

Discuss The Shape Of Pink Floyd's 1979 Album 'The Wall', And The Relationship Of Track 25- 'The Trial', To The Rest Of The Album

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As Fabbri (1999) says, 'A genre is a kind of music...' and The Wall (Pink Floyd, 1979) is a progressive rock concept album, based on the story of 'Pink' (based on a combination of lead singer Roger Waters and ex-lead singer Syd Barret), who builds a metaphorical wall to separate himself from the world, and its impact on his later life as a rock star. However, he suggests a style is 'a recurring arrangement of features in musical events which is typical of an individual'. We are presented with tracks that range from the disco-tinged 'Another Brick In The Wall Part 2' (ABITWP2); through the piano accompanied poem- 'Stop'; to the orchestral epic of 'The Trial'. This makes it difficult to categorise The Wall, due to the vast amount of variation within the album. The album is shaped primarily through its overarching storyline, made up of the lyrical (Genius Media Group, 2017) and musical themes, illustrated in figures 1+2. Of course, throughout the album there are countless musical (such as the D-E-F-E motif first heard clearly in Another Brick In The Wall Part 1 [ABITWP1]) and lyrical themes (the 'bricks' that cause his wall, the outcomes of the wall, and the overarching theme of isolation), which further contribute to its shape.

Disc	Bricks					Outcomes				Wall Leitmotif (D-E-F-E)
	Isolation	Mother	Wife	WWII/Fathers Death	School	Violence	Drugs	Sexuality	Worms	
Disc 1										
In The Flesh?	•			•						Guitar chords from 0:36 play a rhythmically augmented version of the D-E-F-E sequence.
The Thin Ice		•								Subtle, rearranged chords. Maybe not consciously intentional.
Another Brick In The Wall Part 1	•	•		•						Obvious use in the chanted vocal melody.
The Happiest Days Of Our Lives					•					No clear use.
Another Brick In The Wall Part 2				•	•					Obvious use in vocal melody and doubled in guitar.
Mother		•								No clear use.
Goodbye Blue Sky	•			•						No clear use.
Empty Spaces	•		•							Appears throughout, from opening guitar to the long, held lower chords and even the vocals. Most of the song is made of the notes. Perhaps because the song is focused on filling the wall with more items, so the wall is such a clear presence that it dominates the song entirely.
Young Lust	•		•			•	•	•		No clear use.
One Of My Turns	•		•			•		•		Very subtle piano fill at 2:49 references the motif.
Don't Leave Me Now	•		•							No clear use.
Another Brick In The Wall Part 3	•		•		•	•	•			Repeatedly used in the vocal melody.
Goodbye Cruel World	•									The motif is echoed slightly in the vocal melody.
Disc 2										
Disc 2										
Hey You	•								•	Repeatedly played in the guitars as Pink realises he cannot escape The Wall and is stuck behind it with the worms.
Is There Anybody Out There?	•									No clear use.
Nobody Home	•									No clear use.
Vera				•						No clear use.
Bring The Boys Back Home		•		•						No clear use.
Comfortably Numb	•						•			No clear use.
The Show Must Go On				•			•			No clear use.
In The Flesh				•		•	•			Same as 'In The Flesh?'
Run Like Hell				•		•	•			Motif is hidden in chord progressions.
Waiting For The Worms				•		•	•		•	The riff finally comes back in full force. After a huge break in its use, where the wall is complete and Pink has come to terms with this and is essentially not the same person, so as The Wall destroys him, and he simultaneously realises he is himself.
Stop	•									Subtly used at the end of vocal phrases.
The Trial	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	Clear use in overdriven guitar, makes biggest impact due to it being an orchestral score until this point. Very much the focus for a while, very loud and returns as the 'judge' makes his decision that the wall will be torn down. The Wall motif comes back most forcibly when it is being destroyed.
Outside The Wall										Some parts seem to suggest an inverted version of the riff, possibly a suggestion of The Wall having been destroyed, so its melody is not there anymore.

In 'OK Computer' (Griffiths, 2004), Griffiths discusses the use of unity within pop albums, stating that there are many 'half-baked attempts at the unified album', as most concept albums 'could be seen as "merely" held together by a narrative, thematic, dramatic thread', rather than through musical ideas like song cycles were. However, as *The Wall* uses the Wall Motif [*Figure 1+2*], a (perhaps unintentionally) coherent tempo/key structure and linking songs [*Figure 3*] as well as its story, then perhaps *The Wall* does fit into Griffiths' idea of a truly unified work after all. He suggests that 'the "bookend", balanced opening and ending' is one way in which an album can be shaped. His 'favourite example is "Street Legal" (1978) by Bob Dylan', which uses a shape that fades in at the beginning and out at the end, which could be used to suggest a cyclical nature. This can be seen similarly in *The Wall* as track 26 perfectly flows into the very start of track 1, both musically, and lyrically through the vocal 'isn't this where' and 'we came in?' respectively (Timber Walls, 2014). This takes Griffiths' idea of cyclicity to the extreme. This raises a new issue, of whether we can even talk about the album in terms of a beginning and end, as without the physical aspect (the disc ending etc.) we may not actually be able to tell for certain where the end comes.

As *The Wall* was originally made as a vinyl double album, it uses 2 disc's/4 sides making the structure even more complex. We must then look at whether we just extend Griffiths' idea ('double and triple albums simply multiply this assumption'), and assume the end of disc 1 is now the middle, or, contrary to Griffiths' statement, look at each side individually. I think the latter is more appropriate, as in *The Wall*, each side seems to present its own mini-story. Side 1 gives the listener Pink's background and first shows the bricks, 2 shows them beginning to have an impact and him starting to 'complete the wall', 3 shows the wall now complete and side 4 shows him hallucinating dictatorship and eventually destroying it. This means that the use of the story impacts how the change of disc impacts the shape. He says that as 'the side would need to be changed, (both) sides had to contain their own sense of progression'. As each side on *The Wall* uses these self-contained stories this sense of progression is apparent, and the side changes suit the album, rather than interrupt. This is furthered in figure 3, which shows songs which don't overlap to be the end of sides/discs. Due to this, *The Wall*'s shape cannot fit Griffiths' ideas completely, as the shape seems mostly based on sides, rather than 'multiplying the assumption' and basing it around the disc change.

This links to his idea of there being 'collections where there really is no reason to attend to the organisation of sound, since another principle of organisation takes place'. He applies this to an album of birdsong, but this doesn't mean it can't apply to a story such as *The Wall*. He suggests that in many albums, the 'positioning of hit singles' is important, for example, bunching them together at the start. If we take just one example of a non-concept album- 'Metallica' (Metallica, 1991), we can see that 4 of the 5 singles released, are 4 of the first 5 tracks on the album. It could be suggested that this is done to keep the listeners interest by playing songs they are familiar with, or to grab their attention. The biggest selling single on the album- 'ABITWP2', reached no.1 in multiple countries including the US and UK (Cossar, 2017), and is placed close to the start at track 5. However, famous songs such as 'Comfortably Numb' and 'Young Lust' tracks 19 and 9 respectively, suggesting that the album doesn't apply the principles of grabbing attention with familiar songs, as it would interrupt the story. The fact that these songs virtually have to be ordered in this way, makes for clear contrast in shape to albums that have a large degree of freedom to organise tracks. Alternately, Griffiths suggests that some tracks would be positioned based on things such as structural similarity. Side 3 could be seen as an example of this, as it is bookended by relatively 'standard' verse-chorus structures in 'Hey You' and 'Comfortably Numb', that are balanced by almost through-composed tracks such as 'Is There Anybody Out There?' and 'Vera'. The order of tracks that don't have an exact storyline placement (such as those giving general background like 'Mother' and 'ABITWP1') could be based on musical features. For example, the songs that use musical rather than SFX overlaps (shown in [*Figure 3*]), generally use similar tempi and related keys, such as that between 'ABITWP1' and 'The Happiest Days Of Our Lives', which both use the same tempo and key to create a clear transition.

	Main Key	Main Tempo	Overlap Into Next Song
In The Flesh?	A Major	Slow	Sound of baby crying overlaps.
The Thin Ice	C Major	Slow	Final chord rings over into next song.
Another Brick In the Wall Part 1	D Minor	Moderate	Ending of the song lasts about 10 seconds into the start of the next.
The Happiest Days Of Our Lives	D Minor	Moderate	Drum fills and screaming sound leads into next song.
Another Brick In The Wall Part 2	D Minor	Slow	Sound of phone call overlaps the two songs.
Mother	G Major	Moderate	None- end of side 1.
Goodbye Blue Sky	D Major	Moderate	Guitar fades out as sfx fade in between the songs, creating an overlap.
Empty Spaces	E Minor	Slow	Final vocal part ('Wall') overlaps.
Young Lust	E Minor	Moderately Slow	Phone call overlaps the songs.
One Of My Turns	C Major/G Minor	Moderate	Reverb tail of the final vocal overlaps.
Don't Leave Me Now	A Minor (loosely)	Slow	Sounds of TV link the songs together.
Another Brick In The Wall Part 3	D Minor	Moderate	End of the song goes on for over 20 seconds into the following track.
Goodbye Cruel World	D Major	Slow	None- end of side 2/disc 1.
Hey You	E Minor	Moderately	Echoes of 'We fall' continue to next track.
Is There Anybody Out There?	A Minor	Slow	White noise from the end of the track continues into the next.
Nobody Home	C Major	Slow	Remains of the piano chord lead in.
Vera	E Minor	Moderate	Strings and guitar resonate into the opening of the next track.
Bring The Boys Back Home	E Minor	Slow	No direct overlap, but the final lyrics connect the first lyrics of the next song.
Comfortably Numb	B Minor/D Major	Slow	None- End of side 3.
The Show Must Go On	G Major	Slow	Clapping and final vocal part overlap.
In The Flesh	A Major	Slow	Clapping and chanting overlap the tracks.
Run Like Hell	D Major	Moderately Fast	Clapping and chanting continue overlapping.
Waiting For The Worms	E Minor	Slow	Even louder clapping brings in chord/shout of 'stop' that connects the two songs.
Stop	E Minor	Slow	Final chord and sfx overlap the tracks.
The Trial	E Minor	Moderately Slow	Sound of Wall collapsing connects the songs.
Outside The Wall	C Major	Slow	Technically the end of side 4/disc 2, but the musical idea links directly to the start of track 1. If played together, they would link seamlessly, creating the cyclical nature of the album.

[Figure 3] (Carisch, 2001)

'The Trial' is the second to last track on the album, and the 'end' of the storyline- it fits interestingly into the album. First of all, it is essentially a verse-chorus structure, similar to that of 'Hey You' and 'Comfortably Numb' etc. However, due to the amount of variety on the album, the structure isn't merely the standard, as it still heavily contrasts the through the verse-only or through composition of 'In The Flesh?' or 'Stop' respectively. This song is the only direct use of singing 'characters', showing it to differ from the rest of the album. Throughout the rest of the album Waters could have used these voices to represent the characters, instead, he leaves this musical theatre-esque composition to the end, possibly to give it as much difference to the rest of the album as possible. Another way in which The Trial fits into the album is through its use of lyrical themes presented via these characters, something very important in a concept album of this kind. As shown in figure 1+2, we see that this track is where all of the themes of the album are combined. If we take, for example, the verse of The Mother, we see that her entire lyrical content is based on her as a 'brick'. 'Why'd he ever have to leave me?' shows she wants Pink to be with her, drawing parallels to the song 'Mother', as the use of lines such as 'Mamas gonna keep you right here under her wing', also shows the idea of an overbearing mother figure. Similarly, when the schoolmaster speaks, we are linked back into the album through mention of the abusiveness of the school system- 'I could have flayed him into shape', which mirrors its discussion in ABITWP1. As Pink acknowledges his own insanity (the 'crazy...' refrain), it shows that all of the bricks and outcomes that had been building throughout the album finally combined to this realisation (Urlick, 2010), (Nemcoff, 2012). This shows the way in which The Trial seems to be where all of the lyrical themes congregate, showing its place in the album. Furthermore, the use of the Wall Motif is clear in this track, as it is its final use after being placed throughout the album. It use is combined with the destruction of the wall, and therefore, with it, the destruction of the motif.

'The fact that most pop music is vocal music means that we must take account of the voice rather closely', Moore says in 'An analytic musicology of rock' (Moore, 2004). In The Trial, Waters has to manipulate his voice substantially to provide the voice for 6 characters who are 'all in [Pink's] mind, they're all memories' (Crampton, 1979). According to Moore's writing, Waters fits into the 'white' voice: 'restrained, restricted and

apparently uninvolved'. He also seems to suit the 'untrained' vocal style: with limited regard to singing 'tempered pitches precisely in tune' or a 'full-throated tone'. These distinctions apply to all 6 characters, essentially making it seem like the different voices he produces are all the same. Moore dismisses the helpfulness of these ideas and instead suggests that there are 4 features to make up a vocal style, which allow the different voices in *The Trial* to be noticed for their individual differences. These are range, resonance and pitch/rhythmic accuracy. As Pink, his range is relatively restrained, with a timid sound to reflect Pink's fear, until his final phrase, where the pitches begin to rise, and the vocal sound becomes thinner and more strained. However, as the schoolmaster, Waters begins with a much higher tessitura, opening with a shrill shriek that contrasts Pink's timid delivery. The mother has a larger range than Pink, employing a 2 octave glissando scream of 'babe' starting on a high B. The resonance in Pinks voice is distinctive, as it is clearly grainy which seems to be created by an almost hoarse sound in the throat, which can be heard crackling clearly in the first 'Crazy...' refrain. The Wife, however, uses a much fuller, chesty sound, descending into a near growl on 'worm your honour'. With this fuller tone comes a greater accuracy in pitch, especially when compared to Pink, who, as while not sounding out of tune per-se, has a clear wobble in accuracy, particularly in the first syllable of the word 'marbles' towards the end of the first refrain. Finally, rhythmic accuracy is something Pink sticks to more than other characters, mostly singing in time with a piano part playing the same melody, though there are a few deviations, such as on the word 'fishing' which is distinctly behind the beat. This is similar to The Wife and her frequent use of anticipation and retardation, especially on the word 'alone', which is used to anticipate the beat. These 4 aspects give a much greater detail to vocal analysis, especially when the vocalist uses different styles, and even accents, within a song, factors which make *The Trial* stand out hugely from the rest of the album. However, Moore does fail to mention electronic manipulation of the voice, which is something used on *The Judge*, who has his vocal line double tracked, with one distorted and taken down an octave. This hugely changes the sound, and makes *The Trial* stand out further, being the only song to use heavy manipulation on the vocal part. Pink is the voice that most closely matches Waters' general singing style, possibly due to the fact Pink is the only character who 'sings' on other tracks than *The Trial*. This is shown particularly on 'Goodbye Cruel World', where Waters/Pink's voice shows a weak tone, based around a small, low range and average pitch accuracy, but quite clear rhythmic accuracy, and shows at least some connection to the album in terms of vocal writing.

The voice produces the melodies in this track, and their use can be compared to the rest of the album. Moore suggests that 'most commonly, it is the third layer (the 'tune') that is accompanied by the other layers'. This is seen in *The Trial*, as the vocal melodies are consistently accompanied by the orchestra, with the orchestral part being somewhat restricted, to give the vocal part more presence. This principle is seen throughout the album, such as in 'The Thin Ice', which mostly consists of subtle keyboard harmony supporting the vocals. However, the 'tune' found in 'ABITW' is the simple Wall Motif. This D-E-F-E melody is the focus of each part and in the foreground, but when the motif returns in *The Trial* (transposed to Em) it is used in an accompanying sense, with the Judges vocal being the clear focus above it. This melody is essentially the same as it was in ABITW, but this time it is an accompaniment (also shown, for example, in the 'Hey You' guitar solo)- does this mean it wasn't a melody in ABITW? Or does it make this part of the song polyphonic? It seems that this melody line is defined by context, something that Moore's analysis fails to consider. The album-wide repetition of this motif is notable, as it seems to be the musical feature that cements the whole thing together, returning in some form in almost every track [Figure 1+2], linking *The Trial* and the rest of the album together. Moore also discusses the melodic contour- 'the way of discussing the shape traversed by a melody'. He mentions a 'downward sweep' as a common use of contour in vocal lines, but this pattern seems to be mostly avoided in *The Wall*. It seems to often use more of a balanced phrasing of ascent and descent. A specific example in *The Trial* is the Schoolmasters line 'but my hands were tied, the bleeding hearts and artists' which clearly uses a pattern that descends, then ascends etc. This pattern is shown in each verse throughout the song in different variations. This places the melodic writing of *The Trial* firmly into the rest of the album, with a similar contour being used at 'out there on your own getting lonely getting old' in 'Hey You', or in inversion in 'Don't Leave Me Now', such as in the rise and fall of 'why are you running away'. Even the Wall Motif uses this

ascent/descent pattern, moving from D-E-F back to E, showing a link between a huge amount of the melodic writing within the album, firmly placing the writing in The Trial into this, which uses a similar contour in its vocal melodies, and of course, the Wall Motif.

In terms of harmony, Moore suggests that we must 'first call attention to the conventional formal divisions', in this case being: Intro-Verse(Prosecutor/Schoolmaster)-Chorus(Pink)-Verse(Wife/Mother)-Chorus(Pink)-Verse(Judge)-Outro. He suggests that 'the repetition of harmonic sequences is frequently 4 bars, sometimes 8 or 2 bars', and this is (in general) no different in The Trial. Each half of the first 2 verses (aside from some slight elongations etc.) is consistently an 8 bar harmonic pattern. The first half of each is built around Em-Em-F-F-Em-Em-C-B7, and the second half around Em-Em-F#-Em-G-G#dim-D-D (with some slight variation at points). Both of these sequences (much like the Em7b5/Em-Em-Bmaj7/B-B-F#m-D-D#dim-Em7b5/Em-Em-Bmaj7/B-B of the chorus and Em-Am of the final verse) are open, as each 'phrase ends on a non-tonic harmony'. This is something that shows The Trial's difference to the album, as the other tracks avoid focusing on open patterns, such as on 'Comfortably Numb', where the verse is in Bm, with each 4 bar chord sequence (Bm-A-G/Em-Bm) ending on chord I- a closed pattern. The Em-Am sequence in the final verse is based around the addition of the Wall Motif, and is much more linked to the rest of the album than the earlier parts of the song, as this 2 chord open sequence is found, for example, in the 'Hey You' solo, as the motif is also used clearly there. He also discusses rhythm, particularly on the drum kit. He suggests a 'standard rock beat', based on a 4/4 pattern, where the hi-hat will generally play quavers, the bass drum on beats 1+3 and the snare on 2+4. This pattern is littered throughout The Wall, for example, being found incredibly clearly on 'ABITWP2', and with alternations on other tracks such as 'Young Lust'. The Trial, however, furthers its instrumental difference to the rest of the album, with the percussion that enters being limited to bass drum and cymbal. While the general on beat 1+3 bass drum is present, along with the off-beat cymbal replacing the snare, we get no use of hi-hat, and the idea of the 'standard rock beat' found throughout the album isn't really recognisable (not to mention that percussion isn't even used in the rest of the song). The only use of snare is more reminiscent of the other anomalous orchestral track- 'Bring The Boys Back Home' as it is used for short military-style rolls. This suggests that The Trial stands out from the album in terms of rhythmic content.

Moore suggests that a key part of discussion is 'whether songs have been written at the fretboard or the keyboard'. There are large parts of the album that suggest composition on the guitar, such as frequent use of 'open string' keys, such as the Em of 'Hey You' or Dm of 'ABITW', especially shown in the use of the D-E-F-E riff in these (and other) songs, which is a simple pattern on guitar. This is no different for The Trial, which is in Em, possibly to allow the huge use of the riff in an open position at the end. However, the way in which the rest of The Trial is composed suggests composition at the piano. For example, the opening 'oom-pah' tuba part alternates notes in an open 5th, something very comfortable on a piano. The harmony in the piece often uses diminished/augmented chords- easy to play on the piano, but on guitar, will often require deviation to barre chords from the open chords, making it much more complex to play. As Moore suggests 'white-note roots as tonics' and 'disposition of pitches' are giveaways, with the mostly white-note based harmony and close, triadic chords seemingly suggesting piano. This idea is confirmed in Waters' demo of The Trial, which replaces the majority of the orchestra with a piano (Blazefirebootlegs, 2011), suggesting his initial conception of the track was at the piano.

In conclusion, The Wall is a hard album to categorise. While many concept albums revolve around an idea allowing them some level of freedom for shaping, The Wall is based on a rigidly organised story. This might suggest that we should avoid looking at the album in terms of a shape, as it should be looked at as a whole, complete work. This is why it is also difficult to place The Trial in context, as without the rest of the album it makes no sense. We wouldn't understand the story, the voices, the way the melody writing fits it into the album, or the way the instrumentation is so different. This means we wouldn't be able to work out how it suits its place in the album, without the context we are provided.

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