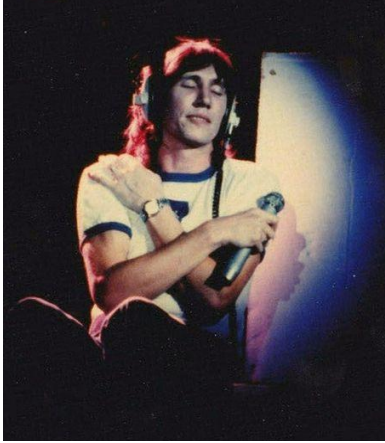


PINK
FLOYD
THE
WALL

Analysis by Sophie :)

THE BAND - 1979



ROGER WATERS - BASS GUITAR, VOCALS

The concept for *The Wall* was devised entirely by Waters, and his vision of the album was so complete that there was little left for the other members to contribute. He took control of the entire recording and production process, and he, producer Bob Ezrin, and sound engineer James Guthrie all fiercely fought over the direction the album should take. Additionally, the relationship between Waters and keyboardist Richard Wright was in tatters, as Waters often targeted the depressed and struggling Wright for his apparent laziness-- something he viewed as sabotage on his creative vision. Waters was always viewed by the band as "a bit of a bully", but it has been said that his aggressiveness and egotistical nature during this time period was at an unprecedented high.

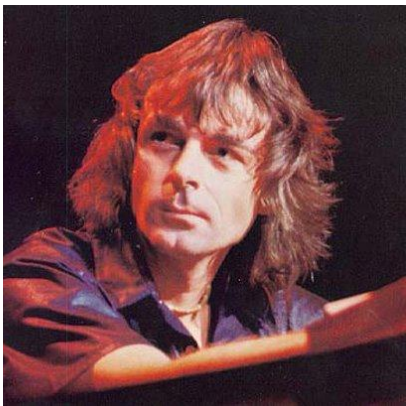
DAVID GILMOUR - GUITAR, VOCALS

David Gilmour had already released his first solo album by the time the concept for *The Wall* was born. He was permitted by Waters to be a co-producer on *The Wall*, but Gilmour's role became to the most part that of a quiet observer, a mediator for conflicts that sprung up due to Waters' strict vision of the project. Gilmour often attempted to calm the fiery tensions that existed between Waters and Wright. He also became closely involved with the business side of matters "by force of necessity", considering the band's assets had been horribly mismanaged in the past. Gilmour would also later remark that *The Wall* wasn't exactly his favorite of Pink Floyd's works, saying he didn't like its negativity or the idea of someone blaming the world for all of their problems-- especially through a piece of art, which he said should instead bring people together. Gilmour also later expressed dissatisfaction with some of the lyrical and musical decisions made on the album.



RICHARD WRIGHT - KEYBOARDS

Wright was the first of the quartet to release a solo album, having released his debut record in 1978. This time period was especially tough on Wright. Although the rest of the band's children were still young enough to travel with them as they relocated to a recording studio in France, Wright's had to stay in school back in England, leaving him alone and missing his family terribly. Besides this, he was going through a painful divorce, and all of this took a severe toll on his mental health. In addition, he was also battling substance and struggling with a cocaine addiction. Drained and depressed, Wright was often accused by his band members of not contributing anything meaningful to the recording process due to laziness or simply not caring, but in fact, his deep state of depression was debilitating him, leaving him feeling uninspired, unmotivated, and unloved. It was even said that Waters was "setting Wright up to fail" from the very start.



NICK MASON - DRUMS/PERCUSSION

Mason seemed to have avoided many of the conflicts and drama which frequently sprung up during the production of *The Wall*. He completed the majority of his drum parts in the earlier part of production, and most of his attention was instead directed toward serving as producer on other artists' works. Although Mason harbored some quiet "tongue-in-cheek" resentment toward producer Bob Ezrin and his "erratic" and unpredictable punctuality, overall his relations with the rest of the band were pretty positive. Even Roger Waters, the notorious bully, expressed no negative qualms about Mason during this time and Mason even moved into his villa near the recording studio during the creation of the album. He left the final mix of the album to Waters, Gilmour, Ezrin, and Guthrie and, having completed his responsibilities, later left for New York to work on his first solo album.



THE BACKGROUND

*Thank you so much to Jane, whose comments and insights really helped me polish up this packet!

Pink Floyd kind of had a reputation for constructing these elaborate, monumental live shows with pyrotechnics, big screen projections, massive stage props, state of the art sound systems, etc. But mind you, this was the 70s, so there were only a handful of venues that could handle that kind of a massive, large-scale production, namely, large stadiums that could seat tens of thousands of people. But there was a problem with this-- the band feared that these huge stadium concerts diluted the message of their music and instead gave the impression that they were only in it for the money. Pink Floyd's *In the Flesh* tour of 1977, which promoted their album *Animals*, was their first endeavor playing these sorts of massive gigs. Roger Waters later said this about the experience: "I disliked it intensely because it became a social event rather than a more controlled and ordinary relationship between musicians and an audience ... The front sixty rows seemed to be screaming and shouting and rocking and swaying and not really listening to anything. And those further back could see bugger-all anyway." At one performance, some audience members set off firecrackers, leading Waters to stop playing and scold them. On July 6, 1977, on the final date of the tour, a group of noisy and excited fans near the stage irritated Waters so much that he infamously spat at one of them. Guitarist David Gilmour then refused to perform a final encore and left the band to sit at the soundboard, leaving them to continue performing with one of their backup guitarists and improvise some slow, sad, very passive 12-bar blues. That night, Waters spoke with music producer Bob Ezrin and Ezrin's psychiatrist friend about the alienation he was experiencing. He articulated his desire to isolate himself by **constructing a wall** across the stage between the performers and the audience.

From this feeling, inspiration struck and by the summer of the following year, Waters recorded two demos of two complete albums -- an early version of *The Wall*, and another which would later become his first solo album. However, the completeness of the demo left the band confused as to where they fit in, and Water's vision of the album was so focused that he basically took over production entirely and didn't allow his fellow bandmates to chime in with their own ideas. He made it clear from the beginning that this album was *his project*, and the rest of the band were just allowed to play on it. He even strictly told Gilmour that although he would be allowed to be a producer alongside him and Bob Ezrin, Wright and Mason would not be permitted the same honor. By this time, most of the band were already working on their own solo albums, and existing cracks in the band were becoming more and more apparent.

If all of this wasn't bad enough, the band was also hit with an onslaught of financial troubles, as it was discovered that the company they had entrusted with protecting their assets was falsifying records to hide the fact that their business was failing. The company folded soon after, leaving the band with a severe financial burden (a 3 million pound loss, plus owing the crown anywhere from 5-12 million pounds in taxes). With *The Wall* only in its early development stages, the band were forced to leave the country and relocate to a studio in France for a year to finish recording the album and avoid further UK taxation on their earnings, as they would be non-UK residents.

After a while, Waters' ego started to get the better of him as tension within the band rose to an all-time high. The project was less of a collaboration where everybody contributed their own ideas and bounced concepts off one another (like their earlier works), instead, most of the band members recorded their parts separately and in isolation. Things became even more tense when Columbia records offered to increase the band's percentage points if the album was delivered by the 1979 holiday season. It was determined that this deadline could be met if the band employed a second recording studio and cut their summer vacation time short by a week. Everyone agreed to these terms except Wright, who wasn't willing to sacrifice time with his family. This set Waters off to no end, as the majority of the keyboard parts were still not recorded and he believed Wright was holding up the record. Waters threatened that either Wright be fired from the band, or the album would be released under Waters' name -- *not* Pink Floyd. Ultimately, Wright decided to leave the group, but under the condition that he could still finish recording his keyboard parts and play on the following live tour as a salaried musician.

After much trial and tribulation, the album was finally completed -- but upon first listening to it, executives at Columbia records were disappointed and unimpressed by what they heard, and even attempted to minimize their losses by offering Waters a reduced cut of the profits. Waters fought back, defending his work, and the label eventually backed down. There were still some more hurdles to overcome -- some changes to the album were made so last-minute that some early pressings of the album still had the lyrics to deleted songs printed on the covers, or displayed an incorrect running order. Furthermore, on some early pressings, Nick Mason and Richard Wright's names were nowhere to be found in the credits on the album, though this was fixed later on to include the names of all the band members. But hey, in the end, the album spawned Pink Floyd's biggest hit ever (and their only ever #1 song) and ended up becoming their 2nd most commercially successful album ever, right after *the Dark Side of the Moon*.

THE BAND - 1979 (CONT.)

BOB EZRIN - PRODUCER

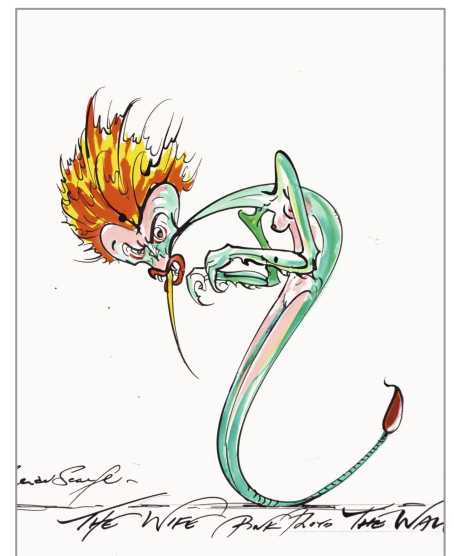


Although not a member of the band per se, Bob Ezrin's contributions as producer were instrumental to the creation of *The Wall*. Ezrin was employed to the project by Waters, who felt he needed "a collaborator who was musically and intellectually in a similar place to where [he] was", qualities he apparently felt his fellow bandmates lacked. Ezrin previously worked with artists like Alice Cooper, Lou Reed, Kiss, and Peter Gabriel, and he helped to refine the concept of the album as well as bridge tensions during recording. Although Ezrin was technically co-producer in addition to Waters, Gilmour, and sound engineer James Guthrie, Waters made it clear from the very beginning who was *really* in charge, saying "You can write anything you want. Just don't expect any credit." Ezrin refined the concept of *The Wall*, broadening the storyline and advising Waters to make the message more universal and less autobiographical. Ezrin's poor punctuality, however, caused problems with the tight schedule dictated by Waters. Drummer Nick Mason was also reportedly a bit irked by Ezrin's "erratic" behavior. Ezrin's share of the royalties was less than the rest of the band, and it was said he viewed Waters as a bully-- especially when Waters mocked him by having badges made that read NOPE (No Points Ezrin), alluding to his lesser share. Ezrin later said he was having marital problems at the time and was not "in the best shape emotionally".

THE PLOT

The basic plot of the wall follows a character called Pink, based for the most part on Roger Waters and to some extent, former frontman of the group Syd Barrett. The rock opera follows Pink's troubled youth and upbringing following the death of his father in World War II as well as his turbulent life as an adult, when he becomes an accomplished rockstar. Plagued by the weight of his own flaws and tragic past, Pink uses his trauma to construct a metaphorical wall around himself, closing himself off from the world emotionally. The album also uses frequent references to fascism in World War II to demonstrate Pink's conflicting and complex relationship with figures of authority and the war that killed his father.

Below are representations of the cast of characters in the album drawn by illustrator Gerald Scarfe (who would later work on Disney's *Hercules* in 1997). These illustrations were created in conjunction with the album, often serving as inspiration for lyrics and song concepts. These designs would also be used for the album cover and the 1982 film which accompanied the album of the same name. (Left to right: Mother (holding Pink), the Schoolmaster, and the Wife)



Side I: BORN AND RAISED

IN THE FLESH?

[Prelude]
...we came in?

(This'll make sense later!)

[Intro]

[Verse: Roger Waters]

So ya thought ya might like to go to the show

(Doo-doo-doo-doo)

To feel the warm thrill of confusion, that space cadet glow

(Doo-doo)

Tell me is something eluding you, sunshine?

Is this not what you expected to see?

If you wanna find out what's behind these cold eyes

You'll just have to claw your way through this disguise

[Bridge: Roger Waters]

Lights!

Roll the sound effects!

Action!

Drop it, drop it on 'em

Drop it on them!

Plane crashing

In the beginning, we are thrust abruptly into the midst of one of Pink's concerts. The audience thought they were coming to the concert to feel that **space cadet glow** (a phrase evocative of being stoned, something many a Floyd fan knows a few things about), but instead are treated to their hardened idol's lessons about reality.

This face of Pink as a brutal, cynical man is just a facade, hiding the real Pink -- a scared man cowering behind his wall, terrified of being exposed.

Pink's yells for lights, sound effects, and action further equate the show with life, much like Shakespeare's Jaques in "As You Like It" comparing life to a play and every person to an actor on the stage. With this song, we start at the end of Pink's journey - this is his fascist persona talking, introducing the "show" that is his life. However, this also introduces the beginning of Pink's story, with the final "Drop it on 'em!" and the sounds of an airplane dive bombing/crashing indicating Pink's birth as well as his first brick: the death of his father.

THE THIN ICE

Baby Crying

[Verse 1: David Gilmour]

Mama loves her baby
And daddy loves you too
And the sea may look warm to you, babe
And the sky may look blue
Ooh ooh ooh ooh, babe
Ooh ooh ooh, baby blue
Ooh ooh ooh ooh
Ooh ooh, babe

This signifies Pink's birth, with his mother singing him a lullaby-- blissfully unaware that his father/her husband has just died. In her lullaby, she sings about how things are not always as they seem, hinting at Pink's deterioration later on in the album, as well as her own shift to becoming a controlling helicopter parent. She also establishes the color **blue** as a symbol of innocence and purity with the symbolism of the sea and the sky, as well as by calling Pink "**baby blue**". The mother calling Pink "baby blue" may also hint at Pink's toxic masculinity later on by referring to him with stereotypically masculine symbolism. This is also pretty ironic, considering how his name is Pink, a traditionally feminine color.

[Verse 2: Roger Waters]

If you should go skating
On the thin ice of modern life
Dragging behind you the silent reproach
Of a million tear stained eyes
Don't be surprised, when a crack in the ice
Appears under your feet
You slip out of your depth and out of your mind
With your fear flowing out behind you as you claw the thin ice

The ice symbolizes the support system we have in our lives -- our friends, our family, the things that make us happy. Pink lacked this support system and thus fell into chaos, heartache, and confusion

Gilmour and Waters trade off lead vocals throughout the album, highlighting their respective strengths. Gilmour has a more sweet, velvety vocal quality while Rogers takes more of a cynical, harsh vocal approach. This is highlighted especially in "Mother" and "Comfortably Numb", where their vocals each serve their respective characters and play off of one another. This can also be seen here, where Gilmour sings the part of the deceptively sweet lullaby, and Waters sings the part of the harsh, pessimistic reality check.

ANOTHER BRICK IN THE WALL, Pt. 1

[Verse: Roger Waters]

Daddy's flown across the ocean
Leaving just a memory
A snapshot in the family album
Daddy, what else did you leave for me?
Daddy, what d'ya leave behind for me?
All in all, it was just a brick in the wall
All in all, it was all just bricks in the wall

Here, the word "ocean" can be interpreted in both a literal sense – as in the physical bodies of water which were crossed by the soldiers who went abroad to fight in WWII, as well as a metaphorical sense-- calling to mind the ancient notion that the afterlife lies beyond a vast, uncharted body of water.

Reminders of what Pink almost had, but which is now always out of reach.

[Outro: Roger Waters]

Hey!
Children's playing

Symbolizes the beginning of Pink's wall -- he turns all of his pain into a blockade which shuts him off from the world and prevents him from emotionally maturing

THE HAPPIEST DAYS OF OUR LIVES

[[Intro: Schoolmaster (Roger Waters)]]

You! Yes, you!
Stand still, Laddy!

[Verse 1: Roger Waters]

When we grew up and went to school
There were certain teachers who would hurt the children
In any way they could (oof!)
By pouring their derision upon anything we did
Exposing every weakness
However carefully hidden by the kids (*Laughs*)

[Verse 2: Roger Waters]

But in the town, it was well known when they got home at night
Their fat and psychopathic wives would thrash them
Within inches of their lives

[Outro]

The title is ironic -- your childhood should be the happiest time of your life, but instead these days were ruined by the abuses of authoritarian figures. The sounds of a helicopter, as well as the megaphone-like shouting of the schoolmaster, seem to compare these teachers with militaristic dictators/generals, likening the experiences of the students with war in a greater sense. This may also hint that maybe this sort of upbringing and war both cause and perpetuate each other (think Pink and his dad)

Bitterly, Pink recounts how the teachers of his childhood would stop at nothing to humiliate their students and crush the children's individuality, but would then get their comeuppance at home where they suffered the abuses of their wives. It seems to speak to the chain of abuse -- the wives abuse the teachers, who abuse the students, who then grow up and abuse their own spouses and children, perpetuating the cycle.

ANOTHER BRICK IN THE WALL, Pt. II

[Verse 1: Roger Waters & David Gilmour]

We don't need no education

We don't need no thought control

No dark sarcasm in the classroom

Teacher, leave them kids alone

Hey! Teacher! Leave them kids alone!

[Chorus: Roger Waters & David Gilmour]

All in all, it's just another brick in the wall

All in all, you're just another brick in the wall

[Verse 2: Islington Green School Students]

We don't need no education

We don't need no thought control

No dark sarcasm in the classroom

Teachers, leave them kids alone

Hey! Teacher! Leave us kids alone!

[Chorus: Islington Green School Students]

All in all, you're just another brick in the wall

All in all, you're just another brick in the wall

[Guitar Solo]

[Outro (Tape loops): Schoolmaster (Roger Waters)]

Wrong, do it again! *Children playing*

Wrong, do it again!

If you don't eat your meat, you can't have any pudding!

(Wrong, do it again!)

How can you have any pudding if you don't eat your meat?

(Wrong, do it again!)

You! Yes! You behind the bike sheds! Stand still, laddie!

(If you don't eat your meat, you can't have any pudding!

How can you have any pudding if you don't eat your meat?)

(You! Yes! You behind the bike sheds! Stand still, laddie!)

Children playing

Phone beeping sound

This double negative seems to change the meaning of this line to “we **do** need education” or “we don't need this kind of education” -- in this sense, “Another Brick in the Wall, Part 2” is not so much a song about complete revolution as it is an anthem about reclaiming one’s individuality; it’s a criticism against the types of teachers and systems that, as in Pink’s case, ridicule an imaginative child for expressing their creativity. No one ever really thinks of this line this way, though, and so it seems to indicate that people often speak out blindly against institutions without actually investigating the merit behind them. Pink denounces education, but the use of the double negative seems to show that maybe he does need education after all (since he should have been taught about this grammar error)-- however, the authoritarian figures he encountered there made him reject any information or insight he may have gained during that time.

Schools are supposed to be places of learning and thought, but in reality, and certainly in Pink’s experience, schools are often places where free thought is actively discouraged, and the main ‘lessons’ are in conformity and obedience. He’s not wrong, either; many schools in Europe and North America were explicitly designed with this goal in mind (factory model schools)



The schoolmaster, as depicted in the 1982 film based on *The Wall* of the same name

MOTHER

[Verse 1: Roger Waters]

Mother, do you think they'll drop the bomb?

Mother, do you think they'll like this song?

Mother, do you think they'll try to break my balls?

Ooh-ah, mother, should I build the wall?

This track is about the character Pink's relationship with his mother: he looks to her for guidance and advice, and she responds by helping him build the metaphorical wall that will serve to both protect and isolate him from the world.

Post-WWII/Cold war paranoia

[Verse 2: Roger Waters]

Mother, should I run for president?

Mother, should I trust the government?

Mother, will they put me in the firing line?

Ooh-ah, is it just a waste of time?

These lyrics show how Pink has become timid and afraid to contribute anything substantial to the world. He has also become someone who constantly seeks outside approval for everything he does.

[Chorus: David Gilmour]

Hush now, baby, baby, don't you cry

Mama's gonna make all of your nightmares come true

Mama's gonna put all of her fears into you

Mamma's gonna keep you right here, under her wing

She won't let you fly, but she might let you sing

Mama's gonna keep baby cosy and warm

Ooooh, babe

Ooooh, babe

Ooh, babe

Of course, Mama's gonna help build the wall

These lines are particularly sinister as the overbearing mother doesn't reassure her son when he is frightened, but instead reinforces his fears and puts some of her own into him in order to make sure he will come running to her when threatened so she can "protect" him. She isn't even necessarily doing so maliciously, or out of a desire for control; it's entirely possible that everything the mother does, she does out of love, which would make her role in isolating and ultimately hurting Pink all the more tragic. She lived through the horrors of the war, and these words and actions are just her trying to protect her son from the world -- ultimately, this is the thing that harms him the most, since he ends up completely closing himself off.

These lyrics might indicate why Pink ended up becoming a musician -- his mother didn't let him have any freedom, and so he turned to music for solace because it's the only thing she let him do.

[Guitar Solo]

[Verse 3: Roger Waters]

Mother, do you think she's good enough-for me?

Mother, do you think she's dangerous-to me?

Mother, will she tear your little boy apart?

Ooh-ah, mother, will she break my heart?

Pink's character in this song is that of a child who is uneasy, paranoid, and seeking comfort from his mother. The music here reflects this uncomfortable tension: each line of the verse has an extra beat inserted in the first measure. A single 5/8 measure juxtaposes the otherwise common 4/4 time of the verse to create the sense that something is amiss, as the listener doesn't have the consistent ability to find the downbeat. However, when the mother starts singing, the song settles into a soothing 6/8 time signature, typical of a lullaby. This soothing sonic cue, however, directly contrasts the mother's sinister, eerie lyrics.

The overprotective nature of Pink's mother in regards to relationships may stem from the death of Pink's father. She fears that if Pink grows too attached to someone, they will be taken away from him just like her husband was taken from her. Thus, she helps him build his wall so he won't have to suffer.

[Chorus: David Gilmour]

Hush now, baby, baby, don't you cry

Mama's gonna check out all your girlfriends for you

Mamma won't let anyone **dirty** get through

Mama's gonna wait up until you get in

Mama will always find out where you've been

Mama's gonna keep baby healthy and clean

Ooooh, babe

Ooooh, babe

Ooh, babe

You'll always be a baby to me

The song ends musically unresolved, which shows how Pink never got any closure for his upbringing. Instead, he became emotionally closed off and isolated from the world.

[Outro: Roger Waters]

Mother, did it need to be so high?

Side II: THE MAD DECLINE

GOODBYE BLUE SKY

[Spoken Intro: Harry Waters]

Look Mummy

There's an airplane up in the sky

Roger Waters' 2-year-old son -- I think it's really cool how his kid plays little Pink! It further emphasizes the fact that this album is semi-autobiographical.

Personally, I see this song as a loss of innocence and naivete, especially as the color blue was established in "The Thin Ice" as a symbol for these things. Pink is growing up, and starting to realize the true horrors of the real world, especially war (which had a massive impact on his own life).

[Intro: David Gilmour]

Ooh-oooh, ooh, ooh, ooh

Ooh-oooh, ooh, ooh, ooh

Ooh-oooh, ooh, ooh, ooh

Here, young Pink is talking to Mother. This line contains very dark irony, as the child is excitedly/innocently pointing out something he finds fascinating and exciting-- apparently, the airplane actually turns out to be a bomber. This contrast from pleasant conversation to wartime destruction can be heard in the song musically. The song begins with birds chirping and peaceful melodies, but quickly turns to a dark, minor tone when the verse begins.

[Verse 1: David Gilmour]

Di-di-di-did you see the frightened ones?

Di-di-di-did you hear the falling bombs?

Di-di-di-did you ever wonder

Why we had to run for shelter

When the promise of a brave new world

Unfurled beneath the clear blue sky?

A reference to Aldous Huxley's 1932 dystopian novel "Brave New World", whose title in itself is a reference to Shakespeare's *The Tempest* -- in both cases, "brave new world" implies a seemingly perfect society which hides a deep evil beneath the illusion of utopia.

[Bridge: David Gilmour]

Ooh-oooh, ooh, ooh, ooh

Ooh-oooh, ooh, ooh, ooh

Ooh-oooh, ooh, ooh, ooh

Doubt begins to flood Pink's mind. He starts to realize that maybe he shouldn't believe all the information he's been spoon-fed his entire life -- things aren't just right or wrong in war, they're much more nuanced than that. And even then, sometimes the ideas that seem "right" or "good" don't prevail in the end.

[Verse 2: David Gilmour]

Di-di-di-did you see the frightened ones?

Di-di-di-did you hear the falling bombs?

The flames are all long gone, but the pain lingers on

At this point in his life Pink realizes that those things that caused him the most mental damage are all in the past -- the death of his father is a memory; his repressive schooling days are over, and he is finally moving away from his mother's protective reach. Nevertheless, he appears unwilling or unable to let any of them go. The wounds may have healed, yet the emotional scars still remain. The bricks have been cemented into place. This also reflects life after WWII and the grief that the world suffered.

[Outro: David Gilmour]

Goodbye blue sky

Goodbye blue sky

Goodbye

Goodbye

I always saw this as symbolizing the wall looming over him, closing him in and blocking all the light from his life. The wall is growing so tall that he can't even see the sky anymore. As he slowly builds this barrier around him, he's waving goodbye to innocence, joy, and real human connection (something he was never able to experience in the first place, what with his father being gone, his mother serving only as another barrier to the world, and his strict schooling).

EMPTY SPACES

[Instrumental Intro]

[Verse: Roger Waters]

What shall we use to fill the empty spaces

Where we used to talk?

How should I fill the final places?

How should I complete the wall?

If you listen closely during the intro, you can hear a sort of secret backwards message embedded in the left audio channel. Here's what it says:

Roger: Congratulations. You have just discovered the secret message. Please send your answer to Old Pink, care of the Funny Farm, Chalfont...

David Gilmour: Roger! Carlyne's on the phone!

Roger: Okay.

This hidden message may imply that Pink ends up in a mental hospital after the end of the album.

Although she hasn't been mentioned yet, many people (myself included) believe this may be a reference to Pink's crumbling marriage to his wife.

The song's beat almost has a mechanical sound to it, like machinery, possibly signifying Pink constructing his wall or maybe him becoming cold and machine-like.

YOUNG LUST

[Verse 1: David Gilmour]

I am just a new boy

A stranger in this town

Where are all the good times?

Who's gonna show this stranger around?

[Chorus: David Gilmour & Roger Waters]

Ooh, I need a dirty woman

Ooh, I need a dirty girl

Musically and lyrically, this song shows Pink putting on the persona of a typical rock star, sleeping around with groupies and having fun. The style of the song itself is supposed to represent an sort of parody of the types of one-dimensional sexual rock songs coming out at the time. It mocks the fragile masculinities of some of Pink Floyd's contemporary artists. It manages to encapsulate the style of "arena rock" while not straying too far from Pink Floyd's typical style. This song also happens to be an absolute banger. It almost seems like here, Pink is trying to fill the emptiness he feels inside him with sex, drugs, and rock and roll-- however, what he really needs is genuine human connection, something he's not getting with this attitude and mindset.

[Verse 2: David Gilmour]

Will some woman in this desert land

Make me feel like a real man?

Take this rock and roll refugee

Ooh, baby, set me free

[Chorus: David Gilmour & Roger Waters]

Ooh, I need a dirty woman

Ooh, I need a dirty girl

[Guitar Solo]

[Chorus: David Gilmour & Roger Waters]

Ooh, I need a dirty woman

Ooh, I need a dirty girl

The persona he fashions through his revolt isn't so much one developed via self actualization, but through embodying the very opposite of what he was told to do as a child. In this context, when Pink sings repeatedly that he needs a **dirty woman**, one must wonder if this is, indeed, an expression of young lust or rather an unconscious response/rebellion against his mother promising to not let **anyone dirty get through** only a few songs earlier.

Pink has a toxic masculine mindset, ingrained in him since his childhood. Because of his insecurity, he feels as though he has to appear dominant over women in an attempt to regain some control over his life. In reality, in this song, by attempting to seem powerful, he actually seems more pitiful than ever by basically begging for a shallow, meaningless, temporary human connection.

YOUNG LUST (CONT.)

[Outro]

Phone beeping

Man: "Hello?"

Telephone Operator: "Yes, a collect call for Mrs. Floyd from Mr. Floyd. Will you accept the charge from the United States?"

Phone clicks

Operator: "Oh, he hung up. That's your residence? Well, I wonder why he hung up. Is there supposed to be someone out there besides your wife there to answer?"

Phone redials and beeps again

Man: "Hello?"

Operator: "This is the United States calling. Are we reaching..."

Phone clicks

Operator: "See, he keeps hanging up. There's a man answering."

This is Pink talking to the operator in order to instigate a transatlantic collect call to his wife, only for it to fail twice due to another man answering the phone and subsequently hanging up. This is an indication that Pink's wife has been cheating on him all this time while he has been away. Ironically, in the album, he gets angry at his wife for cheating even after he himself was JUST cheating on her with groupies while on tour, making him VERY hypocritical (It's giving me Tom Buchanan energy). This further emphasizes Pink's abusive nature and insecurity.

ONE OF MY TURNS

[Intro]

"Oh my God! What a fabulous room! Are all these your guitars?"

("I'm sorry sir, I didn't mean to startle you")

"God! This place is bigger than our apartment!"

("Let me know when you're entering a room")

("Yes, sir")

"Um, can I get a drink of water?"

("I was wondering about")

"You want some, huh?"

("Yes")

"Oh wow! Hey, look at this tub! Wanna take a bath?"

("I'll have to find out from Mrs. Bancroft what time she wants to meet us, for her main")

"What are you watching?"

("If you'll just let me know as soon as you can, Mrs. Bancroft... Mrs. Bancroft")

"Hello?"

("I don't understand")

"Are you feeling okay?"

As a groupie is walking around Pink's hotel room, amazed by its size, Pink sits down and silently watches TV, completely absent. Some people think that the lines from the TV seem to respond to the groupie, as though Pink is gone but a part of his subconscious is still trying to reach out and connect with another human being. Listen for yourself: what do you think? Do you believe that interpretation?

[Verse 1: Roger Waters]

Day after day, the love turns gray

Like the skin of the dying man

And night after night, we pretend it's all right

But I have grown older, and you have grown colder

And nothing is very much fun any more

And I can feel one of my turns coming on

I feel cold as a razor blade, tight as a tourniquet

Dry as a funeral drum

Symbolizing Pink's decaying relationship with his wife as well as his own metaphorical death as he slowly closes himself off. As he becomes colder and older, he becomes more frustrated and violent ("I can feel one of my turns coming on"). Often, depression can manifest itself as anger or sudden outbursts.

ONE OF MY TURNS (CONT.)

[Verse 2: Roger Waters]

Run to the bedroom, in the suitcase on the left
You'll find my favourite axe
Don't look so frightened, this is just a passing phase
One of my bad days
Would you like to watch TV? Or get between the sheets?
Or contemplate the silent freeway?
Would you like something to eat? Would you like to learn to fly?
Would ya? Would you like to see me try?
Ah, no!

Suddenly, the sounds of crashing and a drastic shift in the song's tone indicate Pink's outburst -- he begins to trash the room and eventually scares off the groupie. These violent bouts also appear to be a regular occurrence for him. He alternates between threatening the woman and reassuring her, as if two different sides of him are fighting inside of him -- the part that is frustrated, nihilistic and cruel, and the part of him that still wants to reach out and try to form a real human connection. His actions put her safety into jeopardy, but his hospitable words seem to beg her to stay.

[Outro: Roger Waters]

Would you like to call the cops?
Do you think it's time I stopped?
Why are you running away?

Pink offers to teach the young woman how to fly (presumably, by throwing her off the balcony) or at least letting her watch him try doing the very same.

DON'T LEAVE ME NOW

[Hook: Roger Waters]

Ooh, babe, don't leave me now

The instrumental here, off-kilter and garbled, combined with the sound of breathing, almost makes it seem like Pink is asleep and dreaming this song, or at least stumbling around in a lonely, drunken stupor.

[Verse 1: Roger Waters]

Don't say it's the end of the road
Remember the flowers I sent
I need you, babe
To put through the shredder in front of my friends

Pink is begging for his wife to stay -- and the only thing he can think of to try and convince her to do so is the fact that he made one measly display of affection to her *once*. He wants her to stay with him to that he can then, in turn, abuse her and dump her in front of his friends so that *he* seems like the one in control.

[Hook: Roger Waters]

Oh, babe, don't leave me now

[Verse 2: Roger Waters]

How could you go?
When you know how I need you
(Need you, need you, need you, need you, need you, need you)
To beat to a pulp on a Saturday night

Pink isn't begging his wife to stay because he loves her, he's begging her to stay because he needs someone to abuse. It's the only control he knows in his life. "Saturday night" also implies that this abuse is a regular occurrence in their marriage.

[Hook: Roger Waters]

Oh, babe, don't leave me now

[Verse 3: Roger Waters]

How can you treat me this way?
Running away
Ooh, babe, why are you running away?

Like with the groupie, Pink calls out to his wife "why are you running away?" because he doesn't realize that his loneliness and isolation are his own fault. He pushes away everyone he knows by abusing them and taking advantage of them, yet isn't aware of his destructive and dangerous behavior.

ANOTHER BRICK IN THE WALL, Pt III

[Intro]

Sounds from TV
Yelling, crashing

Pink flicks through the TV channels, and, frustrated with the monotonous nonsense that blares back at him, he screams and smashes it.

[Verse: Roger Waters]

I don't need no arms around me
And I don't need no drugs to calm me
I have seen the writing on the wall
Don't think I need anything at all
No, don't think I'll need anything at all

Here, Pink denounces all the things that he really *does* need: he needs human contact, proper medication (antidepressants?), and general care. He's lonely because he has pushed these things away, but because he feels so tortured from this, he becomes angry at them and pushes them *even further* away.

In an idiomatic reference to the Old Testament Book of Daniel, Pink proclaims to have seen the writing on the wall, a phrase that calls to mind the metaphoric wall Pink has built throughout the album thus far. Pink thinks that his downfall was predestined (written on the wall) and that's why he had to build his barricade, but ironically, this fate only came upon him *because* he built it in the first place. By trying to avoid his greatest fear, he actually inadvertently makes it a reality. It's a self-fulfilling prophecy.

[Chorus: Roger Waters]

All in all, it was all just bricks in the wall
All in all, you were all just bricks in the wall

GOODBYE CRUEL WORLD

[Verse: Roger Waters]

Goodbye, cruel world, I'm leaving you today
Goodbye, goodbye, goodbye
Goodbye, all you people, there's nothing you can say
To make me change my mind, goodbye

This is addressed to everyone in Pink's life who contributed to his wall, but in another seems to break the fourth wall (while ironically completing his own barrier) in potentially addressing us, the listeners.

With this song, Pink completely seals himself from the world. The title, lyrics, and Waters' intimate microphone presence all make this song seem very suicidal. We're placed on the outside of the wall, and so when the song ends abruptly it indicates him putting the final brick in -- the music ends, and all is silenced. We as the audience can't hear anything from him anymore, which may hint as to why no one can hear Pink screaming out in the next song when he begins to doubt this decision.

Side III: CRUEL ISOLATION

HEY YOU

[Acoustic Guitar Intro]

In this song, the guitars and slide bass are both provided by David Gilmour

Immediately after finishing his wall, Pink begins to wonder whether he's made the right decision in completely isolating himself from the world. He begins to call out for help, but the wall is so high and impenetrable that no one can hear him.

[Verse 1: David Gilmour]

Hey you
Out there in the cold, getting lonely, getting old
Can you feel me?
Hey you
Standing in the aisles with itchy feet and fading smiles
Can you feel me?

Going back to "In the Flesh?" -- this references the concert-goers at Pink's performances who are eager to see him perform, but whose smiles begin to fade as they realize that their idol isn't *really* there.

Hey you
Don't help them to bury the light
Don't give in without a fight

Pink is pleading for whoever may be listening not to repeat his mistakes since he has seen how horrible the effects of isolation can be. He doubts his decision to lock himself off from the world and now he's trying to prevent others from falling victim to the same misfortune.

[Verse 2: David Gilmour]

Hey you
Out there on your own, sitting naked by the phone
Would you touch me?
Hey you
With your ear against the wall, waiting for someone to call out
Could you touch me?
Hey you
Would you help me to carry the stone?
Open your heart, I'm coming home

1) He's calling out to everyone else with their own walls, saying they can all be saved if they help carry each others' burdens, **OR**
2) He's addressing everyone on the outside who notice his wall but won't do anything without him explicitly asking them.

[Guitar Solo]

In Pink Floyd's album *Animals* (1977), the "stone" is used as a symbol for the wrongdoings and pain one inflicts on others in one's life, which eventually harden into a stone that drags the doer to their downfall. Pink knows that he's done is wrong, but he's asking for someone to help him carry the burden of his guilt so he won't be dragged down.

This is one of my favorite guitar solos of all time it's soooo good man..... no further annotation it's just perfect

[Bridge: Roger Waters]

But it was only fantasy
The wall was too high, as you can see
No matter how he tried, he could not break free
And the worms ate into his brain

Worms are a symbol for decay throughout the album, more specifically, mental decay. Pink's weak attempt to reach out was unsuccessful, and so his mental deterioration continues and is fueled. The 3rd person here could indicate dissociation from himself, a common symptom of anxiety/depression.

[Breakdown]

The synth buzzing here emphasizes the theme of decay -- it almost sounds like insects, like pestilence eating into Pink's mind. I think you can also really tell here that the bass is provided by Gilmour -- no offense to Roger Waters, but no one can wring as much emotion out of an instrument as Gilmour and it's evident here. The sliding bass almost sounds like it's wailing/crying.

HEY YOU (CONT.)

[Verse 3: Roger Waters]

Hey you
Out there on the road, always doing what you're told
Can you help me?
Hey you
Out there beyond the wall, breaking bottles in the hall
Can you help me?
Hey you
Don't tell me there's no hope at all
Together we stand, divided we fall

Pink is calling out to people from all different reaches of society, but nobody hears him. He becomes more and more desperate, even reaching out to people who he obviously has some cynicism towards (ex. conformists)

This is pretty much the exact opposite of what Pink's mindset has been this entire album -- it almost seems like he's lying when he says this because he clearly has never lived by this and from here on out, he doesn't seem to learn from this message. On the other hand, this might be the logical/human part of him buried deep within his mind fighting to be heard over his soon-to-emerge fascist persona.

[Outro: Roger Waters]

(We fall, we fall, we fall, we fall, we fall, we fall, we fall...)

I love this touch! The echoing emphasizes the vast, barren environment inside his mind and the fact that his message fails to reach beyond his wall. The echoing message falls upon deaf ears and illustrates just how isolated he is.

IS THERE ANYBODY OUT THERE?

[Intro]

"Well, only got an hour of daylight left. Better get started"
"Isn't it unsafe to travel at night?"
"It'll be a lot less safe to stay here. Your father's gonna pick up our trail before long"
"Can Lorca ride?"
"He'll have to ride. Lorca, time to go! Chengra, thank you for everything. Let's go."
"Goodbye Chengra"
" Goodbye, Missy!"
"I'll be back--one day"

[Refrain: Roger Waters & David Gilmour]

Is there anybody out there?
Is there anybody out there?
Is there anybody out there?
Ah, is there anybody out there?

This whole song sounds very mystical and spacey, like floating aimlessly through a dark wood. There's a kind of sinister, sad serenity about it.

[Instrumental Outro]

This classical guitar outro is played by session guitarist Joe DiBlasi, who Roger Waters miscredited as "Ron DiBlasi" on the album sleeve (jerk)

NOBODY HOME

[Intro]

"But there's somebody else that needs taking care of in Washington.."

"Who's that?"

"Rose Pilchitt!"

"Rose Pilchitt? Who's that?"

Kid screams in background

(Shut up!)

"36-24-36 *laughs* does that answer your question?"

(Oi! I've got a little black book with me poems in!)

"Who's she?"

"She was 'Miss Armoured Division' in 1961..."

[Verse 1: Roger Waters]

I've got a little black book with my poems in

Got a bag with a toothbrush and a comb in

When I'm a good dog they sometimes throw me a bone in

I got elastic bands keeping my shoes on

Got those swollen hand blues

I've got thirteen channels of shit on the T.V. to choose from

I've got electric light

And I've got second sight

I've got amazing powers of observation

[Chorus 1: Roger Waters]

And that is how I know

When I try to get through

On the telephone to you

There will be nobody home

[Verse 2: Roger Waters]

I've got the obligatory Hendrix perm

And the inevitable pinhole burns

All down the front of my favourite satin shirt

I've got nicotine stains on my fingers

I've got a silver spoon on a chain

I've got a grand piano to prop up my mortal remains

I've got wild staring eyes

And I've got a strong urge to fly

But I've got nowhere to fly to (fly to.. fly to.. fly to..)

Feeling that his wife and the world are now beyond his reach, Pink lists the inconsequential things that are still within his grasp – the possessions in his hotel room and his unrealized dreams of personal freedom. The song is partly based on the band's feelings towards fame and isolation, and so many of the lines include references to Syd Barrett, Roger Waters, and Richard Wright.

I interpret this as Pink repressing his inner child/childhood trauma

Despite being rich and famous, Pink still is very much like a vagabond -- wandering around from place to place with no real purpose or home.

"They" could refer to Pink's fans/record company who reward him for good performances or record sales. Music is no longer an opportunity for Pink to be personally creative, instead, he's basically just become a commodity for people to use for monetary gain and entertainment.

Alludes to either the physical swollen hands many heroin users develop, or simply the delusive feeling of swelling while high on a hallucinogen. This also may foreshadow "Comfortably Numb"'s imagery of Pink's hands feeling "just like two balloons"

"Second sight" is a term used to describe the ability to see in the future, or to see things invisible to ordinary people. In this case it might mean being able to see the truth, not what was forced into his head in his youth

This may refer to Pink calling his wife, knowing that nobody will pick up since the connection between them is dead. It could also refer to Pink's mental absence -- when people try to reach him, it's like nobody's home.

It seems like the times where Pink glorifies himself are the times when these grandiose horns come in. Throughout the album Pink has put himself down and hated himself, but this song almost sounds like a superhero score as Pink praises himself. This may hint to the reprise of "In the Flesh" when Pink becomes a selfish, dictator-like figure.

This line has been said to be referring to Richard Wright, who was so "burnt out" from cocaine addiction that producer Bob Ezrin and an uncredited session musician named Peter Wood were forced to handle most of The Wall's keyboard duties. The keyboards in this particular track are provided by Ezrin.

This reminds me of back in "Mother" where Mother tells Pink that she "won't let [him] fly, but she might let [him] sing". Is this a suicidal "fly", like in "One of my Turns", or is it a hopeful one?

NOBODY HOME (CONT.)

[Chorus 2: Roger Waters]

Ooh, babe, when I pick up the phone
("Surprise, surprise, surprise...")
There's still nobody home

I love how this clip from the TV lines up so well with the lyrics -- it's kind of like in "One of my Turns" where Pink is unable to freely express his own emotions, so his sarcasm is conveyed through the TV

[Outro: Roger Waters]

I've got a pair of Gohills boots
And I've got fading roots

Either 1) Fading roots on the surface refers to hair roots growing in after dying one's hair. Pink has been neglecting his personal appearance as his dissociation and depression grow stronger OR 2) this could signify Pink's increasing detachment from his home and family or him losing his sense of belonging/individuality



Syd Barrett's signature "Hendrix perm" (pictured 1967)

VERA

[Intro]

"Where the hell are you?
Where the hell are you, Simon?" *Shots*

[Verse: Roger Waters]

Does anybody here remember Vera Lynn?
Remember how she said that
We would meet again some sunny day?
Vera, Vera, what has become of you?
Does anybody else in here feel the way I do?

Dame Vera Lynn remained very prevalent during the 1960s/70s so this question may not be totally literal - he's probably just asking if anyone remembers what she once represented.

As he drifts farther from reality, Pink yearns for feelings of home and a renewed connection with his personal roots, recalling the hope that Vera Lynn - a World War II era singer - instilled in a country torn apart by war and loss.

The listener can no doubt insert any number of possible emotions into that general and unspecified feeling, be it nostalgia for a bygone era, hope for better times ahead, or the cold realization that hope is ultimately futile...all depending on how the listener interprets Vera as a whole.

BRING THE BOYS BACK HOME

[Verse: Roger Waters]

Bring the boys back home
Bring the boys back home
Don't leave the children on their own, no, no
Bring the boys back home

[Outro: Tape loops]

"Wrong, do it again!"
knock "Time to go!"
"Are you feeling okay?"
"He keeps hanging up, and it's a man answering!"
"Hahahahaha!!!!!!"
Is there anybody out there?

I think that these tape loops represent how the monotony of his life are slowly driving Pink mad. His art is no longer fulfilling and he isn't really connecting with anyone he encounters. His past trauma just echoes in his head over and over.

Some people think that in this song, Pink has fallen asleep in front of a documentary/show on WWII and is dreaming of being a patriotic leader, delivering this rallying cry

"Well, because it's partly about not letting people go off and be killed in wars, but it's also partly about not allowing rock and roll, or making cars or selling soap or getting involved in biological research or anything that anybody might do, not letting that become ... more important than friends, wives, children, other people."
-- Roger Waters on "Bring the Boys Back Home"

COMFORTABLY NUMB

[Intro]

[Verse 1: Roger Waters]

Hello? (Hello, hello, hello)

Is there anybody in there?

Just nod if you can hear me

Is there anyone home?

Come on (Come on, come on), now

I hear you're feeling down

Well, I can ease your pain

And get you on your feet again

Relax (Relax, relax, relax)

I'll need some information first

Just the basic facts

Can you show me where it hurts?

[Pre-Chorus 1: David Gilmour]

There is no pain, you are receding

A distant ship, smoke on the horizon

You are only coming through in waves

Your lips move, but I can't hear what you're saying

When I was a child, I had a fever

My hands felt just like two balloons

Now I've got that feeling once again

I can't explain, you would not understand

This is not how I am

[Chorus: David Gilmour]

I have become comfortably numb

[Guitar Solo 1]

[Chorus: David Gilmour]

I have become comfortably numb

Pink's emotional journey into the past is interrupted when his management breaks into his hotel room and has a doctor inject him with a drug that will snap him out of his malaise, ensuring that he will still be able to perform at a concert later that evening. Roger Waters was inspired by an experience where he was injected with tranquilizers before a 1977 concert in Philadelphia in order to perform.

This song doesn't become *explicitly* about drugs until Waters' second verse, so the track can be interpreted in two ways: A) Pink has been so numbed by heavy drug use that he can't feel anything, but he's ok with that. If anything, it's more comfortable than constantly being in pain when he's sober and is forced to confront his own thoughts and emotions. B) Pink has become so distant and disconnected emotionally that he has become numb -- another symptom of depression. Drugs don't have anything to do with it -- he's lived with his pain for so long that he's become completely numb, but he's so used to it that nothing really matters to him anymore. The point is, in both of these interpretations (though there may be many more), Pink has become **comfortably numb**.

Could be referring to the swollen hands that many heroin/drug users get.

The line "This is not how I am" conveys another feeling brought by depression: a loss of identity, not knowing who you are, a feeling that you're better than this and that you will escape this phase and return to "the old me".

This first solo seems full of optimism and serenity, filled with a feeling of innocence as Pink reminisces back to his youth, before he was corrupted by authoritarian or controlling figures, when he felt at peace. In a drug-induced trance, he feels calm for once, and all his troubles seem to fall away or become irrelevant. He seems to be floating in comfortable, numb bliss.

COMFORTABLY NUMB (CONT.)

[Verse 2: Roger Waters]

Okay (Okay, okay, okay)

Just a little pinprick

There'll be no more (Aah!)

But you may feel a little sick

Can you stand up? (Stand up, stand up)

I do believe it's working, good

That'll keep you going through the show

Come on, it's time to go

[Pre-Chorus 2: David Gilmour]

There is no pain, you are receding

A distant ship, smoke on the horizon

You are only coming through in waves

Your lips move, but I can't hear what you're saying

When I was a child, I caught a fleeting glimpse

Out of the corner of my eye

I turned to look, but it was gone

I cannot put my finger on it now

The child is grown, the dream is gone

These lyrics are widely believed to be about Pink catching a glimpse of his future when he was a child, something reinforced by the movie and also hinted at by the "second sight" line in "Nobody Home". However, I believe this line to be about Pink catching a glimpse of truth and joy in his childhood -- however, he's since lost touch with that vision. Before he had the ability to catch that kernel of enlightenment, he was battered and torn down by overbearing, abusive figures and tragedy in his childhood, something he grew more and more aware of as he grew up. Eventually, this pain consumed him and at this point, he's so far gone that it would be impossible to find that dream again.

[Chorus: David Gilmour]

I have become comfortably numb

[Guitar Solo 2]

Now, Pink's guitar is more biting and aggressive. The beauty and serenity of the first solo is flipped on its head as Pink transitions from childlike optimism to the harsh reality of his adulthood.

Side IV: VIOLENCE & VINDICATION?

THE SHOW MUST GO ON

[Intro: David Gilmour]

Must the show go on?

(Ooh-pa, take me home, take me home, take me home)

(Ooh-ma, let me go, let me go, let me go)

[Verse: David Gilmour]

There must be some mistake, I didn't mean to let **them**

Take away my soul, am I too old, is it too late?

(Ooh-ma, ooh-pa) Where has the feeling gone?

(Ooh-ma, ooh-pa) Will I remember the song?

[Outro: David Gilmour]

(Ooh, ooh, ah) The show must go on

You may notice how the album has been getting more and more theatrical as it progresses. These are no longer the somber ballads from a few tracks earlier where Pink mused about his pain. Maybe he feels like he's watching his life as though it were a play, with him assuming the role of a passive watcher who's unable to interfere. (a sentiment many people with depression have expressed)

Pink sounds suicidal in this song, especially highlighted by these lines ("Pa - take me home", "Ma - let me go")

Ah, the ambiguous them -- who do you think it could represent? (I sound like Dora but it's really up to the individual's interpretation) Could it be his overprotective mother? His abusive teachers? Or how about his demanding fans or the corporate leeches at his record label? Or maybe it's someone completely different, or all of the above?

IN THE FLESH

[Intro]

"Three, two... fire!"

[Verse 1: Roger Waters]

(Ah-ah, ah-ah, doo-doo)

(Ah-ah, ah-ah)

So ya thought ya might like to go to the show (Doo-doo)

To feel the warm thrill of confusion, that space cadet glow

I've got some bad news for you sunshine

Pink isn't well, he stayed back at the hotel

And they sent us along as a **surrogate band**

We're gonna find out where you fans really stand

I love that they do this -- this is where Pink came in during the first iteration of this song, but now, he's suddenly not there. We're placed into the shoes of his audience -- we're eagerly awaiting our hero, but he's not there anymore. Mentally, he has completely checked out and someone drastically different has taken his place.

In live performances, a literal "surrogate band" would perform this section, donning unsettling "life masks" of the real band. This was meant to show how Pink almost seems to be putting on a mask of himself at this point, though this new visage is a frightening and unsettling imitation of who he once was.

This iteration of the song starts the same way as the track at the beginning of the album, but the lack of a question mark in the title clues the listener to expect a very different experience. By the first verse, it's very clear that the Pink we once knew is no more. Pink has lost control over almost everything in his life -- his marriage, his music, even his own mind. The one thing he does have control over is his audience, and so he takes advantage of this power and uses it to a frightening extent, taking on the persona of a fascist dictator-like figure.

IN THE FLESH (CONT.)

[Verse 2]

Are there any queers in the theater tonight?

Get them up against The Wall

(Against The Wall)

Now there's one in the spotlight, he don't look right to me

Get him up against The Wall

(Against The-)

And that one looks Jewish and that one's a coon!

Who let all of this riff-raff into the room?

There's one smoking a joint and another with spots

If I had my way, I'd have all of ya shot!

yikes



The Hammers symbol which Pink can be seen wearing at this point in the film adaptation of "The Wall" and which the band wore to symbolize Pink "the dictator" during tours.

Pink tests the loyalty of his fans by having them gather up the oppressed minorities and social outcasts in the audience. While we have seen glimpses of Pink's inner darkness in previous songs, the man who takes the stage in this song is seemingly devoid of any redeeming qualities. He is pure, unmitigated hatred. I can't defend basically any of the stuff Pink does but this is... yeah. I get that this is meant to make you uncomfortable so I guess it succeeds in that sense.

[Instrumental Outro]

At the end of the song, notice that the crowd's chant begins as "Pink Floyd! Pink Floyd!" in the **left** stereo channel, and changes to "Hammer! Hammer!" in the **right** (or far-right haha). Here you can hear "Pink Floyd" clearly, but by the end of "Waiting for the Worms" this shift will become more apparent. The choices of channel were not accidental!!

RUN LIKE HELL

[Instrumental Intro/Guitar Riff]

[Chorus: David Gilmour & Roger Waters]

Run, run, run, run

Run, run, run, run

Run, run, run, run

Run, run, run, run

Maybe referring to the fact that Pink is running from the truth or from his fears?

I don't know if this is significant at all, but I just realized while listening to this album again that this echoing guitar part before the drums come in sounds very similar to the echoing guitars at the end of "Another Brick in the Wall Part I" --I just thought that was kind of interesting. There's a lot of aspects of this song that repeat, for example, the main riff of "Another Brick in the Wall" Parts 1, 2, and 3 can also be heard in "The Trial", "Hey You", etc. Upon multiple listenings you may also find other repeating motifs and phrases!

Connects back to "In the Flesh?" ("If you wanna find out what's behind these cold eyes / You'll just have to claw your way through this **disguise**")

This song is a continuation of Pink's concert from the previous track. Here, in his lyrics, he also seems to be expressing his own tortured mental condition to his audience, who are deaf to his cries.

[Verse 1: Roger Waters]

You better make your face up with your favourite **disguise**

With your button down lips and your roller blind eyes

With your empty smile and your hungry heart

Feel the bile rising from your guilty past

With your nerves in tatters **as the cockleshell shatters**

And the hammers batter down your door

You better run!

Most likely a reference to William Golding's 1954 Novel *Lord of the Flies* in which the conch shell/cockleshell represents reason, and whose destruction symbolizes a descent into brutal, savage chaos and madness.

RUN LIKE HELL (CONT.)

[Chorus: David Gilmour & Roger Waters]

Run, run, run, run

Run, run, run, run

Run, run, run, run

Run, run, run, run

[Verse 2: Roger Waters]

You better run all day and run all night

And keep your dirty feelings deep inside

And if you're taking your girlfriend out tonight

You better park the car well out of sight

'Cause if they catch you in the back seat trying to pick her locks

They're gonna send you back to Mother in a cardboard box

You better run!

"The sexual act, successfully performed, was rebellion. Desire was thoughtcrime."

– Orwell, 1984

This is the only synth solo performed in the entire album, done here by Richard Wright, who at the time was hired as a session musician rather than a full-time member of the band after he was previously fired.

[Synth Solo]

All the scattered sound effects in this outro put together paint the picture of the paranoia-filled world that Pink has conjured in his mind, where people are chased down dark tunnels and stopped by authorities in their vehicles for daring to defy Pink in some way.

[Instrumental Outro]

WAITING FOR THE WORMS

[Intro]

"Eins, zwei, drei, alle!"

Ooh-ooh, you cannot reach me now

Ooh-ooh, no matter how you try

Goodbye, cruel world, it's over

Walk on by

"One, two, three, all!" in German. The use of German ties in to Pink's fascist behavior during this period of the story, and also references the war that killed his father. Another popular interpretation of this line is "Eins, zwei, drei, hammer".

*Note the march-like beat behind the track

Pink has discovered that his "perfect isolation" is far from ideal. It's not the quiet solitude from the insanity of the world that he had imagined--in reality, it's a vicious war between the opposing forces of his mind as evidenced by Gilmour and Waters quickly alternating between lead vocals throughout the track.

[Verse 1: David Gilmour & Roger Waters]

Sittin' in a bunker here behind my wall

Waitin' for the worms to come (Worms to come)

In perfect isolation here behind my wall

Waitin' for the worms to come

Pink is so far gone that all he can do is sit behind his wall and wait to die (i.e. wait for the worms to eat away at him). Worms are a symbol for decay, so it may also mean that he's waiting for his mind to completely deteriorate so that he's not even cognitively aware of himself or his pain anymore.

WAITING FOR THE WORMS (CONT.)

[Bridge: Roger Waters]

Testing. One. Two. One. Two. We're all going to convene at 1:15 outside Brixton Town Hall where we will be going...

[Hook: Roger Waters]

(Waiting) To cut out the deadwood

(Waiting) To clean up the city

(Waiting) To follow the worms

(Waiting) To put on a black shirt

(Waiting) To weed out the weaklings

(Waiting) To smash in their windows and kick in their doors

(Waiting) For the final solution to strengthen the strain

(Waiting) To follow the worms

(Waiting) To turn on the showers and fire the ovens

(Waiting) For the queens and the coons and the reds and the Jews

(Waiting) To follow the worms

This is so obscenely on the nose that I really don't think I need to say much about this song -- I also really don't want to because it makes me wildly uncomfortable :)



The British Union of Fascists (BUF) (1932-1940) in their trademark black shirts, adapted from Mussolini's Blackshirts. A number of BUF principles centered around isolating Britain from the rest of the world in terms of trade, commerce and culture, a very wall-like theme that is very apparent in Pink's own nationalistic rants in "Waiting for the Worms".

[Verse 2: David Gilmour & Roger Waters]

Would you like to see Britannia Rule again

My friend?

All you have to do is follow the worms

Would you like to send our coloured cousins home again

My friend?

All you need to do is follow the worms

[Outro]

The chant from the beginning of the concert has devolved into "Hammer! Hammer!". The marching beat at the end of the song is represented by a series of marching hammers in the film.

STOP



[Verse: Roger Waters]

Stop!

I wanna go home

Take off this uniform and leave the show

But I'm waiting in this cell, because I have to know

(Have to know, have to know...)

Have I been guilty all this time?

(Have to know, have to know, have to know, have to know...)

(Time, time, time, time...)

Pink realizes his wrongdoings, and so he puts himself on trial to find out if he's been guilty all along. These sounds at the end of the song serve as a transition into Pink's trial in the next track...

Door Opens, footsteps...

THE TRIAL

[Instrumental Intro]

[Verse 1: Prosecutor]

Good morning, Worm your honour

The crown will plainly show the prisoner

Who now stands before you

Was caught red-handed showing feelings

Showing feelings of an almost human nature

This will not do

Call the schoolmaster!

This one's a bit weird and confusing -- or as we intellectuals call it, "up for interpretation." Basically the gist is: here, Pink is putting himself on trial for his wrongdoings, having finally become aware of the pain he has caused others. Both Pink and all the side characters are shown in their full, flawed glory. In reality, everyone's kind of at fault for this whole mess. Remember when *the worms ate into his brain* in "Hey You?" I interpret this scene as Pink's true, vulnerable self fighting against the darkness and decay that have taken over his brain and become the premier authority of his mind.

Was the whole cause of this situation Pink's feelings, or him trying to mask those feelings and bury them deep inside? Which of these is the real criminal offense in the eyes of the court? How about for the listener, or to Pink himself?

[Verse 2: The Schoolmaster]

I always said he'd come to no good in the end your honour

If they'd let me have my way I could have flayed him into shape

But my hands were tied, the bleeding hearts and artists

Let him get away with murder, let me hammer him today

This could be why Pink's fascist symbol is the hammer -- it's referenced by the Schoolmaster as a tool to stamp out individuality and self expression, something inflicted on him in childhood and a pattern he continued well into adulthood.

[Chorus 1: Pink (and Choir)]

Crazy, toys in the attic

I am crazy, truly gone fishing

They must have taken my marbles away!

(Crazy, toys in the attic, he is crazy)

What makes these euphemisms for insanity particularly interesting is that they all have a certain childlike connotation, from toys to fishing to marbles (reinforced by the childlike backing choir). Maybe this is a symbol for the hordes of creative, individualistic children who have been squashed by this same system of abuse? And in this moment of insanity, Pink is more vulnerable and childlike than we have seen him ever before. That's why I love Waters' vocal performance in this section, it's perfectly vulnerable and weak and desperate and ... small.

[Verse 3: Wife]

You little shit, you're in it now, I hope they throw away the key

You should have talked to me more often than you did, but no!

You had to go your own way

Have you broken any homes up lately?

Just five minutes, Worm your honour - him, me, alone

This is Pink testifying against himself, and for the first time in the entire album, he is seeing his broken marriage from his wife's perspective, realizing that he shoulders a great deal of blame for the dissolution of his marriage. Before, we'd seen him saying things like "how can [she] treat me this way?" Now we can see that her infidelity and distant demeanor have been his fault due to his self-absorption, lack of empathy, and abuse.

[Verse 4: Mother]

Babe!

Come to mother baby, let me hold you in my arms

M'lud I never wanted him to get in any trouble

Why'd he ever have to leave me?

Worm, your honour, let me take him home

This line always confuses me! Is he angry because he thinks this is all happening due to some fault in the wall that allowed some emotion or some semblance of the outside world to find its way beyond his barricade? Does it mean he really had an escape from his isolation all along that he just didn't see? Who knows

[Chorus 2: Pink (and Choir)]

Crazy, over the rainbow

I am crazy, bars in the window

There must have been a door there in the wall

When I came in

(Crazy, over the rainbow, he is crazy)

THE TRIAL (CONT.)

[Verse 5: The Judge]

The evidence before the court is incontrovertible
There's no need for the jury to retire
In all my years of judging, I have never heard before
Of someone more deserving of the full penalty of law
The way you made them suffer, your exquisite wife and mother
Fills me with the urge to defecate
(Go on, Judge, shit on him!)

Since, my friend, you have revealed your deepest fear
I sentence you to be exposed before your peers
Tear down the wall!

[Outro: Crowd]

Tear down the wall!
Tear down the wall!
Tear down the wall!
Tear down the wall!
Tear down the wall!
Tear down the wall!
Tear down the wall!
Tear down the wall!
Tear down the wall!

Explosion

Bricks crumbling

OUTSIDE THE WALL

[Verse]

All alone, or in twos
The ones who really love you
Walk up and down, outside the wall
Some hand in hand
And some gathered together in bands
The bleeding hearts and the artists make their stand
And when they've given you their all
Some stagger and fall, after all it's not easy
Banging your heart against some mad bugger's wall

[Outro]

Isn't this where...

This whole part and the judge's existence in general have been debated and thought over by Floyd fans for a while (ex. shouldn't the Judge – a product of the wall – praise Pink for not showing emotion towards “his exquisite wife and mother” rather than punishing him, and if his crime is truly the fact that he showed emotion why would he want to tear down the wall instead of maybe making it even stronger?) But here is what makes the most sense for me personally -- the judge's existence is not as a malevolent figure nor as a *good* one per se, but a sort of combination of both. The decision to tear the wall down comes from two places -- the darker half of Pink wants to punish himself, ironically, by having him tear down his wall and remove himself from the sheltered barricade he's been hiding behind, thus making Pink's greatest fear a reality (his fear of being exposed and vulnerable and open about his emotions). Simultaneously, the lighter part of him wants him to tear down the wall as a reward for finally facing his flaws and the pain he's caused others, and this would allow him to finally connect with other people and reach what he's been in need of this entire time. Additionally, the chants of “Tear down the wall” seem like an angry, vicious mob at first, but upon closer inspection these calls can be seen as a victorious cry for Pink's freedom from the wall. I think the only reason this part seems so ominous and looming and intense is that this is what Pink has been fearing and running from his whole life -- vulnerability, empathy, connections with others. All in all, what makes most sense to me is that this decision is both born from Pink's light *and* dark sides together.

Careful, lilting, delicate -- Pink is stepping into the world unguarded and afraid, but in a hopeful way. That's why I love the use of the children's choir here, it really emphasizes how vulnerable and small Pink is in this moment, far removed from the booming, vicious dictator we saw only 3 songs ago. Pink's basically a child again, and he has to learn from scratch what every child must learn -- how to cope with and grow from pain, how to embrace your own emotions, and how to validate those of others, too. These are things he never learned how to do in the first place, as he was emotionally stunted from years of trauma.

I kind of love this metaphor because it's almost like ... this is what art is for. This is why all of these bands and artists exist -- we create together so that we're not so alone anymore, and maybe if we really try, if we're vulnerable and open and if we're brave enough to bare it all for the world to see, maybe that raw humanity can break down some mad bugger's wall. Maybe it's hopeless, maybe we are just banging away, but... worth a shot, right?

People on the outside can try as hard as they want to reach you though love and vulnerability, but in the end, only *you* have the power to break down that barricade. But the ones who love you, they're never gonna stop trying, no matter how exhausted they get.

Remember this? This is the beginning of the snippet we heard at the start of the album! Yeah, it's a perfect loop! Maybe this hints to the fact that this not just an isolated story-- over and over, people build up their walls and tear them down again and again.

THE AFTERMATH OF "THE WALL"

Although *The Wall* remains to this day one of Pink Floyd's most iconic, successful, and impactful albums, it came at the terrible cost of tearing the band apart. *The Wall* signifies the last time this iconic lineup of Pink Floyd (Gilmour, Waters, Wright & Mason) ever recorded together. Pink Floyd's subsequent albums after *The Wall* failed to reach the same iconic status as their previous works, and they never reached quite the same level of financial or critical success. Richard Wright left the band in 1980, but toured with Pink Floyd in 1980-81 as a salaried sideman, not an official member of the band. He did, however, rejoin the group for their albums "A Momentary Lapse of Reason" in 1987 and "The Division Bell" in 1994. Roger Waters officially left the band in 1985. David Gilmour later said *The Wall* was the last time he and Waters ever worked well together (though it's debatable how well they got along even then). However, nearly 25 years after the release of *The Wall*, the four would reunite one last time for a 20-minute live gig at the 2005 Live 8 Concert. It's unclear if the members ever made amends with one another, but honestly, it's great to see that after everything they went through, they could still reunite for one last time and set aside their differences for the greater good. And for one final time, they could stand together as a band -- as *Pink Floyd*-- before Wright's death in 2008. Rest in peace, Richard.



Pink Floyd after their triumphant reunion at Live 8, 2005. This marks the last time all four members of Pink Floyd would ever perform together. (From left to right: David Gilmour, Roger Waters, Nick Mason, Richard Wright)