the song is originally anti-war^{57,58}.

Nonetheless, in the comment section under the official video on YouTube (posted by their music label), one can encounter numerous words of praise from people around the world, especially those who served in the army or had a relative on duty. Below are several comments which received the most likes (respectively 230, 192, and 36 likes):

- I listened to this song when I enlisted into the British army and it reminds me of the comradeship that I have. I feel blessed to survive Afghan but not so blessed to suffer with the mental trauma of the war zones I went through. When I miss my comrades I play this song and immediately I feel like I am back in my old army barracks. God bless all who serve for our queen and Country, past and present⁵⁹;
- I love the way the band put a positive spin on this song within the context of the British Army. However, the older version seems fitting as I watch Kabul fall and remember almost 500 Brits who gave their lives in that war⁶⁰;
- As a former Army wife.. love this song and the band. Thank you all servicemen and women.. I sure appreciate all you do to keep us safe⁶¹.

However, in the same comment section, one user points out the change in meaning by claiming “You can change the lyrics, but you can’t change the irony⁶²”. Their reaction earned them 619 likes⁶³, suggesting that some listeners are unwilling to accept this alteration in the song’s primary message. Nevertheless, this example shows that a cover can undergo a noticeable change and differ from the original song, yet still have some connections to it. In this case, the re-recording only exists due to the two other tracks. It represents the fifth point of Genette’s concept, because

⁵⁷ “Status Quo - In The Army Now (Official Video),” YouTube, accessed September 12, 2023, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cQy2BQAVtVc>.

⁵⁸ Author’s own translation. The original comment in Polish: “I prawdziwa - bo w pewnym momencie zespół sprzedał się i wykonał wersję pro-wojskową (gloryfikującą służbę wojskową), a utwór jest pierwotnie antywojenny”.

⁵⁹ “Status Quo - In The Army Now (Official Video),” YouTube, accessed May 6, 2023, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ObntvRcKMrE>.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, accessed May 6, 2023.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, (accessed May 6, 2023).

⁶² “Status Quo - In The Army Now (Official Video),” YouTube, accessed May 6, 2023, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ObntvRcKMrE>.

⁶³ At the time of writing this paper.

direct transformation refers to the idea that all texts are connected and influenced by other texts. Whenever an artist covers a song, it always carries a trace of the lyrics that have been written before.

The final example that this article will consider concerns a rock cover of a non-rock song. The track in question is “Love Rollercoaster” written and recorded by the Ohio Players⁶⁴. This version represents the funk genre and is featured on their 1975 album *Honey*. The song is about the ups and downs of a romantic relationship. It was a number-one hit in the US in 1976, and was certified gold. Twenty years later, the song was covered by the Red Hot Chili Peppers⁶⁵ for the soundtrack of the animated film *Beavis and Butt-Head Do America*. Contrary to the previous examples, the cover version did not outperform the original⁶⁶, although it did manage to reach a wider audience⁶⁷. The band altered the song, yet musically managed to cleave to the funk style of the track. However, the cover is distinctive due to the addition of new lines to the lyrics: an introduction and extra verses. Below are the two versions for comparison; the alternative and additional lines of the cover are in bold.

Original version by the Ohio Players	Cover version by the Red Hot Chili Peppers
Rollercoaster of love (say what?) Rollercoaster yeah oohh oohh oohh	You give me that funny feeling in my tummy Ahhh shit, yeah, that’s right, huh
Rollercoaster of love Rollercoaster yeah oohh oohh oohh	Rollercoaster of love (say what?) Rollercoaster yeah oohh oohh oohh
Rollercoaster of love Rollercoaster (wow wow wow) oohh oohh oohh	Oh, baby, you know what I’m talkin’ about Rollercoaster of love (love rollercoaster, child) Oh, yeah, it’s rollercoaster time Lovin’ you is really wild
Rollercoaster of love Rollercoaster (lovin’ you it’s been a while) oohh oohh oohh	

⁶⁴ An American funk band most popular in the 1970s.

⁶⁵ A California-based funk rock and rap rock band, also known as RHCP.

⁶⁶ Over 8 million views on YouTube as of May 2023.

⁶⁷ Over 2 million views on YouTube as of May 2023.

Your love is like a rollercoaster baby,
baby

I want to ride (baby ride)

Your love is like a rollercoaster baby,
baby

Learning to ride (aw aw aw)

Rollercoaster of love

Rollercoaster (lovin' you has been
crazy) oohh oohh oohh

Rollercoaster of love (let me ride)

Rollercoaster (one more time) oohh
oohh oohh

Rollercoaster of love

Rollercoaster (wow) oohh oohh oohh

Rollercoaster of love

Rollercoaster oohh oohh oohh

Your love is like a rollercoaster baby,
baby

I want to ride, yeah (aw aw aw)

Your love is like a rollercoaster baby,
baby

Learnin' to ride (learnin' to ride baby)

Your love is like a rollercoaster baby,
baby

I want to ride, yeah

Your love is like a rollercoaster baby,
baby

I want to ride, yeah

Love is like a rollercoaster baby, baby

Love's a rollercoaster

(Love is rollercoaster) your love is like
a rollercoaster baby, baby

**Oh, it's just a love rollercoaster
Step right up and get your tickets!**

Your love is like a rollercoaster baby,
baby

I wanna ride, yeah (aw aw aw aw aw
aw)

Your love is like a rollercoaster baby,
baby

I wanna ride, yeah

**Move it over dad cause I'm a
double-dipper!**

**Upside down on the zip-zip-zipper
1, 2, 1, 2, 3, oh I've got a ticket so
ride with me**

**Mary go down on the merry-go-
round**

All is fair on the fair ground

Love go slow, love go fast

Licorice twist gonna whip your ass

Rollercoaster of love (say what?)

Rollercoaster **yeah** oohh oohh oohh

Rollercoaster of love

**Can you get off our love
rollercoaster?**

Your love is like a rollercoaster baby,
baby

I **wanna** ride, yeah

Your love is like a rollercoaster baby,
baby

I wanna ride

**I will be there for you, I will be
your man**

**Move over, dad, cause I'm a double
dipper!**

**Upside down on the zip-zip-zipper
1, 2, 1, 2, 3, I've got a ticket so
ride with me**

Mary go down on the merry-go-round
 All is fair on the fair ground
 Love go slow, love go fast
 Licorice twist gonna whip your ass

Rollercoaster of love (say what?)
 Rollercoaster yeah oohh oohh
 oohh
 Rollercoaster
 Love rollercoaster, child
 Lovin' you is really wild
 Love lovelovelovelovelovelovel
 ovelove⁶⁸
 Rollercoaster
 Uhuh (ooh ooh, ooh ooh)

Your love is like a rollercoaster baby,
 baby
 I wanna ride, yeah (yeah, this here
 joker's the ride)
 Your love is like a rollercoaster baby,
 baby
 I wanna ride, (yes you do, yes you
 do, yes you do)
 Your love is like (it's like what?)
 a rollercoaster baby, baby
 I wanna ride
 Your love is like a rollercoaster baby,
 baby
 I wanna ride
 (reprise)

As seen in the above comparison, the Red Hot Chili Peppers performed the song in a more sexualised and vulgar manner; it is also slightly longer than the original version. With this approach, the band exaggerated the sexual overtone, and perhaps even expanded the original meaning of the song (i.e. being in a close relationship with one's significant other). Nonetheless, this was done intentionally, since the cover song was meant to be part of the soundtrack for the adult animated comedy *Beavis and*

⁶⁸ Intended measure by the band.

Butt-Head Do America, in which sex is one of the main factors driving the film's plot⁶⁹. In this case, the result of the direct transformation is larger and shows much divergence from the original version, not only by being converted into a rock track but also by being expanded with additional lines of text. The song recorded by RHCP⁷⁰ is a new adaptation and a breath of fresh air for a song that was already about twenty years old when the cover version was recorded.

The most noticeable difference between the two versions is that the Red Hot Chili Peppers version includes a new introduction, two new pre-choruses and a new verse that repeats twice. The new introduction is:

*You give me that funny feeling in my tummy
Ahhh shit, yeah, that's right, huh.*

The beginning of the song consists of the lyrical subject informing the listener about what seems to be the feeling of having butterflies in one's stomach⁷¹. Moreover, it differs from the original through the inclusion of a swear word (*shit*), which makes the song more vulgar and colloquial. The introduction is followed by a pre-chorus, which also appears right before the new verse:

*Oh, baby, you know what I'm talkin' about
Rollercoaster of love (love rollercoaster, child)
Oh, yeah, it's rollercoaster time
Lovin' you is really wild
Oh, it's just a love rollercoaster
Step right up and get your tickets!*

The next significant difference is the addition of the aforementioned new verse:

*Move over, dad, cause I'm a double dipper!
Upside down on the zip-zip-zipper
1, 2, 1, 2, 3, I've got a ticket so ride with me
Mary go down on the merry-go-round*

⁶⁹ As evidenced in the title with the verb *do*, which is an informal expression for having sexual intercourse.

⁷⁰ An abbreviation for Red Hot Chili Peppers.

⁷¹ To be excited or nervous about something.

*All is fair on the fair ground
 Love go slow, love go fast
 Licorice twist gonna whip your ass.*

The verse is rich in sexual innuendo, as it includes references to a variety of sexual activities: having more than one partner (*double dipper*⁷²), the so-called ‘69 position’⁷³ (*upside down on the [...] zipper*), sexual intercourse (*ride*⁷⁴), fellatio (*go down*⁷⁵), a woman having multiple partners simultaneously (*merry-go-round*⁷⁶), a reference to a particular position during group sex (*licorice twist*⁷⁷) and BDSM⁷⁸ practice. It seems that the band’s intent was to include as many innuendoes as possible within the length of the song and to make them rhyme. Finally, the second pre-chorus at the end of the track appears as follows:

*Rollercoaster of love (say what?)
 Rollercoaster yeah oohh oohh oohh
 Rollercoaster
 Love rollercoaster, child
 Lovin’ you is really wild
 Love lovelovelovelovelovelovelovelove
 Rollercoaster, Uhuh (ooh ooh, ooh ooh).*

This part appears to be an alteration of the original chorus with additional lines that rhyme: *Love rollercoaster, child* and *Lovin’ you is really wild*. The latter suggests passionate sexual intercourse. This part is also abundant in emphatic interjections (*ooh*). Moreover, during a particular

⁷² According to Urban Dictionary, a ‘double dipper’ is a male who has more than one sexual partner in a single night. For more information, see: “Double-Dipper,” Urban Dictionary, accessed September 12, 2023, <https://www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=Double-Dipper>.

⁷³ “69 position,” Urban Dictionary, accessed September 12, 2023, <https://www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=69+position>.

⁷⁴ “Ride,” Urban Dictionary, accessed September 12, 2023, <https://www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=Ride>.

⁷⁵ “Go down,” Urban Dictionary, accessed September 12, 2023, <https://www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=go%20down>.

⁷⁶ “Merry-go-round,” Urban Dictionary, accessed September 12, 2023, <https://www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=merry-go-round>.

⁷⁷ “Licorice Twist,” Urban Dictionary, accessed September 12, 2023, <https://www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=Licorice%20Twist>.

⁷⁸ Acronym for *bondage discipline sadomasochism*.

part of the song, the word *love* is repeated multiple times in a rapid manner. Apart from these main differences, there are also minor ones like changing the phrase *want to* into the more informal *wanna* or adding several lines for the backing vocals, for example: *yeah, this here joker's the ride, it's like what? And yes you do, yes you do, yes you do*. These are only minor additions to the lyrics, however.

The songs and their covers considered in this article are examples of direct transformation connected with hypertextuality, one of the five types of transtextuality. In analysing these examples of direct transformation, one may notice differences not only between the original and cover versions but also within the covers themselves. As far as cover songs and lyrics are concerned, I believe that direct transformation can be approached in four ways:

1. Fixed transformation of original lyrics;
2. Slight transformation of original lyrics;
3. Conversion of both the original meaning and lyrics;
4. Considerable transformation of original lyrics.

The first approach, the *fixed transformation of original lyrics*, refers to the act of delivering an adaptation that is lyrically no different from the original version. When adopting this approach, the other artist does not alter the text or change the title whatsoever. In terms of lyrics, the songs are identical and indistinguishable. The track *All Along the Watchtower* by The Jimi Hendrix Experience is an example of this type of transformation. The only transformation that occurs when this approach is applied is the instrumental rearrangement; for example, the tempo might be changed, new instruments could be introduced or some of the primary instruments could have a more prominent role in the cover.

The second method is quite similar to the first, albeit with slight or subtle differences being made by the performer or artist during the transformation. The artist covering the song might wish to alter the lyrics to their liking or for other reasons. The change is usually visible in the lyrics, although the title of the original piece of music might also undergo a slight alteration. The modification of the lyrics may occur while recording the cover in a studio or during live performance. The song “Rockin’ All

Over the World” by Status Quo can serve as an example of this particular transformation.

The third method involves altering the original lyrics in such a way that the new wording conveys a message utterly distinct, dissimilar, or contradictory⁷⁹ to the original. The cover song offers a different message to what the original creator had in mind, even though both versions may sound similar or a certain part of both songs’ lyrics are alike, such as the chorus. Nevertheless, the artist or band covering the piece still gives credit to the writer or writers of the original. The 2010 re-recording of the song *In the Army Now*, again by Status Quo, is a noteworthy example of this approach, as it is a pro-army song built on the basis of an anti-war song. The meaning has been converted significantly while leaving some verses untouched. I find this particular instance to be a problematic one for categorisation, as it combines some aspects of direct and indirect transformation.

The final approach describes an act during which the covered song is transformed considerably. This may involve an extensive alteration to the lyrics and/or adding newlines to the song. In this case, the artist has room for more artistic expression by modifying an already existing song and providing listeners with their own interpretation of the song. This approach can be exemplified by the track *Love Rollercoaster* by the Red Hot Chili Peppers, where the differences between the versions made by two musically different bands are particularly noticeable.

Conclusions

There are two aspects that may set apart an original song from a cover. The first one is the lyrics. These may remain the same or undergo alteration by the covering artist or band. If one opts to modify the original text, the change may be either slight or done to a large degree. A minor change could be a single word or an additional line worked somewhere into the text. A major change could be adding new verses or heavily transforming the original lyrics. The second difference is the musical arrangement of the songs. Artists and bands possess their own distinctive, unique, and recognisable styles. Some covers may represent a different genre or subgenre, and may feature prominent or heavier instrumentation absent in the original versions. These two differentiating features can make covers

⁷⁹ In a way that can be ironic when considering the original lyrics.

a refreshing alternative to one's favourite songs and may encourage listeners to take up new performers and musical styles.

The examples analysed demonstrate that artists need not limit themselves while covering a song. As long as they give credit to the original author(s), they can modify the song of their choice to their own liking. Alterations may, however, be forced on the artist. Status Quo made a 180-degree turn by changing "In the Army Now" from an anti-war song into a pro-army song to suit the needs of the military-themed charity for whom they were performing the song. The song was already recognisable and had gained international fame; therefore, it is understandable why they chose this song for the charity. Conveniently, the song already covered a military topic which made the choice even easier. All they had to do was to alter the lyrics. However, this change was not without its critics, even if the band's intentions were good-natured (to raise money for those in need). The Red Hot Chili Peppers, on the other hand, modified *Love Rollercoaster* (originally a song about relationship issues) into something far more carnal. Their version conveys many erotic references which are included in a newly added verse. In this case, the change was necessary, as their cover was meant to be included in the soundtrack of an adult animation (*Beavis and Butt-Head Do America*), in which sex is one of the main plot devices. It was essential to produce a track that fit the movie's tone.

Regardless, as far as artistic freedom is concerned, there does not have to be any crucial or particular reason for altering a song when recording or performing a cover. Anyone is free to express themselves however they desire, as long as they respect the original writer's effort and not commit copyright infringement. The lyrics can be changed to reflect the new performer's perspective or to update the song for a contemporary audience.

Cover songs are examples of direct transformation, as they involve the reinterpretation or alteration of an existing piece of music. The proposed methods for distinguishing between the different approaches to this type of transformation are suggestions that might be subject to change. These ideas could be further expanded, improved, and elaborated upon using different cover songs, especially of other music genres, for instance, rap and pop music, both of which are rich in covers. In rap, it is more common to encounter instances of sampling rather than traditional covers. The act of

sampling involves taking a portion of an existing song and incorporating it into a new composition, which also fits the notion of direct transformation.

It is also worth noting that in the modern music industry, not only can lyrics be considered as text. This also applies to music videos, voices, and generally music itself. Thus, intertextuality can be analysed in various forms. Intertextuality operates on the premise of establishing connections and relationships between a contemporary text and its predecessors, aiming to evoke a sense of recognition among the audience, enriched by personal experience.

Furthermore, there is a possibility that more than the four approaches mentioned in this article can be identified, scrutinised, and described when studying different examples of covers. Regardless of the approach taken, covers are a form of intertextuality because they reference and transform existing texts. They create a dialogue between the original song and the new version, inviting listeners to compare and contrast the two. I highly encourage music lovers to seek alternative versions of their favourite songs to compare them and spot any differences. This process can lead to new insights and interpretations, as well as to a deeper appreciation of the original song and its place in the cultural landscape. There is also a possibility that one could find the experience enjoyable. After all, there can never be too much music in one's life.

Maciej Niemiec

Abstract

Intertextuality, a term coined by Julia Kristeva, is a crucial aspect of all forms of creative expression, including literature, music, and art. The idea of intertextuality has been further expanded by Gérard Genette, who included intertextuality as one of the five aspects of the broader phenomenon of transtextuality. Among these several types is hypertextuality, which refers to the relationship between a text and its hypertextual extensions or variations. Within the scope of hypertextuality, Genette identified two methods of transforming a text A into a text B: direct and indirect transformation. This paper considers direct transformation. Although its primary association is with prose and poetry, it can also be extended to encompass song lyrics. In this article, several rock covers serve as examples of text B, and consideration is given to how they differ from their original counterparts (text A), albeit not in a musical form, but rather in terms of their lyrics. In the process, four different approaches were found for delivering a transformation of the original lyrics: *fixed transformation*, *slight transformation*, *conversion of both the original meaning and lyrics*, and *considerable transformation*.

Keywords: Gérard Genette, intertextuality, transtextuality, hypertextuality, direct transformation, rock covers

Słowa kluczowe: Gérard Genette, intertekstualność, transtekstualność, hipertekstualność, transformacja bezpośrednia, covery rockowe