

Recontextualisation and fascist music

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Introduction

The vast majority of work examining identity and politics in musicology, and in popular music studies in particular, presumes and sometimes explicitly argues that music is personally and socially therapeutic – that since music enacts social identities it is a force for good, particularly in relation to marginalised groups. My chapter brings together two areas of critical examination: the sociological analysis of fascist music; and the concept ‘recontextualisation’, developed in discourse analytic literature, wherein the contents of one text reappear in another text. Meanings are formed in use; and so, through this process of ‘textual borrowing’, (partly) new meanings are produced. This chapter examines three ways in which this occurs in fascist song and music – through appropriation; through interpolation; and through ideological realignment – and will explore the functions that this, and the performance of song and music more generally, serves to fascist cultural projects.

Music, politics, identity

This chapter is, in a general sense, interested in exploring the ways that music can contribute to inegalitarianism and inequality, and to individual and collective identities that orientate towards these political goals. However, the vast majority of work examining identity and politics in musicology, and in popular music studies in particular, presumes and sometimes explicitly argues that music is “personally and socially therapeutic” (Johnson & Cloonan, 2009: 1). In his conclusion to the book *The Sociology of Rock*, for example, Frith (1978: 209) argued that rock “will remain fun and the source of [...] power and joy”. Cross (2011) has argued that music itself may have evolved to enable social cohesion: “Music as a communicative medium, is likely to have a significant role in minimising within-group conflict or, to put it another way, in collaboratively establishing a degree of social equilibrium” (Cross in McKerrell, 2015: 4).

Equally, there is a well-established literature on music and politics, which examines music’s political power - the ways it can inspire individuals and movements, give voice to minority voices and call for emancipatory change (Billig, 2000; Brown, 2008; Frith & Street, 1992; Garofalo, 1992; Street, 1986, 2012). Pedelty and Weglarz (2013 :xi) summarise this consensus in the literature as follows: “given the right historical circumstances, cultural conditions, and aesthetic qualities, popular music can help bring people together to form more effective political communities.” Here too, the predominant narrative is one of positivity. That even when song and music are instrumental in articulating, representing or contesting relations of power, music plays a beneficial role in, *inter alia*, articulating identities, building groups and communities, in producing pleasure, and in resisting alienation,

conformity and capitalism (Denselow, 1989). Pedelty and Weglarz (2013 :xiii) state that their edited collection on political rock music “is about that rare part of the popular music world where musicians, fans, and critics operate in the belief music can do more than express teen angst, sell mini vans, or evoke nostalgia.” All 11 chapters in their edited collection examine left-liberal political artists – or, “the musicians who move *us*” (p.xiv, emphasis added), and this personal deictic is vital in understanding the orientation of their book. Although they acknowledge this limitation and justify their editorial choice in two ways – that “politicized rock has been much more connected to the Left than the Right” and that “in comparison to mainstream songs extolling the virtues of parties, sex, romance, and conspicuous consumption” Right-Wing rock “barely registers at all” (Ibid) – one is left with a very definite sense of academics writing about their own record collections.

I should point out that I value the contribution of the publications cited above; I also agree with many of their claims. I agree that music and song inevitably invoke, interpolate and index individual and collective identities (Campbell, 2010; Slobin, 1993). Such ideational and inter-personal functions of music and song are always implicitly political (in the sense that ‘the personal is political’) and, when the collective identities invoked articulate hierarchies, inequalities and power struggle, music can be explicitly political too (Garofalo, 1992; Slobin, 1996). Such political/musical interventions do frequently concern struggles for rights and recognition, and in this area the research literature is sizable and sophisticated. Such analysis, again, tends to assume and sometimes to specifically argue that music is fundamental to human life and that music’s capacity to build community is an unquestioned good. As Marie Korpe (2004: ix) puts it, “when music is banned, the very soul of a culture is being strangled”.

However, there are a number of ways in which power can be contested, and a number of political projects to which music can be functionalised. When Blecha (2004: 137) describes political rock music positively, as songs that “dare to question authority”, I immediately think: which authorities are we talking about? What questions are being asked? And with what extremity are these questions posed? What if the musical culture we are examining is orientated towards the *denial* of human rights? A musical culture that resists egalitarian principles, encourages prejudice and, arguably, incites violence against individuals and communities deemed inferior or objectionable? Should this stand unopposed? As Johnson and Cloonan (2009: 4) point out, ethnomusicology and popular music studies only infrequently recognize that “[e]very time music is used to demarcate the territory of self or community, it is incipiently being used to invade, marginalize or obliterate that of other individuals or groups.” The degree of invasion and marginalization differs between songs, scenes and (sub)cultures; but the demarcation of Self and Other, and the roles projected onto these collective identities, are entailed whenever music speaks to the social and cultural (Bohlman, 2003).

Scholars are now starting to consider the roles that music and song play in articulating exclusivist (or *bigoted*) collective identities and giving succour to inegalitarian political projects (McKerrell, 2012). Within conventional musicology there is a well-established literature on nationalism and music and how music “acquired the potential to articulate nationalism by representing place” (Bohlman, 2003: 50). ‘National peoples’ were taken to ‘give voice’ to the nation through music and song (cf Herder, 1778), particularly in folk song, which “came to be venerated as the spontaneous expression of the national soul” (Grout, 1960: 497-98). This process of ‘finding’ (inventing) national music traditions frequently went hand-in-hand with the ‘exoticization’ and ‘racialization’ of musics associated with national Others (cf Piotrowska, 2013). In ethnomusicology, there is also a small but growing

literature on music and conflict (Grant & Stone-Davis, 2013; Pettan, 1998, 2010), and particularly how song and music participate in overt and covert forms of violence (Fast & Pegley, 2012; Gray, 2010; Johnson & Cloonan, 2009; O'Connell & Castelo-Branco 2010). In popular music studies, Grossberg (1983) has argued against the presupposed idea that rock is inherently resistant, suggesting that in addition to political opposition, rock can also adopt alternative, independent, and co-opted political viewpoints. Most recently, Shekhovtsov has written extensively on white power music across Europe (Shekhovtsov, 2009, 2013a; Shekhovtsov & Jackson, 2012), and edited a special issue for *Patterns of Prejudice* on *Music and the Other*, which argued that “music has played an increasingly prominent role in constructing national identities and promoting various types of national projects” (Shekhovtsov, 2013b: 330). Together, these works constitute a significant contribution to understanding the roles that musical transaction can play in social conflict and power abuse.

Fascist music, fascist movement

Music has formed part of the artistic and cultural projects of virtually every European extreme-right party and movement (see Lowles & Silver 1998; Shekhovtsov, 2013a; Shekhovtsov & Jackson, 2012). The European fascist movements that grew from the 1920s used the arts to help foster their moral and cultural order (Etlin, 2002; Griffin, 2004; Hirsch, 2010; Kater, 1992, 1997; Steinweis 1993). In their magisterial edited collection on music and Francoism, Pérez Zalduondo and Gan Quesada (2013) examine “the many ways in which, throughout more than forty years of Francoist rule, music and musicians, musical thinking and practices, both individual and collective, became linked to the society and ideology of the dictatorship” (p.ix). Their resulting book, examining music, ideology and politics in Franco-era artistic culture, is not merely an exemplary study of the relationships between music and power; through making a case for the central importance of music in social and political life, it also makes a crucial contribution to historiography of twentieth-century Spain.

In setting out to achieve their political project, British fascists are motivated by a number of assumptions and commitments that draw directly on Herder's concept of 'nationalbildung' and an accompanying powerful line of racial nationalism inherited from the late 18th century. Central of these is that “the state of the arts was a direct expression of the 'greatness' of the nation” (Griffin, 2004: 45). And, just as great art is assumed to be a manifestation of “the national genius” or “the essential spirit of the people”, so social and cultural pathology is revealed through the production and especially the popularity of so-called 'degenerate' art (Griffin, 2004: 46). In response, fascists aim “to reverse this deplorable state of cultural collapse” (Ibid.), using “music to underpin party mobilization strategies, to anchor choreographed set-pieces like meetings and marches, and to reinforce 'collectives of emotion' among participants as well as unaligned spectators” (Macklin, 2013: 430). As an author writing in the British Union of Fascists' newspaper *Blackshirt* put it, “Fascism will sweep away that cult of ugliness and distortion in art, music and literature which is the product of neurotic post-war minds” (Randall, 1934).

Potter's (1998) study of Nazi Musicology shows it gradually acquiesced, and was implicated in, the radicalization of German cultural life. In 1933 Joseph Goebbels established the Reich Culture Chamber (RKK) with sections responsible for the different arts. There was a section especially for

music, because Goebbels viewed music as a primary way to communicate directly with the people (Potter, 1998; Etlin 2002). As he put it:

Music affects the heart and emotions more than the intellect. Where then could the heart of a nation beat stronger than in the huge masses, in which the heart of a nation has found its true home? (Goebbels cited in Hirsch 2010:5)

There was the intention that 'good German music' would be promoted throughout the Reich, in schools, through the Hitler Youth, through social and leisure Nazi organisations such as Kraft durch Freude ('Strength through Joy') and at Party Rallies. Soldiers too were encouraged to participate in collective singing and music; many special soldiers' song books were published and such songs were participants in "the cultural work of persecution and genocide" (Bohlman, 2003: 53). As Bohlman (Ibid.) points out: "The very horror of the Holocaust is amplified by the recognition that music was, in fact, omnipresent. Music mobilized the fascism and racism of the Nazis."

While all fascist music is intended with this goal of a fascist political-cultural pseudo-revolution in mind (Bertola, 2013), the manner in which such a goal is encoded in music outputs varies according to time, place and the relation of the fascist movement to wider subcultural groups. Songs were written and sung by fascist parties and movements after World War II and through the 1960s, though the genre and delivery were very similar to the pre-war tradition. The largest far-right musical movement has for a long time been the Skinhead scene (Lowles & Silver 1998; Shaffer, 2013). The Skinhead subculture originally developed in the 1960s listening to ska, rocksteady and early reggae, and was influenced by Jamaican rude boys. It was a working class subculture, some of its biggest stars were Black, and the scene was racially mixed. The subculture died back, only to be reborn in the mid- to late-1970s with a radically different constituency and (political) alignment, having been infiltrated and gradually taken over by National Front (NF) supporters

In 1979, the NF launched 'Rock Against Communism' to "fight back against left-wingers and anti-British traitors in the music press" with "concerts, roadshows and tours" (*Bulldog*, no. 14, March 1979). Initially short-lived, due to the collapse of the NF following the 1979 General Election, 'Rock Against Communism' was re-launched in 1983. The key to its revival "was having Skrewdriver, a skinhead band that broke up in 1978, to reunite. [...] the National Front established White Noise Records to release music that mainstream companies would not, and its first release was Skrewdriver's White Power EP, quickly selling out of its first pressing" (Shaffer, 2015: 143). Defined by racism and dominated by a new musical genre - *Oi* – that offered a stripped down, simplified version of punk, "the NF's message of 'whiteness' was spread to radicals in other countries through music" (Ibid.). Bands like Skrewdriver and Brutal Attack used the visceral energy of punk in combination with openly white-supremacist and National Socialist lyrics. Their music, and that of other groups, thrived in the 'White Noise' racist subculture, through "not simply providing texts for complaints about minorities competing for employment, but also instigating violence and memorializing it in forms eerily consistent with the century of unimaginable destruction" (Bohlman, 2003: 54; also see Schwarz, 1997).

However, this musical genre, and musical subculture, did not draw universal approval from fascists in the UK. For example, Colin Jordan, the unrepentant father of British National Socialism, argued that this musical genre was the *opposite* of the vision promoted in fascist ideology:

National-Socialism's pursuit of good order [...] pertains to every aspect of life, including all the arts [...] National-Socialism seeks a reflective *harmony* in all the affairs of man. It seeks this good order in, for example, a just and efficient economic structure, and sees it in good music which by definition is *harmonious*. In contrast to and in conflict with this good music of National-Socialism is the *discordant* din which skinheads delight in. Such cacophony [...] is the authentic death sound of Democracy. (Jordan, 1995: 11, emphases added)

Accordingly, National-Socialism seeks harmony in music as part of its project to bring 'harmony' to life. In contrast, discord in music is taken to be evidence of social degeneracy and decay which, in turn, are symptomatic of democracy. Such multimodal analysis – commenting on the social and ideological significance of tonality, harmonics and distortion – demonstrates not only the significance of music and musical scenes to fascist political projects, but also that fascists themselves are aware of its importance.

Recontextualisation

My analysis of fascism, in general, focuses on continuities and change in fascist discourse since the 1920s and the dialectical relations to wider social and political life (Richardson, 2013, 2015). In relation to fascist music and song, that means relating the music written, recorded and performed at particular points in time to the preoccupations and cultural affordances of that particular period. The concept of recontextualization gives us some analytic traction, allowing us to consider this tension between continuity and change in discourse, and how they can be traced intertextually.

Intertextuality refers to the linkage of texts to other texts, both in the past and in the present. Such links can be established in different ways: through a specific reference to another text by name; by referring to the contents of another text; through reference to the same events as another text; or through the reappearance of a text's contents in another text. The latter process is labelled *recontextualization*. Following Reisigl & Wodak (2001; 2009), if a textual element – a speech, a quote, a phrase and so on – is taken from a specific context we argue it is *de*-contextualised; when this same element is inserted into a new context, we argue it is *re*-contextualised. Meanings are formed in use and so, through this process of 'textual borrowing', (partly) new meanings are produced. As van Leeuwen and Wodak (1999: 96) have argued: "Recontextualization always involves transformation, and what exactly gets transformed depends on the interests, goals and values of the context into which the practice is recontextualized." There are four principle transformations employed in recontextualisation: deletion; addition; rearrangement; and substitution. Taking each in turn: during *de*- and recontextualization of texts (and parts of texts), parts of these texts can be deleted (and the question, of course, is *what* is taken out and the rhetorical/discursive implications of this). Second, new elements can be put in, and van Leeuwen and Wodak (1999) argue that the most important additions during recontextualization are reaction, purposes and legitimations, since these all shift the significance of textual elements. Third, textual elements may be rearranged, or scattered throughout the new text. And finally, elements can be substituted, where a discursive choice is made to replace one element with an alternative from the range of possible choices (whether making the element more abstract or more concrete, more general or specific, mitigated or intensified, and so on).

Recontextualization is not limited to linguistic texts – images, songs and music can also be *de-* and recontextualized across successive texts and across time. Indeed, music and song are particularly interesting to consider in relation to recontextualization, given the ways that lyrics, themes, motifs, melodies and complete songs can be reworked, remixed and re-recorded by successive composers (see Geary, 2014; Young, 2011). Fans of a particular song – whether amateur or professional – can signal their admiration through recontextualization; they can add elements of an old composition to a new one, whether through sampling, interpolation (‘quotation’ of musical content) or appropriation of thematic or structural aspects of a composition. Or else they can record a cover version of a song where the arrangement of the original recording – e.g. as a 4-piece band or a full orchestra – is substituted for the fan simply singing into their laptop mic accompanied only by an acoustic guitar. YouTube is awash with such fan tribute recordings. Musical substitutions may involve rearranging a song in a particular way, changing the genre, changing the harmonics (monophonic to polyphonic, or vice versa), changing instrumentation or arrangement, changing the sex of the singer, and so on.

In this chapter, I will examine four ways that recontextualization occurs in fascist song and music: as textual appropriation; interpolation; cover version; and in ideologically realigned recording. These four approaches to recontextualization draw variously on the four principle transformations (deletion, addition, rearrangement and substitution) in different combinations. I have mapped these out in Table 1, below:

Table 1: Approaches and transformations in fascist musical recontextualization

	addition	deletion	substitution	rearrangement	Does recontextualization subvert connoted meanings?
Textual appropriation	no	no	no	no	Yes
‘Cover version’	rarely	rarely	yes	yes	not usually
Ideological realignment	rarely	rarely	yes	yes	yes
Interpolation	sometimes	sometimes	yes	yes	not usually

The remainder of the chapter will not provide extensive itemisation of music and song that show widespread quantified evidence of appropriation, interpolation, cover version and ideological realignment. The numeric frequency of cultural phenomena is not the only, or even the most important, measure of discursive consequence; a single text, a single speech, a single image can (and do) send out waves of signification, that reverberate in and through (sub)cultural and social space. Accordingly, I will discuss qualitative instances of recontextualization of song and music, and explore the functions that they play to fascist cultural projects.

Recontextualisation, 1: textual appropriation

In cases of what I am referring to as textual appropriation, a whole song is taken and incorporated into the fascist cultural project, either through material reproduction or through performance. In appropriating – and so recontextualising – song in this way, the party or movement attempts to reconfigure the connoted meanings of the song. Textual appropriation of this kind provides a clear instance of the maxim of discourse analysis that there is ‘no meaning outside of context’, and that the meaning of an utterance (or song, or whatever) is dialectically related to contexts of use. Imagine the fascist National Front singing the British National Anthem, and you gain a sense of how this works in practice – the evocation of nationhood and the frequent use of the possessive ‘Our’ in the anthem (‘Our Queen’ and so on) gives us sense to pause, given the exclusive (racist) way that the NF defines who counts as British. And that’s before we consider the second (or in some versions, third) verse of the National Anthem, which calls on God to “Scatter her enemies, and make them fall”. Mckerrell (2015) recently analysed a very similar discursive phenomenon, wherein the jingoistic-but-not-sectarian song ‘Rule Britannia’ was appropriated by Rangers football fans for sectarian political ends. Mckerrell (2015: 1) shows that the way the song appears in a YouTube video – blended with Unionist flags, sectarian slurs and “the ‘tonal gravity’ of Rule Britannia where emphatic rhythm and musical harmonies act together in creating a very strong sense of Self positioned in opposition to an essentialised and simplistic Other” – means it emerges as sectarian.

In the 1970s, the National Front produced a songbook that is interesting to consider in relation to these issues. The songbook itself is actually little more than a lyric book – there is no musical notation accompanying the lyrics, nor any indication of key, time signature or melody. This is itself quite interesting, and speaks to one of two possibilities: either the status of the songs was so well established, and their music was so well known, that the producers of the booklet felt they could dispense with any sheet music; *or*, that the function of the booklet was less about providing the party with a songbook to be used in collective singing, and more about implicitly claiming the songs as their own. The 14 songs in the songbook include traditional patriotic/jingoistic songs (‘Rule Britannia’, ‘Land of Hope and Glory’), rousing hymns particularly associated with the Methodist tradition (‘Battle Hymn of the Republic’, ‘Jerusalem’), marching songs associated with particular regiments (‘Men of Harlech’, ‘Hearts of Oak’), and explicitly political songs of both paramilitary organisations in the North of Ireland and the National Front. The choice to include *Men of Harlech*, in particular, shows the ways that songs can acquire additional implicit meanings through their incorporation in popular culture. Apparently written to commemorate the seven-year siege of Harlech Castle (1461- 1468), the song is something of an unofficial anthem in Wales, associated with the country’s determination to retain its identity *vis-a-vis* the English Other. However a version of the song, with rewritten lyrics, was also included in the film *Zulu* (1960). In this particular scene, the Zulu warriors are singing an (un-subtitled) ‘war song’; panning over images of British soldiers, one retorts “they’ve got a very good bass section, but no top tenors”; he then starts singing *Men of Harlech* in defiant reply, and is gradually joined in chorus by the other soldiers.¹ So starts a call and response between the wild, loin-cloth wearing, spear-waving (Black) Zulus with their unintelligible shouting and chanting, and the uniformed, gun-holding (white) soldiers, singing in unison and perfect harmony. It may be this racialized scene– and its radical binary representation of Black/uncivilised vs White/civilised – that the NF wished to conjure up through the inclusion of the song in the songbook.

The book contains the lyrics of ‘The National Front Calls’, placed opposite those of the Ulster Defence Association song ‘We’ll fight in the Bogside’ and, in so doing, indexes the way they share the

same verse-chorus structure and are sung to the same tune. And this introduces a further way that we can examine some of the meanings inscribed into this booklet beyond the specific meanings of the lyrical content of each song: we can consider the co-textual intertextual relations established between songs, particularly those placed side-by-side. In other words, we can examine the meanings that are established through the choice to place two songs opposite each other on two-page spreads. I have recreated the contents of the songbook, and layout of the particular songs, in Table 2, below:

Table 2: Contents of the National Front Songbook (nd)

Page		
1	[Cover piece]	
2-3	Rule Britannia	Land of Hope and Glory
4-5	Men of Harlech	Hearts of Oak
5-7	Battle Hymn of the Republic	Jerusalem
8-9 [centre pages]	We'll fight in the Bogside	The National Front Calls
10-11	Here Lies a Soldier	The Sash my Father Wore
12-13	England Belongs to Me	Ye Mariners of England
14-15	Scarborough Fair	The National Anthem
16	[Blank]	

It is clear that the songs are being grouped together: the Victorian jingoism of 'Rule Britannia' and 'Land of Hope and Glory'; the two regimental songs 'Men of Harlech' and 'Hearts of Oak'; the two hymns 'Battle Hymn of the Republic' and 'Jerusalem'; and so on. To take two examples: pages 10-11 position the Unionist/Orangeman marching song *The Sash my Father Wore* (which, amongst other things, celebrates the victory of William of Orange over King Charles II) opposite the explicitly pro-Ulster Volunteer Force anthem, *Here Lies a Soldier*. The UVF are a loyalist paramilitary organisation; so placing these two songs opposite each other sets up a relation between the two, and helps pull the meanings of *The Sash* more towards the violent, hardline form of Unionism espoused by organisations like the UVF. The song book included the National Anthem but included it opposite the traditional ballad *Scarborough Fair*. This unusual choice sets up an interesting co-textual relationship between the two songs – the ballad projecting a kind of traditional, folksy pastoralism onto the National Anthem; and, simultaneously, the National Anthem *nationalising* the ballad, not only claiming it as part of an explicitly national musical tradition but also, in so doing, instilling it with a sense of patriotism obviously absent from the lyrics of the song itself.

Textual appropriation like this is frequently opposed, given that other individuals and groups tend to have a stake in ensuring that the connoted meanings of music and song (and sometimes *genre*, see Spracklen, 2015) remain compatible with their own political position. In 2009, for example, the British National Party were selling a CD through their online shop. Entitled '*A place called England*', this was a compilation CD containing the music of Elgar and Vera Lynn, as well as contemporary British folk musicians like John Spiers, Jon Boden and Steve Knightley. They had recorded songs for an album they were told would be sold through gift shops, and so were extremely upset to find that it was also being sold by the BNP to raise money for the party. Steve Knightley's song *Roots* featured on the CD, and it was, he argued, "a betrayal of your invention" to see the BNP profiting in this way.²

Jon Boden made a point specifically in relation to recontextualization: “The CD was titled ‘a place called England’,” he said. “But suddenly when you see it on the BNP’s website, it takes on a darker significance that you never imagined.” The BNP went on selling the CD, but the event led to the establishment of the organisation of “Folk Against Fascism”, launched at the Sidmouth Folk Festival in 2009; Jon Boden continues to play his fiddle with anti-BNP stickers stuck to it, to make his position clear.

Recontextualization, 2: Cover Versions and Ideological Realignment

As is well known, a *cover version* is a new performance or recording of a previously recorded song, by someone other than the original artist. A cover version frequently indicates esteem for either the original song or, especially in the case of fascist song, the original artist and their political motivation. Cover versions rework original compositions, principally through substitution and rearrangement. For example, Skrewdriver’s acoustic ballad ‘*The snow fell*’ – which celebrates (and mourns) the deaths of German Wehrmacht soldiers on the eastern front during WWII – has been re-recorded by literally hundreds of amateur and (semi-)professional musicians, including the bands Rahowa, Sleipnir, Kolovrat, Ravensbrook, The Voice, Prussian Blue and the Swedish singer Saga. Whilst most cover versions reproduce the acoustic, ‘singer-songwriter’, arrangement of the original, others – such as the Noisecore version by ‘DJ Panzerfaust and DJ Retaliator’ (which, at points, samples Saga’s cover version of the track) – are more radical reworkings. Cover versions are recorded and performed for a variety of reasons. For many of the young women who have recorded selfie-videos of them singing ‘*The Snow Fell*’, and uploaded these to YouTube (and young women singing this particular Skrewdriver song *vastly* outnumber men), the act appears to accomplish two things: it speaks to their political identity; and it provides an opportunity, in the words of ‘angrygirl92’, to give people “a history lesson” about the Nazis and Stalingrad in accordance with their mythological fascist narrative of events in the 1940s.³

Cover versions exist in which music (or a musical ‘quotation’) is recontextualized in such a way that the meanings of the original are undermined or subverted. I refer to such cover versions as examples of ‘ideological realignment’. Ideological realignment works in a similar way to a parody, except without the comedic intent/effect. In one particularly interesting case, Ian Stuart Donaldson, the lead singer of Skrewdriver, recorded several versions of ‘*Tomorrow Belongs To Me*’, which was written by John Kander and Fred Ebb for the musical *Cabaret*. He recorded the song under the name of bands Skrewdriver and The Klansmen, as well as part of his double act Ian Stuart and Stigger; the Swedish white supremacist singer Saga also recorded two versions of the song – and this despite it being written in *criticism* of Nazism, by two homosexual Jewish Americans. In the film version of *Cabaret* (1974), the song features in a scene set in a beer garden; a member of Nazi Youth spontaneously starts singing the song and the crowd gradually joins in, getting more exuberant as the song progresses; at the crescendo of the song, following an upward key change, the boy and others give the Nazi salute. I reproduce images of this scene in the sequence below (the images on each row should be read from left to right):

Figure 1: 'Tomorrow Belongs to Me' (Kander & Ebb), Caberet, 1974

		<p>The sun on the meadow is summery warm The stag in the forest runs free But gather together to greet the storm Tomorrow belongs to me</p>
		<p>The branch of the linden is leafy and green The Rhine gives its gold to the sea. But somewhere a glory awaits unseen Tomorrow belongs to me</p>
		<p>The babe in his cradle is closing his eyes The blossom embraces the bee But soon says a whisper: "Arise, arise" [two men join in the song] Tomorrow belongs to me</p>
		<p>Oh Fatherland, Fatherland, Show us the sign [people start to stand & join in the song] Your children have waited to see The morning will come When the world is mine Tomorrow belongs to me</p>
		<p>[upward key change; widespread enthusiastic participation] Oh Fatherland, Fatherland, Show us the sign Your children have waited to see The morning will come When the world is mine</p>
		<p>Tomorrow belongs Tomorrow belongs Tomorrow belongs to me [x2] [two main characters leave the beer garden, signaling discomfort and/or disapproval]</p>

We should note that there is nothing explicitly prejudicial or extremist in the lyrics of the song. Certainly, the lyrics evoke nationalist Germanic themes, of a bucolic pastoral paradise and an imminent future in which the Fatherland will arise and enjoy glory. But the mood of the song, whilst a little jingoistic, is nevertheless non-exclusionary. The political meaning of the scene, therefore, is created in context. First, through multimodal collocation in the scene itself where, at the start of the second verse ('The branch of the linden is leafy and green...'), the camera pans down to reveal the boy's Swastika armband; and, second, it relies upon what we, in the film audience, know took place 'tomorrow', when the world 'belonged' to Swastika-wearing Brownshirts, their supporters and

people like them. Even if we in the audience watching the performance on screen are emotionally or physiologically affected by the musical or lyrical content of the song – and it is undoubtedly an extremely well-crafted song, beautifully sung by both the soloist and the accumulating chorus – this affect is held in check by our understanding of the historic and immoral consequences of the worldview that the performance encapsulates. In other words, the scene creates a distance between us and the singers – we are meant to fear them, in their exultation, precisely because what they declaim acts as a portent for what was to come: war; the death camps; mass murder on an industrial scale.

These levels of meaning, and the way they interpolate the audience, are all recontextualized and subverted in the realigned versions of the song, which take the same lyrics and sing them to a rock arrangement (or, later, as a pop ballad or in rockabilly style). If, when watching the scene from *Cabaret* (1974), we are meant to feel a sense of foreboding – a sense of fear in the terrible convictions of this group of people, and the way that song can be used to make these convictions more poetic and more palatable – this is embraced in the realigned versions of the song: yes, *you should fear*, fascist realigned versions of the song seem to say. Because while the fictional people in the film (and, at a stretch of the imagination, the real-life Germans that they metonymically represent) may have been naïve or short-sighted in foreseeing what exactly was to come, the same cannot be said of Ian Stuart Donaldson or Saga or any other artist who has recorded an ideologically subverted version of the song. Fascists and other extremists who, through their performances, subvert the meanings of the song are aware of what happened next; they take pleasure in the prospect of control, in what they will do tomorrow when the world will, again, belong to them. And through reinterpreting and recording this *particular* song – a song sung by fictional Nazis at a particular historic juncture – they imply a very specific imagined future, a very specific sense of the (fascist) glory that “awaits unseen”. One online commentary, written in praise of Ian Stuart Donaldson and what he aimed to achieve with this realignment, argues that Donaldson

radically changed ‘Tomorrow Belongs to Me’ by substituting a driving rock beat for the ballad format of the original—a surprising decision. He also eliminated the song’s sinister, repulsive, anti-white overtones [...] Ian Stuart’s and Saga’s interpretations of ‘Tomorrow Belongs to Me’ might be characterized as reverse engineering, or even reverse culture distortion: a song by Jews intended to convey an anti-white message has been transmuted into an explicitly pro-white anthem. (Hamilton, 2011)

As with all recontextualizations, it is the new context into which the prior text is inserted that is key to understanding the ‘transmutation’ of the song’s meanings: a ‘pro-white’ (read: fascist) ideological agenda is imposed upon the song – a complete mirror-opposite of the original intentions of the composers – as a direct consequence of the ideological agenda of the singers and their fans.

Recontextualization, 3: Interpolation

Interpolation is a form of musical recontextualization in which an element of a song or recording – typically a melody or refrain or (musical or lyrical) phrase – is incorporated into a new song. Interpolated elements are not samples or recordings, but selective re-recordings involving substitution and rearrangement of songs and parts of songs. Sometimes called musical ‘quotation’ in

musicology, interpolation is a frequent feature of contemporary hip-hop, wherein restrictive copyright laws which block artists sampling as little as a second of an original (copyright) recording can be sidestepped by re-recording the desired melody or refrain. Thus, the song 'Gangsta's Paradise' (1995) by Coolio and LV, interpolates the chorus and melody from 'Pastime Paradise' (1976) by Stevie Wonder; similarly 'Let's Stay Together' (2004), by Cee-Lo Green featuring Pharrell, interpolates a refrain from 'Live Forever' (1994) by Oasis.

One significant case in fascist music, is a three-part recontextualization of the Nazi anthem *Die Fahne Hoch* (Raise the Flag), later better known as *The Horst Wessel Lied*, after the author of its lyrics. It is impossible to overstate the social and cultural importance of *The Horst Wessel Lied* to Nazism. After 1933, the significance of *The Horst Wessel Lied* steadily rose in Nazi Germany, to the point that the song ultimately stood as an unofficial second national anthem of the Reich. At the Fall of France on 22 June 1940, after the French were read the terms of the armistice in the Forest of Compiègne, Hitler and his aides strode down the avenue whilst a Nazi Band blasted out "the two national anthems, Deutschland, Deutschland über Alles and the Horst Wessel Song" (Shirer, 1940: 263). Dedication to the cult of Horst Wessel could bring rewards to even the most out-of-favour Party inductee. Take Josef Müller-Blattau for example, an associate professor of music at the University of Königsberg who, "during the Weimar Republic had actually sympathized with the modernists" (Kater, 1997: 140). Müller-Blattau chose to write a "pseudoscientific article" about Wessel in 1934 in which he described *The Horst Wessel Lied* as:

the 'never to be lost property of the people, a true *Volkslied*.' This calculated act won him advancement to Frankfurt (1935) and then Freiburg (1937). After publishing a book on 'Germanic music' in collaboration with the SS, he was given a Chair at the new Reichsuniversität Strassburg in 1942. (ibid.)

The Horst Wessel Lied remains such a symbol of Nazism that its sale and broadcast in Germany are still banned.

Throughout the 1930s and 40s, fascist parties and movements across Europe adapted versions of the Horst Wessel song. These were not simply translations of the original German words, but rather were locally specific lyrics sung to what was essentially the same melody. It's difficult to make precise statements on the issues of discursive substitution and rearrangement of the *music* and arrangement of the song, given how many recorded versions there are of *The Horst Wessel Lied*. But almost all versions (that I have heard) were recorded with a marching band and male voice choir; in all recordings, the melody and song structure remain the same: the rhythm is not fast, but rather is set at a metronomic walking-pace, as one would expect for a military march. There is no urgency, although there is a sense of relentlessness and forward motion; there is a *little* syncopation, which is used to create a slight 'skip' in each line, and helps to create lightness and ease of momentum. In pitch, the melodies bring both a sense of grounding and sincerity and increasing euphoria through a combination of frequent descending notes and sweeping escalations. Although the songs use a wide pitch range, notably, at its base, the pitch is low and deeply masculine bringing weight and size. The melodies use basic, simple grounding notes with lots of 4ths for building, 2nds to suggest a journey and something unresolved, with the use of 7ths to suggest emotional longing. The voice qualities through which these melodies are articulated include loud volume and taking up of social and physical space; we find open throats and relaxed, easy articulation. We find both longer phrasing

suggesting emotional lingering but also some that is much more abrupt to suggest certainty and confidence. In arrangement we find the voices at the front of the mix above the instruments. The voices sing in unison, following the melody of the instruments. The effect is a chorus of indistinct voices with just a few in the foreground that can be heard individually, but only just. This suggests social cohesion and unity although not to the point where the individual completely disappears – thus providing an ideological misrepresentation of the totalitarian crushing of individualism entailed in and through any fascist political project (see Machin & Richardson, 2012 for further analysis).

The British Union of Fascists (BUF) had a version of the song, called *The Marching Song*, whose lyrics were written by the Blackshirt E.D. Randall. The lyrics of both songs are reproduced below:

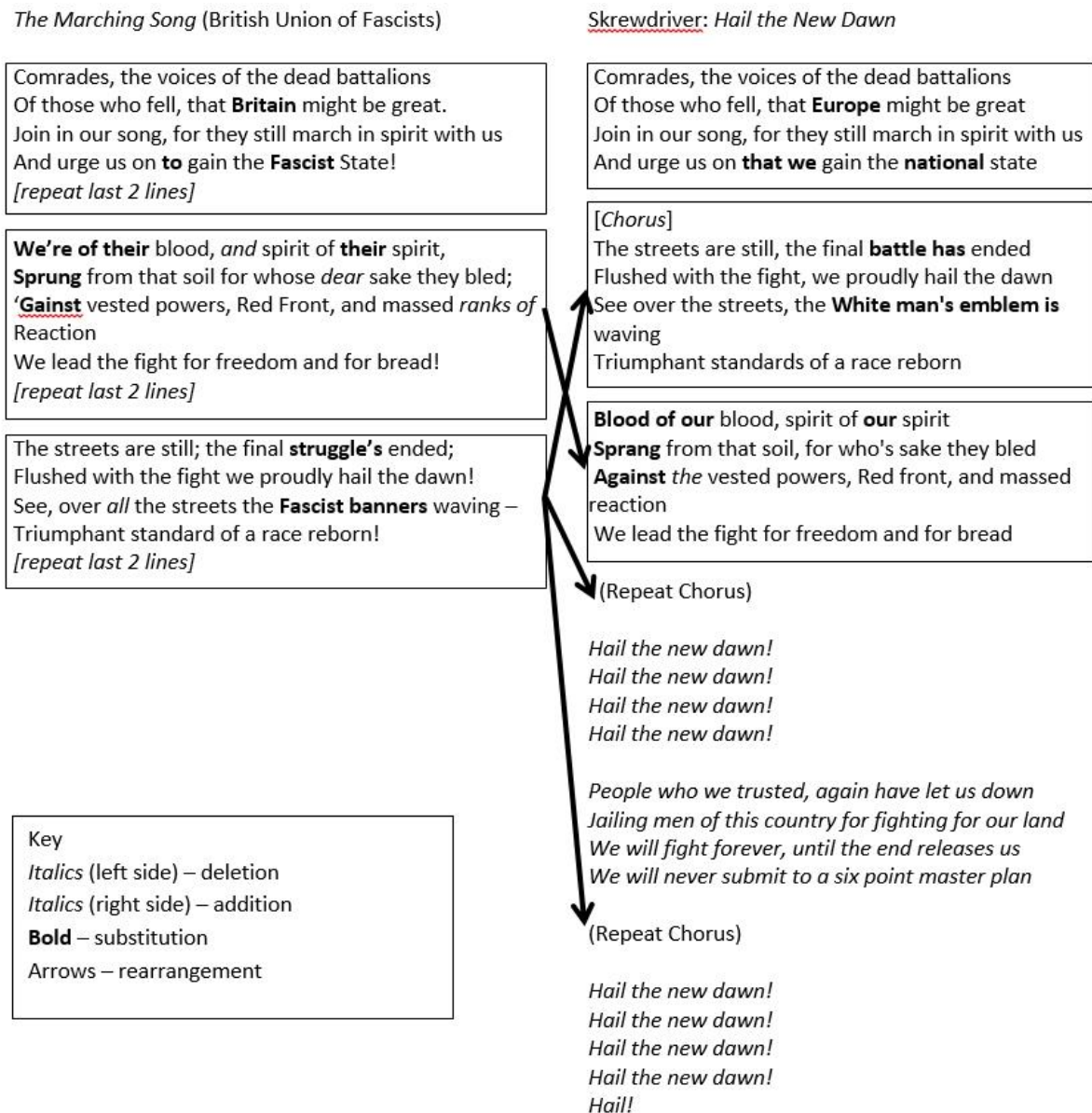
Table 3: Recontextualization of song lyrics, 1

Die Fahne Hoch/ Horst Wessel Lied	The Marching Song (British Union of Fascists)
<p>The flag on high! The ranks closed tightly! SA marches with silent, solid steps. Comrades, shot by Red Front and reactionaries, March in spirit within our ranks. Comrades, shot by Red Front and reactionaries, March in spirit within our ranks.</p>	<p>Comrades, the voices of the dead battalions Of those who fell, that Britain might be great. Join in our song, for they still march in spirit with us And urge us on to gain the Fascist State! Join in our song, for they still march in spirit with us And urge us on to gain the Fascist State!</p>
<p>The streets free for the brown battalions, The streets free for the stormtrooper! Millions look at the swastika full of hope, The day of freedom and of bread is dawning! Millions look at the swastika full of hope, The day of freedom and of bread is dawning!</p>	<p>We're of their blood, and spirit of their spirit, Sprung from that soil for whose dear sake they bled; 'Gainst vested powers, Red Front, and massed ranks of Reaction We lead the fight for freedom and for bread! 'Gainst vested powers, Red Front, and massed ranks of Reaction We lead the fight for freedom and for bread!</p>
<p>The last sound to charge is blown! We already stand prepared for the fight! Soon Hitler's flags will flutter above all streets. Our slavery will last only a short time longer! Soon Hitler's flags will flutter above all streets. Our slavery will last only a short time longer!</p>	<p>The streets are still; the final struggle's ended; Flushed with the fight we proudly hail the dawn! See, over all the streets the Fascist banners waving – Triumphant standard of a race reborn! See, over all the streets the Fascist banners waving – Triumphant standard of a race reborn!</p>

The lyrics in the BUF's *Marching Song* were clearly inspired by those of *The Horst Wessel Lied*. We have the same open militarism; the same references to the spirits of soldiers, martyred for the greater good of the Nation, who march alongside and strengthen the ranks of fascists; the same enemies of the fascist political project – “vested interests” (capital), “Red Front” (Communists) and reactionary conservatives – seemingly united in the traditional conspiracy. In both songs there is the same claim to be fighting for food and freedom as opposed to subjugation and terror; and a rousing declaration of imminent national rebirth. This *national* rebirth is substituted in the *Marching Song* with an explicitly *racial* rebirth, and it was perhaps for this reason that Skrewdriver recorded a song which interpolated the *BUF Marching Song*. Called *Hail the New Dawn*, and included on their 1984 album of the same name, Skrewdriver recontextualized the *BUF Marching Song*, rearranging and re-recording the song as a four piece band (singer, drums, bass and guitar) in their preferred genre of

Oi/punk. Figure 2 below shows the extent of their recontextualization – not only in terms of what is added and taken away, but also the ways that the original song structure was transposed into the verse-chorus structure of popular song.

Figure 2: Recontextualization of song lyrics, 2



The notion of 'Finality' – whether "the final battle" or the 'final solution' – is a particularly resonant watchword in fascist discourse. For a battle to be the *final* one, necessarily, the enemy needs to be not only defeated but denied the possibility of ever returning – that is, not only are their forces dead, but all possibility of others like them returning, and taking up arms, is also removed. Fascist discourse, particularly in the National Socialist tradition, ubiquitously identifies Jews (and/or 'International Jewry') as the enemy (Copsey, 2008; Richardson, 2013, 2015); victory in the 'final battle' is therefore tantamount to genocide; a second Shoah. It is therefore striking that Skrewdriver's interpolated song recontextualizes "the final struggle" of *The Marching Song* in two

ways: first substituting “struggle” for “battle”; and second, rearranging the song in such a way that this phrase is included in the newly created chorus. This repetition – it is sung three times in the Skrewdriver song – ensures it is given an emphasis lacking in the original. And, should listeners be unclear regarding who it is that this “battle” is against, the additional final verse refers directly to a “fight” against submitting to a “six point master plan” – the six points implicitly indexing the six pointed Star of David, thus making it clear that this “final battle” is, eternally, against *Der Jude*.

Conclusion

With each form of musical recontextualization, it is the changed social, political and interpersonal contexts in which a (new) song is performed or reproduced that are key to understanding how the meanings we associate with the song also change. With musical appropriation, a party/movement/individual attempts to colonise and incorporate a complete song (unchanged, unabridged) within, and as part of, a fascist political and cultural project. In so doing, the text remains the same, but its implied meanings partly shift according to this new context. With this form of recontextualisation we see the clearest demonstration of both the dialectical links between text and context, and that there is no meaning outside of use. With interpolation, on the other hand, we see the greatest amount of discursive transformation – musical and lyrical elements can be deleted, added, rearranged and substituted, according to a range of textual, aesthetic and political functions. The political *meanings* of these transformations are related to the political *identities* of those interpolating the song, and their political motivations.

Ideological realignment is essentially a specific form of cover version; a cover version for a particular political purpose. In both cover version and ideological realignment we tend to see little addition or deletion – the song remains lyrically and melodically ‘intact’; but what we always see are substitution (one voice for another; one instrument for another) and rearrangement (the accordion and brass band of the song in *Cabaret* for the rock band of Skrewdriver; the simplification of key in the Skrewdriver realigned version, and so on). Mapping musical transformations in this way provides us with a starting point for analysing of the meaning potentials in each of the four transformations, and also the wider functions and discursive significance of recontextualization in (fascist) music and song.

In any musical culture, or subculture, music and song act to nurture intra-group solidarity. The sense of group identity that comes from shared pleasure of music and song, the role that music and song can play in delineating and differentiating group identities, and so the importance of music to individual and collective identity, are features common to any musical culture. But in a prejudiced musical subculture – like that which venerates a *fascist political tradition* – these individual and collective identities, this nurturing of In-group solidarity and radical rejection of the Outgroup, take on more ominous meanings. The recontextualisation of prior texts (musical and other texts) in fascist songs is one way in which this historic tradition is indexed and celebrated; it signals continuity, connectedness and perpetuation of a political project translated into art and culture.

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¹ See <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0NuTaQsMNaE> for the scene in question [accessed 7 December 2015]

² From the BBC report <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/8191094.stm> [accessed 3 December 2015]

³ 'angrygirl92' <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uOJhe-9SIhc> [accessed 3 December 2015]