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Jihočeská univerzita v Českých Budějovicích

Pedagogická fakulta

Katedra anglistiky

Bakalářská práce

# The relationship between poetry and music lyrics

## Vztah mezi poezií a hudebními texty

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České Budějovice 2016

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Vojtěch Vošahlík

I would like to thank to my supervisor, Regina Helal M.A., for her valuable advice, support, guidance and patience.

## **Anotace**

Předkládaná bakalářská práce se zabývá spojitostí mezi hudebními texty a poezií. Dále se zaměřuje možné užívání hudebních textů v hodinách anglického jazyka. Autor se zabývá hudebními texty a navrhuje metody, které by mohly být užity jako pomůcka pro učitele během využívání písní ve třídě. Práce je rozdělena na dvě části. První část se věnuje hudebním textům, jejich pozici v poezii, a jak mohou být nápomocné při učení se angličtiny. Druhá část se zaměřuje na možnou aplikaci vybraných hudebních textů při výuce anglického jazyka na školách. Autor je přesvědčen, že tento přístup by mohl být nejlépe aplikován na školách, které experimentují s mezioborovými vyučovacími metodami.

## **Abstract**

The bachelor thesis presented deals with the relationship between music lyrics and poetry, and it also focuses on possible utilization of song lyrics in English language lessons. The author will explore music lyrics and propose methods which could be used as a helpful tool during their lessons. The work is divided into two parts. The first part is concerned with lyrics, their position in poetry, and how they could be helpful in learning English. The second part focuses on possible application of selected music lyrics in teaching. This approach, the author is convinced, would best be applicable in schools that have been experimenting with interdisciplinary methods of teaching.

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# 1. Introduction

This bachelor thesis concerns musical lyrics and their connection to poetry. The work is aimed to present, mainly to high school students, the usefulness of music lyrics during English teaching classes not only from grammatical and linguistic point of view, such as extension of vocabulary, but it also tries to show the apparent link between music lyrics and poetic style. Farther it attempts to display interpretations of selected song lyrics which may help students to better understand the circumstances of creation music lyrics.

I have chosen this topic because I have always been interested in music of English-speaking countries and I have often wondered what the meanings of these songs are. I have been listening English music since my childhood and started translating some of my favourite songs in elementary school, in particular from the eighth grade onward. At first I was interested in songs written by the Beatles or the Rolling Stones for example, but later I started dealing with more intricate composers such as Paul Simon and Art Garfunkel, Bob Dylan and so on. It has been the way how I extend my vocabulary, learn the right pronunciation, rhythm of language, etcetera.

The work is divided into two parts. The first chapter acquaints the reader with a brief historical development of the term lyrics and its status in poetry and literature since its first reference in Antiquity to the present. Then I examine typical features of lyrics and poems to describe the connection between these two genres, and try to delineate boundaries between real poetry in lyrics and shallow words as an accompaniment to music with the only ambition to entertain. The subsequent chapter occupies the topic of what music means to contemporary society and how the society is surrounded by music in the current world. Another chapter pays attention to the benefits of using music lyrics in classes and what parts of English language can be enhanced by using song lyrics during English language lessons.

The second part of the bachelor thesis is focused on the lyrics by selected authors as a source of additional teaching materials used in English classes. I will make proposals for teaching methods based on interpretation and comprehension of lyrics with the

emphasis on historical and social context in which the lyrics were formed to give students awareness of life and institutions of English speaking countries.

It is divided into three sections. The first section presents possible similarities and differences between singers performing in Middle Ages and onward and the contemporary songwriters.

In the second part there is a kind of methodology which could be used in classes as a tool of exploration lyrics. It is based on questions concerning specific parts of a song, and then there is my own interpretation of the same song.

The third section contains music lyrics and their meanings which somehow reflect the times of their formation, particularly songs from the sixties and the seventies of the twentieth century. I thus intended to demonstrate that students can comprehend through songs the times and circumstances under which the songs were written, and that the right chosen lyrics can serve as an insight into the past.



## First part

## 2. Development of a term lyrics and its relation to poetry

### 2.1. Meaning of lyrics

The easiest way to find out what the word lyrics means is to look it up in a dictionary. Some dictionaries say: “[1] *the words of a song, especially a pop song. [2] a short poem which expresses the personal thoughts and feelings of the person who wrote it*”<sup>1</sup> It is not much when we conceive the importance and the role that lyrics have played in history and even today play in social, cultural and even political life. To comprehend the role of lyrics and their impact on social history, it is necessary to have a brief look at their evolution.

The first apparent connection between lyrics and music can be found in Ancient Greece where the term lyric meant a song sung to the accompaniment of the lyre. This utilization of music as a complement of lyrics varied throughout the history. Since its first appearance in classical period, where lyrics and music both played comparatively important part, through the end of Renaissance, when the musical component of lyrics gradually diminished, into the present time when music plays the main part and lyrics are just its accompaniment.

However, at first it is important to explain lyric as a genre, which is not an easy task. There were many attempts and theories concerned with lyric and its position in poetry or in any other literature genres in history. Before I take up the evolution of lyric itself, I would like to introduce some of those theories. Aristotle divides literary genres into the epic, dramatic and lyric. “Lyric poetry is merely a minor component of tragedy, alongside plot, character, diction, reasoning and spectacle.”<sup>2</sup> “In the sixteenth century,

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<sup>1</sup> *Cambridge advanced learner's dictionary*. 3rd ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, c2008.

<sup>2</sup> ARISTOTLE. *Poetics*. Malcolm Heath. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1996, page 11.

Antonio Sebastiano Minturno located the lyric or 'melic' as one of three 'presentational modes' alongside the epic and the dramatic."<sup>3</sup> At the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth century, in Romanticism, theorists and philosophers started indicating the connection between lyric and a poetic style because they both express personal thoughts and feelings, which is distinctive for both styles. "For Hegel, lyric discloses the inner world of an individual who is separated from a wider community, while for Viëtor lyric is a 'basic attitude' that expresses feeling."<sup>4</sup>

According to Brewster:

*"Since the nineteenth century lyric has been considered as the core of poetry, the most emotional and strongest poetic mode. Lyric practice has exploited its proximity to other genres, such as elegy, epigram or dramatic monologue, either through their similar forms or shared function and subject matter. Love, death and nature have remained staple features of lyric poetry. Equally, it has blurred the boundaries between 'serious' and 'minor', religious and secular lyric forms, which have borrowed freely from each other at various historical moments. Lyric can be viewed as an umbrella term under which a variety of verse forms shelter, and its flexibility has aided its gradual ascent through the generic hierarchy to become the dominant mode of modern poetry."*<sup>5</sup>

## 2.2. History of lyrics

As already mentioned, the term lyric firstly appeared in Antiquity. From the very beginning lyric was distinguished from other styles like epic and drama and from other forms of poetry such as elegy, for example. In 1924 W. B. Sedgwick declared that Greek lyric exemplifies the qualities of true lyric poetry: "Simplicity and directness, a high rapture (the 'lyric cry'), but above all, perfect harmony in diversity of metre, freedom of construction and apparent spontaneity, checked and held together by the binding force of musical rhythm. With this gold standard in mind, all lyric poetry is 'inconceivable' without musical accompaniment."<sup>6</sup> Although compositions accompanied

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<sup>3</sup> FOWLER, Alistair. *Kinds of Literature: An Introduction to the Theory of Genres and Modes*. Oxford: Clarendon, 1982, page 218.

<sup>4</sup> HERNANDI, Paul. *Beyond Genre*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1972, page 12.

<sup>5</sup> BREWSTER, Scott. *Lyric: The New Critical Idiom*. Taylor & Francis, 2009, page 4.

<sup>6</sup> SEDGWICK, W. B. *The Lyric Impulse*. *Music & Letters* 5, 1924, page 97.

to the music for Ancient Greek poets was typical for writers of Ancient Rome such as Horace, the musical part was vestigial, and so they often recited their poems without help of any musical instruments because their songs were not meant to be sung.

The other important characteristics typical for lyric in classical period were, apart from music, the performance of a poet, and some kind of relation between the speaker and his audience. Ancient poets did not express their feelings and thoughts in the way that is distinctive for the poetry of Romanticism and onwards so the songwriters' success in Greece and Rome depended more on their performance and their ability to capture the attention of a spectator. The presentation of composers was similar to a discourse or an oratory. Audiences required dramatic performance and the poet's goal was to conduct a rhetorical lecture which would charm listeners. Musical accompaniment, lyricist performance and his relation with audience became the main features of lyric since antiquity throughout medieval ages to the Romanticism at the beginning of the nineteenth century when these attributes were slowly diminishing. However, since the first half of the twentieth century all those characteristics have returned to both music and lyrics.

Following a period that some historians call The Dark Ages, this period was not called dark just because of the industrial, agricultural or social decline, but also for culture and lyric deterioration because of the lack of extant written records. Lyric disappeared for over four centuries and if there were significant lyricists in that time, their works were destroyed or lost for good.

Emerging again in the ninth century, lyric with its main features such as a performance, accompaniment to the music, and with all its secular or religious themes remained, if not the same, at least very similar to lyric in Antiquity. After the disintegration of the Roman Empire, new political and administration structures began arising in Europe and songwriters travelled among the Royal courts and principalities to present their works to aristocracy. The poets did not perform only in Europe, they even introduced their songs in North Africa or Middle East, and as a result of the cultural connection between different regions lyric was created in many languages such as Arabic, Germanic or Hebrew. This bloom of lyric took place between the ninth and fourteenth centuries. The

first poems of this period in Europe were epics with lyrical moments and they usually celebrated heroic acts.

Works of singers from Germany, Italy and France known as minnesingers, stilnovisti or troubadours were the main influence on English lyric and transition from oral to literate in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. The troubadour tradition lies at the origin of lyric poetry throughout western Europe. “The prominence of troubadour lyric does not arise purely from its repertoire of tropes and figures, variations on fixed formulae, or subject matter such as love, religious faith, or moral and political comment, but in its mix of musical and verbal harmonies, and in its bridging of the literary and the vernacular.”<sup>7</sup> Three most often used languages in Medieval lyric were English, Anglo-Norman French and Latin. Skilful poets managed to speak in all three languages, so they could perform their songs to three classes of the society: low strata of society, aristocracy and clergy, so many lyrics from that period were preserved not only in religious institutions but also in common books of laypersons.

“The blend of ‘high’ and ‘low’, religious and secular forms and subject matter, and the interlinking of words, music and performance in Anglo-Saxon and troubadour poetry, established the pattern for medieval and early modern English lyric.”<sup>8</sup>

In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in England, particularly on Tudors’ court, lyric was used by singers not only for pleasure of the audience but also for a personal promotion of poets, who could even make political career this way. “The Tudor court in England and the Scottish court of James IV were highly artificial worlds of display, dissembling and ornate praise, where the courtier had to negotiate the vagaries of patronage and political intrigue.”<sup>9</sup> So the lyricist used lyric such a love poem not only for personal desire or display of amorous feelings, but through lyric also to make social impression in order to persuade aristocracy that poets were more than just ordinary artists. Thus a successful author of poems could get a patronage from nobility and earned a living.

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<sup>7</sup> PRESS, Alan R. *Anthology of Troubadour Lyric Poetry*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1971. page 3.

<sup>8</sup> BREWSTER, Scott. *Lyric: The New Critical Idiom*. Taylor & Francis, 2009, page 24.

<sup>9</sup> BREWSTER, Scott. *Lyric: The New Critical Idiom*. Taylor & Francis, 2009, pages 45 – 46.

If we want to find the most influential era from which modern lyrics derived the most, we must not omit Romanticism. Compared with early lyric of medieval troubadours, Romanticism brought a turning point in the conception of lyric. A romantic poet is viewed as someone who is endowed with an ability to express the most inward emotions, thoughts and immediate experience.

Although the meaning of lyric as song-like has diminished since romanticism in theory and practice of poetry, the relation between music and words has remained in various styles from traditional folk songs to romantic rock ballads and many others. Throughout the history until the twentieth century, songwriters put the main stress on the words of their works instead of music. Nowadays the attention of most authors of songs is aimed more at music than at lyrics. “In many cases, we mishear the lyrics of pop songs, and when we do hear them correctly, we usually listen selectively, since our attention is more engaged with the ‘sound’ of the lyrics, interacting with the music, rather than with the meaning of the words themselves”.<sup>10</sup> However, there are lyrics writers whose works do not create just a complementary part of music but prove qualities very close to real poems. There are lyrics writers who work with features closely linked to lyric, such as carefully selected stresses and rhythms, and their songs reflect situations, social movements, trends, and morals that can be usually put in the context of time or within time limitations.

## **2.3 Similarities and differences between song lyrics and poetry**

If there is any relationship between poetry and song lyrics, is it important to deal with questions of relation between these two genres or what features or measures distinguish one genre from another? This chapter is concerned with the intricate question of how modern poetry and modern song lyrics are alike or different from each other.

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<sup>10</sup> ROSS, Andrew. *Contemporary Poetry Meets Modern Theory: Poetry and Motion: Madonna and Public Enemy*. Antony Easthope and John. O. Thompson (eds). Harvester: Hemel Hempstead, 2011, page 95.

The printing press, one of the most significant inventions in history, played a major part in our perception of poetry. The poetry had always been written to be spoken and performed until this outstanding invention, and likewise since it came out the poetry has been mainly written to be read and delivered to the eye. Lyrics, on the other hand, are mainly written to be heard and listened to. Besides this most obvious difference between these genres, there are a few results that follow from this elementary fact.

One of the consequences of writing poetry is that the reader is able to look up the words he does not understand when reading a particular poem so a poet can rely on this reader's literacy which means that the poet can use nifty words. Not so a songwriter. "Since readers can pause and continue reading at their own pace, the poet can use quite complex language: less familiar words, ambiguity, multiple meanings, intricate metaphor. The density of poetic language is a poet's way of "harmonizing" ideas. Like putting chords under your words, it adds a new level of emotion."<sup>11</sup>

The language of lyrics should be more simple and straightforward. There'll be plenty of extra colour given by the notes that join the words, their relationships to other notes, and the rhythm they embody. If you think of melodies as nouns, then chords—the textures that colour them—are the adjectives. Rhythm is the verb. It activates the melody and harmony—it supplies the action. So the words themselves get a lot of help.<sup>12</sup> People who listen to music mostly do not stop their listening in order to find the words they do not understand, they can do that but this would stop the enjoyment of continuous movement of the song. So in the most cases a lyricist tends to avoid using intricate language. So, the more complicated a lyric's language, the more it limits its audience to those who understand complicated language easily. Not a majority.<sup>13</sup> Of course it depends on personal choice of songs; there are many songwriters who use complex language and simple music.

Another feature common for both song lyrics and poetry is a rhyme. It is used more in song lyrics than in poetry because music texts are mainly written to the ear and the

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<sup>11</sup> PENCE, Charlotte. *The Poetics of American Song Lyrics*. University Press of Mississippi, 2011, page 122.

<sup>12</sup> PENCE, Charlotte. *The Poetics of American Song Lyrics*. University Press of Mississippi, 2011, page 123.

<sup>13</sup> PENCE, Charlotte. *The Poetics of American Song Lyrics*. University Press of Mississippi, 2011, page 123.

rhyme of a song shows the ear the relation between lines, telling where individual sections end. Of course the rhyme is also typical in poetry but it is less significant than in lyrics because the reader can see the ending of lines or sections. Subsequent characteristic which distinguishes a song lyric from a poem is the use of repeated content like choruses or refrains. These contents are typically used in song lyrics rather than in poetry, in most cases this repetition of the line strengthens the meaning of its content every time it is sung.

Another practical concern that is often overlooked is the fact that a lyricist has extremely limited time space to work with. Normal commercial songs, lasting from 2½ to 3½ minutes, limit space dramatically. A commercial song cannot be too long nor too short. Not counting the repeated choruses or refrains, the average commercial song contains twelve to twenty lines. There are, of course, some exceptions, but not many.<sup>14</sup> Regarding rhythm, lyrics are more reliant on regular rhythm than poems because the rhythm of lyrics is connected to musical rhythm, poems are not.

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<sup>14</sup> PENCE, Charlotte. *The Poetics of American Song Lyrics*. University Press of Mississippi, 2011, page 127

### **3. Music and society**

Music has always played an important part of human lives since the first devices used a simple instruments such as pipes of bones through the periods of the most famous composers such as Beethoven or Mozart, until the present time when there are so many different genres of music to choose from and for many people music plays an inseparable part of their daily routine. The development of new modern technologies in the second half of the twentieth and then at the beginning of the twenty-first century was so huge and fast so you can hear music almost everywhere for twenty four hours a day, an any time you want, just press a play button. Students encounter music on the radio, television, on the Internet, on public transport, at concerts or in any other music event. It is practically impossible for them to avoid it. Music has become the matter of routine consumption.

However, not long ago, for lots of teenagers, youths and people throughout all social classes and countries all over the world the favourite bands and songwriters became icons of their dreams and holders of their opinions and wishes. In many cases they strongly influenced not only fashion, trends or views of life, but became also strong power in political and social movements or at least reflected and pointed at global problems. The role of music was and in some cases still is so powerful that some regimes get temptation to take control over its content.

It is known that music has an important impact on a human personality such as emotional, behavioural or physiological aspects, and has even become the subject of therapy. Music also helps many people to concentrate on their job or study or whatever work they do, it is a topic of conversations, discussions or a subject of research and methods of relaxation. In many shops and restaurants music is used as a background to create desirable ambiance. This is called 'background furnishing' which according to Dokulil (2013) means the use of songs and music to set or change an atmosphere or mood. "Background furnishing is an increasing trend among catering industry. Their owners create such environment in their restaurants to put their customers at ease so that they would feel more relaxed and opened to talk without fear of unpleasant and



annoying people all around.”<sup>15</sup> Just for the reasons mentioned above, the music factor can be fully exploited as a teaching material in many ways either as the source of general knowledge or just as a helping factor in language teaching. As stated in the following chapters, we can see this factor from different points of views.

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<sup>15</sup> DOKULIL, Aleš. *The Pros and Cons of Using Pop Music in English Primary-Level Lessons*. České Budějovice, 2013. Bakalářská práce. Jihočeská Univerzita. Vedoucí práce Regina Helal M.A., page 11.

## 4. Use of songs during English language lessons

Nowadays music is normally used by teachers as a supportive teaching method in English lessons as well as a tool to extend and enhance students' skills. There are a lot of advantages in using songs. Students can pick up new vocabulary as they see the words of lyrics in an unexpected context which helps them to remember them. Learning grammatical structures gets easier and makes sense when students do not learn it in typical school drills or boring exercises which tend to be just mechanical repetitions. The advantages of teaching pronunciation and listening comprehension via music are obvious. It is clear that using music can make the atmosphere in a class more relaxed and creative, so there is also a big chance that students will be more motivated to learn and get to know the particular language in this way because it offers them to select and to occupy genres of music and song lyrics which they want when they are out of school and so have a free will in this choice. In this chapter I will outline some reasons why songs and lyrics should become more frequently used in language lessons.

The use of music during lessons can bring a feeling of relaxation for both a teacher and a student from fixed teaching methods which are typical in classrooms of foreign language. It can create friendlier atmosphere in a classroom and breaks the stated boundaries between a student and a teacher which is crucial for language learning.

“By breaking down the boundaries or bridging the gaps between stereotypical ‘institutional’ learning and the ‘informal’ learning of our homes, work places and school grounds, we can continue to engage students in natural and authentic language that they will want to practice independently out of class”<sup>16</sup>

Students obviously know the culture of their homeland, they get to know it from a very young age, and soon they become aware of being a part of it. It helps them to find their own identity in society, so it is natural they are keen to get to know other identities in different cultures. Song lyrics may be the first and the most immediate and natural way how to get it. Pop culture is a worldwide extended notion which mainly targets on

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<sup>16</sup> JENKINS, Joseph R. a Robert DIXON. *Vocabulary Learning: Contemporary Educational Psychology*. Harwood: Elsevier Inc., 1983.

young generation so it is more than easy to capture young people in songs and their lyrics which speak straight to them in their own language. Using music in lessons is therefore something which is naturally close to students and gives them a chance to enjoy learning language and culture of a particular country in this non-violent way.

So how to seize the nature of music to a teacher's advantage is a crucial question because a lot of teachers use songs as an additional material just to kill the lesson time and mostly do not aim for the particular target. So what is the goal to achieve? From a teaching point of view it is necessary to divide music as a teaching source into three basic areas:

- 1) Language area – it helps student to learn language itself
- 2) Lyrics comprehension – it helps students to read between lines and understand hidden meaning of the lyrics
- 3) Contextual apprehension – it helps to perceive the song in historical and social context

## **4.1. Language area**

### **4.1.1. Acquisition of vocabulary through songs**

The acquisition of new English words and their preservation in memory can sometimes belong to the problematic tasks of a foreign language learning. Students may not know many efficient methods how to extend their vocabulary, so they usually learn only the meaning of single words without any knowledge of their proper use in context, or their connection to other words. Learning new vocabulary via music and song lyrics can become one of the great methods used in English classes not only as an instrument making language learning process more entertaining, but it can also be a serious method which gives students a chance to learn words, phrases or colloquial expressions that may not be found in ordinary English textbooks, or, at least, not in their ordinary everyday context. This learning method of new words is mostly very enjoyable with

students and it can be easily used both by teachers in their school classes or by students in their free time.

There are many ways how to work with words in songs which could be helpful for students to remember their meaning and their correct use either speaking or writing. For example, many English words may have more than one meaning and learning new words via music lyrics enables students to see words in context which helps them to learn and remember the particular word meaning. Memorizing new words is considered to be one of the most difficult part of vocabulary learning so memorizing song lyrics that is accompanied by certain rhythm and rhyme framed by tune and beat, can make the whole thing easier. As English is mostly an idiomatic language, so songs may be a rich source of useful everyday idioms that students can naturally pick up and consequently use when speaking because they may think “I’ve heard that in that song and it’s cool.”

Presumably the most important as well as the most difficult teacher’s task is careful lyrics selection according to the students’ level and age. A class of ten-year old would not accept complicated lyrics schema full of abstract expressions but rather easy folk songs with a comprehensible theme or a simple country and western “story”. In these songs students can easily connect words to particular subjects or things or on the basis of the song they have listened to they may picture a story to retell, using words in the song. There are many ways how to work with songs, and a lot of teachers use them as they are incorporated in many text books so they just follow the methodology attached in their teacher’s books. For instance, the most utilized and well known method is listening to a song while students are filling gaps of missing words or selecting or matching the best synonyms or antonyms according to a rhyme, rhythm or a word stress before the listening. However, there is a lot of guidance in the teacher’s books or on the internet, yet this practice does not always fit the teaching purposes in any particular class the teacher is working with. So nothing can compare to individual preparation based on meticulous selection of the songs that would be in favour of both the student and the teacher. Music as a mutual enjoyment creates a unique atmosphere that is a crucial point of a relationship between a teacher and a student.

### 4.1.2. Stress and pronunciation

Mastering of English pronunciation is obviously difficult especially for Slavonic speakers who may find English phonetic transcription unfamiliar. Listening to English song lyrics could be very helpful in this crucial component of the language. Matching spelling in written text and the singer's expression of performing song may help to better understanding of the nature of the language. English pronunciation is closely connected to word stress. "Word stress is the term used to describe the accent or emphasis given to a particular syllable of a word, and it is a more or less invariable attribute of that word when spoken in isolation."<sup>17</sup> English word stress seems to be the last thing a student of English acquires. According to experienced teachers, even students on advanced levels are not aware of stress rules and they find it difficult to imitate. When we listen to a sound of language just like music, the more perceptive students may notice that the Czech language always gives the stress on the first syllable but in English there is much diversity where the word stress is given. If we take music as a reflection of language, we may come to a conclusion why Czech folk music put stress on the first beat while the music of English or American background put stress on what musicians called later beat. A typical example is blues music whose beat is difficult to train for continental musicians while English-speaking musician can cope it more easily. If a teacher is aware of this, he or she may try to make students feel the music of the language. As an example of a typical English phrasing can serve Dylan's song *Like a Rolling Stone*. Repetitive listening and singing songs can help students with natural flow of words in their speaking and make their speech more fluent.

"Songs provide examples of authentic, memorable and rhythmic language. They can be motivating for students keen to repeatedly listen to and imitate their musical heroes."<sup>18</sup>. Improving pronunciation by means of constant listening and singing of songs while watching the lyrics on the computer screen helps make speech more fluent and easier.

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<sup>17</sup> Underhill, A. Sound Foundations: Learning and Teaching Pronunciation. Macmillan Publishers Ltd, 2005.

<sup>18</sup> Balbina Ebong & Marta J. Sabbadini. Developing pronunciation through songs. *Teaching English*. [online]. 14. 6. 2007 [cit. 2016-01-27]. Dostupné z:<http://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/article/developing-pronunciation-through-songs>

Improvement of pronunciation certainly depends on what genre of music a teacher chooses, there are music styles like death-metal for example where it is really difficult to understand the singer's words and the pronunciation is not often right. So it is better to select the songs of those genres in which the pronunciation is clear, and the emphasis is given on the lyrics instead of music.

Therefore, as the benefits of listening to songs seem to be obvious, what methods could or should be utilized by teachers in English classes? The very first thing teachers should consider is the students' age and the level they are at, and then which particular constituent of pronunciation they intend to teach. On the website [www.teachingenglish.org.uk](http://www.teachingenglish.org.uk) there is an article which concerns the pronunciation called *Developing Pronunciation through Songs* and according to it the teacher or student should focus on three parts during listening; "Using songs to focus on sounds, using songs to focus on words, using songs to focus on connected speech."<sup>19</sup>

### **4.1.3. Grammar**

One of the most difficult parts, as in any other foreign languages, which cause problems to many students in learning English yet is crucial for correct function, is grammar. The huge amount of available songs is another advantage which can be utilized as a tool of teaching because it enables to teach almost every grammatical segment or structure from their elementary levels to advance.

As already mentioned in the previous chapter, repetitive singing and memorizing songs can help to remember new words, widely improve pronunciation but this act of repetitiveness can hardly play its part in terms of grammatical structures. But whatever we do with lyrics in our lessons, practically any songs can be used as an example of grammatical structure. Lyrics can be also analysed from syntactic or lexical point of view as determine constituents, parts of speech, tenses, word order and others. We may focus the student's attention on unusual structures or intentional grammar mistakes that

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<sup>19</sup> Balbina Ebong & Marta J. Sabbadini. *Developing pronunciation through songs. Teaching English*. [online]. 14. 6. 2007 [cit. 2016-02-21]. Dostupné z:<http://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/article/developing-pronunciation-through-songs>

songwriters often make as part of their poet licence. So the contribution of songs for teaching grammatical patterns is obvious, and according to me, it should be more exploited at contemporary schools than it is now.

## 4.2. Lyrics comprehension

The utilization of songs in language classes as a tool which helps teachers to enhance the students' skills in foreign language is common in English courses. However, there is a song component which is often overlooked, and not fully exploited. It is the meaning and interpretation of music lyrics. I admit that it is quite a difficult part to deal with in the English classes either on the teachers' side, for they need proper preparation for this task, or on the students' side. Teachers are expected to apply more complex thinking, predominately in abstract terms, about the songwriter's intentions, or their feelings, but it is worth it.

There are several reasons why to analyse the meaning of music lyrics. The first, and probably the most important reason is the functional literacy and deteriorating capability of young people to analyse even a simpler text, let alone the more complex one. As the younger generation is becoming more and more fixed on visual side of media communication or quick eye scanning of internet texts, picking up brief catchwords or fragmentary text corresponding to their interests, song lyrics interpretation can become a more pleasurable way how to convert students' attention back to the enjoyment of reading. The second and perhaps the one that can bring out the students' curiosity is common misinterpretation of popular songs. There are many songs which are considered to have different meanings than they really have, and a teacher's attempt to correct these misinterpretations can induce a surprising turning point. As an illustration I have chosen a very famous and popular song written by Bruce Springsteen, *Born in the USA*.

Website called Songfacts mentions: *"This is one of the most misinterpreted songs ever. Most people thought it was a patriotic song about American pride, when it actually cast a shameful eye on how America treated its Vietnam veterans. Springsteen considers it one of his best songs, but it bothers him that it is so widely misinterpreted. With the rollicking rhythm, enthusiastic chorus, and patriotic album cover, it is easy to think this has more to do with American pride than Vietnam shame."*<sup>20</sup>

Another song I have selected is "Every Breath You Take" by The Police. The webpage Songfacts explains following: *"This is one of the most misinterpreted songs ever. It is about an obsessive stalker, but it sounds like a love song. Some people even used it as their wedding song. The Police frontman Sting wrote it after separating from his first wife, Frances Tomelty. In a 1983 interview with the New Musical Express, Sting explains: "I think it's a nasty little song, really rather evil. It's about jealousy and surveillance and ownership." Regarding the common misinterpretation of the song, he added: "I think the ambiguity is intrinsic in the song however you treat it because the words are so sadistic. On one level, it's a nice long song with the classic relative minor chords, and underneath there's this distasteful character talking about watching every move. I enjoy that ambiguity. I watched Andy Gibb singing it with some girl on TV a couple of weeks ago, very loving, and totally misinterpreting it. (Laughter) I could still hear the words, which aren't about love at all. I pissed myself laughing."*<sup>21</sup>

So in the above examples it seems obvious that the word by word translation of a song does not mean that we can understand its correct meaning. As there are many other songs with a confusing meaning a teacher can select from bottomless sources.

Of course, during the process of lyrics interpretation we have to realize that a lot of songs use lyrics just as a music complement and their interpretation could be just a waste of time because they do not have any ambition to enrich the music with deeper meaningful lyrics. However, there are also many songwriters whose lyrics are the crucial part of their songs and although the activity of deciphering the meaning could be sometimes really difficult, it is absolutely worth trying to introduce them to students.

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<sup>20</sup> BORN IN THE U.S.A. by BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN. *Songfacts*. [online]. [cit. 2016-03-11]. Dostupné z: <http://www.songfacts.com/detail.php?id=1014>

<sup>21</sup> EVERY BREATH YOU TAKE by THE POLICE. *Songfacts*. [online]. [cit. 2016-03-10]. Dostupné z: <http://www.songfacts.com/detail.php?id=548>



Before the interpretation of lyrics in a class, it is good to meet up with the historical and social background of the song as well as with a period the particular songwriter composed in since there is a chance that a particular pieces of work are the products of the zeitgeist so they reflect circumstances students cannot know or understand in their context. In this case proper introduction to the background becomes necessity that will help students to comprehend lyrics well. Easy access to the lyrics by means of IT nowadays enables both teachers or students to work with a wide range of materials so teachers can let students do some sort of research into particular songs background on their own so they could consequently give a presentation in a class you.

### **4.3. Music lyrics in historical context**

When someone is familiar with the historical context of music lyrics, they will listen to it and conceive its meaning with historical links. The lyrics can refer to problems, issues or questions that formed the society of a particular era, and they were for some reasons important to preceding generations, but they would be hardly significant for society today. As it is aptly said in a song by Sting *History will teach us nothing*, it is wrong. Teachers should take it as a challenge and try any tricks to enlighten the experience of history to students. Interpreting songs in historical context could be a funny and enjoyable form how to get students closer to historical and social events. This method also opens possibility to explain the significance of these events for these days.

Different interpretations of songs is normal, and it is good to give each student space to express their opinion but it is up to a teacher to find more detailed information about the background of songs to give the most probable or precise explanation of what the lyrics really mean. Many authors reflect the society they lived in so their songs are a valuable source of information.

## Second part

This part deals with selected songs given as an example of methodology that may help teachers to exploit the potential of music lyrics in English classes. Most teachers of secondary schools usually use music and lyrics just as a “time killer” to ease themselves from every-day class routine or to make teaching process more relaxed, and they do not normally use up all the advantages songs can offer. Although teaching through lyrics in the way I propose requires more demanding preparation, it may push up the lesson to a higher level. We do not just want to teach the language itself but we may broaden the students’ minds by entwining more subjects like history or social studies. So my intention is to show that properly chosen music lyrics can bring more benefits than perhaps some teachers are aware of.

As some chapters of the first part are dedicated to possible connections between poetry and music lyrics, so I have intentionally selected songs composed by songwriters who are worldwide renowned and belong among the artists whose songs’ lyrics cross the boundary of poetry. Beside Leonard Cohen or Bob Dylan I have chosen a few other bands or songwriters who can be seen in either close link to poetry or their songs are in some reasons useful for teaching.

This part is divided into three separate sections according to their objectives to help a reader in better orientation in the text. The methods of work with lyrics in my thesis are not firmly set as the only correct manual to follow in lessons but give only my personal advice or offer a few options how to deal with songs as a teaching source.

The first section deals with similarities and differences between the role of singers and lyrics conceptions in history and in contemporary period. It gives comparisons of current songwriters to period singers such as troubadours.

The second section aims at the meaning comprehension of chosen lyrics; the selected song is called *So Long Marianne* by Leonard Cohen. It is a poetic song full of figurative language and metaphors, so its interpretation can be ambiguous. I initially suggest a method how to grasp the meaning of the song. It is based on a series of questions

concerning the particular key parts of the song that students try to answer to direct them to possible meaning. After explaining the method I will present my own interpretation of the song in contrast to possible students' answers.

The third section illustrates songs which reflect crucial periods of the twentieth century. The choice of music lyrics I have selected for this section is hopefully reflective enough to give evidence of social and political problems or fundamental historic twists from the fifties to the eighties. My main attention is aimed at Bob Dylan and his songs witnessing the breaking time of the fifties and the sixties, and then at the choice of significant songs made by various artists who reflected the spirit of social and political changes of the later decades in the Anglo-American society.

## **5. Similarities and differences between the role of singers and lyrics conceptions in history and in contemporary period**

Although almost a millennium separates modern songwriters and singers from troubadours, it is possible to find a few mutual features that are typical for both. One of the characteristic attributes is performance. Like troubadours who had often travelled to perform their songs in courts all over Europe and sometimes even in Middle East or North Africa, the contemporary musicians appear all over the world, and play their music not only for aristocracy but for everyone. Their performing is not addressed just to a local listener but it creates some kind of an overlap understandable to a much broader audience.

It is apparent that while listening to music listeners mostly do not think about the themes of songs or their origins but consider the lyrics as a natural part of the song. Although there are topics which mostly resonated in the mid of the last century, and were practically unknown to a medieval listener, like drugs or sex, most subjects such as love, religion, moral or political comment have their essence in the eleventh century and still remain popular in current music. As mentioned in the first part of this work, the songs created by troubadours in the Middle Ages were often full of tropes and figures, and although almost a thousand years have passed since then, the modern icons of popular music like Leonard Cohen, Bob Dylan, and others could be compared to them, and they could be reputed to be troubadours of contemporary times. Cohen's songs in particular are a good example. They bear all the typical characteristic features of troubadour's songs in terms of themes and figurative language. Cohen's works, besides typical troubadour's topics such as love (*So Long Marianne*) politics (*Democracy*) and references to religion terms (*Hallelujah*) are almost all written in complex figurative language.

As mentioned, in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries singers were able to influence society and aristocracy and their songs could even help them in their political career. This ability of songwriters to influence generations of people has persisted. One of the

most influential songwriters of all time, Bob Dylan, wrote protest songs which accompanied most of the well-known social protests and movements in the sixties and seventies, like in one of his most influential song *Blowin' in the Wind* which, according to Tim Barnes on "... due to the song's cannonballs and doves, it lent itself to anti-Vietnam protests"<sup>22</sup>. On the other hand, songs do not normally serve songwriters to achieve a higher political career nowadays. Some gifted poetical souls such as John Lennon have even achieved more social influence in music business than a whole array of politicians. However, musicians sometimes do support their favourite politicians. In 2008 Bruce Springsteen, one of the most famous songwriters in the U.S.A., endorsed the election of Barack Obama and this backup by a celebrity can have an impact on voters decision.<sup>23</sup>

Another link that we can trace exists between the 20<sup>th</sup> century songwriters and musician and Romanticism. However, in the Romanticism the relation between music and poetry was slowly diminishing, and these two genres appear rather separately. At the beginning of the twentieth century the connection returns but their relationship is slightly different. Romanticism used to put the main stress on lyrics, while subsequently it was music that took over. With developing genres such as the white jazz, big bands and pop orchestras, musicians aimed more attention to musical instruments than to lyrics. The only legacy of Romanticism can be seen in the theme of love. But jazz and other popular genres were not born out of nowhere. The genre standing by its cradle was the earthy music called the blues and the blues, being more rhythm framed in twelve bar structure than music. It gave their Afro-American performers enough space to express their most immediate feelings and experiences, just as the Romantic poets expressed their inward emotions. Predominantly, blues lyrics reflected inner feelings of the hardships and injustice the blacks had suffered. The lyrics of these songs were not complex and they were often improvised.

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<sup>22</sup> Tom Barnes. 5 Bob Dylan Songs That Actually Changed the Course of History. *Music.Mic.* [online]. 20. 3. 2015 [cit. 2016-04-17]. Dostupné z: <http://mic.com/articles/113316/5-bob-dylan-songs-that-actually-changed-the-course-of-history#.JC0mMSk2n>

<sup>23</sup> Jack Doyle. Barack & Bruce, 2008-2012. *PopHistoryDig.* [online]. 14. 12. 2012 [cit. 2016-04-17]. Dostupné z: <http://mic.com/articles/113316/5-bob-dylan-songs-that-actually-changed-the-course-of-history#.JC0mMSk2n>

However, as Romanticism brought the turning point into the conception of lyrics, so the blues singers brought a turning point into the whole conception of modern music and lyrics as a whole. The importance of blues lyrics remained unnoticed until the fifties when musicians such as Bob Dylan, similarly like his less known predecessors Woodie Guthrie, or Pete Seeger came out with their songs inspired not only by the blues rhythm and tunes but by the blues lyrics as well. The Beatles, the Rolling Stones, Led Zeppelin, Eric Clapton, Jimmi Hendrix and others derived the best from the blues, and they managed to make the music and lyrics into unifying language understandable for all. Now it is up to a listener or a teacher to distinguish whose lyrics are closer to the original old troubadours or romantic poetry.

## 6. The meaning comprehension

While thinking over the themes of the songs, I wanted to select for my purposes the first thing that struck my mind, namely how vast is the number of love songs in the history of pop music, as well as in the most of the contemporary music lyrics. And the more you go through numerous love songs to find one of wit, humour or at least a message deeper than *I will always love you*, the more you find similarities and shallow clichés without any further ambition to make the listener think about possible hidden meanings. The lyrics of these songs are plain, easy to understand, and the idea of the whole song is very simple and comprehensible. When these kinds of lyrics are used in teaching process, the possibility of their exploitation is very limited. Besides the possibility to teach new vocabulary, enhance pronunciation of particular words or other language categories, they do not offer enough opportunities to ask students interesting and unexpected questions to explore their deeper sense, because there often isn't any.

As an example of demonstration how to exploit music lyrics in a class, I have chosen the song called *So Long Marianne* by Leonard Cohen. Because of its common vocabulary and the singer's clear pronunciation, the song meets a teacher's needs, and Leonard Cohen belongs to those renowned and respected songwriters whose songs cross the boundary of poetry, so the song itself can serve as a good example how to deal with a poetic kind of song. Those students who are not interested in music, and consider themselves as just common music consumers, may be surprised that Cohen is the author of now well-known tune "Hallelujah" from the popular cartoon film *Shrek*.

Firstly, when we want to work with songs in classes, we have to consider the language level of the students' language skills. The song *So Long Marianne* can be used in classes of intermediate students. Although there are no language forms or any unfamiliar vocabulary which would be incomprehensible for the students of intermediate level, it is good to make a few explanations on less frequent words or grammatical structures before handing out the sheets with lyrics. In terms of vocabulary it is important to be sure that students understand all words in the song before they start to work with the text. I recommend to pre-teach especially those key words which bear the main meaning line. There are a few words in this song students might be unfamiliar

with but are crucial for correct comprehension of the fourth verse, the words *ledge* and *fasten*. If the students do not know what these two words mean, the teacher should encourage them to find their meaning in a dictionary. Then it is good to point out some speech figures such as metaphors, and let the students think of what these metaphors may symbolize, or how their literal meaning can be used in symbolic speech. As this kind of poetic songs do not give their message as directly as some popular songs, such as above mentioned Whitney Houston's *I Will Always Love You*, the teacher should also give students a brief insight into symbolic language by comparing some examples of literal and idiomatic expressions. Examples of idiomatic or symbolic speech can help students discover the language as a game of words. Students may find enjoyment of working with lyrics which provide listener with possibility to play this game of poetic disputation over songs. From this point of view, *So Long Marianne* can be very playful. At the first sight it appears as a love song but it does not have to be true. I have met up with many different interpretations of this song among people, whereas the interpretation of song such as *I Will Always Love You* is apparent just from its title.

The methodology of interpretation I have chosen is based on a series of questions students try to dispute about. The questions should be formed so that students are navigated to possible directions of interpretation. This method works well especially, if not exclusively, with those lyrics of ambiguous meaning, which *So Long Marianne* definitely is. The following paragraphs offer possible options how to guide class debates about lyrics. Although it is not necessary to dispute about each verse, *So Long Marianne* opens up a whole maze of directive questions.

The first two lines of the song (*Come over to the window, my little darling I'd like to try to read your palm*) seem quite obvious to interpret, but they still open up the question does someone really want to read someone's palm, or is it just an intention of doing anything else? Perhaps the author wants to talk about the future? Then in the second part of the first verse (*I used to think I was some kind of Gypsy boy before I let you take me home*) asks the questions: Does he think he was a gypsy boy, but he is no longer, and why? What does the word Gypsy symbolize? Being poor, living without home or being free, living life without boundaries? What does the verse *I let you take me home* mean or refer to? Does the word *let* mean he did not want to, but she insisted? Did he hesitate and why?



In the refrain (*Now so long, Marianne, it's time that we began to laugh and cry and cry and laugh about it all again*) there is a possible ambiguity at the beginning of the phrase *now so long* for which we can ask students if the phrase mean “hello, be welcome again” or “good bye forever” or “for a long time”? We can let them look up the meaning in a dictionary and put it in context. *It's time we began to laugh or cry* evokes both a grammar question “It is time to laugh or cry” or “it was the time we laughed or cried”. “What, or who is to laugh or cry”?

Questions about the first two lines of the second verse (*Well you know that I love to live with you but you make me forget so very much*) could sound “Does he still live with her?” “Forget?” “What does she make him forget?” “Things he used to do before they had met”? “Or perhaps passion that once they felt but they do not feel it anymore”? “What do the angels in the second part of the verse (*I forget to pray for the angels and then the angels forget to pray for us*) symbolize”? “What does this metaphor mean”? “Is this a punishment”? “Does the singer admit he has done something wrong”? “Or do the angels symbolize something above that cannot be seen but we all understand it”? “Can the angles symbolize love or romance”?

Beginning of the third verse (*We met when we were almost young deep in the green lilac park*) indicates their age when they had met and perhaps how they had met, so the question could aim at the unusual and witty collocation *almost young* when people can be only almost old, so how old they actually were? Although these lines are quite easy to be understood, the second part of the third verse is not so apparent. (*You held on to me like I was a crucifix as we went kneeling through the dark*) The ambiguity of this verse opens the game of broad imagination. On the one hand, students may perceive the key word crucifix as a symbol of pure unselfish love, sacrificing someone's life for somebody else. On the other hand, it might let them imagine what young passionate lovers do when kneeling in a dark lilac park. “Was this love or lust”? After all, some questions do not have to be necessarily answered and, as I have said, it is a game of words.

The fourth verse is quite difficult to interpret because of its ambiguity. In the first two lines (*Your letters they all say that you're beside me now then why do I feel alone?*) we can ask about the content of her *letters* and what it suggests. “Does the author mean she

posts him letters because she is far away”? “Can these lines saying *she is beside him now* be a declaration of some sort of commitment”? “Why is he not happy then”? The second part of this verse may suggest a struggle with himself (*I'm standing on a ledge and your fine spider web is fastening my ankle to a stone*). “Why is he on a ledge”? “Does he want to jump and commit a suicide”? “Why will he not do it”? “What emotional problem does he suffer from”? “What does the spider web symbolize”? “Does he feel trapped in his emotions to her”?

The rest of the song gives us quite a clear statement. They are not together anymore. It is apparent from the previous verses that their relationship is ambivalent but the main question why, is not explicitly expressed. (*For now I need your hidden love I'm cold as a new razor blade*) “Why hidden love”? “Does not she love him anymore”? “What does he mean when he says he is cold”? “Does it also mean that he does not love her”? The rest of this verse is probably indecipherable (*You left when I told you I was curious I never said that I was brave*). It is said here that she left but it is not specifically expressed why. The questions should be aimed at words curious and brave. “Why and about what was he curious about”? “Why should people be brave in a relationship”? “Did not he want to take responsibility”? Answers for these questions are certainly wide and the right answer is perhaps known only to the author.

As the meaning of the last verse seems quite obvious, I recommend teachers let students ask a teacher or other students some questions. Although some of their questions will not probably meet the point, a teacher can correct their mistakes (making questions often falls behind their overall ability to understand the language) or at least awake an encouraging feeling that there are no wrong questions when we ask about ambiguous lyrics. Possible questions students may ask: “Why does he say that she is such a pretty one”? “Does it mean that he still feels something to her”? “What does it mean that she changed her name again”? “Does it mean that they were married or not”? (*Oh, you are really such a pretty one I see you've gone and changed your name again*). And the questions about the last line (*And just when I climbed this whole mountainside to wash my eyelids in the rain*): “Does this line express that their relationship is over”? “What does *climb this whole mountainside* mean”? “Why did he wash his eyelids in the rain”? At the end of the activity students can try to sum up the meaning of the song with their own words or write a short review or a summary how they feel about it.

The similar concept of lyrics interpretation is usable for most of the poetic songs the history of pop music offers. Let students explore the meaning of lyrics during classes with the help of prepared questions or make questions on their own to ask about particular parts of the text which carry the clue information.

## 6.1. My interpretation of the song

Because a teacher will have to confront his own interpretation with the students' views and there are a few lines which do not have to be easy to comprehend but they are important for understanding, I bring my own version of the interpretation. The first verse tells us about the initial romance and indicates some changes in author's lifestyle, changes all lovers go through when they fall in love and leave their previous freedom behind. Although there is no direct expression proving my view, it is good to focus at author's figurative speech. So *read your palm* most likely means hold your hand and *some kind of Gypsy boy* may expresses a problem a man has when he has to settle down and let somebody direct his life as indicated in *I let you take me home*.

The refrain simply expresses that they have been separated for a long time and maybe now it is time to talk about it unemotionally like friends as the verbs *laugh and cry* indicate. The repetition at the end of the refrain implies that he is ready to be her friend and that he has overcome their breakup.

The subsequent verse is quite easy to interpret. Although he loves her, he feels somehow cut off his previous life because of her demands on him. The statement *I forget to pray for the angels and then the angels forget to pray for us* just expresses he might have done something wrong in their relationship, but he is not sure what it is .

The first two lines of the third verse tell us about their passionate encounter. Romance and passion are expressed through a lot symbols like *deep in lilac park, held on to me like I was a crucifix*. It also implies they were immature *we were almost young*.

In the fourth verse we get to know that they are not together anymore. It is apparent they have lost the passion of previous love but he is still full of emotions about her, which is indicated by the line *then why do I feel alone?* The end of this verse just underlines his ambivalent attitude to her.

The last verse gives denouement. The author has overcome emotional distress, to *climb the whole mountainside* suggests he underwent something really difficult and in the context it seems obvious what it was. According to the last line *wash my eyelids in the rain*, he recalls a lot of pain he has been through but his eyelids are washed so as he has overcome the worst he may be able to *start all over again*. What? It is up to the listener. If someone has another opinion it is food for thought, but whatever makes students discuss and think counts.

## **7. Lyrics in the context of modern history**

This chapter deals with music lyrics which were created to reflect some important historical events and give us a message about the periods of the second half of the twentieth century. The lyrics were mostly created as a reaction to particular political and social issues which divided and influenced society of those times. As the most influential rock and pop songs of rock raised from Anglo-American roots, they mostly reflected local affairs but mighty American and British cultural influence and the tempting rhythms of rock and roll resonated in many parts of the world, so they became a global message. The sound of newly coming music echoed even in the totalitarian regimes where it helped to trigger a hidden youth rebellion against rigid establishments and sowed the seeds of their subsequent collapse. They were concerned with racism and segregation, military politics of the USA linked to the war in Vietnam which prepared the breeding ground for the birth of the social movement known as Hippies. Beside that, some songs reflected idealistic dreams of the incoming young generation of unrestrained life in peace and eternal free love in contrast of the usual American middleclass dream of success and prosperous career.

The reasons why I have decided to introduce these kinds of songs to students comes out of my strong belief that current social issues are closely linked to historical ones and they bear the blueprint of past decades the same way as current pop music bears the blueprint of unique tunes made in the sixties. The awareness of these problems that were moving the world in the past century and the consciousness of societies and whole generations formed through these songs as a consequence of these big issues, make me believe that this can evoke the students' interest in historical events that went beyond their time but still influence our opinions. Someone may say that this is a subject of history but it is known that there are a lot of secondary and grammar schools in the Czech Republic who end their narration of history with the end of the Second World War while the post-war history is not properly described at all. The interpretation of songs of historical context can help students comprehend the background against which the lyrics had been written.

## **7.1. Song number one**

The first music lyrics I want to introduce is called the Death of Emmett Till written by Bob Dylan during his so-called folk period. The song is about a true story that happened in the middle of the fifties of the twentieth century. It is a story of a fourteen-year old black boy who was tortured and finally killed by white men because he had been speaking with a white woman. Although there was a trial and the two men admitted their violent act, their friend influenced the jury and the murderers were released. I have chosen this song as an example which can help to describe the problem of racism in the United States in the fifties and the sixties of the twentieth century. It is also a good example of how similar events may influence and change social attitudes.

The beginning of the song sets the time and scene of the story (*'Twas down in Mississippi not so long ago*). This gives a teacher the opportunity to explain geographical links to the problem of racism in the USA. Mississippi was a very problematic area in terms of racism and the colour of the skin mentioned in the first verse indicates who the victim of the crime is. Subsequent two verses describes the crime itself with the line (*There were screaming sounds inside the barn, there was*

*laughing sounds out on the street*) which implies the indifferent attitude of other people to acts of violence and to Black Americans at that time, which clearly defines the position of black people in the middle of the last century. A teacher should point out that although everyone knew who had committed the crime, the culprits were not arrested and the trial was just derision (*And so this trial was a mockery, but nobody seemed to mind*). This part explicitly says to the students that the black people were not taken seriously, and they did not have almost any rights. At the end of the song the author criticizes the people who do not do anything against this type of injustice, and appeals the society to intervene against this inhuman behaviour to make their land a better place for everyone.

This song offers a broad discussion with students about problems of racism and at the same time it teaches them what people were and still are capable of doing when they are choked up in their prejudices. As the song narrates the story with no ambiguities it is a good idea to let students listen to the whole song with a sheet of printed text and encourage them to sum up and retell the whole story. Consequently, a teacher can give students brief outlook on the historical context and problem of racism.

## **7.2. Song number two**

Another song, reflecting global and well-known problems of war, offers a similar way of work with text. Its clear message is easy to understand and gives the students the opportunity to try to express their points of view. The song is called *Masters of War* and it was also written by Bob Dylan. Although it is an anti-war protest song, the lyrics are not full of pacifistic statements and verbatim expressions about peace. The song is rather a denunciation of those who bear the responsibilities for the brutality of war. It is good to draw the students' attention to possible relation to the Vietnam War. This song is different from other Dylan's songs invoking peace. In the song there is no mercy or hope for people responsible for developing weapons and earning money on it. Here is a quotation Bob Dylan said about this song: *"I've never written anything like that before. I don't sing songs which hope people will die, but I couldn't help it with this one. The*

*song is a sort of striking out... a feeling of what can you do?"*<sup>24</sup> If we teach more self-confident students, his quote can enrich discussion about moral issues.

I have chosen this song because it provides students with an illustration how artists can perceive the topic the war, and anti-war protest songs can become an effective tool against it. Because the topic of war is characteristic for almost all generations, students can compare the social reaction against war in the past and nowadays. The author of *Masters of War* draws his attention to people who have never really risked their lives in a real fight but make profits out of war conflicts, so in fact they are responsible for all bloodsheds even though they have never killed anyone personally, as demonstrated in the follow lines (*Come you masters of war you that build all the guns/ You that never done nothin' but build to destroy/ You fasten all the triggers for the others to fire*). As I have said this anti-war song is quite different from others for its open hatred against arms manufacturers and dealers, Dylan seems to feel that they do not deserve any form of forgiveness: (*But there's one thing I know though I'm younger than you that even Jesus would never forgive what you do and and I hope that you die and your death'll come soon*). Regarding the language of the song, it is quite difficult in terms of vocabulary; there are a lot of expressions like deceive, trigger, hurl, drain, vein and so on, which may be familiar with students upper- intermediate or higher English levels so I would recommend this song for such levels, but because of the absence of figurative speech the song can be a source of vocabulary tasks with dictionary work.

The selected songs by Bob Dylan are just two examples from many other concerning the social issues of the sixties which can be exploited for description and discussion of historical events in the English-speaking countries mainly the USA. Bob Dylan's songs are a great source of this type of lyrics. Besides his poetic language, his lyrics are also known for his stands against any forms of injustice.

The following selection of songs does not reflect strong social conscience typical for the mid of the twentieth century, like racism, war or injustice, but they reflect period culture

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<sup>24</sup> MASTERS OF WAR by BOB DYLAN. *SongFacts*. [online]. [cit. 1970-01-14]. Dostupné z: <http://www.songfacts.com/detail.php?id=7112>

and lifestyle typical for youth movements, which is mostly linked to the hippies and famous musicians of that time.

### 7.3. Song number three

Before I introduce the songs picturing the lifestyle of the seventies I feel necessity to introduce one of the Beatles songs whose lyrics are in sharp contrast with them. It is connected to drug phenomenon that was typical for the revolting young generation of the late sixties and society of hippies. The song written by John Lennon is called *Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds*. It was released in the famous Beatles album *Sgt Pepper Lonely Hearts Club Band* in June 1967, so in the time of the Hippies movement formed around the mid-sixties and reaching its peak at the end of the decade. A teacher should give a brief introduction to the time when the western societies began to feel the drug addiction as a widespread social problem. Students should know about one of the most dangerous as well as the most extended drug used LSD. John Lennon did not belong to exceptions who did not use it. There are not any explicitly mentioned references to LSD or any other drug in the song, and Lennon himself refused any connection between the lyrics and drug taking. The song can be used as an illustration how young communities and musicians were strongly influenced by the drug phenomenon.

A teacher can open the class with playing the song while students are reading the lyrics from their lyrics sheets. Then the teacher should allow the students a few minutes to answer a seemingly silly question what the song is about. More experienced students may be asked about the artistic style of surrealism the lyrics of the song strikingly remind. The teacher should sum up the song as a surreal description of a state of mind responding to the influence of a drug, and ask the students to read an example (*Picture yourself in a boat on a river with tangerine trees and marmalade skies somebody calls you, you answer quite slowly a girl with kaleidoscope eyes*). The teacher can also tell students about fuss the song provoked when it was first released. When people and music critics saw the title of the song, and the initials of *Lucy, Sky and Diamonds*, they were sure that its acronym LSD was a clear reference to this notorious drug. Although Lennon refused any drug connection in the text, Paul McCartney admitted in 2004 that



there are a few songs by the Beatles which were about drugs or they were written under the influence of drugs. Although the interpretation of this song is incomprehensible, and there is no point in deciphering what particular verses mean, the song can open a discussion over the role of drugs and their disastrous impact not only on promising young musicians like Jim Morrison, Janis Joplin and Jimi Hendrix who died of the overdose, but on the whole generation of young people who found themselves in a blind alley and consequently struggled hard to find a way out.

This song should not be presented without a proper description of social and political background of the sixties. Many of the children who came from successful middle-class families of the young post-war hard working generation that got rich in the fifties and fixed their lives on a simple equation of “success equals money,” wanted to break away from the stiff routine life of their parents and started to distrust and rebel against their old prejudices and their former values of success. Unbridled life with no boundaries, disdain for establishment, unleashed sexual life, drugs and rock and roll became life if not a political program of many. Of course this way of life was also the reaction to the problems occurring such as the war in Vietnam, racism, inequality of women and men, as well as the assassinations of significant popular figures such as John F. Kennedy, Martin Luther King or Robert Kennedy. Besides many protests and sessions for peace and justice, music played an important role for these young idealistic Americans, and the songs became unbelievably mighty weapon and one of the possibilities how to express the political and social attitudes of young rising generation.

The next two songs I want to introduce are in sharp contrast with the boisterous and unbound atmosphere of the sixties and prefigure a new era of *getting sober*. Although they both represent different music styles still they have one thing common. They reveal frivolity, emptiness and untenable position of the life programme of “having no goal” and uncover the misery of drug abuse.

The chosen methodology is similar as in the first chapter of the practical part when I presented song *So Long Marianne*. I also give my own more detailed interpretation of the song.

## 7.4. Song number four

The first song was written by the famous duo Simon and Garfunkel and it is called *America*. It draws a picture of a carefree couple sitting on the Greyhound bus, travelling the States. The authors put their life of independence and freedom in contrast to other people sitting on the bus and representing consumer values they both despise. So far it is in compliance with most of the songs of the sixties, but at the end of the song the man realizes that he does not know what he actually wants from life and slowly sinks into a frustrating feeling of disillusion. Travelling round the States was characteristic for the sixties and many people modelled themselves up to the character of Dean from legendary Kerouac book *On the Road*. That is why the authors set the scene on the bus, and their *looking for America* as symbol of freedom is in contrast with other passengers who are just coming home from work as any other workday.

At the beginning of the class a teacher can play the song for the first time without a typescript. The song is meant for older students so they should be able to answer a simple question about the content of the song. For example: How many characters are there in the song? Who are the main characters? Where are they? or Where are they going? Then the teacher can play the song again with typescripts and ask about the verse (*I've got some real estate here in my bag*). Students may be asked about the connotation of the word estate and what kind of estate the singer means. Or we can ask other questions: Are they rich? Could it be money in their bag? As we learn more about the things in their bag in the subsequent verse, we may let the students guess who the couple is and what they do. In the next verse we could ask students who they think Mrs. Wagner is (*And Mrs. Wagner's pies*) because it can be funny for students to reveal that Wagner's pies were famous pies in America sold by company named Mrs. Wagner's Home Made Pies until 1969. In the following verse (*And walked off to look for America / to hitch-hike from Saginaw. "I've come to look for America."*). We should aim at the verse *look for America* to ask students what America can symbolize and what they imagine when they hear America. In the fourth and fifth verse we can ask the students if they can spot any differences or contrasts between the couple and other people on the bus who are symbolically portrayed as a man in the gabardine suit. (*She said the man in the gabardine suit was a spy / I said, "Be careful, his bow tie is really a camera."*). It

would be good to ask which part of the society the man represents. The sixth verse suddenly reveals that the singer's mood has changed. We may ask if the students notice the change and his struggle with himself and what he is thinking about. (*"Kathy, I'm lost", I said, though I know she was sleeping. "I'm empty and aching and I don't know why."*). This is the key verse to understand his disillusion and why he feels lost. In the following (*Counting the cars on the New Jersey Turnpike they've all come to look for America, all come to look for America*) he finds out that everyone is looking for their America their own way. The last verse meets two symbols of America: Cars in a traffic jam on the New Jersey Turnpike as a symbol of boundless consumerism and a bus ride to nowhere as a symbol pointless life. The singer does not find solution in either of these symbols, and he rather asks more serious existential questions.

As I have described the methodology of asking questions in previous examples, in the following cases I will present only the interpretation of the songs as a contextual guide for teachers.

## **7.5. Song number five**

The subsequent song was written in 1976 when the social tensions and protests of the sixties and the whole American war in Vietnam were over. The song called Hotel California was composed by Don Henley and Glenn Frey from the band The Eagles. There are many interpretations of this song and its lyrics have been provoking both fans and music critics with unanswered questions in terms of its meaning, even after forty years since it came out. The song of very symbolic lyrics looks back to the sixties and the beginning of the seventies at the life of upper class and its hedonism, addictions and indulgences.

In the first verse the singer travels somewhere at night, and tired of his long journey he stops at some place to sleep. Many Americans in that time made the long trips through mountains and deserts where there is almost no population besides the motor-rests by the road. There is quite a problematic word *colitas* in the second line (*Warm smell of colitas, rising up through the air*) whose meaning must be explained to students because

its symbolic nature prefigures the overall meaning of the song. According to Online Slang Dictionary colitas<sup>25</sup> is a slang term for marijuana buds. In the second verse we find a mysterious character (*There she stood in the doorway*) but we do not know who she is, there is only a designation "she" which indicates the importance of the individual and may symbolize temptation. Following line (*I heard the mission bell*) may suggest some spirituality of the place or its location. During the Spanish colonization of the area now called California, the Spanish conquerors set up missions' bases that developed into cities named after these bases such as San Diego, San Francisco, and Los Angeles. (*"This could be Heaven or this could be Hell"*) suggests that the place can be someone's hell (local Indian tribes) or dream (Spanish conquerors). In the third verse we learn more about "she". She as a symbol of indulgences and greed is apparently obsessed with expensive things such as jewellery or cars (*Her mind is Tiffany-twisted, she got the Mercedes bends*) and from this verse onward we also find out that the life in Hotel California is full of parties and unleashed life. In the fourth verse there is an expression "spirit" (*He said, "We haven't had that spirit here since nineteen sixty nine"*) the meaning of which is ambiguous. The spirit in this context may mean alcohol or mood, zeitgeist of 1969, or it may refer to something important that happened in that year. It is certainly difficult to determine what it is. A lot of things happened. Neil Armstrong was the first person walking on the moon, famous Woodstock music festival was held in that year but most likely it just refers to the late sixties as general when unrestrained way of life reached its peak. In the second refrain we read an idiom live it up (*They livin' it up at the Hotel California*) confirms that everyone in Hotel California can do anything to please themselves without any regards to its cost. Subsequent verses portrait desperate picture of drug and alcohol addiction and people's vain struggle to escape from this miserable way of life. (*They stab it with their steely knives, but they just can't kill the beast*) this line in the last but one verse expresses the fight against the addiction to hedonistic lifestyle which may step by step ruin lives. In the last verse we find out that it does not matter how hard you try to escape, you eventually never leave (*You can check-out any time you like, but you can never leave!*). Hotel California itself represents the state of California and particularly Los Angeles, the city of dreams, where scores of young people was heading to become rich and famous, or just to taste the atmosphere of free unbridled way of life on drugs. It is the story of people who really tasted success

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<sup>25</sup> Definition of colitas. *Online Slang Dictionary*. [online]. 14. 12. 2010 [cit. 2016-15-04]. Dostupné z: <http://onlineslangdictionary.com/meaning-definition-of/colitas>

and were swallowed up by this world. The song is actually a criticism of hedonistic lifestyle full of addictions and indulgences typical for the sixties and points back to the sixties at the now abandoned unrealistic visions of that generation. .

## **7.6. Song number six**

Next and the last song which is worth introducing reflects a completely different historical problem, and to a certain extent its lyrics crosses borders of the then western world and reaches problems that were even more pressing in countries east of the free world. It was written in West Berlin in 1977 and the inspiration for this song was the Berlin Wall. The song is called Heroes and was written by David Bowie. I have chosen this song as a demonstration of the theme that differs from those of the sixties and seventies when Anglo-American artists were too preoccupied by themselves and their existential questions. The song gives a good opportunity to introduce a part of our history seen by the artist who obviously could not experience how lack of freedom feels. The song enlightens part of history that has been slowly fading away from our minds, even though it should give an urgent warning to all of us. If you asked students what happened in 1989 in the Czech Republic some would probably answer that Jan Palach died so young, and the more learned, would say some sort of revolution.

Right from the beginning of the song it is apparent that the main characters are lovers who dream of being together (*I, I will be king and you, you will be queen*) but at the same time there is an indication that perhaps some unidentified enemies stands in their way to be happy or even obstruct them to be together (*Though nothing, will drive them away we can beat them, just for one day*). The second verse indicates that although it is not wished them to be together there is nothing in the world to stop them from loving. (*Cause we're lovers, and that is a fact yes, we're lovers, and that is that*). The following two verses emphasize that being together at least for one day would mean to beat those who stand between them make the pair heroes. This may indicate that the obstacle to their love is something really dangerous and that any attempt to approach each other could cost their lives. The fourth verse (*I wish you could swim like dolphins can swim*) in symbols of dolphins who can swim freely indicates he can do what she obviously

cannot, in other words he is free be she is not. After all these indirect references to an unclear enemy, in the sixth verse we learn about a wall and there are probably soldiers on both sides. (*Standing, by the wall (by the wall) and the guns, shot above our heads (over our heads)*). This is quite a clear reference to the Berlin Wall which divided Berlin between 1961 and 1989 and it was one of the most significant symbols of the cold war. In the verse (*and the shame is on the other side*) it is easy to read who to blame. The obstacle which prevents the couple to be together is the wall build by a totalitarian regime dividing the city into two parts and the pair meets up by the wall under the military tower with guards ready to prevent people from getting from one part of the city into another. This song could help students to explore the situation and life of people of that time in Berlin and it can serve for a further discussion about the whole tense atmosphere of that time.

## 8. Conclusion

While doing research for this work, I was fully aware of possible problems that teachers of English may face if trying to put these methods into practice. Current high schools hardly use any of the above-mentioned methods.

The utilization of my proposals in schools can be problematic for several reasons. Firstly, the curriculum limits teachers in their teaching options. They have to work with textbooks to fulfil the syllabus requirements, and then there is not much time to do any additional work which might enrich the students' knowledge and make the contents more varied. Secondly, this way of working with songs is definitely more time consuming and detailed in terms of the teachers' preparation. If they wanted to exploit music lyrics for the exploration of historical events, they would have to broaden their knowledge not just in terms of history but also music and poetry and their historical context. Teachers sometimes miss this interdisciplinary awareness, while they strictly hold on to the methodology of their textbooks, which reduces their options of improvisation and creativity.

The presented methods of working with songs, however, cannot be utilized in classes once a month just as a means of having more fun. Students will not learn how to work with lyrics if the songs are used just as a reward for their learning efforts. Although I think that detailed work with songs will hardly ever be fully incorporated into English language curriculum, it is worth trying out as a new method of enriching widely discussed interdisciplinary teaching.

Although I have never had a chance to present these methods in front of a usual class of more students, yet I had several times utilized this method as a teaching tool in my private lessons with teenage students. They expressed their interest and enjoyment, both in discovering the meaning as well as in discussions about the main themes of the songs. These students were naturally interested in music and literature, so I cannot say if similar lessons would work in classes of more than ten students of more diverse interests. Hence the method is maybe better suitable for smaller group of students. It

could become a good basis for small conversation classes at grammar schools or language schools.

I have learnt that the whole process of songs interpretation itself is not an easy task, one has to count that music lyrics can have more than one meaning (e. g. *Hotel California*) or the song may be meaningless without knowing context (e. g. *Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds*). The interpretation of one song took me quite a long time, so it is apparent that the teachers' preparation is very important and in many cases it would not be an easy assignment for them.

However, my research into lyrics provided me with better understanding of the historical and social background that helped the lyrics to be formed, and in many cases it uncovered surprising links to the circumstances in which the songs were actually created (e.g. *the Death of Emmett Till*). Above all, the adventure of doing research into lyrics, I am convinced, would bring immense enjoyment for those who are interested.



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# List of Appendices

## Appendix 1

### Leonard Cohen – So Long Marianne

Come over to the window, my little darling,  
I'd like to try to read your palm.  
I used to think I was some kind of Gypsy boy  
before I let you take me home.  
Now so long, Marianne, it's time that we began  
to laugh and cry and cry and laugh about it all again.

Well you know that I love to live with you,  
but you make me forget so very much.  
I forget to pray for the angels  
and then the angels forget to pray for us.

Now so long, Marianne, it's time that we began ...

We met when we were almost young  
deep in the green lilac park.  
You held on to me like I was a crucifix,  
as we went kneeling through the dark.

Oh so long, Marianne, it's time that we began ...

Your letters they all say that you're beside me now.  
Then why do I feel alone?  
I'm standing on a ledge and your fine spider web  
is fastening my ankle to a stone.

Now so long, Marianne, it's time that we began ...

For now I need your hidden love.  
I'm cold as a new razor blade.  
You left when I told you I was curious,  
I never said that I was brave.

Oh so long, Marianne, it's time that we began ...

Oh, you are really such a pretty one.  
I see you've gone and changed your name again.  
And just when I climbed this whole mountainside,  
to wash my eyelids in the rain!

Oh so long, Marianne, it's time that we began ...

## **Appendix 2**

### **Bob Dylan – The Death Of Emmett Till**

'Twas down in Mississippi not so long ago  
When a young boy from Chicago town stepped through a Southern door  
This boy's dreadful tragedy I can still remember well  
The color of his skin was black and his name was Emmett Till

Some men they dragged him to a barn and there they beat him up  
They said they had a reason, but I can't remember what  
They tortured him and did some things too evil to repeat  
There were screaming sounds inside the barn, there was laughing sounds  
out on the street

Then they rolled his body down a gulf amidst a bloody red rain  
And they threw him in the waters wide to cease his screaming pain  
The reason that they killed him there, and I'm sure it ain't no lie

Was just for the fun of killin' him and to watch him slowly die

And then to stop the United States of yelling for a trial

Two brothers they confessed that they had killed poor Emmett Till

But on the jury there were men who helped the brothers commit this  
awful crime

And so this trial was a mockery, but nobody seemed to mind

I saw the morning papers but I could not bear to see

The smiling brothers walkin' down the courthouse stairs

For the jury found them innocent and the brothers they went free

While Emmett's body floats the foam of a Jim Crow southern sea

If you can't speak out against this kind of thing, a crime that's so unjust

Your eyes are filled with dead men's dirt, your mind is filled with dust

Your arms and legs they must be in shackles and chains, and your blood  
it must refuse to flow

For you let this human race fall down so God-awful low!

This song is just a reminder to remind your fellow man

That this kind of thing still lives today in that ghost-robed Ku Klux Klan

But if all of us folks that thinks alike, if we gave all we could give

We could make this great land of ours a greater place to live

## Appendix 3

### **Bob Dylan – Masters of War**

Come you masters of war  
You that build all the guns  
You that build the death planes  
You that build all the bombs  
You that hide behind walls  
You that hide behind desks  
I just want you to know  
I can see through your masks.

You that never done nothin'  
But build to destroy  
You play with my world  
Like it's your little toy  
You put a gun in my hand  
And you hide from my eyes  
And you turn and run farther  
When the fast bullets fly.

Like Judas of old  
You lie and deceive  
A world war can be won  
You want me to believe  
But I see through your eyes  
And I see through your brain  
Like I see through the water  
That runs down my drain.

You fasten all the triggers  
For the others to fire  
Then you set back and watch

When the death count gets higher  
You hide in your mansion'  
As young people's blood  
Flows out of their bodies  
And is buried in the mud.

You've thrown the worst fear  
That can ever be hurled  
Fear to bring children  
Into the world  
For threatening my baby  
Unborn and unnamed  
You ain't worth the blood  
That runs in your veins.

How much do I know  
To talk out of turn  
You might say that I'm young  
You might say I'm unlearned  
But there's one thing I know  
Though I'm younger than you  
That even Jesus would never  
Forgive what you do.

Let me ask you one question  
Is your money that good  
Will it buy you forgiveness  
Do you think that it could  
I think you will find  
When your death takes its toll  
All the money you made  
Will never buy back your soul.

And I hope that you die  
And your death'll come soon  
I will follow your casket  
In the pale afternoon  
And I'll watch while you're lowered  
Down to your deathbed  
And I'll stand over your grave  
'Til I'm sure that you're dead.



## **Appendix 4**

### **John Lennon – Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds**

Picture yourself in a boat on a river  
With tangerine trees and marmalade skies  
Somebody calls you, you answer quite slowly  
A girl with kaleidoscope eyes

Cellophane flowers of yellow and green  
Towering over your head  
Look for the girl with the sun in her eyes  
And she's gone

Lucy in the sky with diamonds  
Lucy in the sky with diamonds  
Lucy in the sky with diamonds

Follow her down to a bridge by a fountain  
Where rocking horse people eat marshmallow pies  
Everyone smiles as you drift past the flowers  
That grow so incredibly high

Newspaper taxis appear on the shore  
Waiting to take you away  
Climb in the back with your head in the clouds  
And you're gone

Lucy in the sky with diamonds  
Lucy in the sky with diamonds  
Lucy in the sky with diamonds

Newspaper taxis appear on the shore  
Waiting to take you away  
Climb in the back with your head in the clouds  
And you're gone

Lucy in the sky with diamonds  
Lucy in the sky with diamonds  
Lucy in the sky with diamonds

Picture yourself on a train in a station  
With plasticine porters with looking glass ties  
Suddenly someone is there at the turnstile  
The girl with kaleidoscope eyes

Don't you know that, it's

Lucy in the sky with diamonds  
Lucy in the sky with diamonds  
Lucy in the sky with diamonds

## Appendix 5

### Simon and Garfunkel – America

Let us be lovers,  
We'll marry our fortunes together.  
I've got some real estate  
Here in my bag.

So we bought a pack of cigarettes,  
And Mrs. Wagner's pies,  
And walked off  
To look for America.  
"Kathy", I said,  
As we boarded a Greyhound in Pittsburgh,  
Michigan seems like a dream to me now.

It took me four days  
To hitch-hike from Saginaw.  
"I've come to look for America."

Laughing on the bus,  
Playing games with the faces,  
She said the man in the gabardine suit  
Was a spy.

I said, "Be careful,  
His bow tie is really a camera."  
"Toss me a cigarette,  
I think there's one in my raincoat."  
We smoked the last one  
An hour ago.

So I looked at the scenery,  
She read her magazine;  
And the moon rose over an open field.  
"Kathy, I'm lost", I said,  
Though I know she was sleeping.  
"I'm empty and aching and  
I don't know why."

Counting the cars  
On the New Jersey Turnpike  
The've all come  
To look for America,  
All come to look for America,  
All come to look for America.

## Appendix 6

### Eagles – Hotel California

On a dark desert highway, cool wind in my hair  
Warm smell of colitas, rising up through the air  
Up ahead in the distance, I saw a shimmering light  
My head grew heavy and my sight grew dim  
I had to stop for the night  
There she stood in the doorway;  
I heard the mission bell  
And I was thinking to myself,  
"This could be Heaven or this could be Hell"  
Then she lit up a candle and she showed me the way  
There were voices down the corridor,  
I thought I heard them say...

Welcome to the Hotel California  
Such a lovely place (Such a lovely place)  
Such a lovely face  
Plenty of room at the Hotel California  
Any time of year (Any time of year)  
You can find it here

Her mind is Tiffany-twisted, she got the Mercedes bends  
She got a lot of pretty, pretty boys she calls friends  
How they dance in the courtyard, sweet summer sweat.  
Some dance to remember, some dance to forget

So I called up the Captain,  
"Please bring me my wine"  
He said, "We haven't had that spirit here since nineteen sixty nine"

And still those voices are calling from far away,  
Wake you up in the middle of the night  
Just to hear them say...

Welcome to the Hotel California  
Such a lovely place (Such a lovely place)  
Such a lovely face  
They livin' it up at the Hotel California  
What a nice surprise (what a nice surprise)  
Bring your alibis

Mirrors on the ceiling,  
The pink champagne on ice  
And she said "We are all just prisoners here, of our own device"  
And in the master's chambers,  
They gathered for the feast  
They stab it with their steely knives,  
But they just can't kill the beast

Last thing I remember, I was  
Running for the door  
I had to find the passage back  
To the place I was before  
"Relax, " said the night man,  
"We are programmed to receive.  
You can check-out any time you like,  
But you can never leave! "

## **Appendix 7**

### **David Bowie – Heroes**

I, I will be king  
And you, you will be queen  
Though nothing will drive them away  
We can beat them, just for one day  
We can be Heroes, just for one day

And you, you can be mean  
And I, I'll drink all the time  
'Cause we're lovers, and that is a fact  
Yes we're lovers, and that is that

Though nothing, will keep us together  
We could steal time,  
just for one day  
We can be Heroes, for ever and ever  
What d'you say?

I, I wish you could swim  
Like the dolphins, like dolphins can swim  
Though nothing,  
nothing will keep us together  
We can beat them, for ever and ever  
Oh we can be Heroes,  
just for one day

I, I will be king  
And you, you will be queen  
Though nothing will drive them away

We can be Heroes, just for one day  
We can be us, just for one day

I, I can remember (I remember)  
Standing, by the wall (by the wall)  
And the guns shot above our heads  
(over our heads)  
And we kissed,  
as though nothing could fall  
(nothing could fall)  
And the shame was on the other side  
Oh we can beat them, for ever and ever  
Then we could be Heroes,  
just for one day

We can be Heroes  
We can be Heroes  
We can be Heroes  
Just for one day  
We can be Heroes

We're nothing, and nothing will help us  
Maybe we're lying,  
then you better not stay  
But we could be safer,  
just for one day

Oh-oh-oh-ohh, oh-oh-oh-ohh,  
just for one day