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The History of Rock's Pasts through Rock Covers (1998)

Deena Weinstein

She knows how to love me / Yes indeed / Boy you don't know / What she do to me.
—Little Richard, "Tutti Frutti"

She's a real gone cookie / Yes, sirree / Pretty little Susie / Is the gal for me.
—Pat Boone, "Tutti Frutti"

In this essay Deena Weinstein usefully defines the cover as an iteration or version of a specific *recording*, not simply an interpretation of a song, and describes how the purposes and meanings of covers have changed over time.

Cover versions played a significant role in the early history of rock, when major record companies had white singers cover hits by black artists to make those hits more acceptable to mainstream (i.e., white) audiences. These covers made the music more "vanilla," as Pat Boone put it (Szatmary 2009, 25), and earned millions for the cover artists and their companies; the original artists were paid little or nothing for their songs.

In the '50s rock 'n' roll had just been born and therefore had little history to draw upon. Audiences often did not know the original versions of cover songs; thus, rock was in a state of what Weinstein calls the "eternal now." By the '60s rock had developed a history, and covers both celebrated the original versions and used them to confer a sort of authenticity upon the cover artists. In the late '60s rock demanded originality, and the cover version became less important.

The classical music "covers" of such groups as Emerson, Lake and Palmer in the early '70s were not about authenticity, but rather, about demonstrating virtuosity. More significant are the punk rock covers of the '70s, which treated the original songs in ironic or parodistic fashion. The audience probably knew the original songs, which the covers now subverted to attack the idea of authenticity itself. Thus a gap opened up between the original and its cover. The '80s and '90s explored that gap, transforming the past through the free (postmodern) use of sampling. By now, a longer history could be drawn upon, with reissues, box sets, and soundtracks making obscurities from the past widely available (think of the soundtrack to Quentin Tarantino's *Pulp Fiction*).

One of the most intriguing ideas presented here is the concept of stereophonic listening: the audience is aware of the original and hears the cover in terms of that original. More radical is

the suggestion that the audience, knowing only the cover version, might hear the original itself as a cover (of the cover, as it were).

Popular music continually references its own past. This is a form of intertextuality, the literary theory that, applied to music, suggests that one always brings other music to one's listening; that there is a network of musical texts that interact in every song and every hearing of that song; that music plays with that network of references; and that meaning, or at least appreciation arises from the interactions among those references. The cover song is one of the clearest examples of musical intertextuality.

As rock slouches in 4/4 time to the millennium, it is up to its ringing ears in history. There are tribute albums, several "history of rock" TV miniseries repackaged as video collections, a plethora of bands such as the Rolling Stones reprising their own larger-than-life history on gargantuan stages, major record labels growing fat on CD reissues, and dozens of tribute bands. If that isn't enough of the past in the present, there's the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame. Rock is dead. Long live rock?

Rock proclaims, as it always has, the now, the new beginning, the absolute origin. But like all cultural forms, it is intertextual, always already immersed in a past. My argument in this chapter, then, is that rock has always referenced a past, despite its "nowness," but that the way it has referenced the past has changed significantly over time. I want to describe both the historiography and the history of these references – that is, the differing ways in which the "past" has been constructed by and functioned for rock in different rock eras.

I will explore this history—through one of the major forms of rock's intertextuality, the cover song, which is intrinsically a relation to the past. Cover songs, in the fullest sense of the term, are peculiar to rock music, both for technological and ideological reasons. A cover song iterates (with more or fewer differences) a prior recorded performance of a song by a particular artist, rather than simply the song itself as an entity separate from any performer or performance. When the song itself (as opposed to the performance) is taken as the reference for iteration, each performer does a version or a rendition of the song, and none of these versions is a necessary reference. Forms of popular music other than rock, then, generally do not have covers as I have defined them; rather, they have versions.

Technologically, the electronic reproduction of the performance in recordings makes it practical to take a particular recorded performance as one's reference for iteration, rather than an abstracted "song" per se. But covering a song also presupposes an ideological element. That is, the practice assumes that the "original" recorded performance is privileged, and that in some way the song belongs to that performance and by extension to the original performer.

The following discussion will show that the rock cover has changed its signification over time. I'll briefly define three epistemic breaks that have distinctive relationships to the past—individually, they mark a modern, a modernist, and a postmodern moment in rock's history.

THE PAST AS ETERNAL NOW: FIFTIES COVERS

"Sh-Boom," Crew Cuts, 1954
(Original: Chords, 1954)

"Shake, Rattle and Roll," Bill Haley, 1954
(Original: Joe Turner, 1954)

"Ain't That a Shame," Pat Boone, 1955
(Original: Fats Domino, 1955)

"Hound Dog," Elvis Presley, 1956
(Original: Willie Mae Thornton, 1953)

Rock 'n' roll emerged from an amalgam of rhythm & blues ("race music" rechristened for commerce), country and western music, and pop music, some time during the first half of the 1950s. This reflected the appearance of a definable youth market on the economic side, and the emergence of a distinctive youth culture on the ideological side. Rock 'n' roll might be said to be coconstituted by a relation to its immediate past—by covers. "Sh-Boom," for example, originally done by the Chords, was a hit on the R & B chart in 1954. By July of that year, it also made the Top 10 on the pop charts when the Crew Cuts' cover of that song was issued. The Crew Cuts' "whiter" version made the pop Top 10 one week after its release.

Not all covers in the 1950s were covers in the full sense of involving reference to a particular performance, but they were appropriations of current recorded music within genres, across genres, and into genres-in-formation. Cover songs during the decade were done for commercial purposes—the original was seldom something the intended audience had heard. That is, although 1950s covers constituted a relation to the (immediate) past, that relation was not generally grasped by most audiences as it was not part of their listening experience. In the 1950s so many of the originals had been released only a few months prior to covers that even if some in the audience did know the original, they did not attach any particular past to it. Mid-1950s rock 'n' roll was constituted by timeless moments of now; the past was an eternal present.

Most 1950s covers modified the original in order to reach a wider and whiter audience. One type of modification was merely to cover the original using artists on a major label that had greater marketing clout than the independent label on which the original had appeared.[1] When the sound of the cover was as close as possible to the original it was called, at the time, a "copy."

[1]With the Fontaine Sisters, Pat Boone, and other artists, Dot became a major label by doing covers of upcoming R & B songs.

Successful cover records combined both commercial and aesthetic mediations. Often a few words were changed to make the lyrics less racy. Georgia Gibbs's cover of Etta James's "Wallflower" is a case in point. "Wallflower" was an "answer" record to "Work With Me, Annie" by Hank Ballard and the Midnighters.[2] Ballard's song used the word "work" as a double entendre for sex, imploring Annie to "work with me" and to "give me all my meat." James's reply, "Wallflower," using a similar tune and arrangement, challenged Henry's dancing ability (a code for sexual potency). Gibbs's cover, released by Mercury Records, retitled the song "Dance with Me, Henry," burying the sexual double entendre more deeply.

In general, the covers of 1954 and 1955 transformed the R & B arrangements in the direction of pop. Singers' voices were chosen for polish, rather than rawness, and their enunciation of the lyrics was clear, not gritty, as in many of the originals. Moreover, in contrast to the R & B arrangements, pop clearly segregated the vocal and instrumental parts of the song, subordinating the instrumentals. This Tin Pan Alley style allowed the Crew Cuts, the McGuire Sisters, and Pat Boone, among others, to have hit records covering more raw, mainly black, and generally indie-label, artists.

The mediation between the R & B and pop styles of the early rock 'n' roll covers served to make many white artists popular, while providing paltry songwriting royalties to mainly black musicians. In this way marginalized music crossed over to a white youth audience that was not yet prepared for its full counterhegemonic impact. By 1956, the ears of the white youth audience had been trained away from their parents' pop, and the ministrations of white pop musicians were no longer needed. In that year, Little Richard's "Tutti-Frutti" was a bigger hit than Pat Boone's criminally bland cover.[3]

Elvis built his early career on covers and succeeded in avoiding sounding like either black R & B or (before his Hollywood-Las Vegas careers) white Tin Pan Alley. His first record for Sun was a double-sided cover, Arthur "Big Boy" Cruddup's "That's All Right" backed by Bill Monroe's "Blue Moon of Kentucky."

By 1958 "rock 'n' roll" was transformed (aided by Dick Clark, major record labels, and ASCAP) into the domesticated-for-mass-consumption "rock and roll." With this change, rock became self-conscious of its own history. Songs from the first era became "oldies," grouped in radio formats and snipped into collages in novelty records.

[2]"Answer songs" were a common practice in early 1950s R & B that came close to being covers. In answer songs, the words are changed and the new lyrics respond to the original lyrics.

[3]Little Richard's "Tutti-Frutti" "was considerably cleaned up and censored before being released in the famous version which went on to become a hit. That immortal tag line from the song 'Awop-Bop-a-Loo-Mop Alop-Bam-Boom' actually began as 'Awop-Bop-a-Loo-Mop-a-Good-Goddam.' Another line expunged was 'Tutti-Frutti good booty – if it don't fit don't force it.' The song was written originally by Richard but a second writer was called in to help provide the cleaner lyrics" (Martin and Segrave, 1988: 73).

THE PAST AS AUTHENTIC SOURCE: SIXTIES COVERS

"Roll Over Beethoven," Beatles, 1964
(Original: Chuck Berry, 1956)

"I'm a King Bee," Rolling Stones, 1964
(Original: Slim Harpo, 1957)

"House of the Risin' Sun," Animals, 1964
(Original: Bob Dylan, 1962/Anon.)

"Mr Tambourine Man," Byrds, 1965
(Original: Bob Dylan, 1965)

"All Along the Watchtower," Jimi Hendrix, 1968
(Original: Bob Dylan, 1968)

The British Invasion hit the American shores in early 1964.[4] It was a modern "retro" movement, reviving the cultural menace that rock 'n' roll had been at its inception, and reclaiming rock, once again, for the young. Led by the Beatles and the Rolling Stones, the invaders used weapons that were stamped, almost illegibly, "made in the USA," to conquer the American youth market. Cover songs were a staple of the invaders' early arsenal, but unlike the covers of the 1950s, these were covers with a past.

The 1950s cover usurps the original, asserts itself as freestanding, and functions as its own absolute beginning. The 1950s cover constitutes a relation to the past by negating that past. But in the 1960s British bands constituted for themselves a new relation to their origins, which were the components of the initial rock amalgam and its crystallization in early rock 'n' roll. Rather than seeking to usurp or efface these origins, British bands celebrated them and in doing so used them to validate their own authenticity as musicians.

The music of the early Beatles and Rolling Stones is saturated with intertextuality beyond the cover songs themselves. Belz (1969: 128) and other critics contend that "early Beatles records contained an encyclopedia of Chuck Berry guitar licks, Buddy Holly harmonies, and Little Richard falsettos." The early British invasion nodded to American black music at the same time that Americans were involved in the Civil Rights movement and Motown was supplying homegrown blackened pop.

The Beatles chose songs that had been successful in the United States. Many covers found their way into their April 1964 album (Beatles' Second Album), including Chuck Berry's "Roll Over Beethoven," Little Richard's "Long Tall Sally," and the Marvellettes's Motown hit, "Please Mr. Postman." In contrast, the Rolling Stones tended toward

[4]In April 1964 the top five songs were by the Beatles. Number two was a cover of "Twist and Shout."

covers of songs found on the R & B charts, such as "Time is on My Side" by Irma Thomas, Slim Harpo's "I'm a King Bee," and Jimmy Reed's "Honest I Do."

As the episteme of 1960s rock crystallized, it included new emphases on the original sources of rock 'n' roll and new sources of authenticity. The Delta blues and its Chicago and Detroit offspring became the sources of white blues rock. Bands such as John Mayall's Blues Breakers, the Yardbirds, and Cream covered blues songs. (They also helped to resurrect the careers of older, underappreciated bluesmen.) The blues-rock audience was, at least initially, unfamiliar with the originals, but no doubt heard the covers as referencing "real blues." Examples of blues-rock covers include Cream's Howlin' Wolf covers ("Spoonful" and "Sitting on Top of the World"), the Yardbirds' cover of Bo Diddley's "I'm a Man," and Led Zeppelin's cover of Muddy Waters' "I Can't Quit You Baby."

In the last part of the 1960s, cover songs were done less frequently. They tended to be relegated to B-sides and encore material at live shows, distancing the band from material that it didn't write, while at the same time maintaining some connection with authentic origins. The modern romantic notion of authenticity—creating out of one's own resources—became dominant over the idea that authenticity constituted a relationship, through creative repetition, to an authentic source.[5]

Notable examples of covers at the time, however, included the many covers of Bob Dylan's songs, such as Jimi Hendrix's "All Along the Watchtower." Moreover, about this time, as rock performance became increasingly skewed toward a style of the arena-rock spectacle, a style that indexed the general reactionary political and cultural moment, authenticity increasingly became a pose. This was most clearly expressed in the singer-songwriter style, made popular by Joni Mitchell, Jackson Browne, James Taylor, Carole King, Neil Young, Paul Simon, and John Denver. "And the appeal of each of them," Janet Maslin (1980) contends, "at least initially, had far less to do with either singing or song writing, than with the sheer allure of personality."

FRAGMENTARY PASTS: SEVENTIES COVERS

The Romantic Continuation: Heavy Metal

"Green Manalishi (With the Two-Pronged Crown)", Judas Priest, 1979
(Original: Fleetwood Mac, 1970)

"Beethoven's Ninth," Rainbow, 1980
(Original: Beethoven, 1823)

Slayer, "In-A-Gadda-Da-Vida," 1986
(Original: Iron Butterfly, 1968)

Megadeth, "Anarchy in the U.K.," 1988
(Original: Sex Pistols, 1977)

[5]For a discussion of authentic repetition, see Heidegger (1962).

Heavy metal, initiated by the ur-metal band Black Sabbath, continued the blues-rock tradition of the 1960s. Black Sabbath did not do covers, in part, the band said, because no extant songs embodied their vision of existence (an inversion of the "love" of the counterculture). As the style of heavy music became a genre with a subcultural audience, some bands did covers, but, as in the 1950s, the audience had not often heard the originals. For example, Judas Priest, definers of the classic metal that came to dominate the late-1970s and early-1980s heavy-metal sound, redid early Fleetwood Mac's blues-rock "Green Manalishi (With The Two-Pronged Crown)." The song became a well-loved anthemic staple of Priest's repertoire; hardly any fans knew the original, or even that there was one.[6]

Metal did not acknowledge a premetal past. The classical music motifs and the few metal covers of modern classical music (Rainbow's rendition of the fourth movement of Beethoven's Symphony no. 9; Manowar's remakes of the "William Tell Overture" and "Flight of the Bumblebee"; and Accept's "Metal Heart," a remake of Beethoven's "Für Elyse") were not meant to provide an authenticity rooted in a valorization of the past, but to validate and proclaim a musical virtuosity valued by the subculture.

THE PAST AS OBJECT OF PARODY: PUNK COVERS

"Eve of Destruction," Dickies, 1978
(Original: Barry McGuire, 1965)

"Viva Las Vegas," Dead Kennedys, 1981
(Original: Elvis Presley, 1964)

"Eight Miles High," Hüsker Dü, 1983
(Original: Byrds, 1966)

A new episteme emerged with the eruption of punk rock in the mid-1970s. As a fundamentalism in revolt, punk drew much of its vitality from its engagement with the musical past. Punk adopted intentions ranging from playful irony laced with tribute, to scathing, high-energy parody. Following the example of the Ramones, covers became a common punk practice. But punk covers were of a different order then previous rock covers. They tended to be stereophonic, depending for their full impact on the audience being acquainted with the originals and thus reminding listeners of the past. Punk covers deconstructed their originals, removing and/or exaggerating the pretty, the pompous, and the pop. The audience's knowledge of the original allowed it to hear punk's fast and raw style more clearly. The Ramones' revision of the Contours' "Do You Wanna Dance?" the Dead Kennedys' remake of the bloated late-Elvis trademark, "Viva Las Vegas," and the Dickies' sarcastic delivery of Barry McGuire's "Eve of Destruction" all subverted the originals by transposing them to an irreverent musical attitude.[7]

[6]Judas Priest also redid Joan Baez's "Before the Dawn," fully covering over its folky roots.
[7]The Dickies did many, including the Moody Blues' "Nights in White Satin."

Through parody, the punk cover attacked the conventions of authenticity in rock as pompous, pretentious, and (laughably) lame. The punk cover took the new position of distancing criticism, opening up an intentional gap in attitude between original and cover that had not been present before. Covers in the 1950s often attempted to escape their status and be taken as self standing (perfect simulation where the simulation substitutes for the reference), whereas 1960s covers paid homage to their referents. Punk covers negated the originals without attempting to obliterate them; consequently, they keep the originals in play by constituting themselves over and against them.

THE PAST AS ARCHIVE FOR APPROPRIATION: EIGHTIES AND NINETIES COVERS

"Mrs. Robinson," Lemonheads, 1993
(Original: Simon and Garfunkel, 1968)

"Girl You'll Be a Woman Soon," Urge Overkill, 1995
(Original: Neil Diamond, 1968)

"Lay, Lady, Lay," Ministry, 1996
(Original: Bob Dylan, 1969)

"Unplugged" albums by Eric Clapton, Nirvana, Rolling Stones, etc.

Tribute albums to Kiss, Tom Petty, Jimi Hendrix, Joy Division, Thin Lizzy, John Lennon, Black Sabbath, etc.

The postmodernist, postpunk moment of rock music negates punk's negation of the 1960s, not in order to restore authenticity, but to explore the gap opened up by punk between original and cover. The past now becomes not something to transcend, to honor, or to criticize and parody, but something to appropriate. Facilitated by audio technologies that allow sampling, the postmodern past is transformed in any way that one wishes.

In the postmodern moment, covers are no longer relegated to the periphery but share the center with original work. The raw material of rock is no longer life, but culture. If God is dead and all things are allowed, the god that was knocked off by punk was the myth of the individual, along with its master name, Authenticity. Musicians can now plunder the past with abandon. The immediate postpunk "new wave" did covers, but extended reinterpretations far beyond parody. Devo's cover of one of the most central and praised rock songs of all time, "(I Can't Get No) Satisfaction," fully removed the romantic individual from the first-person pronoun.

Postmodern covers are generally stereophonic: the audience is aware of the original and hears the cover in terms of it. Well-known originals are often chosen, but

more importantly the audience for rock now is far more knowledgeable about rock's past. The looming presence of the past for the current rock audience and potential creators is a complex phenomena. Rock is no longer confined to adolescents or even youth. Youth became a free-floating signifier in the postmodern moment and many who were young during the 1960s or later see no reason to give up youthful lifestyles and attitudes, including rock music, which is one of the prime signifiers of youth (Weinstein, 1994a).[8] These chronological adults, some pushing into late middle age, want access to the music of their youth.

CD reissues and box sets of extinct rock acts and artists have made record companies fat with profits. New albums by the older bands (including once defunct but now profitably reformed bands, such as the Eagles and the Sex Pistols), and groups sounding like them, have cross-generational appeal. (Indeed, the notion of generations has been blurred in postmodern culture.) Television, Hollywood soundtracks, and retro radio formats ("oldies," "classic rock," "retro flashbacks") make rock's past available to everyone. The most lucrative tours in recent years have been those of Pink Floyd, the Rolling Stones, and the Grateful Dead—all 1960s bands.

Record companies are releasing compilations of the original artists whose songs were the basis for hits by other bands.[9] Most listeners will hear these originals as covers of the far more familiar rock hits. Covers have become so fashionable in the 1990s that the Association of Independent Music Publishers has an award category for "Best Pop Cover Song."

Covers are done in every conceivable way now, ranging from radical modification to slavish imitation. The reasons for doing covers in the postmodern moment are as varied as the ways in which they are done: the commercial advantage of familiarity, homage, introducing obscure artists to a wider audience, gaining credibility, criticizing the past, appropriating a song from one genre into another, demonstrating one's roots, finding the original song to express the cover artists' views or feelings as well as if not better than anything they could write, and lack of creativity.

The so-called hip bands of the 1980s (lumped into a category called "indie rock") played with rock's past via covers. The Rolling Stones' *Exile On Main Street*, released in 1972, was remade by Pussy Galore.[10] Sonic Youth's side project, Ciccone Youth, did a noisy remake of several Madonna (Ciccone) hits in 1988. Hüsker Dü released a souped-up version of the Byrd's "Eight Miles High" in 1983. R.E.M.'s many covers, including those of "Superman" by the obscure psychedelic band the Clique, and Wire's "Strange," as well as the covers on their 1987 album, *Dead Letter Office*, were never hits as originals, but were influential in underground rock culture. The Residents did a whole album of Elvis covers, *The King and Eye*, which combines the

[8]See also Weinstein (1994b) and Weinstein (1995).

[9]For example, Yazoo Records released *Roots of Rock* in 1994, a collection of the original renditions of songs made popular by bands including Cream, the Allman Brothers Band, and Led Zeppelin. A similar Rhino release, *Blues Originals* vol. 6, includes originals of songs made famous by Canned Heat, the Yardbirds, Jeff Beck, Elvis Presley, and Led Zeppelin. There is also *Stone Rock Blues*, a CD of the originals that the Rolling Stones covered.

[10]Issued as a limited-edition cassette in 1986.

punk practice of deconstructing bloated rock with the postmodern penchant for tribute albums.[11]

Mainstream listeners have heard a fair number of cover songs become hits, including remakes of Neil Diamond's "Red Red Wine" by UB40 and "Girl You'll Be a Woman Soon" by Urge Overkill. Artists such as Guns N' Roses, the Ramones, Slayer, and Pat Boone have put out entire albums of covers.

A torrent of cover songs has flooded the market in the 1990s in the form of tribute albums, in which an artist's songs are covered by a variety of current artists. Tribute albums have become so ubiquitous that record stores stock them in a separate section. Some are put out by indie labels to gain exposure for new, unknown groups. Other compilations have well-known bands doing the covers. (And some even have the tributee producing or playing on the album.) Releases have honored a wide variety of artists, including Kiss, Tom Petty, Kraftwerk, Lynyrd Skynyrd, Richard Thompson, Black Sabbath, Arthur Alexander, Roky Erikson, Van Morrison, and the Carpenters, to name only a handful.[12]

As heavy metal fragmented in the 1980s, both the punk-influenced thrash bands and the more pop and popular hard-rock groups were not averse to doing covers. Metallica redid songs by obscure bands that had influenced them. Megadeth's reworking of the Sex Pistols' "Anarchy in the U.K." has been the highlight of their live show since they recorded it in 1988.[13] Thrash bands have even covered classic heavy-metal songs. For example, Sacred Reich and Faith No More each redid Black Sabbath's "War Pigs," Exodus did AC/DC's "Overdose," and Metal Church revisited Deep Purple's "Highway Star." The pop metal covers that became well known include Great White's cover of Ian Hunter's "Once Bitten Twice Shy," White Lion's reinterpretation of Golden Earring's "Radar Love," and W.A.S.P.'s version of the Who's "The Real Me." (Death metal, more than just commercially underground, is probably the only style that avoids covers.)

Rap and hip-hop practiced their own strategy of aural collage via sampling, exploiting the archive by recombining the past while at the same time affirming authenticity by adopting their own attitude toward the material. Associated with hip-hop, dance mixes are covers of songs specifically made for play at urban clubs. The key

[11]"More insidiously perceptive than most critics, the Residents dismantle and rebuild sixteen of his standards, from 'All Shook Up' to 'Burning Love,' offering radical new ways to hear the commonplace. ... Cruelly but kindly pushing the songs to the limits of recognizability, the Residents deliberately strip away everything familiar to reveal previously hidden depths of passion, leering sexuality and gripping drama. Such dusty jewels as 'Viva Las Vegas,' 'Return to Sender' ... and 'Teddy Bear' are reborn in twisted melodies, imposed rhythms, radical rearrangements and distended vocal phrasings rendered with an exaggerated Southern drawl" (Robbins, 1990).

[12]"In the best tributes the covering artist steals a song from the original artist and makes it their own, while they keep, even exaggerate, its original spirit. It's a tough trick, demanding authenticity and empathy, but Hasil Adkins pulls it off when, on Turban Renewal, he puts his seriously deranged persona all over "Wooly Bully," opening up a new understanding of the Sam the Sham sobriquet. Megadeth's Dave Mustaine literally absconds with "Paranoid." Sure Ozzy, with and without Black Sabbath, rides a crazy train, but Mustaine has hijacked it and parked it permanently in the paranoid station" (Dasein, 1995).

[13]In So *Far*, So *Good*. . . So *What!*

to these covers is the use of a drum machine to manufacture a made-for-dancing disco-style beat to any song. Mainstream exposure of this style began with the remixes of Suzanne Vega's "Tom's Diner" and Bruce Springsteen's "Dancing in the Dark." The original Springsteen performance, from the megaplatinum *Born in the USA* album, was well known, helping to promote the cover (Tankel, 1990).

It is no small irony that a feature of the 1990s rock scene, tribute bands (Dasein, 1994), which cover other bands' sounds and images in live shows, honor just those bands, such as Rush, the Rolling Stones, Pink Floyd, and the Doors, that privileged authenticity and the romantic self. Tribute bands do not put out albums; they are only heard live. Without merchandise to sell and without the possibility of large tours, such bands, despite their musical expertise (often exceeding that of the bands to which they pay tribute) are not especially lucrative. Other sorts of tribute bands (let us call them "indexical" bands) skirt the tribute band's limitations. They do not cover the songs but imitate the original band's arrangements and performance style. Kingdom Come indexed Led Zeppelin and Phish indexes the Grateful Dead. This form of intertextuality allows the bands to make albums and have arena tours.[14]

Does the pan-appropriation of the past from a simultaneous archive that makes everything contemporaneous spell cynicism and the passing over of creativity as a value? The situation seems far more complex than that—allowing for, as it does, the emergence of new genres, recurrence to external sources, and, most importantly, authentic appropriation. Perhaps the notion of an authentic relation to the past, in which one draws upon the resources of that past to find oneself in the present, is the living alternative to cynicism in the postmodern moment of rock. Or perhaps, as Simmel noted in "The Metropolis and Mental Life" (Simmel, 1950), the overwhelming din of the past will finally obliterate people's ability to hear themselves.

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[14]Of course, the indexical bands are rather similar to reformed, like the Allman Brothers and Lynyrd Skynyrd, which bring together only a few of the original musicians.

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