

*Topics and language features in
The Clash's London Calling.*

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Abstract

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- Title: *Topics and language features in The Clash's London Calling.*
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- Aims: The aims in this study were to identify the topics and language features in The Clash's *London Calling* to see how they reflect the society in the UK at the time, and how a study like this can be practiced in the English- and Swedish courses in upper secondary school.
- Method: A meta analysis with song lyrics as empirical data.
- Material: Song lyrics from The Clash's *London Calling* were analyzed.
- Main results: The study shows that the lyrics on *London Calling* often deal with topics like addiction, violence, dystopia and alienation. The most frequently used language features are allusions, idioms and slang.
- Keywords: Punk music, punk movement, subculture, The Clash, song lyric analysis.

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1. Introduction

The punk movement arose in the United States, the United Kingdom, and Australia in the mid-1970s. Its exact regional origin has been a controversy within the movement. No matter who is right; this new subculture rebelled against authorities and protested against the establishment and the prevailing mainstream popular culture; it also reserved special hatred for the advertising- and marketing industry. Apart from *The Clash*, other bands that are often mentioned when speaking about this movement are *The Ramones* from New York City, *The Sex Pistols*, *Generation X*, *Sham 69* and *UK Subs* from the British scene.

In this context, in December 1979, *The Clash* released their third album, *London Calling*, a critically acclaimed double album, which is often considered their best. In 2003 the album was ranked # 8 on Rolling Stone's list of *The 500 Greatest Albums of All Times*. The same year the band members were inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame. However, the band is interesting for more reasons. On the one hand, their connection to the societal climate is strong. On the other hand, they are interesting as a phenomenon as regards countercultures of the time, and youth- and musical movements with political lyrics. This is the starting point for this present study; how do the lyrics in *The Clash's London Calling* reflect the society in the UK a few years after the birth of the punk movement, and what language features can be found?

From another perspective, for me as a teacher in English and Swedish in upper secondary school, there is also a personal interest. Is there a possibility to define a pedagogical/didactical angle? When looking at the syllabuses in the English and Swedish courses below the answer is yes. According to Skolverket (The Swedish National Agency for Education) one of the goals in the syllabus for English 5, 6 and 7 in the recent reform (GY11) is:

Living conditions, attitudes, values, traditions, societal issues and cultural, historic, political and social circumstances, in different contexts and parts of the world where English is spoken.¹

The central contents in Swedish 1 should deal with...

Basic linguistic terms that are required for in a methodical and structural way discuss and analyze language, language variations and linguistic correctness.²

¹ Skolverket.se (my translation)

² Skolverket.se (my translation)

2. Aims

The aim of this study is to answer three research questions:

- How do the topics in the lyrics on *The Clash's London Calling* reflect the society at the time, mostly in the UK but also the surrounding world? What do the lyrics relate to?
- How are the lyrics constructed, and how are language features such as allusions, idioms, slang, synonyms and metaphors are used in those lyrics?
- How can a study like this be used for teaching purposes?

3. Background

3.1 1970's society in the UK

Throughout the 70's, the UK was in a long seemingly never-ending recession, and by the end of the decade the oil crisis and shortage of gas were still continuing. High inflation and unemployment figures, riots in the suburbs, racism and constraints on the labor movement caused social problems and poverty among the working classes. Bindas (1993) writes in *The Future is Unwritten*:

In 1976, more than one million persons were out of work and the inflation rate soared above 18 percent; *The New Statesman* estimated that 35 percent of those under twenty-five years of age were unemployed. After graduation at sixteen, thousands of young people immediately went on the dole, which quickly symbolized the problems in Britain (p. 69).

The situation was tearing the nation apart. The Tory Party was in power, and in 1979 Margaret Thatcher became Prime Minister. Thatcherism had not yet become a concept, but the population was given a foreshadowing of what was to come. In Julien Temple's *The Filth and the Fury* (2000), the punk icon Johnny Rotten of *The Sex Pistols* gives his view:

England was in a state of social upheaval. [...] There was rioting all over the place, strikes on every kind of amenity you could think of. TV channels would go on and off randomly. People were fed up with the old way; the old way was clearly not working.

The young working class generation felt alienated and neglected by the regime and to them the British socio-economic system was a failure. In the midst of this recession the punk movement emerged.

3.2 The punk movement

Every subculture has its own ideology, and the punk movement is no exception. What is significant for the punk movement is that it adopted a variety of influences from earlier youth cultures, art movements, politics and philosophy. Jon Savage, music journalist and broadcaster, describes it in his *Teenage: The Creation of Youth Culture* (2007) as a 'bricolage' of almost every postwar subculture in the West "stuck together with safety pins" (p. 16). Another scholar in this area, Dick Hebdige, uses the same term in *Subculture: The meaning of Style* (1998) to explain how the subcultural styles are constructed and that they are all predominantly working class.

With this wide range of influences, the punks did not have a unifying agenda, but one term that encapsulates the beliefs of this movement is the DIY ethic, do-it-yourself, nobody else will do it for you. The message is that everybody can be his or her own expert without being trained or skilled. You do not have to, figuratively speaking, chew and swallow everything the establishment in all areas serves you. The areas where this motto was most noticeable were arts and crafts; clothing, publishing records, books and fanzines; arranging concerts, and playing music. On the back of the cover of *Punk: The Whole Story* Sid Vicious from *The Sex Pistols* is quoted: "You just pick a chord and go twang, and you've got music" (Blake 2006). Thus, the punk movement was not only what could be seen. It was a movement that had a message, both internally, like the DIY, and outwardly towards the public in the shape of direct as well as indirect political actions. The frustration, disillusion and sometimes aggressiveness among the young generation in the UK was often expressed through the music, and in the wake of *The Sex Pistols* several bands were formed, and *The Clash* were one of them.

3.3 The Clash – a brief story

As a band, *The Clash* existed from 1976 to 1986 and consisted for most of their recording career of Joe Strummer, Mick Jones, Paul Simonon and Topper Headon. Their debut album, *The Clash* was released in 1977, and a year later the second album, *Give 'Em Enough Rope* came out. The band was of great importance for the development of the punk movement, both politically and in terms of music, in particular through their political and social awareness. In the lyrics they developed the punk music from an aggressive style into a more sophisticated and intellectual genre. They differ from the other punk bands like *The Sex Pistols*, *The Ramones*, and *UK SUBS* in that *The Clash* did not get their musical influences from the

western pop and rock tradition but rather turned towards Caribbean and Latin American styles. Thus, they mixed all that punk stands for with rhythms and musical styles such as Reggae, Dub and Ska. Later, on their fourth album *Sandinista*, they developed a more Latino style.

This is of great significance, not only from a musical aspect but also politically. Choosing a multicultural direction also involved taking a stand. During this time British society was going through a change due to an increasing immigration. The reaction from the ultra right was immediate. It was a time when the fascistic National Front reached its heyday; this was how *The Clash* took sides.

3.4 The band members: some background

In order to understand song lyrics, and other texts involving the band for that matter, it is of importance to know the identity of the “authors” involved. All four members of the band were unique with their different social backgrounds and musical influences, and each one contributed to the band in their own special ways, but since Joe Strummer was the one who set the tone when it comes to most of the lyrics, the present work focuses mostly on him.

Joe Strummer, alias for John Graham Mellor, was the son of a British Foreign Service diplomat and a nurse from the Scottish Highlands. During his first nine years the family lived a nomadic life. From Turkey, where he was born in 1952, the family moved to Egypt, then onto Mexico, then to Bonn. At the age of nine, he was sent to a boarding school in England and saw his parents only on school holidays somewhere in the world where his father was stationed. He hated school and graduated with poor grades, and it was in school he learned to hate authorities, so he decided to become one himself. In Don Letts’s *Westway to the World* (2000) he describes it: “I could see from an early age that authority was only a system of control, I quickly realized that you either became a power or you are crushed. I realized I had to fight fire with fire”.

Strummer’s paternal grandfather had served in India and had Armenian as well as German Jewish roots. This quotation from *Last Gang in Town* by Marcus Gray (1995) could explain Strummer’s general knowledge and multicultural awareness

The recent history of the Mellor family could stand as a microcosm of social change in 20th century Britain. In the course of three generations, the family witnessed the fall of the Empire and the rise of the counter-culture; a colonial and postcolonial family, they have gone from “Raj to raga” (p. 88).

Despite his poor grades, he was an avid reader and considered himself a film freak and news addict. After graduating school he spent some years at art school. He left the conventional society for some years living in different squats. His musical career started when he began busking with a ukulele at Green Park tube station, playing folk songs and blues. When the band he played in, *The 101ers*, was supported by *The Sex Pistols* at a concert, he got the idea of forming a punk band himself.

As far as the other band members are concerned, Mick Jones lived most of his childhood, neglected by his parents, with his grandmother and two other old ladies. Paul Simonon grew up in Brixton, a multi-ethnic district in south London with a large population of Caribbean and African roots. In his teens he received a scholarship to art school. The drummer Topper Headon was important to the band's musical development but did not contribute to the lyrics.

3.5 Previous research.

Piles of factual books and documentaries about the punk movement as a phenomenon and counterculture have been written and filmed by different authors, music journalists and directors, and for obvious reasons *The Clash* has a dominant part in some of them. But when trying to find previous academic studies concerning the contents and language features in punk lyrics in general, or *The Clash* specifically, there is, to my knowledge, no scholarly work on these subjects. The ultimate thing would be to find scholarly works, but with a shortage of such references works by authors outside the academic context are used.

One of the more academic works is Dillon Ferdinandi's *The Only Band That Matters: An Analysis of the Relationship Between Punk Rock and Culture* (2010), which deals with how culture is reflected and represented in music of all genres. The essence in this study is that when members of a culture create music, it is a direct reflection of their beliefs, collective values, and traditions. And as the beliefs in a culture change, so does the music.

Subcultures can be traced far back in time, but this is not a natural part of all societies. In most societies and cultures throughout the history, a person goes straight from childhood to adulthood, often through an initiating ritual. The time when youth subcultures made a breakthrough has been debated, but it is generally accepted to have occurred some time during the first half of the last century. Professor Johan Fornäs describes in www.ne.se/lang/ungdomskultur the conditions for a youth culture as a prolonged adolescence with education, leisure time and resources that nourished a substantial youth market of

consumerism after World War II. Another scholar in this area, Dick Hebdige, touches on this point in his *Subculture: The Meaning of Style*:

They are, as we have seen, cultures of conspicuous consumption – even when, as with the skinheads and the punks, certain types of consumption are conspicuously refused – and it is through the distinctive rituals of consumption, through style, that the subculture at once reveals its ‘secret’ identity and communicates its forbidden meanings. (1998: 102)

With ‘they’ he means subcultures from predominantly working class. This market of consumption is central in all youth movements as it allows the young to identify with the in-group through the products they consume. This identity could lead to increased creativity and self-confidence, but also to boredom, confusion and apathy. Both these aspects are representative for the punk movement.

Another aspect of a subculture is its linguistic identity. To summarize Joanna Thornborrow’s definition, a linguistic identity can be described as how we display ourselves through the way we talk. In order to communicate with other people on the same level, we adapt and adjust our language depending on the environmental context we are in (Thomas et al.: 158). In the article *Staging language: An introduction to the sociolinguistics of performance* Bell and Gibson make an analysis of what differentiates what they call a stage performance from every day performance out of a sociolinguistic identity. What differs a stage performance from everyday performance is that...

It involves the agentive use of language, building on the foundation of existing social meanings. Staged performances tend to be linguistically stylized, pushing the limits of language creativity (p. 555).

This is also practicable on, and relevant for recorded music, like *The Clash’s London Calling*.

4. Materials and Methods

The materials that are used in this study are 13 of the 19 lyrics from *London Calling*. I have also used documentary films, factual books, and a number of online sources about *The Clash*, the punk movement and the UK society at the time. To relate this study to the goals in the courses English 5, 6 and 7, the syllabuses have been thoroughly examined.

This present work is a meta analysis, which is built on others' observations and empirical studies. A method built upon secondary studies makes it possible to analyze a phenomenon from a distance, both in time and space. The benefit of a study like this is that a person of today can reflect on a phenomenon that has already gone through a process, which now, subsequently is more understandable. The disadvantage is that one cannot make a direct observation or interviews in order to catch the immediate situation. Another motive for me to choose an observation study is of course practicality. There would be difficulties in finding relevant objects to observe as well as persons to interview. That is why I choose to carry out this study in a secondary way applying a meta-analysis approach. In this case I have analyzed the lyrics by a close observation of the topics and language features. That is why previous interviews from different kinds of documentaries about *The Clash* and the society at the time have been studied, to look into the correlation between the time and the lyrics.

My strategy was firstly to read the lyrics that come with the CD, read and listen at the same time, in order to see whether the lyrics on the sleeve correspond to the singing or not. From there, I went deeper into each song in order to judge whether it should be included in the study or not.

The lyrics have been analyzed from a contextual and linguistic point of view. To be able to make a comparison between the spirit of the time and the picture of the UK society in terms of social and political conflicts that appeared, some theories that spot out a better understanding of what we see when we make a retrospective analysis of the contents in lyrics, youth culture, popular culture and resistance.

In order to analyze the lyrics, codings have been used (Aspers 2011:166-193). I have created a matrix where all the songs are lined up in the vertical left margin (see Appendix 1). The horizontal line consists of 9 boxes, categories. These categories were created after a thorough reading of the lyrics in order to sort out the contents. Thus, this part of the method is empirical. What was in the lyrics then became the starting point to see to what extent they correlated to the categories. After creating the main categories *Topics* and *Language features*,

subcategories were created. By looking at the horizontal lines the reader can see which songs contain which of the above categories and subcategories.

Some of the marks fall under two categories. One example is allusions and references in the text. An allusion is a literary device *that* refers to a category under topics. A reference refers *to* something. When the coding was completed, all that remained was to analyze them, lyric by lyric, out of the main- and subcategories.

This method directly satisfies the first two of my aims, but also the third aim is fulfilled. There is a didactic purpose by teaching/letting the students use the above method in order to carry out coding and analyses of different texts on their own by using matrixes.

5. Results

The lyrics are presented song by song in the same order they appear on the standard edition of the album (see Appendix 2). The matrix has been used as a tool but the content below is presented in a running text. First, the topics are identified and mentioned, followed by a description of the contents, and then a presentation of the language features is given in list form.

The matrix used is only a sketch and does not cover everything in the songs since there are topics and language features that do not fall neatly under the included categories. For example, sometimes it is difficult to distinguish an allusion from a reference. An allusion is an expression designed to call something to mind without mentioning it explicitly, an indirect or passing reference. A reference is the action of mentioning or alluding to something. In the result there is no difference between the two. Allusions mentioned early in the text will not appear again among the language features.

5.1 London Calling

Topics: Addiction, violence, dystopia, references to art forms

To start with the title, the phrase *London Calling* can be associated with the call sign for BBC's Overseas Service Radio, just before they announced the news bulletin. Every other line in the song begins with it, which makes it sound like a news announcement *to the faraway towns* throughout the whole song. Even though Strummer grew up in different countries, this call sign was something he remembered from his childhood, wherever the family was stationed. The song has an apocalyptic theme and is packed with issues such as the climate change, a new Ice Age, heavy rains, drought, drugs, nuclear errors and the

shortage of oil. *The sun's zooming in* refers to extreme weather conditions, a prevailing topic in newspaper articles at the time. According to Marcus Gray (2011), several articles and books were published in the late part of the 1970's, some of them were Newsweek's *The Cooling World, Hothouse Earth* by Harold Wilcox, *The Cooling: Has the Next Ice Age already begun* by Lowell Ponte. In this context, the first World Climate Conference was held in February 1979. The "news addict" Strummer was most likely aware of that.

In an interview from 1988 in *Melody Maker*, Strummer said that he "had read about 10 newspaper reports in one day calling down a varieties of plagues upon us, like the Ice Age is coming and the sun's getting closer to the Earth, and London's gonna drown next time there's a heavy rain" (Gray 2011: 179). Hebdige (1998) describes the British summer of 1976 as apocalyptic and "extraordinarily hot". Before the warmth began in May, the tabloid headlines had been doom-laden. The sunshine came as a relief and the population could relax, the Ice Age was not here yet, but by August, when the heat wave still remained, crops were failing and water was rationed, a drought was declared. The weather threat now paradoxically changed into the opposite, and "Last Day imagery began to figure once more in the press" (Hebdige 1998: 24).

The reference to *a nuclear error* is fairly straightforward. It obviously refers to the meltdown at Three Mile Island in Pennsylvania in March the same year the album was released. *Engines stop running* could refer to either the shortage of oil or no electricity as a result of *a nuclear error*. Starvation is brought up in *the wheat is growing thin*.

The implication for police brutality is shown in *we ain't got no swing 'cept for the ring of that truncheon thing*. Some of the band members had both seen and experienced police brutality. *I have no fear London is drowning- and I live by the river* brings up the worries for heavy rains and floods. The exact meaning of this line is difficult to pin down. At the time of the making of the song Strummer lived by the Thames and he could mean that if there were a flood he would be lucky to be the first to drown. On the other hand, they had just built a flood barrier, so he was safe.

A subtler topic in the song is the drug abuse; words related to drugs are *zombies of death, nodding out, we ain't got no high*, and somebody has *yellowy eyes*, likely from having hepatitis.

Allusions: *Beatlemania* – a Broadway show in the 70's, *top of the dial* – top of the hour

Slang: *Nodding out* – fall asleep or pass out after taking drugs

Idioms: *Has bitten the dust* – failed or stopped to exist, *holding out* – to prevent someone from participating

Synonyms: *The underworld*- the ones who do not take part in conventional society³

Metaphors: *Zombies of death* - drug addicts,

5.2 Jimmy Jazz

Topics: Addiction, violence and references to art forms.

The police walked in for Jimmy Jazz is the opening line on this track. As a listener it is easy to imagine a run down bar that just had a visit by a minor police squad. Gray (2011: 210) describes it as “impressionistic, with the story being as hard to grasp as the smoke hanging in the air of the nightclub”.

The topics in this song are drug abuse and police brutality and have some references to films. The police brutality is more implied than explicit. *Cut off his ears and chop off his head* is an expression used in *Bring Me the Head of Alfred Garcia*. In the film there were two hit men instead of the police. Robert De Niro’s Travis Bickle in *Taxi Driver* is present in the phrase *suck that* (which he says before he shoots the pimp) in the final verse.

Jimmy Jazz is both alliteration and synonym for the drug the police are looking for, but it is not there because the leaves (*ears*) and bud (*head*) have already been *cut off*. *Satta Massagana* means “give thanks” is Amric, an Ethiopian language.

Alliteration: *Jimmy Jazz*

Idioms: *Try your luck* – attempt to do something that requires luck.

Slang: *It sucks* – an expression of dislike

Synonym: *Jimmy* – joint, *Jazz* – cannabis

5.3 Hateful

Topics: Addiction and references to art forms.

The topic in this song is drug addiction and describes a man’s waiting for his dealer to come and *give me what I need*. What he needs is heroin, and he needs *it all so badly*. When going further into the lyrics it shows ambivalent feelings for the drug. On the one hand, the man is *grateful to be nowhere* when he is high, but it is *not for free* because *it’s paid for*. On the other hand, he says *it’s hateful* when he is burned out. He tells the listeners he has *lost some friends* but does not really bother, as long as he can get in touch with his *main man*.

In the original lyric drafts that were found among Strummer’s old notebooks after his death and displayed at *The Joe Strummer: Past, Present & Future* exhibition in London 2004,

³ The term *underworld* often refers to a criminal world. In this case it is rather an expression of alienation.

this song was called *H for Hateful*. *H* is short for heroin, horse or Harry. *A main man* is “a close and trusted male friend”, but in this case it is clearly slang for dealer.

The drug theme is obvious but not who it is all about. During the band’s *Pearl Harbor* tour in America in 1979 they heard about Sid Vicious’s overdose and death. According to Gray (2011: 216), the lines *can’t drive so steady* and *can’t see so clearly* could also refer to Montgomery Clift, the protagonist in *The Right Profile* (see the discussion in 5.6).

Slang: *Main man* – here; a drug dealer. *Killed all my nerves* – got numbed of too much drugs.

5.4 Rudie Can’t Fail

Topics: Violence, alienation and reference to art forms

Rudie is a Rude Boy. Rude Boys was originally a term for a deviant subculture formed in the working classes in Jamaica in the 1960’s (Hebdige 1998: 145). As the Jamaican immigration in the UK grew in the 1970’s so did the number of Rude Boys. In the 1970’s it became a term for a Jamaican young male immigrant, often described as a lazy, irresponsible outlaw, a party-loving young man who is criticized by the elder generation.

The entire song is full of references to the film *Rude Boy*, a semi documentary about the band where they play themselves. The main character in the movie lives up to the above-mentioned image. The phrase *Rudie can’t fail* is recycled from the song *Safe European Home* on their second album *Give ‘Em Enough Rope*, but was originally borrowed from Desmond Dekker’s song *007 (Shanty Town)* from 1967. One interpretation is that he cannot fail because he has not much to lose.

This track tackles violence, in the form of police brutality, described in the chorus *first they curse then they press me till I hurt*. Another topic is the high unemployment; Rudie needs to *find a job in the paper*, but as a result of social decay he is accused of being *crude and feckless* to which he responds *I know that my life make you nervous, but I tell you I can’t live my life in service*, and starts his day with *drinking brew for breakfast*. *The doctor* in the second verse *who was born for a purpose* is a reference to Doctor Alimantado, a contemporary reggae DJ who had a hit in 1977 with the single *Born for a Purpose*.

Slang: *Brew* - beer, *Hot* - cool, *Sky juice* - crushed ice with syrup poured on it *or* water.

5.5 Spanish Bombs

Topics: Violence and references to art forms

One need not necessarily read between the lines to know that this song was written to commemorate the Spanish Civil War 40 years earlier. However, what made Strummer write

the lyrics was the several bombings by ETA and the IRA in the seventies. Several holiday resorts at the coast of Costa Brava were hit with many casualties. *Back home the buses went up in flashes/The Irish tomb was drenched in blood* is a reference to the IRA's activities in the UK at the time.

"*They sang The Red Flag, they wore the black one*" are references to the red flag for the socialist anthem and the socialism, the black flag of the anarchists. Other references to the war are *bullet holes in the cemetery walls*, where Franco's Nationalists executed the *freedom fighters*, *The shooting sites in the days of '39*, *The ragged army, fixin' bayonets to fight the other line* were civilians trying to fight Franco's army. *Andalucia* and *Grenada* are two of those *shooting sites*.

Fredrico Lorca, a poet and vocal supporter for the left, was executed in 1936 by the right wing. The line *Oh please leave the vendanna open* is similar to Fredrico Lorca's opening- and closing line in his poem *Farewell* (Gray 2011: 244). Spanish is used in some parts of the second and third verses.

Idioms: *Went up in flashes* – exploded, *Nip in the bud* - stop something before it grows too large

5.6 The Right Profile

Topics: Addiction, alienation, references to art form.

What inspired Strummer to write the lyrics to this song was a biography he had read about the famous Hollywood actor Montgomery Clift, who at the top of his career in the 50's, was in a car accident and got his face severely injured, which required plastic surgery.

The lyric deals with the alienation and social decay, which Clift subsequently fell into, caused by alcohol and the painkillers he relied on. As a result, both his looks and health were considerably deteriorated. He continued to act but had to be shot from *the right profile* to look good.

Every line has a reference to either his films, *Red River*, *A Place in the Sun*, *The Misfits*, *From Here to Eternity* or the social decay he fell into after his accident. *His clothes are torn* walking down 42nd Street in Manhattan *with no shoes*, drunk, erratically shaking or *numbed* on *Nembutal*. The location 42nd Street was no coincidence; this "was where the American Dream bumped up against American Dirty Realism" (Gray 2011: 254).

Idiom: *Pimp the beat* - make something seem better than it is

Metaphor: *Broken on a wheel* – here; injured

Slang: *Pimp* – here; a man who arranges clients for prostitutes

5.7 Lost in the Supermarket

Topics: Addiction and alienation

The track is about how to establish an identity through consumerism. It begins with the chorus, and Gray puts it: “The listener is immediately plunged deep into consumer alienation: that sense of being surrounded by specials and deals” (2011: 260). The protagonist is *all tuned in* with the consumer society; he sees *all the programs* that tell him what to buy to become a fulfilled person. To cure his spiritual emptiness, he goes in to the supermarket *for that special offer, a guaranteed personality*. When it does not work, he *empties a bottle and feels a bit free*.

In the phrase *I wasn't born as much as I fell out, nobody seemed to notice me*, the protagonist's childhood is described as being neglected, unwanted and abandoned by the parents. Hearing the noises of screaming and fighting people is something this person grew up with. There could be references both to Strummer's own childhood as well as Jones's. *Long distance callers make long distance calls* is one example. After Jones's parents divorced, his mother remarried and moved to USA and the only contact with her son was via post and long distance calls. Strummer's parents were always abroad. According to Gray, Strummer was not a person who wanted to bother others with his feelings and claimed it was “a sin to bore people” with his own problems (2011: 258). He might have used Jones's childhood to cover the real protagonist, himself.

Idioms: *Tuned in* – very aware of something

5.8 Clampdown

Topics: Violence, dystopia, alienation and reference to art form

In an interview in 1988 Strummer said “ Mainly it's a song about freedom, or the lack thereof” (Gray 2011: 271). The theme here is violence through repression and control. Looking up *clampdown* in *Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary*, the definition is *a severe or concerted attempt to suppress something or someone*. Those suppressed in this case are the working class, the poor, the immigrants and other minorities. The message is clear to all these people: resist the capitalist system with its oppressive forces, and do it now before you grow old. The references are many. In the first verse racism is represented with *taking off his*

turban, they say, is this man a Jew? Are they insulting him or are they just ignorant about his culture? Then they go on with we will teach our twisted speech and we will train our blue-eyed men to be young believers. Further down, these *blue-eyed men* have become old, who like to *boss around* men wearing *blue and brown* shirts, which could refer to the uniforms in the police- and military forces, or worse, Hitler's brown shirts, The SA.

Written in 1979, *In these days of evil presidents* is most likely a reference to some of the dictators at the time, Idi Amin in Uganda, Pol Pot in Cambodia, the Shah of Iran and Somoza in Nicaragua. *But lately one or two has fully paid their due.* Some of them lost their power before the decade was over.

Idioms: *Boss around* – give order in a domineering manner, *Pay their due* – atone for

Slang: *Clampdown* - an increased effort to make sure that people obey laws and rules

5.9 The Guns of Brixton

Topics: Addiction, violence, reference to art forms, and alienation

Race riots in Brixton is not a phenomenon specific for the 70's. The first ones erupted in 1958, as a result of the exploitation of the West Indian immigrants. In the wake of the Civil Rights movement, the Black Power in the USA and the formation of the far right National Front, a new wave of riots occurred in the late 60's and recurred with some regularity for some other decades.

This is the only track on the album written and sung by Paul Simonon and deals with police brutality. What made him start writing the lyrics was the film *The Harder They Come* from 1972. "That was the initial inspiration" he told *Melody Maker* in 1988 (Gray 2011: 281). The protagonist in the film is the rude boy Ivan, who moves from the countryside in to Kinston to make his fortune. He becomes a reggae singer, gets into crime and violence. He is subsequently shot dead by the police.

In the song the scene of the crime is Brixton. Phrases like *when they kick at your front door, when the law break in, hands on your head, he feels like Ivan* are all references to the film. His drug dealing is implied with *the money feels good* and *his game is called surviving.* *But surely your time will come and you know it means no mercy, you'll have to answer to the guns of Brixton* are all foreshadowing of what is coming.

The song summarizes the final scene when Ivan is about to be arrested; *at the end of the harder they come, shot down on the pavement.* Since he is dead there is *no need for the Black Maria*, slang for police van, *goodbye to the Brixton sun.*

Slang: *Black Maria* – a police van, *Death Row* - a place where people wait to be executed.

Synonyms: *Law* – the police.

5.10 Death or Glory

Topics: Violence and references to art forms.

Death or Glory is the motto of the Queen's Royal Lancers in the British Army, which means it is honorable to die for your country and ruler. A devoted soldier rather dies than live in dishonor. To die with honor is as old as the idea of war. A more reasonable definition is to be found in www.oxforddictionaries.com; *brave to the point of foolhardiness*. By 1979 the motto had become a buzz phrase and a life style slogan among drug users (Gray 2011: 309). Strummer uses the motto to draw parallels to the rock and roll world and the hypocrisy within the music business. A real rock star would rather die than sell out.

In the first verse the “soldier” against everyday life *strikes a bargain and ends up making payments on a sofa or a girl*. His frustration makes him *slap his kids around* and by embracing the things he once despised he has become *just another story*.

The man in the second verse will do the same. He is a *gimmick hungry yob digging gold from rock 'n' roll*, says he will *die before he's sold*. But, even if he at present *fucks nuns* he will sooner or *later join the church*. Strummer claims *it's been tested by research*.

Slang: Mike - microphone, *yob* - an uncivilized working-class person

Idiom: *Strikes a bargain* – make a deal, beat of time

5.11 Koka Kola

Topics: Addiction, violence and references to art forms

Again, drug abuse is the topic, but set *in the corridors of power* it has a flashier surface than some of the previous tracks. The title is ambiguous and refers both to the drug and the beverage. It starts in the *elevator going up* to the *gleaming corridors of the 51st floor* where our yuppie has his office. He is in the *advertising world* and can afford both *snakeskin suit* and *alligator shoes*. Still, life must be hard on him and his fellow *top men*; they all *need a top up long before the happy hour*, because *Koke adds life where there isn't any*. The last phrase is a reference to Coca-Cola's slogan from 1976; “Coke adds life”.

Jumping from the windows is a reference to the Black Tuesday in 1929 followed by the Great Depression. The rumors said that 11 men jumped from the windows in desperation. Later this turned out to be an urban myth (Gray 2011: 32)

In the 1970's cocaine was the drug among the smart set and in *the gleaming corridors* in *Berlin, Manhattan* and even *the White House*. In the final verse reality catches up on our yuppie, and a mobster or a dealer is *coming through the door* and threatens him with a *snub nose* .44. He panics, jumps out of the window and *hit the deck*.

Slang: *Koka Kola* – Coca-Cola and cocaine, *hit the deck* – drop down to the ground

Idiom: *Top up*, to add more than what is needed, *happy hour* - early evening hours at a pub when drinks and food are discounted

Alliteration: *Koka kola, snakeskin suit*

5.12 The Card Cheat

Topics: Addiction and references to art forms

The Card Cheat is *a solitary man crying, "Hold me"*. He is gambling for his life with Death and *won't be alive for long*, which refers to *The Book of Revelation*. *The Gambler* is also an illustration from the 16th century, attributed to Hans Holbein, where Death and the Devil fight over the right to a card player. The scene when a knight challenges Death to a game of chess in Ingmar Bergman's *The Seventh Seal* is implicitly referred to.

Death is the issue here and present throughout all the verses and the references are several. The hourglass as *the keeper of time, king of spades, before you meet your fate*, the card cheat was *shot dead*.

This song goes from medieval time with the *Hundred-Years War, lance* and a *Roman spear*, to *Crimean War* and *a musket*, to a saloon in the Wild West, *opium den* and *the barroom gin*. Gunmen sit around a table playing a game of cards, the Card Cheat *with a card up his sleeve, as he lays down the king of spades*. He is *forced to his knees* when he is *seized*. As the knight in *The Seventh Seal* he just wanted *more time from the darkest hour*.

Allusion. *Keeper of time* - Death

Slang: *Den* – here; a hole where one can hide

Metaphor: *The darkest hour* - just before dawn

Idiom: *His luck gave in* – stopped trying

5.13 Four Horsemen

Topics: Dystopia, addiction, reference to art forms

The first thought is that this track has a cowboy mode, but similar to *The Card Cheat* and *Death or Glory*, it has a Biblical theme. The lyrics allude to the chapter in *The Book of*

Revelation, where The Great Whore of Babylon tricks the four horsemen into severe drinking; *they were given the grapes that go ripe in the sun* by using tricks like giving them *all the foods of vanity* and *instant promises of immorality*. Finally, they go insane, *bit the dust screamin' insanity* and *over the edge*, like one of the prophets.

In the Bible The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse are described as forces of destruction of humanity. In the fourth verse they turn to the listeners and persuade them to join them in their degeneration. They outdrink them, *drank 'em blind* and *cleaned out their pockets*, but they *still told nothing 'bout what was to come*.

Idiom: *Over the edge* - insane,

Slang: *Spliff* - a big rolled cigarette with cannabis (joint)

5.14 The pedagogical angle

The third aim in this work was to find a pedagogical angle to the subject. How can a study like this be practiced in my teaching or in teaching in general? It can appear that the analysis carried out in this work is something the students can carry through as well. It is all about structuring a method and showing them how an analysis similar to this can be done, and to add this tool into their student's "toolbox" so that they can analyze texts of many different types and genres. An assignment for the students can look as follows:

1. Choose a band that has lyrics that appeal to you.
2. Select a few of their lyrics to analyze.
3. Obtain the analytic tools you need.
4. Analyze the selected lyrics.
5. Write an account for what you have found.
6. Prepare and make your presentation in class or in a small group.

My pedagogical/didactical aim with this is about formative assessment. In a practical sense, the students will carry out their assessments with the basic idea and the key strategies in mind. The content of the formative assessment is as follows; to make an assessment developing three aspects need to be clarified to the students.

1. The intended goal, or the ideal quality of the work.
2. Where is the student's position in relation to the goal?
3. Strategies for the student to shrink the distance between his/her current position and the goal/quality.

In order to understand what goals and qualities that are required, students also have the opportunity to practice how to identify goals and qualities. In my teaching I use the formative assessment to:

1. Clarify the goals and encourage students to share the criteria for success.
2. To enable effective classroom discussions, questions, activities and tasks that create visible evidence of student learning.
3. To provide feedforward that develops learning.
4. Activating students as resources to each other.
5. To encourage students to take their learning into their own hands.

Throughout the process the students work with self-assessment, formative feedforward and peer assessment.

6. Discussion

The aim of this study was divided into three. The questions were:

How do the topics in the lyrics on *The Clash's London Calling* reflect the society at the time, mostly in the UK but also the surrounding world? If not, what do the lyrics relate to? How are the lyrics constructed and what language features are used regarding allusions, idioms, slang, synonyms and metaphors? How can a study like this be practiced in my teaching?

The first two questions have been answered in the result song by song; in the following I present a more holistic approach. I therefore avoid bringing up each song, if not necessary, but instead concentrate on the whole. The discussion is divided into three. I begin with the topics, then the language features and end up with the didactic-and pedagogical angle.

One conclusion that can be drawn from the start is that *The Clash's* lyrics *are* political and reflect the society in the UK at the time, but less than expected. When going deeper into the lyrics, it turned out they often referred surprisingly to other things, which are presented below.

6.1 Topics

As mentioned before, on the album there are references to topics that are only touched incidentally or implicitly and not all of them can be discussed in this study. Five main topics are pointed out in order of how often they occur in relation to other topics. These are *References to art forms, addiction, violence, alienation and dystopia.*

The most recurrent topic is undoubtedly references to different art forms, films in particular. This is perhaps not surprising considering Joe Strummer's film interest. In all the songs, except in *Lost in the Supermarket*, there are references to art forms. Others deal primarily with various themes in literature, but also myths – some with the Christian myths related to *The Book of Revelation*. The films he refers to are in most cases what we would call modern, but there are also films from the 50's, like *The Seventh Seal*. It is quite obvious that Strummer has an interest that exceeds the average film consumer. One explanation could most likely be his upbringing, education and class background. He possesses the academic middle class characteristics; intellectuality, language and cultural awareness, but self-assurance in his expression is more typical for the upper class.

In his references to films and books that are not seen or read by the average filmgoer or reader, one can detect an appeal and encouragement to the British working class. Strummer does not express it directly, but implicitly; freedom can only be reached through education. It is the educated individual who makes the big changes.

One theme that appears in half of the songs is addiction in forms of alcoholism, painkillers, the usage of cannabis and the heavier heroin and cocaine addiction. In *London Calling* the addiction is more implicit, whilst in *Jimmy Jazz*, *Hateful* and *Koka Kola* the message is direct; don't do drugs! Alcoholism is also brought up, but not with the same negativity. Here it is more about individuals who are unable to keep the alcohol demon at a distance. The addiction to pain killers is touched in just one song, *The Right Profile*.

One theme that occurs as many times as addiction is the one that can be categorized as violence. One of the songs, *Spanish Bombs*, is about the Spanish Civil War in the 1930's, but is in another meaning about terrorism and terrorist movements. In the song Strummer brings up the resemblance with the bombings by ETA in Costa Brava and the domestic problems with the IRA bombings at the time. Other wars that are referred to are The Crimean War and The Hundred Years War. Surprisingly, there is no reference to The World War II, which was closest in time and should have been the most traumatic for the British.

One issue belonging to the violence topic is the police brutality during the Thatcher era and has a direct connection to the riots and the disturbances that Margaret Thatcher's politics created. In *Guns of Brixton* and *Jimmy Jazz*, the police brutality is present throughout both songs as well as the underlying racism.

A minor topic, which in a way belongs to violence, is alienation. There is an undertone of violence in several texts, but more clearly in five of them. The strongest reasons to experience alienation, as it appears in the lyrics, are a reaction to the systematic racism and

the hopelessness associated with unemployment. In this sense, these songs describe the British society at the time, but not explicitly. Instead, they focus more on experienced vulnerability than on a political discussion.

The last topic is the dystopian one. It would be wrong to say that *The Clash*, at least from what has been analyzed, is a dystopian band. The lyrics deal with the hopelessness of unemployment and concern about the climate and drug abuse. The title track *London Calling* definitely has dystopian features, among others. However, overall, *London Calling* is not a gloomy, dismal album. The seriousness is there throughout all four records, but there is also much joy and hope. Therefore, as listeners, we should not focus on references to dismal subjects like nuclear meltdowns, drugs, and apocalyptic myths in the Bible, environmental disasters or even war and terrorism. The biggest threat comes from within ourselves in how we approach the world. In the analyzed lyrics, there is a different approach. Some of it is really quite punk, like the DIY ethic (do-it-yourself, nobody else will do it for you) and there is hope for the future.

6.2 Language features

Just like the topics, there are several kinds of language feature that occur in the album lyrics but not all of them have a column in the matrix. The matrix includes five of them; allusions, idioms, slang, synonyms and metaphors.

As seen in the matrix, allusions and references to art forms fall under the same column, and have already been discussed under 6.1.

Idioms occur in almost every song. Such features are so common and incorporated in the language and texts that they can be difficult to detect. Compared with the other categories, there is a major occurrence of idioms in the lyrics.

Another category, which can be seen in more than half of the texts, is slang. This must be considered as little, since the punk movement is a subculture, which often uses slang to include the in-group or exclude the others. Two minor categories are synonyms and metaphors. They occur only four times in the lyrics. As the punk music in general had a somewhat aggressive style, and since *London Calling* is considered one of the most representative albums for the punk movement, the listeners most likely expect a lot more aggressive, informal language than there actually is.

One conclusion to be made is that the language as well as the topics is a reflection of Strummer's background. The schooling and the upper middle class background make the language fairly correct, and what is interesting is not what is there, but what is *not* there.

The Clash's lyrics are far from aggressive. Instead the listener might find some indignation in the language. Apart from other punk bands at the time, *The Clash* want to initiate a discussion, not throw a brick at someone's head.

6.3 The didactic- and pedagogical angle

By performing the task based on formative assessment, I am convinced that students not only achieve the learning outcomes, but also learn to set such goals through a collaborative working with matrices. Through these we learn also to identify the qualities in different texts. But most of all I think that the assignment described under 5.14 is motivating. One of the challenges in upper secondary school can sometimes be the lack of interest or motivation among the students to carry through a certain assignment, but choosing a favorite song or another text can awaken a greater interest. When the interest increases, it is easier to get deeper into the subject.

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Appendix 1

Matrix *London Calling*

Songs	Topics					Literary devices			
	Addiction	Violence	Dystopia	Alienation	References to art forms/ Allusions	Idioms	Slang	Synonyms	Metaphors
London Calling	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X
Jimmy Jazz	X	X			X	X	X	X	
Hateful	X				X		X	X	
Rudie Can't Fail		X		X	X		X		
Spanish Bombs		X			X	X			X
Right Profile	X			X	X	X			
Lost in the Supermarket	X			X		X			
Clampdown		X	X	X	X	X	X		
Guns of Brixton		X			X				
Death or Glory		X			X	X	X		
Koka Kola	X				X	X	X	X	
Card Cheat	X				X	X	X		X
Four Horsemen	X		X		X	X			

Lyrics *London Calling*

London Calling

London calling to the faraway towns
Now that war is declared-and battle come down
London calling to the underworld
Come out of the cupboard, all you boys and girls
London calling, now don't look at us
All that phony Beatlemania has bitten the dust
London calling, see we ain't got no swing
'Cept for the ring of that truncheon thing

The ice age is coming the sun is zooming in
Engines stop running and the wheat is growing thin
A nuclear error, but I have no fear
London is drowning-and I live by the river

London calling to the imitation zone
Forget it, brother, an' go it alone
London calling upon the zombies of death
Quit holding out-and draw another breath
London calling-and I don't wanna shout
But when we were talking-I saw you nodding out
London calling see we ain't got no highs
Except for that one with the yellowy eyes

Now get this
London calling, yeah, I was there, too
An' you know what they said? Well, some of it was true!
London calling at the top of the dial
After all this, won't you give me a smile?
I never felt so much a' like

Jimmy Jazz

The police walked in for Jimmy Jazz
I said, he ain't here, but he sure went past
Oh, you're looking for Jimmy Jazz

Sattamassagana for Jimmy Dread
Cut off his ears and chop off his head
Police came looking for Jimmy Jazz

So if you're gonna take a message 'cross this town
Maybe put it down somewhere over the other side
See it gets to Jimmy Jazz

Don't you bother me, not anymore
I can't take this tale, oh, no more
It's all around, Jimmy Jazz

J-a-zee zee J-a-zed zed
J-a-zed zed Jimmy Jazz
And then it sucks, he said, suck that!
So go look all around, you can try your luck, brother
And see what you found
But I guarantee that it ain't your day
Chop! Chop!

Hateful

Well, I got a friend who's a man
What man?
The man who keeps me from the lovely
He gives me what I need
What you need? What you got?
I need it all so badly

Oh, anything I want he gives it to me
Anything I want he gives it, but not for free
It's hateful, and it's paid for and I'm so grateful to be nowhere

This year I've lost some friends
Some friends? What friends?
I dunno, I ain't even noticed
You see, I gotta go out again
Again? My friend
I gotta see that mainman

I killed all my nerves
My nerves? What swerves?
And I can't drive so steady
I've lost my memory
My mind? Behind!
I can't see so clearly

Rudie Can't Fail

Sing, Michael, sing-on the route of the 19 Bus
Hear them sayin'
How you get a rude and a reckless?
Don't you be so crude and a feckless
You been drinking brew for breakfast
Rudie can't fail

So we reply
I know that my life make you nervous
But I tell you that I can't live in service
Like the doctor who was born for a purpose
Rudie can't fail

I went to the market to realise my soul
'cause what I need I just don't have
Firs they curse then they press me till I hurt
We say Rudie can't fail

We hear them sayin'
Now first you must cure your temper
Then you find a job in the paper
You need someone for a saviour
Oh, Rudie can't fail

We reply
Now we get a rude and a reckless
We been seen lookin' cool an' a speckless
We been drinking brew for breakfast
So Rudie can't fail
Okay! So where you wanna go today?
Hey boss man!
You're looking pretty smart
In your chicken skin suit

You think you're pretty hot
In your pork pie hat
But...Rudie can't fail
Look out, look out...
Sky juice!...10 cents a bottle!

Spanish Bombs

Spanish songs in Andalucía
The shooting sites in the days of '39
Oh, please, leave the vendanna open
Fredrico Lorca is dead and gone
Bullet holes in the cemetery walls
The black cars of the Guardia Civil
Spanish bombs on the Costa Rica
I'm flying in a DC 10 tonight

Spanish bombs, yo tequierro y finito
Yote querda, oh mi corazon
Spanish bombs, yo te quierro y finito
Yo te querda, oh mi Corazon
Spanish weeks in my disco casino
The freedom fighters died upon the hill
They sang the red flag
They wore the black one
But after they died it was Mockingbird Hill
Back home the buses went up in flashes
The Irish tomb was drenched in blood
Spanish bombs shatter the hotels
My seniorita's rose was nipped in the bud

The hillsides ring with "Free the people"
Or can I hear the echo from the days of '39?
With trenches full of poets
The ragged army, fixin' bayonets to fight the other line
Spanish bombs rock the province
I'm hearing music from another time
Spanish bombs on the Costa Brava

I'm flying in on a DC 10 tonight
Spanish songs in Andalucía, Mandolina, oh mi corazon
Spanish songs in Granada, oh mi Corazon

The Right Profile

Say, where did I see this guy?
In Red River?
Or a place in the sun?
Maybe the Misfits?
Or From Here to Eternity?

Everybody say, "Is he all right?"
And everybody say, "What's he like?"
Everybody say, "He sure look funny."
That's...Montgomery Clift, honey!

New York, New York, New York, 42nd Street
Hustlers rustle and pimps pimp the beat
Monty Clift is recognized at dawn
He ain't got no shoes and his clothes are torn

I see a car smashed at night
Cut the applause and dim the light
Monty's face is broken on a wheel
Is he alive? Can he still feel?

Nembutol numbs it all
But I prefer alcohol

He said go out and get me my old movie stills
Go out and get me another roll of pills
There I go again shaking, but I ain't got the chills

Lost in the Supermarket

I'm all lost in the supermarket
I can no longer shop happily
I came in her for that special offer
A guaranteed personality

I wasn't born so much as I fell out
Nobody seemed to notice me
We had a hedge back home in the suburbs
Over which I never could see

I heard the people who lived on the ceiling
Scream and fight most scarily
Hearing that noise was my first ever feeling
That's how it's been all around me

I'm all tuned in, I see all the programmes
I save coupons from packets of tea
I've got my giant hit discotheque album

I empty a bottle and I feel a bit free
The kids in the halls and the pipes in the walls
Make me noises for company
Long distance callers make long distance calls
And the silence makes me lonely
And it's not hear
It disappear
I'm all lost

Clampdown

What are we gonna do now?
Taking off his turban, they said, is this man a Jew?
'Cause they're working for the clampdown
They put up a poster saying we earn more than you!
When we're working for the clampdown
We will teach our twisted speech
To the young believers
We will train our blue-eyed men
To be young believers

The judge said five to ten-but I say double that again
I'm not working for the clampdown
No man born with a living soul
Can be working for the clampdown
Kick over the wall 'cause government's to fall
How can you refuse it?
Let fury have the hour, anger can be power
D' you know that you can use it?

The voices in your head are calling
Stop wasting your time, there's nothing coming
Only a fool would think someone could save you
The men at the factory are old and cunning
You don't owe nothing, so boy get runnin'
It's the best years of your life they want to steal

You grow up and you calm down
You're working for the clampdown
You start wearing the blue and brown
You're working for the clampdown
So you got someone to boss around
It makes you feel big now
You drift until you brutalize
You made your first kill now

In these days of evil presidents
Working for the clampdown
But lately one or two has fully paid their due
For working for the clampdown
But ha! Gitalong! Gitalong!

And I've given away no secrets
Who's barmy now?

Guns of Brixton

When they kick at your front door
How you gonna come?
With your hands on your head
Or on the trigger of your gun

When the law break in
How you gonna go?
Shot down on the pavement
Or waiting on death row

You can crush us
You can bruise us
But you'll have to answer to
Oh, the guns of Brixton

The money feels good
And your life you like it well
But surely your time will come
As in heaven, as in hell

You see, he feels like Ivan
Born under the Brixton sun
His game is called survivin'
At the end of the harder they come

You know it means no mercy
They caught him with a gun
No need for the Black Maria
Goodbye to the Brixton sun

You can crush us
You can bruise us
Yes, even shoot us
But oh-the guns of Brixton

When they kick at your front door
How you gonna come?
With your hands on your head
Or on the trigger of your gun

Shot down on the pavement
Waiting in death row
His game is called survivin'
As in heaven as in hell

Death or Glory

Every cheap hood strikes a bargain with the world
And ends up making payments on a sofa or a girl
Love 'n' hate tattooed across the knuckles of his hands
The hands that slap his kids around 'cause they don't understand

How death or glory becomes just another story
How death or glory becomes just another story
'N' every gimmick hungry yob digging gold from rock 'n' roll
Grabs the mike to tell us he'll die before he's sold
But I believe in this-and it's been tested by research
That he who fucks nun will later join the church

From every dingy basement on every dingy street
I hear every dragging handclap over every dragging beat
That's just the beat of time-the beat that must go on
If you've been trying for years then we already heard your song

Koka Kola

Elevator! Going up!
In the gleaming corridors of the 51st floor
The money can be made if you really want some more
Executive decision-a clinical precision
Jumping from the windows-filled with indecision

I get good advice from the advertising world
Treat me nice says the party girl
Koke adds life where there isn't any
So freeze, man, freeze

It's the pause that refreshes in the corridors of power
When top men need a top up long before the happy hour
Your snakeskin suit and your alligator boot
You won't need a launderette; you can send them to the vet!

I get my advice from the advertising world
Treat me nice says the party girl
Koke adds life where there isn't any
So freeze, man, freeze

Koka Kola advertising and cocaine
Strolling down the Broadway in the rain
Neon light sign says it
I read it in the paper-they're crazy!
Suit your life, maybe so
In the White House-I know
All Over Berlin (they've been doing it for years)
And in Manhattan!

Coming through the door is a snub nose 44
What the barrel can't snort it can spatter on the floor
Your eyeballs feel like pinballs
And your tongue feels like a fish

You're leaping from the windows-saying don't
Ayaiiiiiirrrghhh! *@!!*@!!*!
Don't give me none of this!

I get good advice from the advertising world
Treat me nice says the party girl
Koke adds life where there isn't any
So freeze, man, freeze
Hit the deck!

The Card Cheat

There's a solitary man crying, "Hold me."
It's only because he's a-lonely
If the keeper of time runs slowly
He won't be alive for long!

If he only had time to tell of all of the things he planned
With a card up his sleeve, what would he achieve?
It means nothing!

To the opium den and the barroom gin
In the Belmont chair playing violins
The gambler's face cracks into a grin
As he lays down the king of spades

But the dealer just stares
There's something wrong here, he thinks
The gambler is seized and forced to his knees
And shot dead
He only wanted more time
Away from the darkest door
But his luck it gave in
As the dawn light crept in
And he lay on the floor

From the Hundred Year War to the Crimea
With a lance and a musket and a Roman spear
To all of the men who have stood with no fear
In the service of the King

Before you met your fate be sure you
Did not forsake your lover
May not be around anymore

Four Horsemen

Well they were given the grapes that go ripe in the sun
That loosens the screws at the back of the tongue
But they told no one where they had begun-four horsemen

They were given all the foods of vanity
And all the instant promises of immortality
Buy they bit the dust screamin' insanity! Four horsemen

One was over the edge, one was over the cliff
One was lickin' em dry with a bloody great spliff
When they picked up the hiker he didn't want the lift
From the horsemen
But you!
You're not searching, are you now?
You're not looking anyhow
You're never gonna ride that lonely mile
Or put yourself up on trial
Oh, you told me how your life was so bad
An' I agree that it does seem sad
But that's the price that you gotta pay
If you're lazing all around all day
Four horsemen coming right through
Four horsemen and they're pissing by you
They make you look like you're wearing a truss
Four horsemen and it's gonna be us

Well they gave use everything for bending the mind
And we cleaned out their pockets and we drank 'em blind
IT's a long way to the finish so don't get left behind
By those horsemen

And they gave us the grapes that went ripe in the sun
That loosens the screws at the back of the tongue
But we still told nothing 'bout what was to come
Four horsemen