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‘Building Blocks’ of Ideology : Deconstructing Pink Floyd’s Album *The Wall* with Althusser’s lens

لبينات الأيديولوجية : تحليل الألبوم الموسيقي الجدار لبينك فلويد من خلال عدسة ألتوسير

Les fondements de l’idéologie : déconstruire l’album musical Le Mur de Pink Floyd à travers l’optique de Althusser

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## **‘Building Blocks’ of Ideology : Deconstructing Pink Floyd’s Album *The Wall* with Althusser’s lens**

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### **Les fondements de l’idéologie : déconstruire l’album musical Le Mur de Pink Floyd à travers l’optique de Althusser**

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#### **Introduction**

Pink Floyd’s significance in the history of rock music remains uncontested. Famous for their innovation and experimental phase, the band introduced unconventional techniques and electronic sounds into the landscape of progressive rock. Albums like *The Dark Side of the Moon* (1973) and *Wish You Were Here* (1975) stand as testimonials to their popularisation of the ‘Concept Album’, a novel thematic narrative format that subsequently inspired numerous musicians. Their awe-inspiring, elaborate live performances often leave a mesmerising, indelible effect on the audience due to their unique light shows and ground-breaking visuals and aesthetics. Still, beyond their musical prowess, Pink Floyd engaged profoundly with social and political issues such as war, alienation, and the human condition. Owing to this blend, Pink Floyd enjoys an enduring legacy, as their music continues to ‘echo’ across generations. This legacy is particularly apparent in their most thematically and artistically iconic rock opera, *The Wall* (1979).

*The Wall*, written by Roger Waters of Pink Floyd, tells the story of Pink, a character loosely based on Waters himself and on Syd Barrett, who experiences a psychological breakdown due to trauma and alienation. The narrative unfolds through anachronistic scenes, each a metaphorical “brick” in the wall Pink builds around himself. Pink’s story begins with his childhood, marked by his father’s death in the Second World War and an overprotective mother. As he grows, he faces further isolation and emotional turmoil, intensified by an oppressive education system and the disillusionment of fame.

Driven to madness by internal and external pressures, Pink constructs a wall, isolating himself in numbness. This wall symbolises his alienation from society and his emotions. As it grows taller, Pink becomes increasingly detached from reality, eventually descending into a surreal, nightmarish world where he struggles with identity, power, and social destruction. Ultimately,

Pink decides to confront his wall and his emotional barriers. The story culminates in a climactic trial where he must resolve whether to tear down the wall and reclaim his humanity or remain trapped in his self-imposed prison.

Despite the critical acclaim surrounding the album, there lies a striking paradox : while Waters uses *The Wall* as a springboard to critique social realities, audiences often engage with the band's music primarily for its sonic qualities and overlook its profound ideological foundations. In light of this, the aim of this paper is to reveal how this socio-political critique is translated within this album.

Indeed, apart from recounting episodes from his life, Waters infused the album with his own political stance and perspectives. In an interview with the French magazine *Télérama*, on December 19, 2001, Waters expressed his creative method when he stated his songs reflect his observations of reality, which are more of an expression of dissatisfaction rather than despair (Hart and Morrison). Waters is in a way inviting listeners to join him on a mission of emancipation.

The album has sparked notable academic works, particularly pertaining to socio-political themes. Romeo and Cabo's "Roger Waters' Poetry of the Absent Father : British Identity in Pink Floyd's *The Wall*" (2006) explores the album through Waters' personal narrative and socio-cultural context ; it highlights its significance amid post-war disillusionment but limits its scope by emphasising Waters' trauma. Zeno Ackermann's "Rocking the Culture Industry/Performing Breakdown : Pink Floyd's *The Wall* and the Termination of the Post-war Era" (2012) examines the album's cultural impact in post-war Britain, arguing it represents the era's end. David Boza Méndez's "The Teacher, The Doctor, and The Judge : Power and Authorities in Pink Floyd's 'The Wall'" (2017) analyses power dynamics, using Foucault, Althusser, Galbraith, and Russell to critique institutional authority. Vesa-Matti Sarenius's "The Change in the Political Message of Pink Floyd's/ Roger Waters' *The Wall*" (2015) traces the band's political message shift from personal to global themes, influenced by Waters' activism.

Together, these studies provide a background for this paper. Indeed, this study seeks to analyse *The Wall* by focusing on interaction patterns between Pink and key characters that come along his way. To fulfil this task, the paper will use Althusser's concept of Ideological State Apparatuses, hailing, and subjectivity formation and how they constitute a hegemonic means to maintain ideological cohesion.

Louis Althusser's notion of ideology is understood as an active system of beliefs that influences individuals' behaviour, which operates through interpellation and Ideological State Apparatuses (ISAs). He describes ideology as a system of principles or "representation" that "classifies the practices of men," i.e., it affects how individuals perceive their reality (232). Althusser theorises ideology as being material, encrusted in daily rituals and social practices, saying that ideology "has no history" and transcends temporal boundaries (242). He distinguishes between individual-specific ideologies and the dominant ideology, the latter being consistent and serving to support the ruling class's interests : "ideology represents the imaginary relationship of individuals to their real conditions of existence" (232) and "the class struggle is thus expressed and exercised in ideology" (242). Althusser's concept of interpellation describes how ideology "acts" or "functions" to "recruit subjects among the individuals" (232), and how it assimilates them into the prevailing ideology through cultural symbols and daily routines, such as the classic example of a policeman calling out "hey you there !" automatically and unconsciously positioning the individual as a subject of ideology. He maintains that "all ideology hails or interpellates concrete individuals as concrete subjects" (233) ; in this sense, ideology becomes pervasive through interpellation, where individuals are active participants in maintaining social norms and dominant ideologies.

Ideological State Apparatuses, including religion, education, family, culture, and politics, subtly reinforce values and norms, maintaining social order. Educational ISAs, for instance, promote values like competition and individualism and play a fundamental role in reproducing labour power and social submission, as Althusser notes their function saying "the reproduction of submission to the rules" (132). Family ISAs transmit cultural values and obedience, while cultural ISAs like cinema and music propagate the dominant ideology. Political ISAs maintain legitimacy and order, sometimes overlapping with Repressive State Apparatuses (RSAs) which enforce ideology through physical violence, though Althusser emphasises that RSAs should be used as a last resort when the government is "outrun by events" (137). ISAs are omnipresent, validate the existing power structures, and ensure social order through ideology transmission, behaviour regulation, and opposition control.

This paper aims to put across Pink's internalisation of the preferred norms and expectations that eventually led him to his alienation and withdrawal from the world. More specifically, this paper examines Pink's exchanges with characters like his mother, his teacher, his doctor, and finally the judge, and

how these are different manifestations of Ideological State Apparatuses. However, it is important to mention that those interactions are the fruit of his own delusion. They are voiced the way he has come to perceive them, in accordance with his schemata. This detail strengthens the thesis of the subjected Pink having internalised the hegemonic nature of ideology of his milieu.

This study outlines its discussion in four sections. First, it examines Pink's relationship with his mother in "Mother" to show her effect on his emotional repression and metaphorical wall. Second, it explores his interactions with the teacher in "The Happiest Days of Our Lives," "Another Brick in the Wall, Part 2," and "The Trial" to shed light on educational indoctrination and conformity. Third, it analyses Pink's brief encounter with the doctor in "Comfortably Numb" to demonstrate how the medical ideological apparatus serves capitalist interests. Lastly, it examines the judge in "The Trial" as the symbol of the legal ISA and Pink's key to reconciliation with his demons.

## **1. The Mother figure**

Within Althusser's framework, the mother represents the family ISA, which plays an important role in socialising individuals and reproducing dominant ideologies. The mother serves as a conduit for transmitting these ideologies by shaping her children's perceptions of self and society. Looking into Pink's interactions with his mother, one cannot but notice her overarching effect on him. Pink's relationship with his mother is quite peculiar. Having lost her husband during the Second World War, she projects all of her fears of loss and separation onto him, making him suffocate in her toxic love. She is overprotective and controlling, leaving little space, if at all, to Pink's agency.

Such instances of domination are mostly represented in the gentle, melancholic song "Mother," a sort of made-up conversation between him, performed by Waters for his harsh voice, and his mother, performed by David Gilmour for his milder, softer timbre. Through the anaphoric 'hailing' "mother" heading each stanza in Pink's part, we gain access to his anxious psyche. This is even foreshadowed by the loud inhalation/exhalation prelude to the song. Pink here addresses his mother to open up about his existential angst: "Mother do you think they'll drop the bomb/ Mother do you think they'll like this song?" to which she replies, "She won't let you fly but she might let you sing," inadvertently helping build the wall in the process. The thematic divergence in those two questions is fairly noticeable, for the first question pertains to the immediate post-war context and the fear

of a prominent atomic war. The period matches with Pink's childhood, for he was born at the end of the Second World War. Yet, he immediately switches to his second source of anxiety : his musician career prospect, which visibly pertains to his early adulthood. The lack of cohesion here suggests that his self-perception travels to and fro childhood. He unknowingly subjects himself as his momma's child who needs adult comforting. Adult Pink's psyche is frequently interrupted with a child-like psyche which demonstrates an unstable, fragmented consciousness of Pink.

Every detail of his life decisions, like her opinion about his dates, is also a subject of discussion : "Mother do you think she's good enough for me" to which she replies, "Mama's gonna check out all your girlfriends for you." It is not clear whether Pink here is an adolescent in a self-discovery journey or a fully grown-up yet emotionally immature adult. Either way, he lacks agency in his life decisions. Worse than that, he is consistently hailed "baby" by his mother. He even hails himself "your little boy." This entails that she denies his adulthood and considers him a baby whose needs fully rest upon her shoulders. He has, in turn, internalised her domination so much so that despite this conversation being imagined, sprouting straight from his delusion, he subjects himself as a little boy notwithstanding. Her overprotection exacerbates his sense of alienation and later contributes to inhibiting his nascent sex-drive in adolescence, which in turn ultimately leads to the breakdown of his marriage.

Her toxic domination is also palpable in the penultimate song named "The Trial" wherein delusional Pink is figuratively tried for his madness and the crimes which stemmed from it. Instead of addressing the existential malaise that led him to this tragic situation, everyone partaking in the trial tries to bring him down to their authority. The mother's caricatural jet-like entrance into the scene, then her morphing into a chubby middle-aged mother cradling ragdoll Pink, then her arms morphing again into the symbolic wall that intensified his alienation and obliterated his agency is vividly rendered by cartoonist Gerald Scarfe. She begs the judge to just "let [her] take him home," as though she were still his legal tutor. She once again expresses her attachment issues and fear of loss when she says, "Why'd he ever have to leave me ?", implicitly blaming him for having flown with his own wings for that matter. She does not realise that her overpresence helps make Pink a dysfunctional member of society. Moreover, she also justifies her position before the judge : "M'lud, I never wanted him to get in any trouble," explaining that, as a Familial ISA so to speak, she has attempted to

fulfil her task in making him a 'normal' member of society, not deviant to the preferred ideology.

All in all, Pink's mother becomes a symbol of omnipresent repression and control. Pink's efforts to metaphorically 'build a wall' around himself can be seen as a defence mechanism in response to the suffocating influence of his mother and his need to assert his own identity separate from familial expectations. In brief, Pink's relationship with his mother could be seen as a miniature version of the many ideology and hegemony-related themes.

## 2. The Teacher Figure

Coming to the teacher's figure symbolising the Educational ISA, which in Althusserian terms, represents the most important and powerful of all the ISAs combined, for it is the only mandatory institution that is imposed on people from early age up to late adolescence. Althusser argues that children are indoctrinated in schools in order to internalise social structures. This process is achieved through knowledge transfer whose sole purpose is to channel children's potential into several walks of life so as to keep the capitalist machine going. It is thus in accordance with this context that this section examines Pink's interactions with his teacher and how it reflects the ways in which the education system shapes perceptions of self and society and perpetuates dominant ideologies. What emanates from the following analysis will help attain a better understanding of how Roger Waters used his work as a socio-political critique of the Establishment.

The teacher, along with the theme of education, is introduced in "The Happiest Days of Our Lives", "Another Brick in the Wall, Part 2", and later in "The Trial". Pink's experience with his teacher is purely conflictual and oppressive. The representation of the teacher's character is quite thought-provoking in many respects. In the film version, we see him proudly overtaking his female colleagues to lead the line that goes to their respective classrooms, which gives the impression of the teacher being the archetype of the 'alpha male'. All this is juxtaposed with these lyrics : "When we grew

"When we grew up and went to school/There were certain teachers who would/ Hurt the children any way they could/ By pouring their derision/Upon anything we did/ Exposing every weakness/ However carefully hidden by the kids."

The teacher, as represented in *The Wall*, seems dehumanised and uncaring, even verbally and physically abusive, as shown in "The Happiest Days of Our Lives" lyrics mentioned above. Waters denounces the use of unnecessarily



mean methods to achieve hegemony over already weak subjects, here being children.

Later, we see the teacher monitoring his pupils with a domineering attitude, and this scene constitutes the core of the socio-political critique of the educational system. He discovers Pink's little black book and allows himself to mock and ridicule him publicly : "mysterious scribblings ? a secret code ? oh ! Poems no less ! Poem everybody ! Your laddie reckons himself a poet !" To add insult to injury, the paranoid teacher dismisses his poems as "absolutely rubbish" and proceeds to punish him by whipping his hands, echoing the Pavlovian/Skinner method of learning. It should be added that the teacher hails his children to subjection by only referring to them either by "you!" or "laddie!", in any case, never with their names. Such a behaviour could be explained as a denial of the pupils' identity and as them being just a homogeneous hoard.

Similarly, during this scene, Pink is not allowed to utter a word. The interaction, if it can be called that, is strictly top-down, symbolizing asymmetrical power distribution. Clearly, the teacher serves as a repressive tool to suppress individualism and talent while promoting conformity and docility.

This is ever so ironically reinforced by the scene that comes afterwards when the teacher asks the students to repeat after him a theorem defining an acre. This scene is worth mentioning because it demonstrates how the school reprimands singularity and creativity and encourages mechanical rote learning. It is noteworthy to add that lonely and estranged adult Pink regurgitates this incident when he starts enumerating his many 'cool' belongings in the song "Nobody Home" as he says, "I've got a little black book with my poems in...". This very short stanza reflects how deep and traumatizing the incident's impact was. His repressed childhood memory resurface as he was having a depressive soliloquy. The teacher figure employs all his efforts to torment his students and creates a toxic learning environment that inhibits the learning process ; the constant bullying of the teacher towards helpless children makes the latter crippled by fear of public humiliation (Méndez).

Alternatively, another scene that perfectly encapsulates instances of forced obedience and erosion of individuality is that of the students going through a sort of assembly line, similar to any factory's, where they undergo a process that obliterates their facial features and renders them totally submissive. The 1 A Scottish variation of the word 'lad', i.e., a child.

end of the production line bins them into a machine that crushes them into mincemeat. Again, this graphic scene serves as a metaphor to convey the side effects of the school in destroying children and to “flay them into shape”, echoing the teacher’s words as stated in “The Trial”. The flaying here is exactly what Althusser meant when he theorised the educational ISA : it helps the ruling class maintain the status quo and secure future labour force.

The educational system itself is also put under scrutiny ; in the film, the school is represented as an endless maze in which pupils wander aimlessly under the supervision of the harsh teacher. This only highlights the shortcomings of the educational system in making self-fulfilled individuals. The teaching method consisting of rote learning, choir repetition of theorems, positive punishment with negative stimuli, yelling in this case, as in “if you don’t eat yer meat, you can’t have any pudding”, lack of constructive and meaningful feedback in “wrooong, do it again!”, all these obsolete behaviourist techniques overlook the cognitive as well as the socio-constructivist nature of the learning process. Roger Waters insisted that it is not education per se that he was targeting when interviewed but rather the failing educational system that needs amendment (Nemcoff). The chorus, sung by students from both public and private schools, “we don’t need no education / we don’t need no thought control” summarizes his position. This is also translated in young Pink when he dissociates in order to desperately fantasise over a possibility to burn the school and the teacher to the ground as a way to avenge all the weak and mentally abused children.

To put it in a nutshell, the teacher is the cornerstone upon which the dominant ideology rests. In fact, he serves as a symbol of authority and discipline, but above all, he helps enforce conformity and total submission among the students. The educational apparatus as represented in the album implements authoritarian mechanisms so as to reduce future members of society into servitude to the ruling class.

### **3. The Doctor’s Figure**

While the doctor’s role in the album is not as paramount as that of, say, the mother, his intervention in “Comfortably Numb” remains nevertheless important to mention since he represents the medical ISA and perpetuates capitalist interests, as will be shown presently. To put it in context, the band manager breaks into Pink’s hotel suite with a doctor to check on the unresponsive rock star who had wrecked his room in a drug-driven fit of rage. The dreamy, floating melody of the song features a dialogue between

a doctor and a patient - Pink. In regular settings, a doctor would administer treatment only after conducting explorations and questioning the patient. However, in this case, the medical and ethical practice is quite dubious.

Initially, he pretends he can fix Pink : “I hear you’re feeling down / Well I can ease your pain / and get you on your feet again,” without having checked the origin of his ailment, which would make any professional healthcare provider question the Hippocratic Oath. He also expects the patient to be fully compliant and docile, given the authority he draws from his knowledge. As a consequence, the interaction is uneven and hierarchical.

In fact, while the doctor ‘interpellates’ Pink to inquire where the (physical) pain is, Pink repeatedly claims there is none : “there is no pain, you are receding,” as his problem is purely psychological. Pink makes several attempts to explain his distress and that he is under the effect of numbing drugs to comfort him from his feeling of alienation and depression. Pink adds, “you are only coming through in waves,” reflecting his fragmented sense of reality, where his cognition is inhibited, explaining the ‘fleeting glimpses’ of his nightmarish childhood memories, including his cold and aloof pediatrician<sup>2</sup>. He makes a final desperate attempt to connect with the doctor when he says, “this is not how I am,” to which the doctor bluntly replies, “okay, just a little pinprick.” There is clearly a communication gap between the two interlocutors on one hand, and a lack of empathy from the doctor on the other. Ironically enough, he does warn Pink of possible side-effects following the injection, but only when it is too late, that is, when the substance is already running through his veins. The patient has been misinformed accordingly. The doctor is only interested in fulfilling the task for which he has been brought : to resuscitate Pink for the next show. He is both dehumanized and dehumanizing, in Marxist terms : commodified.

Indeed, we discover that the injection<sup>3</sup>, that elixir, serves to neutralize the drugs’ effect on Pink’s body for him to be able to make it to the next concert :

2. In psychoanalytical terms, his flashbacks about his sever fever he contracted from a wounded rat could be interpreted as a persona regression into a ‘wounded child’ as a coping mechanism. Many Floydian enthusiasts would even consider young Pink caring for the wounded rat as a symbol of connection failure with his mother as we could see her stepping away from it in disgust. This could be justified by the scene where Pink’s father, whom he never knew, is shown leaning forward carrying the dead rat, just like some sort of parallelism.

3. The substance nature of this injection has been subject to many debates. The bottom line is that Roger Waters says the scene was inspired from a real-life situation where he was suffering from hepatitis and was injected with tranquilisers by what he called “sleezy doctor” to calm his abdominal pains and secure his tour performance. Waters describes the experience as “the longest two hours of his life” and as “his second worst” with his divorce being the first (Scarfe).

“that will keep you going through the show / come on it's time to go.” In this sense, the doctor is not acting as a care provider, but rather only fulfilling his mechanical mission of getting Pink out of his catatonic state. The doctor could accordingly be considered merely ‘a cog’ in the capitalist machine that serves to keep the profit-making process going. Pink is commodified into a lucrative machine that needs occasional maintenance. If the teacher reserves his student but spite and disdain, the doctor is here shown as being completely apathetic, almost robotic. His psychological ordeal is repressed instead of addressed, further worsening his mental health and accelerates his descent into madness. “Comfortably Numb” is thus another strong illustration of the dehumanising effect of capitalism, the dominant ideology.

In summary, following the aggressive insistence of Pink's manager, essentially consisting of many banknotes being pinned into his jacket as represented in the film, the doctor succeeds in extracting Pink from his inert state for purely capitalist ends. This reflects Althusser's notion of individuals as subjects shaped by ‘ideological state apparatuses’ that dictate their expected/preferred behaviours and identities. This concept overlaps with the Foucauldian perspective on the medical corps as a means of exercising power through knowledge, as expressed in works such as *The Birth of the Clinic*(1963), particularly in relation to the ‘medical gaze’. Further research in this area is strongly encouraged.

#### **4. The Judge's Figure**

Keeping in mind Althusser's definition of ISAs as institutions that sustain and reinforce the dominant ideology of a given society, such as schools, churches, and the legal system, the judge in *The Wall* represents the legal system that imposes social norms that exert control over Pink's life. Before proceeding any further, it is worth explaining that the judge, despite having tried and punished Pink, is not part of what Althusser called the Repressive State Apparatus. The authority that the judge wields to control Pink is not achieved through physical coercion, but is rather exerted via legal proceedings. Besides, this trial involving Pink, his mother, his wife, his teacher, along with the prosecutor and the judge, is of Pink's own making ; it is imaginary. He is questioning his choice to isolate himself and to turn into a fascist as a form of defence mechanism. The following is an examination of the judge's representation as a figure of authority, conformity, and ideology enforcement.

Despite having a very brief intervention in the song, the judge's role remains pivotal in the redemption of Pink. He finally utters his deliberation

after having heard everyone but Pink himself : “The evidence before the court is incontrovertible, there’s no need for the jury to retire.” He draws his authority from his position to judge Pink for having “shown feelings of almost human nature”. It is clear that this accusation does not make any sense in the first place and is not liable for anyone to be brought to court and judged without the jury’s deliberation. The fact that everyone’s voice was heard except Pink’s testifies to his lack of agency and individualism. The prosecution is just as symbolic as ambiguous ; it in fact aims at putting Pink back on the track of the dictated social norms. The unreachable and cold judge serves to reinforce the preferred ideology indeed.

As stated before, the precise reason for his prosecution remains obscure : sometimes it is because of having expressed feelings, sometimes for having made his mother and wife suffer with his alienation. However, at the end, when the final sentence falls, we learn that the judge ironically hails him “my friend” before announcing that his punishment consists of being “exposed before his peers.” Adult Pink, who has spent most of his life secluded in his house watching wartime films, is now obliged to face his peers while he actually has none. It could be confusing at first, but what the judge actually means is to be injected back into the homogenous mass, to society, to conformity.

Ultimately, the judge’s intervention during the climax of the story serves to restore a new harmony, a new reality where Pink is reconciled with his past demons, a new reality where Pink is at the same wavelength as the rest of society, where he conforms to the imposed and acceptable values and beliefs. In sum, the legal ISA acts as a perpetuator of social hierarchies and hegemonic ideologies. The judge serves as a compelling figure of authority, conformity, and ideological enforcement within the narrative.

## Conclusion

The rock opera *The Wall* is effectively a multidimensional investigation of social structures and individual struggles comprising themes of alienation, oppression, and resistance. Having used details of his life as well as some aspects of Syd Barrett’s regarding mental health issues, Waters knits the narrative together to put across his socio-political agenda and lay bare the emotional journey of Pink through trauma, isolation, and, ultimately, redemption.

Drawing upon the framework of Louis Althusser’s theory of Ideological State Apparatuses (ISA), we gain insights into the mechanisms of control and hegemony depicted in *The Wall*. The album depicts the construction of

a metaphorical wall engendered by both social pressures and internal chaos. Each of these apparatuses plays a role in swaying Pink's identity on the one hand and reinforcing social norms on the other. The mother symbolises the family ISA, imposing control and perpetuating dominant ideologies through suffocating love and repression. The teacher represents the educational ISA, enforcing conformity and suppressing individuality through authoritarian methods. The doctor embodies the medical ISA, serving capitalist interests and neglecting genuine care in favour of maintaining productivity. Last but not least, the judge epitomises the legal ISA, exerting authority and enforcing social norms to uphold the dominant ideology. All these figures serve as 'recruited' agents of control who reinforce the dominant ideology by subjecting Pink and his perception of his place in the world.

It is hoped that the deconstruction of this concept album as a representative sample offers thought-provoking insights into the ways in which oppressive ideological forces 'asphyxiate' individual agency. Along similar lines, using his work as an ideological platform, Waters calls his audience to reflect on their own struggles and eroding conformity. With hindsight, however, his work could even be considered a 'counter-ISA' of his own creation to urge people to challenge hegemonic structures and chase individual freedom.

One may add that *The Wall* goes beyond its musical originality to become an everlasting critique of the Establishment and a demonstration of the potential influence of art as response. As Waters himself repeatedly stated on many occasions, the album serves as a call to liberation and to reclaim individuality. It is no wonder then that the album continues to resonate as a significant epitome of social critique. Thus, further research in this respect could bring about fresh ways of looking at it. There are still many grey areas to be explored using different textual perspectives like intertextuality, narratology, or more philosophical approaches like existentialism and postmodernism, to name just a few.

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## Abstract

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Pink Floyd's *The Wall*\* (1979), a rock opera written by Roger Waters, is an unparalleled testament to the band's thematic and artistic brilliance. It delves into the psychological disintegration of the character Pink, a figure loosely based on the experiences of Waters and Syd Barrett. This study seeks to analyze *\*The Wall\** through the lens of Althusser's concepts of «hailing» and Ideological State Apparatuses (ISAs), focusing on how interactions with

key figures represent hegemonic forces that intensify Pink's alienation and inner turmoil. The paper scrutinizes Pink's imagined confrontations with his mother, teacher, doctor, and judge, demonstrating how these characters embody familial, educational, medical, and legal ISAs, respectively. It highlights the album's critique of internalized social structures and ideological conformity.

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## Keywords

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Pink Floyd, socio-political analysis, Althusser, hailing, Ideological State Apparatuses

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## مستخلص

يعد ألبوم بينك فلويد الجدار (1979)، وهو أوبرا روك كتبها روجر ووترز، دليلاً فريداً على العبقورية الموضوعية والفنية للفرقة. يستكشف الألبوم الانهيار النفسي لشخصية بينك، المستوحاة بشكل جزئي من تجارب ووترز وسيد باريت. تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى تحليل \*الجدار\* من خلال منظور مفهوم ألتوسير للاستدعاء وأجهزة الدولة الأيديولوجية (ISAs)، مع التركيز على كيفية تجسيد الشخصيات الرئيسية للقوى المهيمنة التي تعمق عزلة بينك وصراعاته الداخلية. يتناول المقال مواجهات بينك المتخيلة مع والدته ومعلمه وطبيبها والقاضي، موضحاً كيف ترمز هذه الشخصيات إلى الأجهزة الأيديولوجية العائلية والتعليمية والطبية والقانونية، على التوالي. يركز المقال على نقد الألبوم للبنى الاجتماعية المتجذرة والتوافق الأيديولوجي.

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## كلمات مفتاحية

بينك فلويد، التحليل الاجتماعي السياسي، ألتوسير، الاستدعاء، أجهزة الدولة الأيديولوجية

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## Mots-clés

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Le rock-opéra *The Wall\** (1979) de Pink Floyd, écrit par Roger Waters, constitue une démonstration inégalée du génie thématique et artistique du groupe. Il explore la désintégration psychologique du personnage Pink, vaguement inspiré des expériences de Waters et Syd Barrett. Cette étude se propose d'analyser *\*The Wall\** à travers le prisme des concepts d'interpellation et d'Appareils Idéologiques d'État (AIE) d'Althusser, en mettant en lumière la manière dont les interactions avec des personnages clés incarnent des forces hégémoniques qui exacerbent l'aliénation et les luttes internes de Pink. L'article examine les confrontations imaginées de Pink avec sa mère, son professeur, son médecin et le juge, pour démontrer comment ces figures symbolisent respectivement les AIE familiaux, éducatifs, médicaux et légaux. Il souligne ainsi la critique de l'album envers les structures sociales intériorisées et la conformité idéologique.

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## Mots-clés

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Pink Floyd, analyse socio-politique, Althusser, interpellation, Appareils Idéologiques d'État