

JETHRO TULL'S *THICK AS A BRICK*:
GEARED TOWARD THE EXCEPTIONAL RATHER THAN THE AVERAGE

by

TIM SMOLKO

(Under the Direction of Stephen Valdez)

ABSTRACT

In the late 1960s and early 1970s, British progressive rock bands such as Yes, Genesis, and Jethro Tull were imbuing their music with a broadened harmonic palette, large-scale classical structures, polyphonic textures, avant-garde sensibilities, virtuoso technique, and the use of the latest advances in instrument and studio technology. All of these ingredients are in abundance on Jethro Tull's *Thick as a Brick* (1972). The album consists of one continuous forty-three minute song comprised of fourteen short songs interspersed with nineteen instrumental passages. The complex yet accessible music, the utterly perplexing lyrics, and the original LP packaging as a twelve page newspaper full of Monty Pythonesque humor make it one of the most creative and original albums in the history of rock music. This thesis provides a context for the album, examines its packaging and lyrics, and analyzes its music with a focus on form and thematic development.

INDEX WORDS: Jethro Tull; Ian Anderson; Thick as a Brick; Progressive rock music; 1970s rock music; Musical form; Musical analysis; Thematic development

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CHAPTER 1

PROVIDING A CONTEXT FOR *THICK AS A BRICK*

Introduction and Brief Literature Review

In the late 1960s and early 1970s, British progressive rock bands such as Yes, Genesis, and Jethro Tull were imbuing their music with a broadened harmonic palette, large-scale classical structures, polyphonic textures, avant-garde sensibilities, virtuoso technique, and the use of the latest advances in instrument and studio technology. All of these ingredients are in abundance on Jethro Tull's *Thick as a Brick* (1972). The album consists of one continuous forty-three minute song comprised of fourteen short songs interspersed with nineteen instrumental passages. The complex yet accessible music, the utterly perplexing lyrics, and the original LP packaging as a twelve page newspaper full of Monty Pythonesque humor make it one of the most creative and original albums in the history of rock music.

This thesis begins by providing a context for the album and then examines its similarities to certain elements of Medieval/Renaissance culture, literature and music. After a consideration of the album's packaging and lyrics, the bulk of the thesis consists of a thorough analysis of its music taking into account its form, use of repetition and thematic development, instrumental passages, instrumentation, stylistic changes, and harmony. A description of the various live versions of *Thick as a Brick* and some general conclusions bring the thesis to its completion.

The following brief literature review covers the most important writings from both musicologists and rock journalists about Jethro Tull and progressive rock in general. While rock journalists have been writing biographies and discographies of progressive rock bands since the

1970s, it was only in the 1990s that progressive rock (and rock music in general, for that matter) began to receive attention by musicologists. In 1997, Edward Macan published his definitive study of progressive rock *Rocking the Classics: English Progressive Rock and the Counterculture*.¹ Other musicologists such as Nors Josephson, Allan Moore, Walter Everett, and John Covach laid the groundwork for musical analyses of the longer pieces by these bands. These scholars showed that the analytic methodologies used to explore classical music were also useful in analyzing the large-scale structures found in progressive rock. Since the early 2000s, a growing body of musicologists including Mark Spicer, David Nicholls, John Sheinbaum, and Kevin Holm-Hudson has been doing thorough analyses of many progressive rock pieces.

Of all the major British progressive rock bands that emerged in the late 1960s, Jethro Tull has received the least attention in terms of musical analysis. The majority of writings on the band have consisted of biographies and discographies, the best being *Jethro Tull: A History of the Band, 1968-2001* (2002) by Scott Allen Nollen.² Allan Moore does some analysis of the style characteristics of Jethro Tull's music in his book *Rock: The Primary Text* (2001) but no album or song receives a thorough analysis. Moore's book *Aqualung* (2004) is a detailed study of that album, this being the only such scholarly work on a specific Jethro Tull album. John Covach wrote a short article on *Thick as Brick* in the progressive rock periodical *Progression Magazine* (1996), but it is only an introduction to the piece. This thesis, with its lengthy analysis of the music of *Thick as a Brick*, is designed to remedy this gap. While the emergence of progressive rock as a distinct style of rock music and Jethro Tull's place within this style have been well

¹ Two other thorough progressive rock histories are Paul Stump's *The Music's All That Matters: A History of Progressive Rock* (London: Quartet Books, 1997) and Bill Martin's *Listening to the Future: The Time of Progressive Rock, 1968-1978* (Chicago: Open Court, 1998).

² Two excellent Jethro Tull biographies besides Nollen are Greg Russo's *Flying Colours: The Jethro Tull Reference Manual* (New York: Crossfire Publications, 2000) and David Rees's *Minstrels in the Gallery: A History of Jethro Tull* (Middlesex, England: Firefly Publishing, 1998).

documented, much more needs to be said about how significant a milestone *Thick as a Brick* was in the musical climate of the early 1970s, a period which saw great expansion in the boundaries and possibilities of rock music.

The majority of the quotes by Ian Anderson and other band members used in the thesis were culled from Andrew Jackson's website *Jethro Tull Press* which is a collection of Jethro Tull feature articles and interviews from rock magazines such as *Rolling Stone*, *Creem* and *Melody Maker*. All the scans of the album cover and musical transcriptions in the thesis are my own (unless noted otherwise).

Chart Success

Jethro Tull's back-to-back Number One albums, 1972's *Thick as a Brick* and 1973's *A Passion Play*, are arguably the most uncommercial and uncompromising albums ever to top the Billboard album chart.³

So writes Craig Rosen, author and compiler of the authoritative book *The Billboard Book of Number One Albums*. *Thick as a Brick* reached number one on the U.S. *Billboard* 200 Album Chart in June 1972, where it remained for two weeks, and reached number five on the UK Albums Chart.⁴ How can an album which consists of one continuous forty-three minute song, and had no singles released from it, have been so popular?

In the mid- to late-1960s the Beatles and other bands fostered an atmosphere of artistic freedom within the music industry and created a new style of popular music in which active and concentrated listening was valued. A simple comparison between an early Beatles album (*Meet the Beatles!* from 1964) and a later Beatles album (*Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band* from 1967) illustrates how quickly this spirit of inventiveness arose. The first album is a collection of

³ Craig Rosen, *The Billboard Book of Number One Albums: The Inside Story Behind Pop Music's Blockbuster Records* (New York: Billboard Books, 1996), 144. Also available online: <http://number1albums.com/1972/06/03/thick-as-a-brick--jethro-tull-june-3-1972.aspx> (accessed May 25, 2010).

⁴ Neil Warwick, Jon Kutner, and Tony Brown, *The Complete Book of the British Charts: Singles and Albums*, 3rd ed. (London: Omnibus Press, 2004), 565.

singles primarily for dancing, while the second is an eclectic and experimental album made primarily for listening. The fact that both Beatles albums reached number one on the U.S. *Billboard* 200 Album Chart shows the drastic shift in artistic expression in popular and rock music from the mid- to late-1960s. In this period, the rock album was becoming quite an experimental art form with bands and musicians like Pink Floyd, The Doors, The Velvet Underground, Miles Davis, and Frank Zappa taking it into unheard of directions. Yet in this time of creativity and innovation, it is still remarkable that a band like Jethro Tull could release an album like *Thick as a Brick* and have it become a number one hit.

The ability to compose concept albums or extended pieces of music that are both challenging to the listener and accessible to the general popular music audience is something that few bands have accomplished. Of all the progressive and experimental rock bands in the 1960s and 1970s (besides the Beatles), only the Doors,⁵ the Jimi Hendrix Experience,⁶ Jethro Tull⁷ and Pink Floyd⁸ had number one albums on the *Billboard* 200 Album Chart.⁹ Chart success was a little easier in England for these types of bands and musicians with Jethro Tull,¹⁰ Emerson, Lake & Palmer,¹¹ Pink Floyd,¹² Yes,¹³ Rick Wakeman¹⁴ and Mike Oldfield¹⁵ having albums that reached number one on the UK Albums Chart.¹⁶ While the charts are not a critical assessment of music, they are a good indication of what is in vogue at a particular time. In the early 1970s it

⁵ *Waiting for the Sun* (1968).

⁶ *Electric Ladyland* (1968).

⁷ *Thick as a Brick* (1972), *A Passion Play* (1973).

⁸ *Dark Side of the Moon* (1973), *Wish You Were Here* (1975), *The Wall* (1980).

⁹ Rosen, *The Billboard Book of Number One Albums*.

¹⁰ *Stand Up* (1969).

¹¹ *Tarkus* (1971).

¹² *Atom Heart Mother* (1970), *Wish You Were Here* (1975), *The Final Cut* (1983).

¹³ *Tales from Topographic Oceans* (1974), *Going for the One* (1977).

¹⁴ *Journey to the Centre of the Earth* (1974).

¹⁵ *Hergest Ridge* (1974), *Tubular Bells* (1974).

¹⁶ Warwick, Kutner, and Brown, *The Complete Book of the British Charts*.

seems that the popular music audience was interested in listening to a forty-three minute rock song (perhaps if only for the novelty of it).

The Art of the Long Song

In the mid- to late-1960s and early 1970s, a number of bands successfully integrated rock music with large-scale or extended forms by using a variety of means. The most popular was the concept album which, as Roy Shuker defines it, is “unified by a theme, which can be instrumental, compositional, narrative or lyrical.”¹⁷ The Beatles’ *Sgt. Pepper’s Lonely Hearts Club Band* (1967) is generally regarded as being the first rock concept album. Although Beatles scholars like Thomas MacFarlane have pointed out that “there is no evidence of thematic or harmonic relationship between any of the album’s 13 tracks,”¹⁸ few people deny that this is a concept album. The majority of concept albums from this period consist of separate songs which tell a story (such as The Who’s *Tommy* from 1969) and to some extent resemble the 19th-century song cycles of Franz Schubert and Robert Schumann. Some bands integrated classical music with rock by either recording with a symphony orchestra (The Moody Blues, Deep Purple, Procol Harum) or interpreting classical works within a rock context (Emerson, Lake & Palmer’s version of Modest Mussorgsky’s *Pictures at an Exhibition*).

Another means explored by many progressive rock bands is the composition of large-scale pieces, some of which lasted entire album sides. While creativity and experimentation in rock music can take many forms, composing a piece of original music of formidable length, without falling into the traps of predictable and mindless repetition, extended soloing, and studio wizardry, is impressive. Creating a large-scale work that keeps the listener’s interest requires a keen understanding and use of form, harmony, arranging, and instrumentation. Employing

¹⁷ Roy Shuker, *Popular Music: The Key Concepts*. 2nd ed. (New York: Routledge, 2005), 7-8.

¹⁸ Thomas MacFarlane, “*Sgt. Pepper’s* Quest for Extended Form,” in *Sgt. Pepper and The Beatles: It Was Forty Years Ago Today*, ed. Olivier Julien (Aldershot, England: Ashgate, 2008), 37.

different styles of music, varying the mode of expression, and having a flair for dramatic storytelling are also important. John Covach points out two approaches to large-scale rock songs which bands adopted in the late 1960s:

The first is the "medley," in which a number of independent tunes are played one after the other with no break in the music and sometimes with a bit of transition to ease the way from one tune into the next. Perhaps the most famous rock medley of this type is the second side of [the Beatles'] *Abbey Road*, where tunes follow one after the other to fill up one whole side of the LP. A second way of creating pieces of extended length is to "stretch them from within," so to speak: in such a case a song of conventional length is extended by creating a long jam session in the middle, and something like [Iron Butterfly's] "In-A-Gadda-Da-Vida" is a pretty good example of this. Here the song and its reprise act as bookends surrounding the extended soloing in the middle.¹⁹

Thick as a Brick has some similarity with the first approach, yet it is much more than just a medley of tunes. Of the fourteen vocal sections, three of them repeat material heard previously which leaves eleven different "tunes." Yet there are nineteen different instrumental passages which link the tunes, some of these passages coming between sections of a particular tune. This is quite a bit more sophisticated than "a bit of transition" which characterizes the medley approach. In fact, the instrumental passages take up approximately twenty-three minutes of music while the vocal sections take up approximately twenty-one minutes, which makes the album more "transition" than "tune"! Yet the relationship between the vocal sections and the instrumental sections is more complex than just equating the vocal sections as "tunes" and the instrumental passages as "transitions," as will be discussed in more depth later.

Thick as a Brick bears little resemblance to the second approach. Ironically for such an extended piece, it is marked more by concision than by extension or stretching. It is a tightly composed collage of many musical ideas rather than a stretching of a few musical ideas. Even

¹⁹ John Covach, "Jethro Tull and the Long Song," *Progression Magazine* (Summer 1996) <http://www.ibiblio.org/johncovach/jethrotull.htm> (accessed April 14, 2010).

the passages of improvised solos are short and no section, neither vocal nor instrumental, lasts longer than five minutes. Concerning the stretching of musical material, Edward Macan writes:

when listening to the long instrumental jams of even the most gifted psychedelic bands—the Hendrix Experience, Cream, the Nice—one is initially wowed by the musicians’ daunting virtuosity, but after two or three minutes a certain numbness sets in: one wishes for a greater variety of instrumentation and dynamics, a better balance between virtuoso solos and a more melodic approach, and ultimately a sense that the music was “going somewhere.”²⁰

Thick as a Brick (which was written principally by singer, guitarist and flautist Ian Anderson) transcends Covach’s categories because of its wealth of thematic development, its unique form, and its numerous stylistic changes, all of which will be discussed in depth in the thesis.

Jethro Tull’s Long Songs

When one considers the progressive rock and jam bands of the late 1960s and early 1970s, it seems unlikely that Jethro Tull would be the first to release an album that consisted of one continuous song. Not counting live recordings, the longest song Jethro Tull wrote and recorded before *Thick as a Brick* was “My God” from *Aqualung* (1971), which is 7:08 long. Several bands broke the “eighteen minute sound barrier” (a continuous, unified song lasting the whole side of an album or more) before Jethro Tull’s *Thick as a Brick* and many composed concept albums before 1972. Yet practically all of these long pieces fit into Covach’s two categories above being either songs strung together as a medley with linking material or conventional length songs extended by instrumental solos.²¹

Thick as a Brick was a huge leap forward for Jethro Tull, but there are signs on *Aqualung* that the band was capable of a work of this magnitude. “Aqualung” and “My God” are dramatic

²⁰ Macan, *Rocking the Classics*, 41.

²¹ Some examples include “Tarkus” by Emerson, Lake & Palmer (1971), “Dark Star” by the Grateful Dead (from *Live/Dead*, 1969), “Atom Heart Mother” and “Echoes” by Pink Floyd (1970, 1971), “A Plague of Lighthouse Keepers” by Van der Graaf Generator (1971) and “Mountain Jam” by the Allman Brothers Band (1972).

pieces of music that employ several different styles and modes of expression. Yet there are even clearer signs in “By Kind Permission Of,” a ten minute track recorded live at Carnegie Hall on November 4, 1970 and included on the *Living in the Past* compilation (1972). In this piece, pianist John Evans strings together bits of the first movement of Beethoven’s Piano Sonata no. 8 in C minor (“Pathetique”), Debussy’s “Golliwogg's Cakewalk” from *Children’s Corner*, and Rachmaninoff’s Prelude in C Sharp Minor op. 3 no. 2, and combines them with his own tuneful vamping, improvising, and dueting with Anderson on flute. Because of its large-scale structure and merging of a number of different styles, this piece may be seen as a precursor to an extended work like *Thick as a Brick*.

While *Thick as a Brick* was a milestone for the band, their next studio album *A Passion Play*, was something of a millstone. While it is nearly as compelling a work as its predecessor in terms of music, lyrics, theme, and use of humor, it suffered simply because the band had already recorded a monumental album-length song and a second attempt at this endeavor was bound to fall short. While many fans (including myself) believe *A Passion Play* to be one of their most intriguing albums, it has always received negative reviews from the musical press, scarring its reputation. Ironically, Jethro Tull’s two most difficult and perplexing albums were the only ones to hit number one on the U.S. *Billboard* 200 Album Chart!

CHAPTER 2

MEDIEVAL AND RENAISSANCE INFLUENCES ON *THICK AS A BRICK*

By the early 1970s, Medieval and Renaissance influences became a defining characteristic of Jethro Tull and were reflected not only in their music, but in their lyrics, stage presence, and album covers. Before exploring some musical similarities between *Thick as a Brick* and Medieval and Renaissance music, it would be useful to consider some broader influences from these periods that began to show up early in their career.

Lyrics

From his earliest lyrical attempts on Jethro Tull's first few albums, Ian Anderson has been quite adept at writing in past literary styles and imbuing his lyrics with pastoral imagery found in pre-industrial British literature and folklore. This type of lyric writing would come to full fruition on *Songs from the Wood* (1977) and *Heavy Horses* (1978), but many early songs such as "Mother Goose" from *Aqualung* (1971) and "The Witch's Promise" from *Living in the Past* (1972) use folkloric imagery that can be found in ballads, fables, nursery rhymes and fairy tales. Several phrases in the lyrics of *Thick as a Brick* incorporate or allude to these literary genres, for instance the folk and ballad tropes "Let me tell you" and "Come all ye" in Vocal 12.²² Many of Anderson's lyrics adhere to strict rhyme schemes and poetic meters and have an affinity with traditional British narrative forms such as the ballad. In this regard, Jethro Tull was part of a larger group of bands—including Fairport Convention and Steeleye Span—who were trying to merge rock music with English folk music, folklore, and literature. Yet Anderson was not

²² My labels (Vocal 12, etc.) for the vocal sections in *Thick as a Brick* are listed in Tables 1 and 2 in chapter 5 in the section on form, pp. 55-58.

deliberately trying to imitate any particular literary form or style, an important point which will be discussed in more depth at the end of this section. The form and content of the lyrics to *Thick as a Brick* defy easy classification and stand as a unique work.

In the late 1960s, a period in rock music when addressing contemporary issues such as the Vietnam War was viewed as imperative, many of Anderson's lyrics harkened back to the past. "Living in the Past," a single released in 1969 at the height of the Vietnam War, contains the lyrics: "We'll go walking out while others shout of war's disaster. Oh we won't give in, let's go living in the past." When Anderson did address contemporary social issues in his lyrics, he often adopted the persona and tone of a Medieval or Renaissance era court jester or fool. "Sossity; You're a Woman" from *Benefit* (1970), much of the *Aqualung* album, and "Wond'ring Again" from *Living in the Past* all contain social critique delivered in this fashion. The lyrics to *Thick as a Brick* can also be viewed in this way, a critique of society from the perspective of an eight-year old boy genius (discussed further in chapter 4 on the lyrics, p. 32).

Specific references in Jethro Tull's lyrics to Medieval/Renaissance life and culture begin to show up more often beginning with *A Passion Play* (1973). The passion play itself was an early Medieval invention. Maypole dancing (though not exclusively a Medieval English tradition) is mentioned in the lyrics and was shown in the short film played during the tour for that album, "The Story of the Hare Who Lost His Spectacles." "Back-Door Angels" and "Only Solitaire," from *WarChild* (1974) contain references to fools and court jesters and the lyrics to "Minstrel in the Gallery" (1975) are written from the perspective of a minstrel looking down on his audience. Most of the songs from *Songs from the Wood* (1977) and *Heavy Horses* (1978) are about rural life in pre-industrial England and Scotland.

Stage Presence

Beginning with the tour to support Jethro Tull's second album *Stand Up* (1969), Anderson altered his appearance on stage from that of a traveling bluesman--with hat and tattered overcoat--to that of a Medieval or Renaissance era strolling minstrel. As early as Jethro Tull's participation in *The Rolling Stones Rock and Roll Circus* from December 1968, Anderson was beginning to shape his iconic persona of the slightly-mad minstrel flautist hopping up and down on one leg, as he was so often described. For Jethro Tull concerts in the early to mid 1970s, Anderson dressed in garb similar to that of a minstrel, *jongleur*, or jester, complete with tights and a codpiece. When speaking of his life as a touring musician, he often invokes minstrelsy: "It's something to do with being, a gippo [gypsy], a troubadour, a traveling musician, that peculiar romanticism about traveling around and hawking your wares, which is what we do to a bunch of different people in different places."²³

Anderson differs from his peers in folk and rock music in the manner of his vocal delivery during concerts. He doesn't use the earnest, everyman delivery of folk musicians such as Pete Seeger and Peter, Paul and Mary. His use of sardonic humor and sarcasm is closer to the type of social critique a fool or court jester would revel in and this is quite apparent on *Thick as a Brick*. Although Anderson is very serious about his musical performance on stage and expects perfection from his band mates, he is also aware of his role as an entertainer. In between songs, he engages in much stage banter, making ribald jokes about himself, his band mates or society in general, and offering snide remarks about the venue or technical difficulties with equipment. This banter creates a rapport with the audience and demonstrates how Anderson appropriates certain performance conventions of the *jongleurs* and minstrels into Jethro Tull's concerts. When

²³ Ian Anderson, from "Jethro Tull - Sweet Dream and band interviews - 1979"
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yaF7cms3MJc> (accessed June 18, 2010), 5:20.

the band performed *Thick as a Brick* during their 1972 tour, they added some surreal comedy bits making each show unpredictable and unique.

Album Covers

Jethro Tull's interest in Medievalism did not find its way onto their album covers until after *Thick as a Brick*, although the inside gatefold of *Aqualung* consists of a painting of the group inside a Gothic cathedral. The cover to *Minstrel in the Gallery* (1975) is a painting depicting courtly entertainment in the main hall of a castle or banqueting house. The group of players in the minstrels' gallery on the front cover is mirrored on the back with a photograph showing the band in the balcony of the radio station in Monte Carlo where they recorded the album.

Musical Medievalism

Beginning with their second album *Stand Up*, Anderson shifted Jethro Tull away from the electric-blues influences that dominated their first album *This Was* (1968) and adopted elements both from Medieval/Renaissance minstrel music and late 1960s acoustic folk music.²⁴ By the years 1971-1972, when *Aqualung* and *Thick as a Brick* were released, these elements were a defining characteristic of Jethro Tull's music. Anderson said in a 1982 interview of the band's movement away from the blues:

I quickly became dissatisfied with what we were doing. I found it hard to go onstage and convincingly be a polite shade of black. What really got me was that I was singing something that was essentially stolen. And it wasn't just stealing music, it was stealing somebody's emotions and point of view, almost pretending to have an awareness of what it means to be black.²⁵

²⁴ This shift away from the blues is even evident in the lyrics to the song "Play in Time" from *Benefit* (1970): "Blues were my favorite colour, till I looked around and found another song that I felt like singing."

²⁵ Ian Anderson, interviewed by Tom Silvestri, "Ian Anderson: The Jethro Tull Autodiscography," *Trouser Press* (October 1982) <http://www.tullpress.com/tpoct82.htm> (accessed June 16, 2010).

Two areas in which this shift becomes apparent are instrumentation and song form. A third, the use of modal harmony, will be addressed in chapter 5 in the section on harmony, p. 119.

Instrumentation

Anderson's increasing use of the flute and acoustic guitar from *Stand Up* onward summons up resonances with the Medieval strolling minstrels, troubadours, and trouvères who commonly accompanied themselves on the flute, recorder, and lute. The flute is one of the oldest and most widespread of all musical instruments. There is nothing particularly "Medieval" or "English" about it and the recorder was used more often by strolling minstrels.²⁶ Yet with flute in hand, Anderson became very clever at embodying the persona of a Medieval English strolling minstrel. Anderson also changed the way he played and composed for the flute. He abandoned the electric-blues-guitar influenced flute lines he played on *This Was* for lines reminiscent of Medieval and Renaissance music. For instance in "My Sunday Feeling," the first song on their first album *This Was*, Anderson employs the call and response verse form, commonly used by blues musicians such as Muddy Waters and B.B. King in which the singer sings a line, then "responds" to it with a riff on guitar or harmonica. The opening section (Vocal 1) of *Thick as a Brick* uses the same convention of call and response, yet the blues influence has all but vanished. The lilting dotted eighth notes, the ascending contours of the melody, and the brightness of the F Major/F Mixolydian key contrast with the dark, heavy, descending contours of "My Sunday Feeling." Edward Macan's observation on this shift is helpful:

While modality and the I-IV-V blues progression coexisted uneasily in British rock during the early days of psychedelia, by the late 1960s progressive rock

²⁶ Jeremy Montagu, Howard Mayer Brown, Jaap Frank and Ardal Powell, "Flute" in *Grove Music Online*. *Oxford Music Online*, http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/40569?q=flute&search=quick&pos=2&_start=1#firsthit (accessed January 29, 2010).

musicians had largely abandoned the rigid framework of the blues progression in favor of modality's greater flexibility.²⁷

Lastly, regarding his flute playing, Anderson often sang through the flute on Jethro Tull's blues influenced songs. This technique gave the instrument more of a thick, heavy, guitar timbre. However, on much of *Thick as Brick*, he plays with a pure, clear timbre.

Anderson's movement away from the blues is also evident in his use of the acoustic guitar (and other plucked instruments), creating associations with the troubadours' and trouvères' use of the lute in secular Medieval song. On their first album *This Was*, Anderson sings, plays the flute and harmonica, and dabbles on the piano. On their second album *Stand Up*, Anderson adds four more instruments to his recorded repertoire: acoustic guitar, balalaika, bouzouki, and mandolin. Anderson writes:

When Mick [Abrahams] left the band in December of '68 to be replaced by Martin Barre, it offered me the chance to broaden my flute playing by moving out of the blues form and towards the use of a more eclectic mix of influences, some half-formed from childhood memories, some, more recently adopted from Classical music, Asian music and the more adventurous peer group progressive pop and rock work of the time. Curiously, Mick's departure also re-awakened the guitar player in me; not only acoustic and electric guitars but mandolin, bouzouki, balalaika and almost anything with strings (and frets) attached!²⁸

From this album on, Anderson makes the acoustic guitar (and other acoustic plucked instruments) an essential element in the band's music and begins to develop a characteristic style as identifiable as his singing and flute playing. Although Anderson never recorded with the lute, "Bourrée" from *Stand Up* was his arrangement of that movement from J.S. Bach's Lute Suite No. 1 in E minor, BWV 996. On *Thick as a Brick*, guitarist Martin Barre plays the lute in the section Vocal 11 ("The poet and the wise man stand behind the gun..."). With Anderson

²⁷ Macan, *Rocking the Classics*, 52.

²⁸ Ian Anderson, *Jethro Tull: The Official Website*, <http://jtull.com/musicians/iananderson/equipment.html> (accessed January 28, 2010).

strumming on acoustic guitar, Barre plays arpeggios on the lute. The use of Medieval instruments by the band members becomes more pronounced during the tour for 1977's *Songs from the Wood*: on the song "Velvet Green," Martin Barre played the lute, keyboardist David Palmer played portative organ, and drummer Barriemore Barlow played the nakers and tabor.

A final example of musical Medievalism in early Jethro Tull is the "chant" section in "My God" from the *Aqualung* album. In the middle of a song attacking the "bloody church of England," Anderson obviously mimics plainchant and the serene character of Medieval sacred music in general.

The Medieval *Lai* and *Thick as a Brick*

A second factor, besides instrumentation, that shows Jethro Tull moving away from the blues and towards acoustic folk music in 1969 is their adoption of a wider variety of song forms. Although this topic will be covered more fully in chapter 5, I would like to focus now on one song form which *Thick as a Brick* resembles: the Medieval *lai*.²⁹ Although its origins are obscure, most Medieval scholars believe the *lai* began as an extended poetic form created in the late twelfth century. The French poet Marie de France is the first poet of definitive authorship of the form. She wrote her *lais* in Anglo-Norman, a dialect of Old-French, and the subject matter was predominantly courtly love. Beginning in the early thirteenth century, the form was taken up by the *trouvères* and *troubadours*, who expanded and diversified it, added music and made it variable in length depending on the number of stanzas. The *lai* would later be taken up by Guillaume de Machaut, who regularized the *lai* into twelve stanzas. Machaut added a feature to his *lais* that *Thick as a Brick* also has: the last stanza repeats material from the first stanza, rounding off the form and bringing it to a satisfying conclusion. Unlike the motet or the mass, which were cultivated by composers throughout the Renaissance and Baroque eras and beyond,

²⁹ Thanks to my advisor Dr. Stephen Valdez for suggesting this to me.

the *lai* was abandoned after Machaut. Consequently, it is an unadulterated example of Medieval song form.

The structure of the lyrics and music of *Thick as a Brick* shows many similarities to the forms of the *lais* written by the trouvères and troubadours of the thirteenth century, and to Machaut's *lais* from the late fourteenth century. Concerning the former, Christopher Page writes: "For the troubadours and trouvères a *lai* was a specific lyric form, of most ambitious design, in which each subdivision of the text had its own metric form and musical setting."³⁰ Similarly, *Thick as a Brick* is "of most ambition design," and most of the vocal sections have their own metric form and musical setting. Concerning Machaut's *lais*, Richard H. Hoppin writes: "It is obvious that the poetic structure of the *lai* must determine the larger aspects of its musical form. The different stanzaic forms require different music, and only the last stanza can, and does, repeat the melody of the first."³¹ Similarly, a portion of the first vocal section of *Thick as a Brick* is repeated at the end of the piece. Of the fourteen vocal sections, three repeat or alter previous material, leaving eleven *different* vocal sections, which closely coincides with Machaut's *lai* form. Lastly, Hoppin points out in the above quote that "the poetic structure of the *lai* must determine the larger aspects of its musical form." Expanding on this, Isabelle Ragnard writes: "The absence of a refrain, a relatively unconstraining framework for the versification, requires that the poet "invent" the form [of the music] as he goes along, just as he freely invents his poetic material."³² This is true of *Thick as a Brick* in that Anderson wrote the lyrics first, shaping the music to fit the varying structures of the lyrical stanzas.³³

³⁰ Christopher Page, *Voices and Instruments of the Middle Ages: Instrumental Practice and Songs in France, 1100-1300* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), 93.

³¹ Richard H. Hoppin, *Medieval Music* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1978), 404.

³² Isabelle Ragnard, liner notes from *Ay Mi!: Lais et Virelais: Guillaume de Machaut*. Emmanuel Bonnardot. OPS 30-171. CD (Paris, France: Opus 111, 1997), 11.

³³ Ian Anderson, from an interview in Greg Russo's *Flying Colours: The Jethro Tull Reference Manual* (New York: Crossfire Publications, 2000), 69.

But was Anderson modeling *Thick as a Brick* on the form of the Medieval *lai* when he composed it? Was he even aware of the form? My purpose in pointing out the similarities between the forms of the *lai* and *Thick as a Brick* is not to show that Anderson knew of the form and tried to emulate it, but that his compositional thought process was comparable to that of a Medieval musician writing a *lai*. In an article from *Creem* magazine, he stated that he does not get his musical ideas from listening to or studying music, but from an emotional response to what he calls “folk memory.” When asked by the interviewer, “Have you always liked traditional English folk music, or did you pick it up recently by listening to old recordings or something?,” Anderson replied:

No, I don't listen to anything. I hate that approach, personally speaking. The academic delving and the subtle sharpness of traditional English music is a relatively sterile intellectual exercise ... I believe first and foremost in a folk memory. I'm of particularly mixed origin; my mother is English, my father is Scottish. So you have the peculiar sort of mixture of origins in me. But I do believe in a folk memory or something which is at once Anglo-Saxon and Celtic mixed together from way back a long, long time ago and I believe that we retain something of, certainly not the academic wherewithal to put that type of music together, but something of the emotional response to that music.³⁴

Referring to the overt folk and Medieval/Renaissance elements in Jethro Tull's albums *Songs from the Wood*, *Heavy Horses* and *Stormwatch*, Anderson said in a 1993 *Rolling Stone* interview: “looking back on some of that stuff, it was a bit self-conscious in its acknowledgement of formal historical references from English, Irish, Scottish and European folds. As with the blues, it's best when it just oozes out of you when you're trying to write a song.”³⁵ The Medievalism in *Thick as a Brick* seems to come from this “oozing,” this emotional response to folk memory, rather than any conscious effort to recreate it. While it is unlikely that Anderson was familiar with the

³⁴ Ian Anderson, interviewed by Air-Wreck Genheimer, “Ian Anderson: Too Old to Rock 'n' Roll? Never!,” *Creem* (June 1977) <http://www.tullpress.com/crjun77.htm> (accessed April 5, 2010).

³⁵ Ian Anderson, interviewed by Graham Fuller, *Rolling Stone*, issue 668 (October 1993) <http://www.tullpress.com/rsoct93.htm> (accessed December 10, 2010).

Medieval *lai* as a musical form and explicitly tried to model it when he was writing *Thick as a Brick*, it is possible that a modern songwriter grappling with a large-scale piece can follow similar thought patterns as the trouvères or Machaut and create a comparable structure.³⁶

³⁶ Anderson shows evidence of his knowledge of the *lai* a few years later in 1977 when he uses the word in “Cup of Wonder” from the *Songs from the Wood* album: “For the May Day is the great day, sung along the old straight track. And those who ancient lines did lay will heed the song that calls them back.” Ernest Adams points out that with the word “lay,” Anderson creates a homophone (or more precisely a heterograph) with three different spellings and meanings: lay, ley and *lai*. Adams’s lucid explanation of “lay” is on Jan Voorbij’s website *Cup of Wonder: The Annotated Jethro Tull Lyrics Page* <http://www.cupofwonder.com/songs3.html#ancient> (accessed June 14, 2010).

CHAPTER 3

ORIGINAL PACKAGING OF THE ALBUM

Just as the music of *Thick as a Brick* was inspired by the broadened possibilities and creative atmosphere of rock music in the late 1960s and early 1970s, so was its album cover. The album cover became a wildly creative art form during this period and browsing the stacks in the rock section of a used record store even today can be quite an adventure. One may find the psychedelic ambigram on the Grateful Dead's *American Beauty* (1970), the working zipper of the Rolling Stones' *Sticky Fingers* (1971), the rotating wheel of *Led Zeppelin III* (1970), or the stark, enigmatic whiteness of the Beatles' *White Album* (1968). Some record covers were designed to be simulacra of physical objects and were "interactive," almost like origami puzzles. Jefferson Airplane's *Long John Silver* (1972) can be folded into a cigar box. Alice Cooper's *School's Out* (1972) folds out into a school desk. Bob Marley and the Wailers' first album *Catch a Fire* (1973) resembles a Zippo lighter with a "lid" that flips open revealing the record. Isaac Hayes's *Black Moses* (1971) folds out into the shape of a cross and shows the singer attired in robe and sandals. Jethro Tull's *Thick as a Brick* not only looks like a newspaper, it actually *is* a newspaper, *The St. Cleve Chronicle & Linwell Advertiser*. Once you open the gatefold and unfold the bottom section, you realize you're holding a full size twelve page newspaper filled with dozens of inane, preposterous stories and advertisements plus the lyrics (supposedly written by an eight year old boy genius), a mock review of the album, a crossword puzzle, and a naughty connect-the-dots puzzle. While some of these album cover designs were nothing more than

kitsch, it shows how malleable and expressive the medium of the long-playing disc could be in terms of its packaging.

The Significance of Album Covers

It is difficult these days to appreciate the visual impact and selling power that an album cover had in the 1950s through the 1980s. Roger Dean, who created many of Yes's album covers (among other bands), said "I bought the Grateful Dead album *Aoxomoxoa* a year before I could afford a record player simply for Rick Griffin's cover."³⁷ The compact disc, with its small size and uncompromising plastic jewel case, is not much of an attention grabber (although designs for CD box sets can be just as diverse and creative as LPs were). Downloadable MP3 files do come with a wide array of additional online visual and textual materials, but this is a medium with no physicality.

Album covers did for musicians in previous decades what music videos and online websites do for artists now – attract attention to the artist and their music. Some record covers, like *Whipped Cream & Other Delights* by Herb Alpert's Tijuana Brass (1965), attracted attention to themselves because of their sexual content. Some attracted attention because of their artistic merit, aesthetic beauty or their shock value. Some albums like *Trout Mask Replica* by Captain Beefheart & his Magic Band (1969) attracted attention simply because they were odd. *Thick as a Brick* fits into this last category; it is definitely odd!

While album covers have been creative in terms of design, graphics, illustration, and photography since the inception of the long-playing record in the late 1940s, the musicians themselves had limited input into their design. Many record labels had an identifiable style which was developed by art departments with graphic designers. Often these graphic designers

³⁷ Roger Dean, *45 rpm: A Visual History of the Seven-Inch Record*, ed. Spencer Drate (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2002), 97.

fitted the liner notes, song lyrics, and photographs or drawings of the musicians into a standard template. This changed in the late 1960s and early 1970s when the musicians themselves began to consider the album packaging as a vital avenue of expression. Steve Jones and Martin Sorger write: “[a]s the market for rock music grew, recording artists gained more leverage, and clauses for artistic control began appearing in contracts, including control over packaging. Spearheading the trend were the Beatles.”³⁸

In his article on the album covers of the Beatles, Ian Inglis points out four functions of the album cover.³⁹ The first is to protect the record from damage, the second is to advertise the recording, the third is to provide accompanying materials to the recording, and the last is to be a work of art which can be appreciated in and of itself. While virtually all album covers accomplish the first three of Inglis’ functions, fewer accomplish the fourth. The Beatles paved the way for rock musicians who saw the album cover both as a work of art and as an integral part of the album. The cover of *Sgt. Pepper’s Lonely Hearts Club Band* (1967) was especially influential in this regard. The rise of psychedelic art, innovations in graphic design and printing technology, and the creative freedom that record companies granted artists in this period all produced an expansive environment for album cover design. As Jones and Sorger say: “The cover and the record together acted as a kind of complete audio-visual experience.”⁴⁰ Joni Mitchell is in a class by herself in turning the LP into a multivalent medium of self expression. Beginning with her first album, *Song to a Seagull* (1968), she augmented her roles as principal songwriter, lyricist, and performer by painting many of her album covers. Similarly, *Thick as a Brick* qualifies as album cover which is a work of art unto itself.

³⁸ Steve Jones and Martin Sorger, “Covering Music: A Brief History and Analysis of Album Cover Design” *Journal of Popular Music Studies* 11-12, no. 1 (August 26, 2006): 75.

³⁹ Ian Inglis, “‘Nothing You Can See That Isn’t Shown’: The Album Covers of the Beatles” *Popular Music* 20, no. 1 (January 2001): 83-84.

⁴⁰ Jones and Sorger, “Covering Music,” 77.

Some of the more literarily-inclined songwriters in the rock era went beyond composing lyrics and had their writing experiments spill over onto the album packaging. Bob Dylan included extra poems/lyrics entitled “Some other kinds of songs...Poems by Bob Dylan” on the back of his 1964 album *Another Side of Bob Dylan*. Jim Morrison included his poem “The Celebration of the Lizard” on the inside gatefold of the Doors’ *Waiting for the Sun* (1968).⁴¹ In addition to the lyrics (printed on the two record sleeves), Peter Gabriel included a prose story on the inside gatefold of Genesis’s *The Lamb Lies Down on Broadway* (1974). In essence, the story of *The Lamb* is told twice, first in the lyrics and second in the prose story. *Thick as a Brick* is also a unique literary experiment with the members of the band writing all the material for the twelve page newspaper.

The Making of *The St. Cleve Chronicle*

Concerning the time and effort the band put into the design of the album cover, Anderson said this in an interview from 1979:

All of that album cover ... and I've said this before and it's absolutely true, took longer to put together than the album. I'm not suggesting it's any more important, but it took a long time to write all of that. I did, I suppose, more than half of it; Jeffrey [Hammond] did quite a lot and John Evans did a bit, and it was put together, put into columns and laid out, by Royston Eldridge at Chrysalis.⁴²

Jethro Tull finished the American leg of their *Aqualung* tour on November 18, 1971⁴³ and immediately began the process of writing, arranging, rehearsing, recording, and mixing *Thick as a Brick*. In two interviews, Anderson says it took approximately one month to make the record

⁴¹ The Doors intended to include an extended musical performance of the poem on the *Waiting for the Sun* album, but only the last section “Not to Touch the Earth” was included. A live recording of the entire work appears on *Absolutely Live* (1970).

⁴² Ian Anderson, interviewed by Bryan Matthew for “The Jethro Tull Story, Part 3: Thick As A Brick to Passion Play” for BBC Radio, World Service, March 1979 <http://www.tullpress.com/bbc79c.htm> (accessed June 3, 2010).

⁴³ Greg Russo, *Flying Colours: The Jethro Tull Reference Manual* (New York: Crossfire Publications, 2000), 224.

(two weeks to arrange and rehearse the music and then ten days to two weeks to record).⁴⁴ In another interview, Anderson says the process took a little over six weeks.⁴⁵ Regardless of which account is correct, the band had the music recorded (except for some overdubs) by the end of December 1971. One month to a little over six weeks is an incredibly short period of time to produce a piece of music of such complexity. The band and Royston Eldridge must have spent all of January and February writing and designing the newspaper, since the album was released in the UK on March 10, 1972. To complicate matters, the band started another tour on January 6, 1972, so presumably they wrote the material for the newspaper while they were traveling throughout Scandinavia and Western Europe. Concerning this, Jeffrey Hammond says: “I just remember doing a lot of recording into a Dictaphone ... or a small tape recorder, and tapes got sent off to various secretaries to type up. But most of it was giggling, I think, and laughing at some of the more immature sections of it.”⁴⁶

Royston Eldridge was uniquely qualified to take on such an unusual project. Before being hired by Chrysalis Records, he worked as a rock journalist for the popular British music periodicals *Melody Maker* and *Sounds* and also for a small town newspaper. As David Rees puts it: “he had the possibly unique experience of leaving a newspaper to work for a record company only to find one of his first tasks was to compile a newspaper!”⁴⁷ Eldridge gives his story on designing the cover for *Thick as a Brick* on the *Jethro Tull Classic Artists* documentary:

When the group had the idea to do it like a newspaper, I was the obvious mug to help them put it together. It was a pretty complex thing, actually. I'd hate to try to

⁴⁴ Ian Anderson, interviewed by Christopher Scapelliti, “Jethro Tull: Tull Tales” *Guitar World* (September 1999) http://www.guitarworld.com/article/jethro_tull_tull_tales (accessed June 5, 2010); Ian Anderson, from interview on the remastered CD of *Thick as a Brick*. 7243 4 95400 2 6 (Chrysalis Records, 1997), 6:20-6:45.

⁴⁵ Ian Anderson, quoted in Scott Allen Nollen’s *Jethro Tull: A History of the Band, 1968-2001* (Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland & Company, Inc., 2002), 82.

⁴⁶ Jeffrey Hammond, from interview on the remastered CD of *Thick as a Brick*. 7243 4 95400 2 6 (Chrysalis Records, 1997), 9:41-9:59.

⁴⁷ David Rees, *Minstrels in the Gallery: A History of Jethro Tull* (Middlesex, England: Firefly Publishing, 1998), 49.

do it now. I don't think you could do it nowadays. There were enormous problems with how you put it together to keep the record safe, who was going to print it. Some of the paper was too thin and tore too easily. We had problems with retailers making sure it fit into the racks. Everything in the paper, the whole twelve pages from births, deaths, marriages, sport reports (the weirdest sports you even heard of), it was all written by the group. Every photograph features either friends of the group, members of the road crew, even a review of the album inside. [Manager] Terry Ellis, for instance, he's featured in a photograph. [Producer] Robin Black is the roller skating champion. Every small ad had some relevance.⁴⁸

Jethro Tull was not the first nor the last to make the cover of an album look like a newspaper. The Dave Brubeck Quartet (*Dave Brubeck at Storyville: 1954*) and Elvis Presley (*Elvis Sails!*) were the first to use this trope in the 1950s. Artists like Pete Seeger (*Gazette Vol. 2*), Jefferson Airplane (*Volunteers*), and The Four Seasons (*The Genuine Imitation Life Gazette*) used it in the 1960s. John Lennon's overtly political album *Some Time in New York City*, with the lyrics to the songs printed in vertical columns on the cover, was released in June 1972, just months after *Thick as a Brick*. Guns N' Roses used the format for their *G N' R Lies* album (1988). Yet none of these albums approach the expansiveness, depth, or the comic absurdity of the *Thick as a Brick* newspaper, the front page of which is scanned here:

⁴⁸ *Jethro Tull: Classic Artists: Their Fully Authorized Story*. Produced and directed by Jon Brewer. DVD (Image Entertainment, 2008), 51:24-52:39.

THICK AS A BRICK

JUDGES DISQUALIFY "LITTLE MILTON" IN LAST MINUTE RUMPUS

ART DEMO FORCES CLOSURE

THREE poets and five painters were arrested yesterday afternoon outside Lady Paritt House after repeatedly causing disturbance and harassing members of the public visiting the museum and gallery throughout the day. They were demonstrating against gallery policy of showing only resident exhibition works, and led by heavily bearded Ahab Gross demanded that the Gal-



Ugly notes at Constable Grimpaire tries to calm the protesters.

ery showed the "work of the people" and gave more attention to new and unknown local artists. Mr. Gross allegedly squirted a tube of Cadmium Yellow paint on the wall, and signed his name on the policeman's helmet. Aided by other scruffy members of the action group, Gross tied up the policeman and attempted to auction off the "work of art" to passers-by. Said the unfortunate Constable Grimpaire later, "I was absolutely disgusted. No one even made even made an offer to help me."

Following the release of the policeman by a number of construction workers who were close at hand, the demonstration moved inside the Gallery where several works were damaged and obscene appendages were drawn on some fine old paintings of teachers. The arrests took place following a scuffle involving the artists and a group of Womens Lib supporters from Bursley on a three-day outing. Several of the ladies were badly bruised and unfortunately their match with Chelsea F.C. tomorrow has had to be cancelled.

THE SOCIETY FOR LITERARY ADVANCEMENT AND GESTATION, (SLAG), announced their decision late last night to disqualify eight year old prizewinner Gerald (Little Milton) Bostock following the hundreds of protests and threats received after the reading of his epic poem "Thick as a Brick" on B.B.C. Television last Monday night.

A hastily reconvened panel of Judges accepted the decision by four leading child psychiatrists that the boy's mind was seriously unbalanced and that his work was a product of an "extremely unwholesome attitude towards life, his God and Country". Bostock was recommended for psychiatric treatment following examination "without delay". The first prize will now be presented to runner up Mary Whiteyard (aged 12) for her essay on Christian ethics entitled, "He died to save the little Children".

The Literary Competition, which was for children aged from 7 to 16 years of age, was sponsored by leading national newspapers and received thousands of entries from schools all over Britain. Mr. Humphrey Martin, the Headmaster of Moorvale Primary School said: "Gerald, nicknamed 'Little Milton' by his English master because of his poetic ability, was mentally advanced for his age, although inclined on occasions to obscure and verbose assertions which led him to being somewhat unpopular with his schoolmates. He went on to say that without doubt the child had a great future academically and that his progress was unsurpassed in the history of Moorvale Primary. Gerald, and his parents moved to St. Cleveland four years ago from Manchester when Mr. Bostock decided for health reasons to move to Cleveland. Mr. Bostock now does occasional gardening work while his wife

Daphne is well known to the Congregation of St. Clevs Parish Church for her activities in social work and her wonderful buffet luncheons at the fete last Saturday. Well done, Daphne! Mr. Bostock said this morning of "Little Milton's" disqualification, "We are heartbroken at the way the Judges changed their minds, and the loss of the prize money and scholarship means we shall find difficulty in paying the instalments on Gerald's Encyclopaedia Britannica. I shall have to do Dr. Musson's roses next week after all." When he heard of the decision against him, Gerald went to his room and locked the door. "Mrs. Bostock and I are sorry vexed at the way this has turned out", said Mr. Bostock of No. 6 Pollitt Close, St. Clevs.

Many local residents are also annoyed and hurt by the news and an angry mob led by Gerald and his mother in St. Clevs Chronicle prints the full text of the disqualified

"notes" the "Pteroisaurus" flew away at an "Amazing speed" in the direction of the public library.
Hasty Snag
 Fortunately I was able to make a photographic testimonial of the "Ship in the sky" (Reproduced above).



The Grimpaire object over the library. The "photograph" and P.C. Grimpaire are being "forwarded to East Anglia Divisional Headquarters" for "further enquiries".



Flashback to last week's prize-winners dinner held in Gerald's honour by the Committee of the St. Clevs District Art and Literary Society at the Paritt Rooms. Left to right: Local Clevs Party Parritt, Mrs. and Mrs. Bostock, Gerald Bostock, Lady Parritt, Julia, Gerald's class with whom he writes poems.

poem this week on page 7.
 G... ..
 Many of the viewers who heard Gerald read his work in the "Young Artists" programme... ..
 one poem but a series of separate poems put together merely

to appear impressive. Many of the viewers' complaints were centred around: "Little Milton's" use of a four-letter word during the interview... ..
 The Producer of "Young Artists" Michael Fenwick said later,

"We have come to expect that sort of language from adults on television these days, but to hear it from a child of eight is particularly depressing. When I was very young, other viewers knew what the word g... .. meant."

LITTLE MILTON IN SCHOOL - GIRL PREGNANCY ROW

A fourteen-year old schoolgirl this week blamed her pregnancy on Gerald Bostock, the eight-year old poet at the centre of this week's major St. Clevs controversy.

The girl, 14-year old Julia Fealey, a junior member of the St. Clevs District Art and Literary Society and a poet in her own right, is known to have been friendly with Gerald for some time and has often written poems with him. The accusation was outrageous, said her family doctor, and there was no question of Gerald Bostock being called upon for a medical test, since the girl was obviously lying to protect the real father, but in her state of anxiety showed no sign of changing her story. Mrs. Daphne Bostock, Gerald's mother already much upset over the events of this

week, told our reporter: "It's disgusting. She's always been jealous of my Gerald."

DIRECTOR ACCUSED

John Bowden, 35, managing director of Trentlett Avenue, St. Clevs, was remanded on bail until December 19 at the Assizes accused of dishonestly handling two blouses at the High Street, St. Clevs between October 13th and October 15th. Bowden was bailed in his own recognisance of £50.

Mongrel dog soils actor's foot

The cameras were rolling film actor Robert E. Levi was addressing his men in the making of his new film "Biggles" and the snake-woman when a mongrel dog soiled his foot. The dog belonged to Japanese make-up artist Tatu Tuya who recently became resident in St. Clevs. He explained later poor People was taken short. Picture on page 8.

HEAD INJURY

Fifty-two year old Sarah Pickles of the High Street, St. Clevs, cut her head when she tripped over while walking in the High Street, St. Clevs.

Figure 1. Cover of *Thick as a Brick*. Copyright © 1972 Chrysalis Records Ltd. Used by permission of Chrysalis Records Ltd.

Content of the Newspaper

The St. Cleve Chronicle & Linwell Advertiser contains over sixty articles, more than thirty pictures, drawings and illustrations, want ads, a horoscope, puzzles, classified ads, television and radio listings, advertisements, and comic strips. The articles consist of local news stories, editorials, advice columns, and sports reports, most of which display the band's absurd sense of humor. While many of them are inane and preposterous ("Mongrel Dog Soils Actor's Foot on p. 1" and "Magistrate Fines Himself" on p. 3), several have a quite serious tone. For instance, "Do Not See Me Rabbit" on p. 9 tells the story of WWII R.A.F. pilot who was shot down over London by a German Me. 109 fighter in the summer of 1940.

Several of the articles address the controversy surrounding Gerald Bostock (the supposed author of the "epic poem" *Thick as a Brick*) and Jethro Tull's musical interpretation of the poem. "Judges Disqualify 'Little Milton' in Last Minute Rumpus" on the front page reports that Bostock's reading of his poem on B.B.C. television caused protests from viewers who felt that the work "was a product of an 'extremely unwholesome attitude towards life, his God and Country.'" Just below this, another article entitled "Little Milton in School-Girl Pregnancy Row" states that a fourteen year old girl, Julia Fealey, accused the eight-year old Bostock of impregnating her. On p. 3, "Major Beat Group Records Gerald's Poem" reports that "one-legged pop flautist Ian Anderson...was so enthused by [*Thick as a Brick*] he wrote forty-five minutes of pop music to go with it." On p. 5, the article "Chrysalis and Bostock Firm Foundation Deal" reports that a special royalty on all sales of *Thick as a Brick* will go towards a fund called the "Bostock Foundation" to assist young boys and girls in the literary arts. The article also says that Bostock has signed with Chrysalis Records to be the first participant in a series of spoken word recordings. Page 7 contains the full text of the poem with the preface: "We print here, for all to

read, Gerald Bostock's controversial poem "Thick as a Brick" which caused so much controversy." Underneath the lyrics we find "Music Review - New Tull L.P.," a review of the record in which Julian Stone-Mason B.A. (Anderson himself) sums up the record in this fashion: "One doubts at times the validity of what appears to be an expanding theme throughout the two sides of this record but the result is at worst entertaining and at least aesthetically palatable." All of these articles contribute to the "concept" of *Thick as Brick*, Jethro Tull putting to music a controversial poem written by a marginalized and misunderstood boy genius. Undoubtedly one of the strangest concepts for a concept album!

Most of the material in the newspaper is simply the reporting of everyday life in a supposed small town in the north of England. It is evident that the band had great fun writing and designing it. There is an obituary on p. 2 with the names of the recently deceased being "Bury," "Graves," "Hurse," and "Stiff." Page 4 contains a hilariously bad poem "Ode to a Nose" submitted by a reader. A column about pets on p. 5 is written by a "motoring correspondent" who describes animals in terms of vehicles. In the "Weekend Radio" listings on p. 7, this curious entry appears: "Serious Music, Delirius D. Rivel, Myart, Randelsson, Sherbet, Gettintonmann, Rightonmann, Lisp and Ibetyoure Boredwith-Thisky," obviously puns on composers' last names. In the classified ads on p. 9, we find this: "Brick urgently required. Must be thick and well kept." There are also ridiculous references to stuffed penguins, rabbits, and non-rabbits throughout the newspaper. This type of absurd humor was greatly influenced by *Monty Python's Flying Circus*.

There are many subtle references to band members and people associated with Jethro Tull scattered throughout the newspaper. In the classified ads on p. 10, there is an ad for Royston Estate Agency Ltd. with its address as 44 Eldridge Street, an obvious reference to Royston Eldridge. Eldridge's name also appears in an ad on p. 11 and in a picture caption on p. 12. John

Covach points out that in the article “Visiting Prof. Gives Talk” on p. 5 the professor’s name, Andrew Jorgensen, contains “Anderson.” In the article “Man Threw Bottle” on p. 2, we learn that the man who threw the bottle at Jorgensen while he was giving his talk was Albert Innes, which contains “Ian.”⁴⁹ On p. 11, there is coverage of the St. Clevians’ favorite local sport “fennel.” A photograph shows a player Max Quad (probably bassist Jeffrey Hammond) being restrained by an umpire (Ian Anderson) after attacking another player, the Rev. John Smythe-Liphook (probably guitarist Martin Barre) who is lying limp on the field. This type of absurdist sports humor reminds one of the “Upper Class Twit of the Year,” “Silly Olympics,” and “The Philosophers’ Football Match” sketches from *Monty Python’s Flying Circus*.

Links to *A Passion Play*

While there appears to be little thematic connection between the music and lyrics of *Thick as a Brick* and their next album *A Passion Play* (other than they both contain one conceptual, album-length composition), there are obvious associations between the two album covers. The cover for *A Passion Play* is a gatefold with the lyrics printed on the inside. Glued to the inside spine is a playbill for a performance of *A Passion Play* at “The Linwell Theatre” on Parrish St. by the Linwell Players. The *Thick as a Brick* newspaper is called *The St. Cleve Chronicle & Linwell Advertiser*. It appears that Linwell is a neighboring village to St. Cleve in the band’s fictional world. Parrish St. is also mentioned many times in the *St. Cleve Chronicle*. Two of the members of the Linwell Players in *A Passion Play* are Max Quad (Jeffrey Hammond) and John Tetrad (Barriemore Barlow). In the coverage of the fennel game on pp. 11-12 of the *St. Cleve Chronicle*, two of the players are named Max Quad and John Tetrad (again Jeffrey Hammond and Barriemore Barlow). It seems that these gentlemen lead busy lives, playing fennel

⁴⁹ John Covach, “Jethro Tull and the Long Song,” *Progression Magazine* (Summer 1996) <http://www.ibiblio.org/johncovach/jethrotull.htm> (accessed June 9, 2010).

by day and doing a bit of acting in the evenings. It's obvious that the band intended no deep connections between the covers of the two albums and that they were just having some fun.⁵⁰

Thick as a Brick is one of those albums in which one must have both the original LP and the remastered CD to fully appreciate. The listener needs the original LP since the newspaper provides the satirical foundation for the concept and is one of most innovative and entertaining record covers ever conceived in the rock era. Also, it cannot be faithfully reproduced in the CD or MP3 format. On the other hand, the listener needs the remastered CD or MP3 for the vast improvement in clarity and sound quality which reveals additional timbres and layers of sound in the music. If the LP is difficult to obtain, there are page-by-page scans of the newspaper available for viewing online.⁵¹

⁵⁰ The name Derek Small can be found in many places in the *Thick as a Brick* newspaper as well as in the *A Passion Play* playbill (Martin Barre). Harry Shearer's mutton-chopped bass player Derek Smalls in the rock mockumentary *This is Spinal Tap* was most likely inspired by this.

⁵¹ Nancy Street Network, *Thick as a Brick* <http://www.orthogonal.com.au/music/taab/index.htm> (accessed July 21, 2010).

CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS OF THE LYRICS

The lyrics to *Thick as a Brick* are notoriously confusing and confounding.⁵² In addition, the original packaging of the album further confuses the listener with its twelve page newspaper filled with preposterous news stories and advertisements. John Covach writes that:

The *St. Cleve Chronicle* is densely packed with references that bear upon the lyrics to *Thick as a Brick*. [T]he album packaging is almost as important in figuring out the themes addressed in the lyrics as the lyrics themselves; and this creates a crucial interdependence between the music, lyrics, and packaging that was unprecedented in its day.⁵³

This leaves the modern day listener at a disadvantage, since the original packaging is impossible to reproduce in the CD or MP3 format. As stated before, the only way to experience the album as it was intended to be experienced is to find a copy of the original LP online, in a library, or in a used record store.

Jethro Tull and the Concept Album

Many of Jethro Tull's albums could be considered concept albums, in that the lyrics are concerned with a specific topic or theme. *Too Old to Rock n' Roll, Too Young to Die* is probably the best example in that it is a song cycle which tells the story of an aging rocker who finds, many years after his heyday, that he is in vogue again. Several of Jethro Tull's albums have songs with a specific theme in their lyrics, but these albums also contain songs that have little or nothing to do with that theme. Some albums that fall into this category are, *Aqualung* (organized

⁵² The lyrics to *Thick as a Brick* are included in their entirety in chapter 5 in the section on form, pp. 61-69 (reprinted by permission of Hal Leonard Corporation).

⁵³ John Covach, "Jethro Tull and the Long Song," *Progression Magazine* (Summer 1996) <http://www.ibiblio.org/johncovach/jethrotull.htm> (accessed April 14, 2010).

religion), *Songs From the Wood* (English folklore), *Stormwatch* (the forces of nature over man), and *A* (cold war paranoia). *Thick as a Brick* and *A Passion Play* are concept albums that fall into a slightly different category in that their music is unified, being one continuous song, yet their lyrics are oblique and difficult to grasp, which clouds the “concept.”

Although *Thick as a Brick* is a concept album in terms of its music and packaging, any attempt to glean a coherent interpretation or meaning from the lyrics is bound to be misguided because that was not Anderson’s intention. In 1976, when asked by an interviewer “how did the conception for *Thick As A Brick* start?,” Anderson replied:

It wasn't a conception really, just the act of writing a song thinking about what I might have been, what I began life as being, what kind of childhood images moved me — dealt with in a very oblique fashion, because I'm not setting out to create a threadbare tale of emotional woe or to even delineate emotional happenings. I'm just creating a background lyrical summation of a lot of things I feel about being a contemporary child in this age and the problems that one has — the problems of being precocious beyond one's age or having interests beyond one's age, and to some extent being ruled in a kind of heavy-handed, unexplained fashion by father-figures.⁵⁴

Anderson muses on several specific themes in the lyrics, yet he never intended them to be easily digestible or unified, describing them as “very oblique.” Anderson speaks of the lyrics being about “childhood images,” and this is reflected in the fragmentary and episodic nature of the many sections of the lyrics. This steers listeners away from thinking he has created a linear storyline with a plot, or a “tale of emotional woe.” Above all, Anderson obliges the listener not to take the lyrics too seriously. In interviews, he often brings up the humor of *Monty Python’s Flying Circus* as a way of describing the satirical and absurd aspects of not only the album’s lyrics, but also its music, packaging and stage show. In an interview on the remastered CD of *Thick as a Brick* from 1997, Anderson says:

⁵⁴ Ian Anderson, interviewed by John Alan Simon, “The Codpiece Chronicles,” *Down Beat* 43 (March 11, 1976) <http://www.tullpress.com/db11mar76.htm> (accessed April 5, 2010).

[*Thick as a Brick*] came about primarily because the thing we had done a year before, which was the *Aqualung* album, had generally been perceived as a concept album, whereas to me it was just a bunch of songs, as I've always said. So the first thing about *Thick as a Brick* was, let's come up with something which is the mother of all concept albums, and really is a mind-boggler in terms of what was then relatively complex music, and also lyrically was complex, confusing, and above all a bit of a spoof. It was quite deliberately, but in a nice way, tongue-in-cheek, and meant to send up ourselves, the music critics and the audience perhaps, but not necessarily in that order! This was the period of *Monty Python's Flying Circus* and a very British kind of a humor, which was not terribly well understood by the Japanese or the Americans when we finally went out to perform *Thick as a Brick* in concert. But they sat politely if a little confused through the whole thing and came back next time for more so it can't have gone too far amiss.⁵⁵

Salient Themes in the Lyrics

Anderson treads a fine line between seriousness and spoof in *Thick as a Brick*. The lyrics delve into serious matters, yet they are presented as if they were an “epic poem” written by an eight year old schoolboy, Gerald “Little Milton” Bostock, and Jethro Tull has set the poem to music. Concerning the creation of Gerald Bostock, Anderson says:

He's the little figure that I'm sort of saying is me as a little lad, who was supposed to have everything going for him, a really quite precocious little lad, very bright, very clever, read books, and knew a lot of things at an early age, but was well into opting out of that and making his own way ... a sort of exaggerated version of me as a similarly-aged child.⁵⁶

Anderson again, on the concept of the album:

Thick As a Brick was tongue in cheek, what with the album's pretense that the lyrics had been written by a 12-year-old⁵⁷ school boy named Gerald Bostock. Monty Python had just come to prominence, and people were in tune with that slightly surreal type of British humor. And at the same time, the album expressed some serious sentiments about English society, as well as some rather serious music writing. But it was also meant to be a bit of fun.⁵⁸

⁵⁵ Ian Anderson, from interview on the remastered CD of *Thick as a Brick*. 7243 4 95400 2 6 (Chrysalis Records, 1997), 2:12-3:29.

⁵⁶ Ian Anderson, interviewed by Bryan Matthew for “The Jethro Tull Story, Part 3: Thick As A Brick to Passion Play” for BBC Radio, World Service, March 1979 <http://www.tullpress.com/bbc79c.htm> (accessed June 3, 2010).

⁵⁷ Anderson misspeaks here. Bostock is said to be eight years old on the album cover.

⁵⁸ Ian Anderson, interviewed by Christopher Scapelliti, “Jethro Tull: Tull Tales” *Guitar World* (September 1999) http://www.guitarworld.com/article/jethro_tull_tull_tales (accessed April 5, 2010).

Some Jethro Tull fans have done a thorough line-by-line analysis of the lyrics. While these analyses give insight into what certain sections or phrases are about, these all-encompassing interpretations tend to be overly-serious, contrived, and tedious, and do not take into account the fact that Anderson never intended them to be taken too seriously.⁵⁹ This thesis presents no overall interpretation and will be limited to a few themes in the lyrics based on Anderson's own thoughts about them.

In the above quote, Anderson mentions that the lyrics do express some “serious sentiments about English society.” One of the important issues in the lyrics is how modern educational institutions breed an attitude of conformity among children and consequently marginalize gifted children. A key phrase concerning this is “we will be geared toward the average rather than the exceptional,” which inspired the subtitle of this thesis. This is spoken by bassist Jeffrey Hammond during Instr. 11 (3:07 side 2).⁶⁰ The phrase also appears in a comic strip underneath the lyrics on p. 7 of *The St. Cleve Chronicle*.

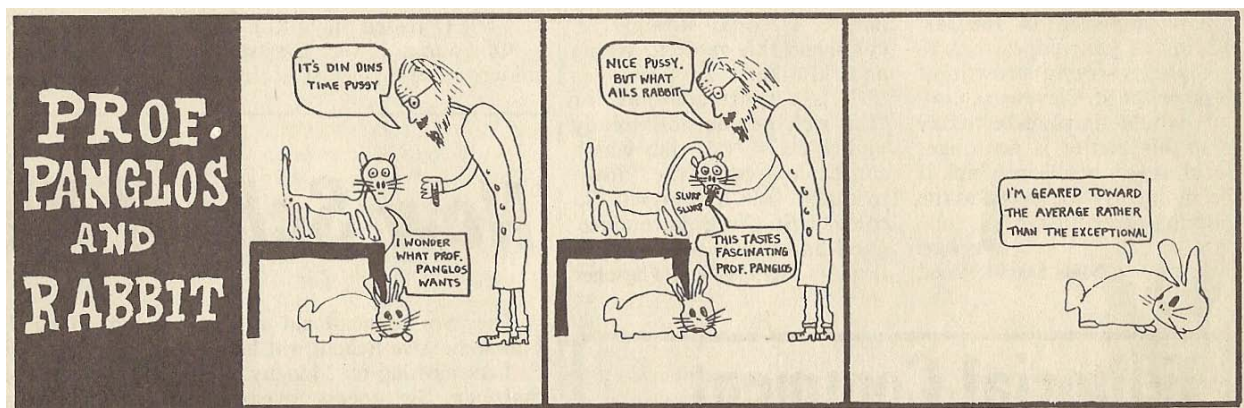


Figure 2. Comic on p. 7 of *The St. Cleve Chronicle*.
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Used by permission of Chrysalis Records Ltd.

⁵⁹ One analysis can be found online at http://www.thickasabrick.net/Thick_as_a_Brick/Essay.html (accessed April 10, 2010).

⁶⁰ My labels (Instr. 11, etc.) for the instrumental sections in *Thick as a Brick* are listed in Table 2 in chapter 5 in the section on form, pp. 57-58.

The cat, who has been properly conditioned by Prof. Panglos, readily eats his “din dins,” but the rabbit, an exceptionally free thinking rabbit, is suspicious of what the professor is trying to feed him. “Pangloss” is the name of the tutor in Voltaire’s satirical novel *Candide*, first published in 1759. Pangloss, who is a devotee of philosopher Gottfried Leibniz and his views on optimism, tries throughout the novel to convince the young Candide that everything is fine and he lives in the “best possible of worlds.” For instance, Pangloss unfeelingly believes that “...individual misfortunes are for the general good: the more individual misfortunes there are, the more everything is as it ought to be.”⁶¹ Candide has trouble fitting the tragedies he sees in his own life and in others’ into Pangloss’s simplistic rubric, and ultimately begins to think for himself. This use of Pangloss is effective in the lyrics to describe the “wise men” who “don’t know how it feels to be thick as a brick” (lines 7-8 from Vocal 1). The apprehension that the rabbit feels about being “geared toward the average rather than the exceptional” is also satirically addressed in the article “New School Plans” on p. 8 of the newspaper:

⁶¹ Voltaire, *Candide, or Optimism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005), 14.

New School Plans

The new Educational system around which Harrowditch Comprehensive School will be built was discussed at a Founder Fathers meeting on Monday. Over 200 people were present as chairman, Sir Robert Sidcastle outlined the new system in a frank talk with parents.

He told them that it was the aim of the new school to provide its pupils "with a sense of academic equality and a group identity which would relieve the crushing burden of individual aspiration and frustration during school life". The academic standard would depend, he said, on the child who is rather slower to learn than the unduly gifted ones. "We will be geared toward the average rather than the exceptional," said 'Sir Sid', "but we believe that the true group-learning experience will be invaluable in the later adjustments to future urban society."

Figure 3. Article on p. 8 of *The St. Cleve Chronicle*.
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Used by permission of Chrysalis Records Ltd.

Anderson elaborates on this:

The phrase "thick as a brick" is a North English colloquial term meaning "stupid." Like the religious themes on *Aqualung*, the theme of *Thick As a Brick* came out of my adolescent feelings about society and how it tries to bend you away from your will and toward its will, as if you're not bright enough to make your own choices. I wasn't a precocious child, but I knew how it felt to be one of the more academically gifted people; I knew what it felt like to be ostracized, despised and feared by the rank and file, who weren't terribly bright. Nobody likes the clever kids. So the album came to represent the gulf between growing up clever and the social discrepancy that results from that: the fact that you were really disliked by some of the kids.⁶²

Anderson expresses a similar sentiment in "Too Many Too," an outtake from the *Broadsword and the Beast* sessions: "Too many equal and average children who will all grow up the same."⁶³

Roger Waters of Pink Floyd also addresses this topic in "The Happiest Days of Our Lives" and

⁶² Ian Anderson, interviewed by Christopher Scapelliti, "Jethro Tull: Tull Tales," *Guitar World* (September 1999) http://www.guitarworld.com/article/jethro_tull_tull_tales (accessed April 5, 2010).

⁶³ This song, recorded in 1981, appears on the compilation *20 Years of Jethro Tull* and on the remastered version of *Broadsword and the Beast*.

“Another Brick in the Wall, Part 2” from the 1979 album *The Wall*, and conveys it powerfully in the 1982 movie with schoolchildren on a conveyor belt falling into a meat grinder.

Another theme in the lyrics that is closely related to this is the importance of individuality and free thinking, and how those with political power can stifle the voice of the poor and undereducated. Anderson says:

In the case of *Thick as a Brick*, it started off from one line. The concept, or concepts, expressed in the music, or in the lyrics, is that everyone’s right. And the necessity, I think, should be apparent for everyone to decide, to make their own judgment on things in their own way, regardless of age or experience, or even intelligence. We have at one end of the scale ... the intellectual society ... who are necessarily making judgments on people on the other end of the scale who may be ... thick as a brick. “Your wise men don’t know how it feels to be thick as a brick.” How the hell can they decide for the man in the street what he should want.”⁶⁴

John Covach points out that this theme is reiterated in the article entitled “Visiting Prof. Gives Talk” on p. 5 of *The St. Cleve Chronicle*.⁶⁵ The article reports that the visiting professor, Andrew Jorgensen, believes that “man must learn to assume individual identity as opposed to the collective super-society style of life” and “man must learn to function as an independent observer of mass-behavior and develop the right of each individual to intellectual freedom on the particular level he is personally capable.”

⁶⁴ Ian Anderson, interview with Jeune Pritchard, broadcasted in Australia on GTK on July 18, 1972. http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pSeTTL2_swk&feature=channel (accessed April 2, 2010), 1:50-2:03.

⁶⁵ John Covach, “Jethro Tull and the Long Song,” *Progression Magazine* (Summer 1996) <http://www.ibiblio.org/johncovach/jethrotull.htm> (accessed April 14, 2010).

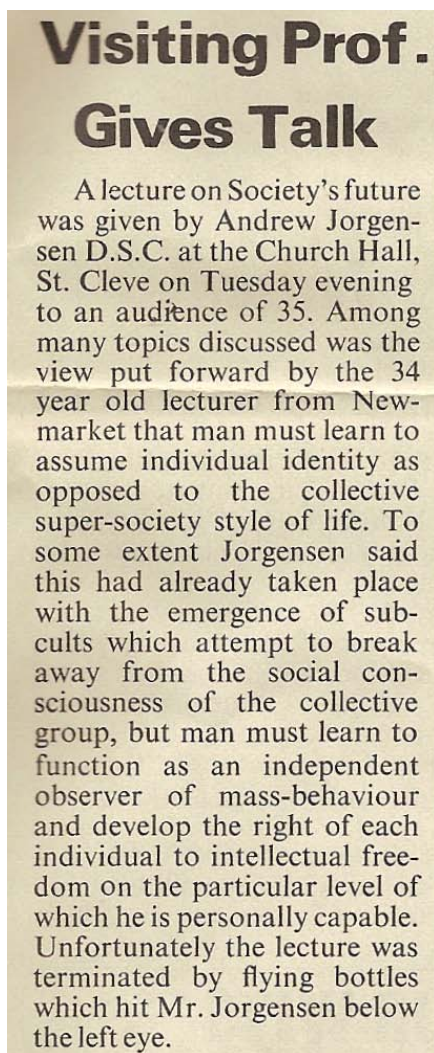


Figure 4. Article on p. 5 of *The St. Cleve Chronicle*.
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Another theme in the lyrics is the struggle for power between headstrong sons and aging fathers. This theme is brought to the foreground in Vocal 3 (with the references to “the youngest of the family” and “the oldest of the family”), Vocal 4 (“What do you do when the old man's gone - Do you want to be him?”), and Vocal 5 (“So come on all you criminals! I've got to put you straight. Just like I did with my old man - twenty years too late”).

The last theme worth noting is the lampooning of the British upper class which comes through in many places in the lyrics, especially in Vocal 7 (“I see you shuffle in the courtroom”).

These satirical passages, along with the absurd stories in the newspaper, deflate the serious tone of the more weighty themes in the lyrics and exhibit Anderson's biting wit and eye for caricature. So while the lyrics to *Thick as a Brick* are oblique and obscure, a clearer view of what the album is "about" can be obtained when they are considered in conjunction with Anderson's interviews and certain sections of *The St. Cleve Chronicle*.

Grammatical Transgressions in the Lyrics

The lyrics to *Thick as a Brick* break several basic rules of English grammar and composition. While this is common in rock lyrics, and actually laudable, this is rarely the case with Anderson who is one of the more sophisticated lyricists from the rock era. If one were to judge Anderson's lyric writing ability on *Thick as a Brick* alone, one could well criticize him as being a pretentious writer meddling with literary genres beyond his capacity. Yet with a songwriting career that has spanned over forty years and well over two hundred and fifty songs, he deserves more than that and *Thick as a Brick* deserves more than just a cursory critique of its adherence to the established rules of grammar and story-telling. Anderson breaks these rules on purpose. This is alluded to in the article "Judges Disqualify 'Little Milton' in Last Minute Rumpus" on the front page of *The St. Cleve Chronicle*. The article notes that some viewers who watched Gerald Bostock recite his poem on a B.B.C. 2 program "felt that it was not one poem but a series of separate poems put together merely to appear impressive." Since Anderson conceived of the lyrics as being the musings of an eight year old boy, it's only natural that they would be grammatically incorrect. The next section will focus on four of these literary "transgressions" and show how they stem from the episodic nature of the lyrics, the fact that the lyrics are a spoof of concept albums, and that Anderson was more interested in sketching images rather than telling a story.

The first problem in understanding the lyrics is their shifting narrative mode. It is quite difficult to grasp who is addressing whom throughout much of the lyrics because the viewpoint shifts arbitrarily between the 1st, 2nd and 3rd persons, singular and plural. For example, Vocal 1 is in the 1st person singular (“I,” “my”) and addresses the second person plural (“you,” “your,” “yourselves”). Suddenly in Vocal 2, the music switches from a folk style to a rock style and the viewpoint switches to 1st person plural (“we”) and addresses the 3rd person singular (“a son”, “him”). Then in Vocal 3, the 1st and 2nd persons are abandoned in favor of just the 3rd person. This section is simply the description of characters (“poet,” “painter,” “soldier”) in a setting from the vantage point of an omniscient observer and the lyrics have little connection with the first two vocal sections. These shifts in narrative mode give the lyrics a fragmented point of view and contribute to their oblique character.

A second difficulty concerns the introduction of many characters during the course of the lyrics but there is confusion as to who the characters really are. Vocal 1 seems to be addressing modern society at large and accuses the “wise men” of being unsympathetic to those who are “thick as a brick” (the lower classes and the undereducated). Vocal 2 presents a child (“a son is born”) who will be socially engineered into one of these unfeeling wise men. Vocal 3 describes a setting with a host of characters: the poet, the painter, the infantry, the do-er, the thinker, the master of the house, the soldier. The “youngest of the family” mentioned here may be the son from Vocal 2 but this is unclear. Some of these characters are mentioned later in the lyrics and some are not. It appears that many of the characters in the text are not treated as characters in a storyline, but are used simply to create imagery, or to portray a setting. Because of the lack of a

central protagonist (such as Ray Lomas, Tommy, Rael, or Pink⁶⁶), it is difficult to get engrossed with, or invested in, the lyrics.

Third, like the music, some sections of the lyrics are well-formed and can stand alone while other sections seem fragmentary and transitory. For instance, when one reads sections like Vocal 1, 3 and 7 out of the context of the lyrics as a whole, they still retain some degree of coherency. But the majority of the vocal sections make little sense at all when considered by themselves. This gives the lyrics an overall feeling of obliqueness and fragmentation.

Fourth, as mentioned earlier, the lyrics do not adhere to a linear storyline and have abrupt narrative shifts which seem to have no apparent purpose or meaning. In fact, the word “LATER” appears in three places in capital letters to show there is an obvious break in time and place in the narrative. In addition, the lyrics are printed in the newspaper as if they were an article, obscuring the overall form, scansion and rhyme schemes. Also, the lyrics are broken up into twenty-three separate paragraphs which do not correspond with the fourteen vocal sections. All of these factors obscure the form of the lyrics and make the listener delve more deeply into them in order to find their meaning. Of course, this was the band’s intention all along and is part of their spoof of concept albums. To try to resolve these problems in the lyrics would be quite a tedious task and would take away from the enjoyment of the piece as a spoof. As cited in a previous quote, Anderson and the band deliberately sought to conjure up the “mother of all concept albums,” and create a “mind-boggler” to “send up ourselves, the music critics and the audience perhaps, but not necessarily in that order!”

The narrative transgressions in the lyrics are only disconcerting when one divorces the lyrics from the music and tries to analyze them as if they were poetry, prose, or a short story. The

⁶⁶ From, respectively, Jethro Tull’s *Too Old to Rock ‘n Roll, Too Young to Die* (1976), The Who’s *Tommy* (1969), Genesis’s *The Lamb Lies Down on Broadway* (1974), and Pink Floyd’s *The Wall* (1979).

music provides the structure, unity, and continuity that is lacking in the lyrics in two ways. First, the repetition of music and text grants the piece a tighter structure and greater unity. Second, the instrumental passages give the lyrics continuity by smoothing out the abrupt shifts in the narrative. Both of these elements are examined below and also in chapter 5 in the sections on form and instrumental passages.

Textual Repetition in *Thick as a Brick*

The ways in which a piece of music uses repetition, in either its text or its music, largely determines its shape and scope. In most popular and rock music, it is common to find whole blocks of lyrics repeated verbatim at regular intervals. This is the case with verse-chorus form, where the chorus repeats the same lyrics each time it comes around. *Thick as a Brick* uses textual repetition, but in unorthodox ways. There are five sections in the piece where lyrics are repeated, but mostly in fragments or with variations, and the repetitions occur at irregular intervals. The repetition of, or variation upon, certain portions of the lyrics give it a tighter structure and greater unity and places added emphasis on those repeated sections.

First, lines 5-8 from Vocal 1 (0:38 side 1) are repeated verbatim in Vocal 14 (20:42 side 2). Anderson sings the lines in Vocal 14 with a world-weariness in his voice, expressing his disappointment that nothing has come of his critique of society.

So you ride yourselves over the fields
And you make all your animal deals
And your wise men don't know how it feels
To be thick as a brick.

Second, the lyrics in Vocal 2 and Vocal 8 are linked thematically and contrast a child with the man he becomes. Vocal 2 occurs near the beginning of side 1 (3:01) and Vocal 8 occurs at the beginning of side 2 (0:48), giving these sections an introductory function.

Vocal 2

See there! A son is born –
 And we pronounce him fit to fight.
 There are black-heads on his shoulders,
 And he pees himself in the night.

We'll make a man of him
 Put him to a trade
 Teach him to play Monopoly
 And how to sing in the rain.

Vocal 8

See there! A man is born –
 And we pronounce him fit for peace.
 There's a load lifted from his shoulders
 With the discovery of his disease.

We'll take the child from him
 Put it to the test
 Teach it to be a wise man
 How to fool the rest.

Third, in Vocal 3 Parts 1 and 2 (6:09 and 9:21 side 1), there is a contrast made between the poet and the soldier and their respective “weapons,” and a contrast between a son (“the youngest of the family”) and a father (“the oldest of the family”).

Vocal 3 Part 1

And the poet lifts his pen
 While the soldier sheaths his sword.

And the youngest of the family
 Is moving with authority.
 Building castles by the sea,
 He dares the tardy tide
 To wash them all aside.

Vocal 3 Part 2

And the poet sheaths his pen
 While the soldier lifts his sword.

And the oldest of the family
 Is moving with authority.
 Coming from across the sea,
 He challenges the son
 Who puts him to the run

Fourth, the lyrics of Vocal 7 Parts 2 and 4 (18:39 and 19:59 side 1) are repeated verbatim in Vocal 13 Parts 1 and 2 (18:16 and 19:01 side 2). These sections appear near the ends of sides 1 and 2, giving them a concluding function.

Vocal 7 Part 2 and Vocal 13 Part 1

So!
 Come on ye childhood heroes!
 Won't you rise up from the pages
 Of your comic-books? your super-crooks
 And show us all the way.

Well! Make your will and testament.
 Won't you? Join your local government.
 We'll have superman for president
 Let Robin save the day.

Vocal 7 Part 4 and Vocal 13 Part 2

So! Where the hell was Biggles
When you needed Him last Saturday?
And where are all the Sportsmen
Who always pulled you through?

They're all resting down in Cornwall -
Writing up their memoirs
For a paper-back edition
Of the Boy Scout Manual.

Fifth and last, the lyrics of Vocal 12 Part 2 (14:55 side 2) are repeated in Vocal 12 Part 4 (17:21 side 2). These sections function as a chorus would in verse-chorus form.

So come all ye young men who are building castles!
Kindly state the time of the year
And join your voices in a hellish chorus.
Mark the precise nature of your fear.

While one can find plenty of loose thematic connections in the lyrics, these five occurrences are the most obvious use of textual repetition in *Thick as a Brick*.

The Instrumental Passages and the Lyrics

Besides textual repetition, the instrumental passages help provide the structure, continuity and unity which is lacking in the lyrics. These passages effectively smooth out the abrupt shifts in the narrative. If the lyrics were sung straight through, the disjointed flow of images and shifts in narrative voice would render them incoherent. The instrumental passages, with their forays into virtuosic soloing and ensemble playing, temporarily shift the listener's attention away from the lyrics. In some instances they function as scenery changes do between acts in a play, transporting the listener from the setting of one vocal section to the setting of the next. In this regard they operate in the same way a *sinfonia* did in early Venetian opera. Monteverdi, Cavalli and other 17th century opera composers inserted these short instrumental passages between scenes to cover up the noise made from changing the scenery on the stage. The nineteen

instrumental passages in *Thick as a Brick* allow the listener to forgive the “transgressions” that the narrative commits and to follow the lyrics as if they were meant to convey a story, even though they don’t. Now that the packaging and lyrics have been investigated, I will turn to the core of the thesis, an analysis of the music beginning with the work’s form.

CHAPTER 5

ANALYSIS OF THE MUSIC

This chapter will discuss *Thick as a Brick*'s form, use of repetition and thematic development, instrumental passages, instrumentation, stylistic changes, and harmony. Before considering *Thick as a Brick*'s form, it would be helpful to read a section of the first review of the album which warns the listener that the structure of the work may seem a bit odd:

One doubts at times the validity of what appears to be an expanding theme throughout the two continuous sides of this record but the result is at worst entertaining and at least aesthetically palatable. Poor, or perhaps naïve taste is responsible for some of the ugly changes of time signature and banal instrumental passages linking the main sections but ability in this direction should come with maturity.⁶⁷

This review isn't from *Rolling Stone* or *Melody Maker*, the leading music periodicals when the album was released. Beating the critics at their own game, Ian Anderson wrote this tongue-in-cheek review himself, and included it on the album.⁶⁸ It is found on p. 7 of the *St. Cleve Chronicle*, the mock newspaper that comprises the packaging of the original LP. Although Anderson writes that *Thick as a Brick* shows "naïve taste," this is in fact a piece of music whose form shows a great deal of "maturity." The form of *Thick as a Brick* is one of its most distinctive elements and a close examination lends great insight into what makes the piece original and significant.

⁶⁷ Julian Stone-Mason B.A. (Ian Anderson), "Music Review, New Tull L.P." from newspaper section of Jethro Tull's *Thick as a Brick*. MS 2072. 1 disc. 33 1/3 rpm (Reprise Records, 1972), 7.

⁶⁸ Ian Anderson, interviewed by Bryan Matthew for "The Jethro Tull Story, Part 3: Thick As A Brick to Passion Play" for BBC Radio, World Service, March 1979 <http://www.tullpress.com/bbc79c.htm> (accessed June 21, 2010).

Analytical Methodology

As with most music, an appreciation of the musical content of *Thick as a Brick* cannot be fully grasped by using only one method of analysis. What John J. Sheinbaum concludes about Yes's song "Roundabout" is also true of *Thick as a Brick*:

Interpreting "Roundabout" *solely* as a rock song misses much of the detail that invites consideration alongside the art-music tradition, but at the same time, to describe the song as if it were merely a piece *of* that tradition also misses much of the detail essential for understanding the song in terms of its background as rock music.⁶⁹

Thick as a Brick is no doubt an album of rock music, but it is more accurately described as a convergence between the worlds of classical, rock, and folk music exhibiting both the common ground and the tension between these three styles. It succeeds as a composite of these three types of music because it captures the essences of them simultaneously. My analysis of the form of this piece draws parallels to large-scale forms found in classical music simply because, being forty-three minutes of continuous music, it is far more complex than the common song forms of much rock and folk (such as strophic, AABA and verse-chorus). Yet *Thick as a Brick's* large-scale form is constructed from the building blocks of these same small-scale forms, and a consideration of them is just as necessary.

The Form of *Thick as a Brick* and Possible Antecedents

In the past twenty years, several scholars have convincingly compared large-scale forms in progressive rock pieces to various large-scale forms in classical music. These scholars have shown that bands like Yes and Genesis blended rock with classical music not simply at a surface level, but also at a deep structural level. A brief overview of this research allows one to appreciate just how complex and sophisticated rock music became in the late 1960s and early

⁶⁹ John J. Sheinbaum, "Progressive Rock and the Inversion of Musical Values," in *Progressive Rock Reconsidered*, ed. Kevin Holm-Hudson (New York: Routledge, 2002), 35.

1970s. Edward Macan finds the multi-movement suite to be the most common form adopted by progressive rock bands in their large-scale works.⁷⁰ Macan⁷¹ and Dirk von der Horst⁷² trace elements of sonata form in Yes's "Close to the Edge." Mark Spicer describes the Genesis piece "Supper's Ready" in terms of Arnold Schoenberg's *Grundgestalt* theory ("basic shape"), showing how the nearly twenty-three minute piece grows out of the first four measures.⁷³ Nors Josephson devotes an entire article to finding antecedents of progressive rock forms in classical music from the Renaissance to the twentieth century.⁷⁴ In considering the form of *Thick as a Brick*, David Nicholls states that

...[it] is at once song cycle, multi-movement suite and symphonic poem, yet succeeds brilliantly at transcending all of these supposed models in creating a seamless musical, textural and pictorial *Gesamtkunstwerk*.⁷⁵

Thick as a Brick exhibits striking similarities to the classical forms that Nicholls mentions and it also resembles theme and variations form and Schoenberg's *Grundgestalt*. Lastly there is another important form which is relevant here, the Medieval *lai*, which was considered in chapter 2.

Anderson is quite candid, and comic, in admitting that he followed none of these models and methods:

I remember in an act of extreme bluffing on a daily basis, coming in saying "OK right, next piece of music we have today, to add on to the rest of the stuff as we built it up, is such and such," and I had only written it that morning. I would come in the next day and pretend it was all part of some master plan, some grand scheme, whereas, in fact, of course, I was only making it up as I went along.⁷⁶

⁷⁰ Macan, *Rocking the Classics*, 42.

⁷¹ Macan, *Rocking the Classics*, 99-103.

⁷² Dirk von der Horst, "Precarious Pleasures: Situating 'Close to the Edge' in Conflicting Male Desires," in *Progressive Rock Reconsidered*, ed. Kevin Holm-Hudson (New York: Routledge, 2002), 173-177.

⁷³ Mark S. Spicer, "Large-Scale Strategy and Compositional Design in the Early Music of Genesis," in *Expression in Pop-Rock Music: A Collection of Critical and Analytical Essays*, ed. Walter Everett (New York: Garland, 2000), 85, 101.

⁷⁴ Nors S. Josephson, "Bach Meets Liszt: Traditional Formal Structures and Performance Practices in Progressive Rock," *The Musical Quarterly* 76 no. 1 (Spring 1992): 67-92.

⁷⁵ David Nicholls, "Virtual Opera, or Opera between the Ears," *Journal of the Royal Musical Association* 129 no. 1 (2004): 103.

⁷⁶ Ian Anderson, quoted in Martin Webb and David Rees's *Jethro Tull 25th Anniversary Programme* (England: Adrian Hopkins Promotions, Ltd., 1993), [9].

This quote and other quotes about how the work was composed in an intuitive, organic and piecemeal fashion will be taken up again later in chapter 5 in the section on repetition and thematic development, pp. 91-93. Although the aforementioned models and methods are useful, they do not go far enough in describing the form of this piece. An approach that considers both large-scale form (the edifice) and small-scale form (the bricks) is necessary. A study of the small-scale forms of popular, folk, and rock music (the *bricks* if you will) is useful in understanding how Anderson and the band built the edifice.

The Role of Form in Popular Music

Listeners of popular, folk, or rock music are more often drawn to a song's melody, lyrics or performance than they are to a song's form. The major reason for this is that these types of music usually are made from small-scale forms which are easily discernable. They carry within themselves an inherent series of expectations that are subconsciously ingrained into a musical culture. Everyone seems to know that when they hear a verse and a chorus that another verse and chorus will usually follow. We take note of a song's form only when these expectations are altered, or denied, and it is easy for an audience to lose interest in a piece of music when it does not deliver what is expected from it. A piece like *Thick as a Brick* alters and denies expectations so many times that once the listener gets past the first ten minutes, he or she has no idea what should be expected next. Its form is not easily discernable, and this can confuse the listener.

Because of this, *Thick as a Brick* requires more of the listener than much popular, folk, and rock music. To appreciate a work such as this, the listener must recognize that it is drawing on expectations from both the classical and the popular song worlds, from both large-scale and small-scale forms. Anderson himself acknowledges the incongruities between these two worlds

in his remarks about performing *Thick as a Brick* in its entirety during Jethro Tull's 1972 tour in support of the album:

There was a time in my life when I got very upset with the audiences, back in around 1972, when we were performing *Thick as a Brick*. The difficulty then was trying to play the acoustic music that we didn't have to play when we were doing the heavy rock music of the *Aqualung* album. The audience was just about able to cope with the acoustic section in *Aqualung*, or in *Wind Up* or *My God*, knowing that they were going to get the big rock 'n' roll riff any minute. With *Thick as a Brick* suddenly there was a lot more music that was really stretched out. The audiences, particularly in America, were not sympathetic to the concert atmosphere that it was necessary to maintain: that they had to be quiet in the quiet places, and could react and jump up and down in the loud bits. In 1992 in almost every country in the world the people have now learned how to respond to that song. Today, as soon as I start playing *Thick as a Brick* there's a great wave of recognition, but then immediately people go quiet.⁷⁷

When Anderson says "concert atmosphere," presumably he means the atmosphere of a classical music concert, where actively listening to the music is paramount. Anderson is hoping the crowd will act as if they are at a classical concert during the softer, acoustic sections (so they can actually hear what's being played) and act as if they are at a rock concert during the loud electric sections. He is also hoping that they will expand their attention spans beyond what they are used to and actively listen to a long and complex piece of music.

These considerations of form would not be so significant if *Thick as a Brick* was successful only with progressive/experimental rock listeners who are attracted to large-scale pieces. The album, however, was very successful as a mainstream rock and pop album. As mentioned earlier, it hit number one on the American *Billboard* 200 Album Chart on June 3, 1972 and stayed there for two weeks. This is very unusual for several reasons. First, from just a cursory glance at the form of *Thick as a Brick* (Tables 1 and 2 on pp. 55-58 below), one can see that its complexity is comparable to large-scale classical forms and is far beyond what is

⁷⁷ Ian Anderson, *Jethro Tull 25th Complete Lyrics*, ed. Karl Schramm and Gerald J. Burns. 2nd ed. (Heidelberg, Germany: Palmyra, 1996), 10-11, 14.

typically found in popular, folk, or rock music. The average music listener rarely encounters a forty-three minute rock song. Second, it is extraordinary that an album can reach number one while having no singles released from it.⁷⁸ Additionally, in the review of the album on p. 7 of *The St. Cleve Chronicle* (under the pseudonym Julian Stone-Mason B.A.), Ian Anderson wrote that the album was “for the underground market” and “not blatantly commercial.” So there must be something about the music that was attractive and accessible to the mainstream popular music audience. The small-scale popular, folk, and rock song forms (strophic, AABA and verse-chorus) embedded within the large-scale form were a major factor in making *Thick as a Brick* accessible.

Adorno on Popular Music Forms

To explore further the significance of the form of *Thick as a Brick*, it would be helpful to consider what philosopher, sociologist, and musicologist Theodor Adorno said about the clash between classical and popular music, especially in regard to their forms. Although Richard Middleton successfully showed several flaws in Adorno’s negative assessment of popular music,⁷⁹ Adorno’s critique is still useful in showing some incongruities between classical and popular music forms, and how *Thick as a Brick* successfully integrates their polarities. Adorno argued that popular music in the twentieth century was deficient because its forms were too predictable and turned people from active listeners into passive listeners. He wrote:

The whole structure of popular music is standardized, even where the attempt is made to circumvent standardization. Standardization extends from the most general features to the most specific ones. ... The composition hears for the listener. This is how popular music divests the listener of his spontaneity and promotes conditioned reflexes. ... The schematic build-up dictates the way in

⁷⁸ There was no single from *Thick as a Brick* released in America or in the UK, but the first three minutes of the album have been included on practically all of Jethro Tull’s greatest hits compilations. From these compilations the edit garnered heavy radio airplay, and thus became a well-known Jethro Tull “single.”

⁷⁹ Richard Middleton, *Studying Popular Music* (Milton Keynes, [England]: Open University Press, 1990), 34-63.

which he must listen while, at the same time, it makes any effort in listening unnecessary.⁸⁰

Adorno felt that this standardization turned music from being a creative activity into a commercial activity, and that the writing and recording of popular music was just another enterprise of mass production in which mediocre musical ideas were plugged into pre-existing forms. Conversely, he praised the unique, “one-off” structures that classical composers created which gave free reign to their musical ideas.

Adorno died in 1969 and one wonders what he would have thought of the progressive and experimental rock bands of the late 1960s and early 1970s. Perhaps *Thick as a Brick* would have tickled his fancy since it succeeds in the areas where he says that popular music fails. Its structure is not standardized, neither in its general features nor in its specific ones. The composition does not “hear” for the listener, but expects effort and active listening from the listener. In this regard, what Ian Anderson said about the complexity of *A Passion Play* applies as well to *Thick as a Brick*:

I like an album that’s difficult to listen to. I like to have to sit down and really work into the music. A listener should make that effort. I don’t like music that kind of unconsciously gets your foot tapping. That’s Musak. I could write that kind of music, but it’s just too easy. That’s using music as a tactical weapon to sell records. I think it’s important for the listener to feel that an effort has been made, that he has actually contributed in some way to the enjoyment for the music. The only tricks that I use when I play are used to try and help the audience want to make the effort. I admit to doing that. I try to entice the audience into wanting to listen.⁸¹

⁸⁰ Theodor Adorno, *Essays on Music*. Selected, with Introduction, Commentary, and Notes by Richard Leppert. New translations by Susan H. Gillespie (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 438, 442-443. Also available online at: http://www.icce.rug.nl/~soundscapes/DATABASES/SWA/On_popular_music_1.shtml (accessed January 17, 2010).

⁸¹ Ian Anderson, quoted from an interview in Greg Russo’s *Flying Colours: The Jethro Tull Reference Manual* (New York: Crossfire Publications, 2000), 76.

Thick as a Brick gives the listener the best of both worlds. Its unpredictable form provides the listener with a unique musical experience, yet it is built with the materials familiar to everyone, the *bricks* of the popular song forms.

Common Popular Music Forms

Before exploring the diversity of song forms in the vocal sections of *Thick as a Brick*, the following section will provide a brief overview of common forms from which practically all songs from the popular and rock music eras are constructed. Understanding the different song forms and how they are utilized in *Thick as a Brick* gives a deeper appreciation of its complexity and subtlety. The most prevalent forms in popular and rock music from the post-World War II era to the early 1970s are strophic, AABA, verse-chorus and compound form (which combines elements from more than one form).⁸² To these must be added through-composed form, though it is rarely encountered. None of these categories are mutually exclusive as many songs from the rock era exhibit characteristics from more than one category. Anderson composed songs in all of these forms (usually with alterations) up to and including *Thick as a Brick*.

Strophic form is the most basic of the song forms because it doesn't contain any of the contrasting sections found in the other forms. It consists of a variable number of lyric stanzas, each sung with relatively the same melody over the same harmonic progression. It was used often by folk and blues musicians such as Woody Guthrie, Muddy Waters and Bob Dylan. Examples include Dylan's "Blowin' in the Wind" and "The Sounds of Silence" by Simon & Garfunkel. Jethro Tull's "My Sunday Feeling" and "Locomotive Breath" are strophic forms.

⁸² For deeper analyses of popular songs forms, see: John Covach, "Form in Rock Music: A Primer," in *Engaging Music: Essays in Music Analysis*, ed. Deborah Stein (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 65-75; Walter Everett, "Forms: Phrases and Sections," in *The Foundations of Rock: From "Blue Suede Shoes" to "Suite: Judy Blue Eyes"* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 134-156; Ken Stephenson, "Form," in *What to Listen for in Rock: A Stylistic Analysis* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), 121-143; Richard Middleton, "Form" in *Key Terms in Popular Music and Culture*, ed. Bruce Horner and Thomas Swiss (Malden, Mass.: Blackwell, 1999), 141-155.

The AABA form was used extensively by composers in the Tin Pan Alley tradition of American popular song, which lasted from the late nineteenth century into the 1950s. The form then became prominent in rock music. Each of the four sections is usually eight bars long, giving it its other common name, thirty-two bar form. The first two A sections have the same melody and chord progression, the B section (also called the bridge or middle eight) presents new material, and the last A section repeats the first melody and chord progression bringing the song to its conclusion. Judy Garland's version of "Over the Rainbow" by Harold Arlen and E.Y. Harburg uses this form. "Yesterday" and "Hey Jude" by the Beatles are in AABA form, but with some alterations (such as a repeat of the B and final A sections). Jethro Tull's "Hymn 43" is based on this form with its B section extended by a guitar solo and a repeat of the B section lyrics. The first three minutes of *Thick as a Brick* (Vocal 1) approximate this form with extended AAB sections and a truncated and altered final A section.

The verse-chorus form is similar to AABA form in that it presents two different sections of music, but is different in that the emphasis is placed upon the chorus. Although many songs in AABA and strophic form have what sounds like a chorus at the end of each A section, the refrain, or "tag," is not distinctive enough to be considered a section in itself. For instance, Dylan's "Blowin' in the Wind" has a refrain at the end of each stanza ("The answer my friend..."), but it is not different enough from the material in the stanza to be thought of as a chorus. Another example of this is the Beatles' "I Want to Hold Your Hand," which is considered by John Covach⁸³ and Walter Everett⁸⁴ to be an AABA form rather than verse-chorus. Beatle songs such as "Penny Lane" and "Yellow Submarine" have an obvious division

⁸³ Covach, "Form in Rock Music," 70.

⁸⁴ Everett, *The Foundations of Rock*, 144.

between verse and chorus and thus are clearly in this form. Several of Jethro Tull's songs fit this form ("Bungle in the Jungle") as Anderson was never averse to a big chorus or a catchy "hook."

Oxford Music Online defines through-composed form as "a composition with a relatively uninterrupted continuity of musical thought and invention."⁸⁵ In through-composed form, each line, stanza, or small group of stanzas, is given different music. Rather than fitting the words into a pre-existing structure, the shape and flow of the words determine the musical structure. Examples in rock music of this form are rare because repetition and closed structures (AABA, verse-chorus) are easier for a listener to digest. The Doors' "The Soft Parade" and several Frank Zappa pieces would qualify. "Cheap Day Return," a short acoustic piece on *Aqualung*, as well as the instrumental "By Kind Permission Of" from *Living in the Past* have little or no repetition of musical material and therefore fit into this category. *Thick as a Brick* could be considered to be through-composed, yet, because it has sections that repeat, it is closer to compound form.

Compound, or sectional, form combines elements from more than one song form. For example, Led Zeppelin's "Stairway to Heaven" combines strophic with through-composed form and Meatloaf's "Paradise by the Dashboard Light" combines strophic and verse-chorus with through-composed form. Instead of each stanza receiving a different musical treatment (like through-composed form), stanzas are grouped into larger sections with each of these larger sections given a different treatment. Many of the large-scale pieces by the progressive rock bands fall into this category, beginning quietly and slowly building to a grand climax. A popular compound form is verse-chorus-bridge, which is a combination of AABA and verse-chorus. A bridge (the B section of an AABA form) is included after the second chorus of verse-chorus form, creating an ABABCB structure. U2's "Beautiful Day" is in this form with the C section, or

⁸⁵ Ian Rumbold, "Through-composed," in *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online*, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/27904> (accessed February 11, 2010).

bridge, occurring at the lyrics “See the world in green and blue.” By the *Aqualung* album, Anderson was writing songs with compound forms, such as “Aqualung” and “My God.”

Songs Forms in *Thick as a Brick*

Jethro Tull’s first four albums exhibit a wide variety of song forms, utilizing all the above forms. The same is true for *Thick as a Brick*. While many of the vocal sections in the piece do not adhere strictly to the forms above, Table 1 shows to which ones they most closely adhere:

Table 1. Song Forms in *Thick as a Brick*.

<u>Vocal section</u>	<u>Song form</u>	<u>Lyrics</u>
1	AABA (last “A” section is altered)	“Really don’t mind...”
2	Through-composed	“See there! A son is born...”
3 Part 1	Verse-chorus	“The Poet and the painter...”
3 Part 2	Verse-chorus	“The cattle quietly grazing...”
4	Through-composed	“What do you do...”
5 Part 1	Strophic	“I’ve come down...”
5 Part 2	Strophic	“Your bread and water’s...”
6	Through-composed	“You curl your toes in fun...”
7 Part 1	1st “A” of AABA	“I see you shuffle...”
7 Part 2	2nd “A” of AABA	“So! Come on ye childhood...”
7 Part 3	“B” of AABA	“You put your bet on ...”
7 Part 4	Last “A” of AABA	“So! Where the hell was...”
8	Through-composed	“See there! A man is born...”
9	Strophic	“In the clear white circles...”
10	Through-composed	“The legends worded...”
11	Strophic	“The poet and the wise man...”
12 Part 1	1st verse of verse-chorus	“Let me tell you the tales...”
12 Part 2	1st chorus of verse-chorus	“So come all ye young men...”
12 Part 3	2nd verse of verse-chorus	“Let me help you to pick up...”
12 Part 4	2nd chorus of verse-chorus	“So! come all ye young men...”
13 Part 1	Reprise of Vocal 7 Part 2 (2nd “A” of AABA)	“So! Come on ye childhood...”
13 Part 2	Reprise of Vocal 7 Part 4 (Last “A” of AABA)	“So! Where the hell was...”
14	Reprise of lines 5-8 of Vocal 1	“So you ride yourselves...”

The form of *Thick as a Brick* is comprised of fourteen vocal sections interspersed with nineteen instrumental passages, each of which is between one to five minutes in duration. To differentiate between these vocal sections in the course of the analysis, they have been labeled “Vocal 1,” “Vocal 2,” etc. These vocal sections are linked seamlessly together by the composed and/or improvisatory instrumental passages (labeled “Instr. 1,” “Instr. 2,” etc. in Table 2 below), with some of the vocal sections having instrumental passages between verses. No two vocal or instrumental passages are exactly the same, which gives the piece a great musical diversity. At the same time, melodies from both the vocal and instrumental passages return later in the music in altered forms, which gives the piece coherency. This relationship between diversity and coherency will be pursued further in the next section on thematic development. Table 2 shows how *Thick as a Brick* breaks down into its vocal and instrumental sections, and includes timings, meters, pitch centers, and the first line of each section’s lyrics:

Table 2. Large-scale Form of *Thick as a Brick*.Side 1

<u>Section</u>	<u>Timing</u> ⁸⁶	<u>Meter</u>	<u>Pitch Center</u> ⁸⁷	<u>Lyrics</u>
Vocal 1	0:00-3:01	12/8	F	“Really don’t mind...”
Vocal 2	3:01-3:36	5/4	C Dorian	“See there! A son is born...”
Instr. 1	3:36-4:21	5/4		
	4:21-5:01	4/4, 5/4		
	5:01-6:09	4/4	G Dorian	
Vocal 3 Part 1	6:09-7:16	4/4		“The Poet and the painter...”
Instr. 2	7:16-9:21	4/4		
Vocal 3 Part 2	9:21-10:30	4/4		“The cattle quietly grazing...”
Instr. 3	10:30-11:20	4/4, 6/8		
Vocal 4	11:20-11:52	6/8	D Mixolydian	“What do you do...”
Instr. 4	11:52-12:32	4/4	B Aeolian	
	12:32-13:16	12/8	D	
Vocal 5 Part 1	13:16-14:13	12/8		“I’ve come down...”
Instr. 5	14:13-15:26	12/8	D Aeolian	
Vocal 5 Part 2	15:26-15:54	12/8	D	“Your bread and water’s...”
Instr. 6	15:54-16:24	12/8		
	16:24-16:35	12/8	F	
Vocal 6	16:35-17:06	6/8		“You curl your toes in fun...”
Instr. 7	17:06-17:26	6/8		
	17:26-17:41	4/4		
Vocal 7 Part 1	17:41-18:08	4/4		“I see you shuffle...”
Instr. 8	18:08-18:39	4/4		
Vocal 7 Part 2	18:39-19:05	4/4		“So! Come on ye childhood...”
Vocal 7 Part 3	19:05-19:29	4/4	G Dorian	“You put your bet on...”
Instr. 9	19:29-19:59	4/4	F	
Vocal 7 Part 4	19:59-20:25	4/4		“So! Where the hell was...”
Instr. 10	20:25-21:08	4/4, 6/8		
	21:08-22:03	free	C Dorian	
	22:03-22:39	free		

⁸⁶ Regarding the “Timing” column, I have divided *Thick as a Brick* into two large sections in order to follow the tracking of the original LP (MS 2072. Reprise Records, 1972), the remastered CD (7243 4 95400 2 6. Chrysalis Records, 1997) and the downloadable MP3 version of the album on websites like iTunes. The first section (side 1) lasts 22:39 and the second (side 2) lasts 21:05 with a fade-out and fade-in between the two sections.

⁸⁷ Regarding the “Pitch Center” column, some sections cannot be placed in a specific mode or key. For instance, Vocal 1 could be said to be in both F major and F Mixolydian since the opening acoustic guitar pattern contains both an E natural and an E-flat. In cases such as this I chose pitch centricity (“F”) for the sake of clarity and simplicity. This will be discussed further in the section on harmony at the end of chapter 5.

Side 2

<u>Section</u>	<u>Timing</u>	<u>Meter</u>	<u>Pitch Center</u>	<u>Lyrics</u>
Instr. 10	0:00-0:48	free, 6/8		
Vocal 8	0:48-1:24	6/8		“See there! A man is born...”
Instr. 11	1:24-2:58	6/8	G	
	2:58-4:05	free		“We will be geared toward...”
Vocal 9	4:05-5:13	12/8	F	“In the clear white circles...”
Instr. 12	5:13-6:00	6/8, 12/8	G Minor	
Vocal 10	6:00-6:30	4/4		“The legends worded...”
Vocal 11	6:30-11:00	4/4		“The poet and the wise man...”
Instr. 13	11:00-12:37	4/4		
	12:37-13:15	4/4	F	
Vocal 12 Part 1	13:15-13:52	4/4	C Dorian	“Let me tell you the tales...”
Instr. 14	13:52-14:55	4/4, 5/4, 3/4, 6/4		
Vocal 12 Part 2	14:55-15:10	4/4	G Dorian	“So come all ye...”
Instr. 15	15:10-16:14	4/4, 3/4, 5/4		
Vocal 12 Part 3	16:14-16:50	4/4	C Dorian	“Let me help you...”
Instr. 16	16:50-17:21	4/4, 5/4, 3/4, 6/4		
Vocal 12 Part 4	17:21-17:51	4/4	G Dorian	“So! come all ye...”
Instr. 17	17:51-18:06	4/4		
	18:06-18:16	4/4	F	
Vocal 13 Part 1	18:16-18:38	4/4		“So! Come on ye...”
Instr. 18	18:38-19:01	4/4, 7/8, 9/8	C Dorian	
Vocal 13 Part 2	19:01-19:30	4/4	F	“So! Where the hell...”
Instr. 19	19:30-20:36	4/4, 6/8	C Dorian	
Vocal 14	20:36-21:05	12/8	F	“So you ride yourselves...”

Text Forms in *Thick as a Brick*

The form of each of the vocal sections of *Thick as a Brick*, let alone the piece as a whole, cannot be gleaned from a cursory glance at the lyrics the way they are presented in the original album packaging (see Figures 5 and 6 below). Gerald Bostock’s poem (actually Anderson’s) is printed in *The St. Cleve Chronicle* as if it were a newspaper article, with narrow columns, slashes in odd places and verses grouped in irregular sections.

THICK AS A BRICK

By Gerald "Little Milton" Bostock

We print here, for all to read, Gerald Bostock's controversial poem "Thick as a Brick" which caused so much controversy—Ed

Really don't mind if you sit this one out.

My words but a whisper—your deafness a SHOUT. I may make you feel but I can't make you think. Your sperm's in the gutter—your love's in the sink. So you ride yourselves over the fields and/you make all your animal deals and/your wise men don't know how it feels to be thick as a brick. And the sand-castle virtues are all swept away in/the tidal destruction/the moral melee. The elastic retreat rings the close of play as the last wave uncovers the newfangled way. But your new shoes are worn at the heels and/your suntan does rapidly peel and/your wise men don't know how it feels to be thick as a brick.

And the love that I feel is so far away: I'm a bad dream that I just had today—and you/shake your head and/say it's a shame.

Spin me back down the years and the days of my youth. Draw the lace and black curtains and shut out the whole truth. Spin me down the long ages: let them sing the song.

See there! A son is born—and we pronounce him fit to fight. There are black-heads on his shoulders, and he pees himself in the night. We'll/make a man of him / put him to a trade/ teach him/to play Monopoly and/how to sing in the rain.

The Poet and the painter casting shadows on the water—as the sun plays on the infantry returning from the sea. The do-er and the thinker: no allowance for the other—as the failing light illuminates the mercenary's creed. The home fire burning: the kettle almost boiling—but the master of

the house is far away. The horses stamping—their warm breath clouding in the sharp and frosty morning of the day. And the poet lifts his pen while the soldier sheaths his sword.

And the youngest of the family is moving with authority. Building castles by the sea, he dares the tardy tide to wash them all aside.

The cattle quietly grazing at the grass down by the river where the swelling mountain water moves onward to the sea: the builder of the castles renews the age-old purpose and contemplates the milking girl whose offer is his need. The young men of the household have/all gone into service and/are not to be expected for a year. The innocent young master—thoughts moving ever faster—has formed the plan to change the man he seems. And the poet sheaths his pen while the soldier lifts his sword.

And the oldest of the family is moving with authority. Coming from across the sea, he challenges the son who puts him to the run.

What do you do when/the old man's gone—do you want to be him? and/your real self sings the song. Do you want to free him? No one to help you get up steam—and the whirlpool turns you 'way off-beam.

LATER.

I've come down from the upper class to mend your rotten ways. My father was a man-of-power whom everyone obeyed. So come on all you criminals! I've got to put you straight just like I did with my old man—twenty years too late. Your bread and water's going cold. Your hair is short and neat. I'll judge you all and make

Figure 5. Lyrics to *Thick as a Brick* from *The St. Cleve Chronicle* (scan 1).

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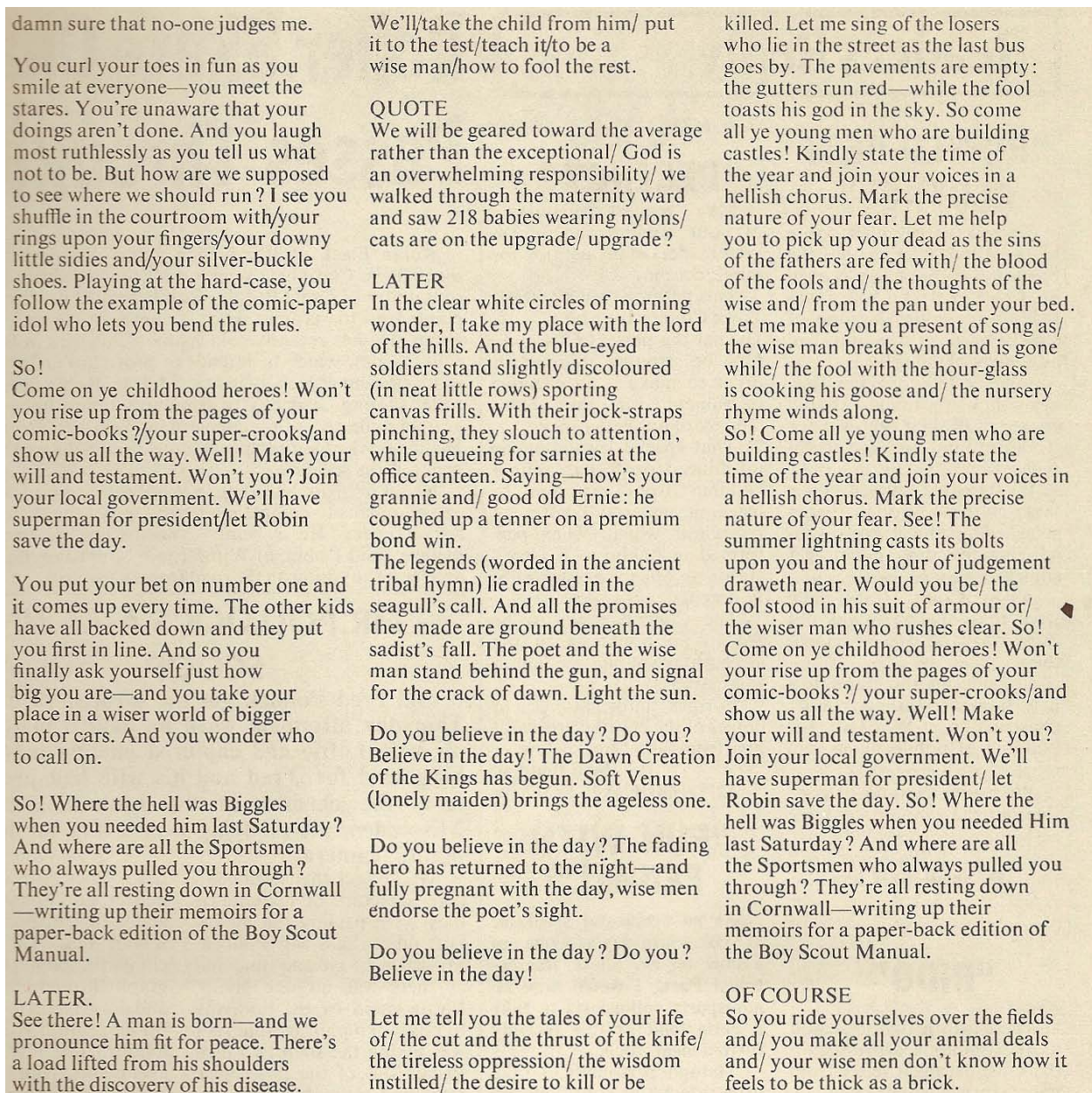


Figure 6. Lyrics to *Thick as a Brick* from *The St. Cleve Chronicle* (scan 2).

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Yet, when the lyrics are arranged according to their rhyme schemes and given proper scansion, the separation between, and forms of, the vocal sections become clearer. Anderson wrote the

lyrics before the music⁸⁸ so the form of the lyrics played a large part in determining the form of the music.

Lyrics to *Thick as a Brick* (with regularized scansion and rhyme schemes)

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Vocal 1 AABA (last “A” section is altered) 0:00-3:01 side 1

Really don't mind if you sit this one out.	a	
My words but a whisper - your deafness a SHOUT.	a	
I may make you feel but I can't make you think.	b	
Your sperm's in the gutter - your love's in the sink.	b	
So you ride yourselves over the fields	c	
And you make all your animal deals	c	
And your wise men don't know how it feels	c	
To be thick as a brick.	d	
And the sand-castle virtues are all swept away	e	
In the tidal destruction the moral melee.	e	
The elastic retreat rings the close of play	e	
As the last wave uncovers the newfangled way.	e	
But your new shoes are worn at the heels	c	
And your suntan does rapidly peel	c	
And your wise men don't know how it feels	c	
To be thick as a brick.	d	
And the love that I feel is so far away:	e	
I'm a bad dream that I just had today -	e	
And you shake your head and say it's a shame.	f	
Spin me back down the years and the days of my youth.		g
Draw the lace and black curtains and shut out the whole truth.		g
Spin me down the long ages: let them sing the song.		h

⁸⁸ Ian Anderson, from an interview in Greg Russo's *Flying Colours: The Jethro Tull Reference Manual* (New York: Crossfire Publications, 2000), 69.

Vocal 2 through-composed 3:01-3:36

See there! A son is born – a
 And we pronounce him fit to fight. b
 There are black-heads on his shoulders, c
 And he pees himself in the night. b

We'll make a man of him d
 Put him to a trade e
 Teach him to play Monopoly f
 And how to sing in the rain. e

Instrumental passage 1 3:36-6:09**Vocal 3 Part 1** verse-chorus 6:09-7:16

The Poet and the painter casting shadows on the water - a
 As the sun plays on the infantry returning from the sea. b
 The do-er and the thinker: no allowance for the other - a
 As the failing light illuminates the mercenary's creed. b

The home fire burning: the kettle almost boiling - c
 But the master of the house is far away. d
 The horses stamping - their warm breath clouding c
 In the sharp and frosty morning of the day. d

And the poet lifts his pen while the soldier sheaths his sword. e

And the youngest of the family f
 Is moving with authority. f
 Building castles by the sea, f
 He dares the tardy tide g
 To wash them all aside. g

Instrumental passage 2 7:16-9:21

Vocal 3 Part 2 verse-chorus 9:21-10:30

The cattle quietly grazing at the grass down by the river a
 Where the swelling mountain water moves onward to the sea: b
 The builder of the castles renews the age-old purpose c
 And contemplates the milking girl whose offer is his need. b

The young men of the household have all gone into service c
 And are not to be expected for a year. d
 The innocent young master - thoughts moving ever faster - e
 Has formed the plan to change the man he seems. f

And the poet sheaths his pen while the soldier lifts his sword. g

And the oldest of the family h
 Is moving with authority. h
 Coming from across the sea, h
 He challenges the son i
 Who puts him to the run. i

Instrumental passage 3 10:30-11:20**Vocal 4** through-composed 11:20-11:52

What do you do when the old man's gone – a
 Do you want to be him? b
 And your real self sings the song. a
 Do you want to free him? b
 No one to help you get up steam - c
 and the whirlpool turns you `way off-beam. c

Instrumental passage 4 11:52-13:16**Vocal 5 Part 1** strophic 13:16-14:13

LATER.

I've come down from the upper class to mend your rotten ways. a
 My father was a man-of-power whom everyone obeyed. a
 So come on all you criminals! I've got to put you straight b
 Just like I did with my old man - twenty years too late. b

Instrumental passage 5 14:13-15:26

Vocal 5 Part 2 strophic 15:26-15:54

Your bread and water's going cold. Your hair is short and neat. c
 I'll judge you all and make damn sure that no-one judges me. c

Instrumental passage 6 15:54-16:35**Vocal 6** through-composed 16:35-17:06

You curl your toes in fun a
 As you smile at everyone - a
 You meet the stares. b
 You're unaware b
 That your doings aren't done. a
 And you laugh most ruthlessly c
 As you tell us what not to be. c
 But how are we d
 Supposed to see d
 Where we should run? a

Instrumental passage 7 17:06-17:41**Vocal 7 Part 1** 1st "A" of AABA 17:41-18:08

I see you shuffle in the courtroom a
 With your rings upon your fingers b
 And your downy little sidies c
 And your silver-buckle shoes. d

Playing at the hard-case, e
 You follow the example f
 Of the comic-paper idol g
 Who lets you bend the rules. d

Instrumental passage 8 18:08-18:39

Vocal 7 Part 2 2nd "A" of AABA 18:39-19:05

So!

Come on ye childhood heroes!	a
Won't you rise up from the pages	b
Of your comic-books? your super-crooks	c
And show us all the way.	b

Well! Make your will and testament.	d
Won't you? Join your local government.	d
We'll have superman for president	d
Let Robin save the day.	b

Vocal 7 Part 3 "B" of AABA 19:05-19:29

You put your bet on number one and it comes up every time.	a
The other kids have all backed down and they put you first in line.	a
And so you finally ask yourself just how big you are -	b
And you take your place in a wiser world of bigger motor cars.	b
And you wonder who to call on.	c

Instrumental passage 9 19:29-19:59**Vocal 7 Part 4** Last "A" of AABA 19:59-20:25

So! Where the hell was Biggles	a
When you needed him last Saturday?	b
And where are all the Sportsmen	c
Who always pulled you through?	d

They're all resting down in Cornwall -	e
Writing up their memoirs	f
For a paper-back edition	g
Of the Boy Scout Manual.	h

Instrumental passage 10 20:25-22:39 side 1, 0:00-0:48 side 2

Vocal 8 through-composed 0:48-1:24

LATER.

See there! A man born -	a
And we pronounce him fit for peace.	b
There's a load lifted from his shoulders	c
With the discovery of his disease.	b

We'll take the child from him	d
Put it to the test	e
Teach it to be a wise man	f
How to fool the rest.	e

Instrumental passage 11 (with spoken word passages) 1:24-4:05

QUOTE

We will be geared toward the average rather than the exceptional
 God is an overwhelming responsibility
 We walked through the maternity ward and saw 218 babies wearing nylons
 Cats are on the upgrade
 Upgrade?
 Hipgrave.
 Oh, Mac.⁸⁹

Vocal 9 strophic 4:05-5:13

LATER

In the clear white circles of morning wonder,	a
I take my place with the lord of the hills.	b
And the blue-eyed soldiers stand slightly discoloured	c
(In neat little rows) sporting canvas frills.	b

With their jock-straps pinching, they slouch to attention,	d
While queueing for sarnies at the office canteen.	e
Saying - how's your grannie and good old Ernie:	f
He coughed up a tenner on a premium bond win.	e

Instrumental passage 12 5:13-6:00

⁸⁹ These last two lines of the spoken word section do not appear in the lyrics on the original LP, but were added in *Jethro Tull 25th Complete Lyrics*, ed. Karl Schramm and Gerald J. Burns. 2nd ed. (Heidelberg, Germany: Palmyra, 1996), 65.

Vocal 10 through-composed 6:00-6:30

The legends (worded in	a
The ancient tribal hymn)	a
Lie cradled in the seagull's call.	b
And all the promises they made are ground beneath the sadist's fall.	b

Vocal 11 strophic 6:30-11:00

The poet and the wise man stand behind the gun,	a
And signal for the crack of dawn.	a
Light the sun.	a
Do you believe in the day?	b
Do you? Believe in the day!	b

The Dawn Creation of the Kings has begun.	a
Soft Venus (lonely maiden) brings	c
The ageless one, the ageless one.	a
Do you believe in the day?	b

The fading hero has returned to the night -	d
And fully pregnant with the day,	b
Wise men endorse the poet's sight.	d
Do you believe in the day?	b
Do you? Believe in the day!	b

Instrumental passage 13 11:00-13:15**Vocal 12 Part 1** 1st verse of verse-chorus 13:15-13:52

Let me tell you the tales of your life	a
Of the cut and the thrust of the knife ⁹⁰	a
The tireless oppression	b
The wisdom instilled	c
The desire to kill or be killed.	c

Let me sing of the losers who lie	a
In the street as the last bus goes by.	a
The pavements are empty:	d
The gutters run red -	e
While the fool toasts his god in the sky.	a

Instrumental passage 14 13:52-14:55

⁹⁰ What is sung here is: "Of your luck and the cut of the knife."

Vocal 12 Part 2 1st chorus of verse-chorus 14:55-15:10

So come all ye young men who are building castles!	a
Kindly state the time of the year	b
And join your voices in a hellish chorus.	c
Mark the precise nature of your fear.	b

Instrumental passage 15 15:10-16:14**Vocal 12 Part 3** 2nd verse of verse-chorus 16:14-16:50

Let me help you pick up your dead	a
As the sins of the father are fed	a
With the blood of the fools	b
And the thoughts of the wise	c
And from the pan under your bed.	a

Let me make you a present of song	d
As the wise man breaks wind and is gone	d
While the fool with the hour-glass	e
Is cooking his goose	f
And the nursery rhyme winds along.	d

Instrumental passage 16 16:50-17:21**Vocal 12 Part 4** 2nd chorus of verse-chorus 17:21-17:51

So! Come all ye young men who are building castles!	a
Kindly state the time of the year	b
And join your voices in a hellish chorus.	c
Mark the precise nature of your fear.	b

See! The summer lightning casts its bolts upon you	d
And the hour of judgement draweth near.	b
Would you be the fool stood in his suit of armour	e
Or the wiser man who rushes clear.	b

Instrumental passage 17 17:51-18:16

Vocal 13 Part 1 (same music and lyrics as Vocal 7 Part 2) 18:16-18:38

So! Come on ye childhood heroes!	a
Won't you rise up from the pages	b
Of your comic-books? your super-crooks	c
And show us all the way.	b

Well! Make your will and testament.	d
Won't you? Join your local government.	d
We'll have superman for president	d
Let Robin save the day.	b

Instrumental passage 18 18:38-19:01**Vocal 13 Part 2** (same music and lyrics as Vocal 7 Part 4) 19:01-19:30

So! Where the hell was Biggles	a
When you needed Him last Saturday?	b
And where are all the Sportsmen	c
Who always pulled you through?	d

They're all resting down in Cornwall -	e
Writing up their memoirs	f
For a paper-back edition	g
Of the Boy Scout Manual.	h

Instrumental passage 19 19:30-20:36**Vocal 14** (same music and lyrics as lines 5-8 of Vocal 1) 20:36-21:05**OF COURSE**

So you ride yourselves over the fields	a
And you make all your animal deals	a
And your wise men don't know how it feels	a
To be thick as a brick.	b

Conclusions on Form

Table 1 above shows that the vocal sections named Vocal 1, Vocal 3, Vocal 5, Vocal 7, Vocal 9 and Vocals 11-13 approximate well-known popular and rock song forms: AABA, verse-chorus and strophic. If any of these sections were extracted from *Thick as a Brick*, they would almost sound as if they were complete, close-ended songs. In contrast to this, Vocal 2, Vocal 4,

Vocal 6, Vocal 8 and Vocal 10 can be considered to be through-composed. All five of them have melodic lines that either do not repeat, or repeat only once. They are also short in duration with most of them having six or less lines of text and singing that lasts less than one minute. Three of the five are accompanied by ostinati and wander away from their tonic area. Because of these features, they sound open-ended, fragmentary and transitional when compared to the other sections which are longer, repeat lyrics and/or music, have stronger melodic material and because of their forms sound more like “songs.” The pattern of alternating between popular song forms and transitional, through-composed sections is consistent until Vocal 11. There are no through-composed vocal sections after this. Vocal 12 repeats material, Vocal 13 brings back lyrics and melodies heard in previous sections (Vocal 7 Parts 2 and 4) and Vocal 14 is a reprise of the refrain (lines 5-8) of the Vocal 1. Bringing back familiar material cues the listener that the end of the piece is near and gives it a satisfying conclusion.

Thus, the vocal sections maintain a balance between familiar popular songs forms, which provide recognition because material is repeated, and through-composed sections, which bring new material to the ear. The former provide moments of stasis like an aria, while the latter keep the music moving forward like a recitative. If all the vocal sections were in one form, the predictable pattern might bore the listener after five or ten minutes. Yet if no material was repeated, or could be recognized as popular song forms, the listener may also lose interest because the music would appear long-winded and formless. Further, if too many tight-knit, closed forms such as verse-chorus and AABA were used, the piece would sound like a series of songs strung together (a medley), rather than a continuous flow of music. If too many open-ended forms (like through-composed or strophic) were used, then the piece would sound like it was wandering aimlessly.

Adding to the musical variety in the piece, the sections which resemble common song forms (Vocals 1, 3, 5, 7, 9, and 11-13) are treated in a number of different ways, especially through the placement of instrumental passages (see Table 2). Vocals 5, 9, and 11 are in strophic form, but Vocal 5 is distinctive in that it has an instrumental passage imbedded within it. Vocals 1 and 7 are in AABA form, yet the sections of Vocal 7 are broken up with two instrumental passages, one after the first “A” section and one after the “B” section. Vocals 3 and 12 are in verse-chorus form; Vocal 3 has an instrumental passage after the first chorus, which separates it into two equal sections, while Vocal 12 has three instrumental passages which separate all the verses and the choruses from each another. So not only does the piece as a whole have a variety of song forms, each of the songs forms are altered and expanded in different ways.

Thick as a Brick deftly integrates small-scale and large-scale forms, satisfying the expectations of both popular and classical music listeners. The variety of song forms, along with the integration of instrumental passages, make it a unique work which is more than just a medley, or a song that has been inordinately stretched out. The next section of this chapter will first discuss how repetition is used in a number of ways in *Thick as a Brick*, and then show how the piece is unified by means of thematic development.

Repetition and Thematic Development

In the post-World War II era, popular music has been governed by certain practical conventions which have established its boundaries. For example, a popular song usually lasts less than five minutes. Also, a popular song has no more than six different main sections of music (an introduction, verses, choruses, a bridge, an instrumental solo, a coda). Lastly, a popular song contains a fair amount of repetition, in both the lyrics and music. *Thick as a Brick* is one of the very few songs to gain mainstream success while radically breaking these three

conventions. It lasts for forty-three minutes, it has well over twenty-five different sections of music (counting the instrumental passages), and uses repetition in ways that popular music normally does not. This section investigates the ways in which *Thick as a Brick* uses repetition in both orthodox and unorthodox ways.

Repetition in Popular Music and Classical Music

In any piece of music, too much repetition tends to bore a listener; familiarity breeds contempt. Theodore Adorno detested this aspect of popular music, saying: “[l]isteners become so accustomed to the recurrence of the same things that they react automatically” and this leads to the “institutionalization and standardization of listening habits themselves.”⁹¹ Yet, unfamiliarity often breeds just as much contempt. Music which continually presents new material keeps the listener at a distance because she or he has nothing recognizable to grasp. The music seems to be wandering aimlessly with no sense of “home.” Hence, the ways in which a piece of music employs repetition, and presents new contrasting material, largely determines its shape and scope, and how it is received by the listener.

A comparison between how repetition is used in popular music and classical music is helpful in understanding how it is employed in *Thick as a Brick*. In most popular and rock music, it is common to find whole blocks of music repeated at regular intervals, often verbatim. For example, in a typical verse-chorus type song, the verses repeat the same music (with different words) at least twice and the chorus repeats the same music and words at least three times. Popular songs often repeat instrumental riffs and end with a fadeout which continually repeats the chorus. In some songs, a guitar riff is repeated throughout a song, such as in “The

⁹¹ Theodor Adorno, *Essays on Music*. Selected, with Introduction, Commentary, and Notes by Richard Leppert. New translations by Susan H. Gillespie (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 447. Also available online here: http://www.icce.rug.nl/~soundscapes/DATABASES/SWA/On_popular_music_1.shtml (accessed January 17, 2010).

Last Time” by the Rolling Stones. *Thick as a Brick* employs a degree of exact repetition in this way, which situates it within the realm of popular music.

The exact repetition that is found in popular music is similar to the repeat in binary dance form in the Baroque period (although the performer has the freedom to embellish the material) and the repeat of the exposition in sonata form in the early Classical period. While this gives the music symmetry and accessibility, it stymies the forward movement, organic shape and progressive intensity that composers with more Romantic sensibilities (such as Beethoven) sought. Following the lead of Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven, composers in the early 19th century began to eschew exact repetition in favor of through-composition and thematic development.⁹² In the Romantic period Brahms’s developing variation, Liszt’s thematic transformation, and Wagner’s manipulation of leitmotifs became new compositional models which later composers adopted to avoid exact repetition of musical material.⁹³ Richard Middleton writes that with composers such as Beethoven, repetition “tends to be absorbed into an irregularly shaped, prose-like discourse.”⁹⁴ Middleton’s use of the phrase “irregularly shaped, prose-like discourse” is an excellent description of both the lyrics and music of *Thick as a Brick*, and describes well the way its use of repetition mirrors that of the Romantic composers. While the music of *Thick as a Brick* does not approach the complexity and subtlety found in the works of these composers, nevertheless the use of these advanced compositional techniques gives the piece a depth not normally found in popular music. Yet, as stated previously, *Thick as a Brick* also contains exact repetition that characterizes popular music and certain forms from Baroque and Classical era

⁹² See Michael Broyles, “Organic Form and the Binary Repeat,” *The Musical Quarterly* 66, no. 3 (July 1980): 339-360 and Hugh MacDonald, “Repeats” in *Beethoven’s Century: Essays on Composers and Themes* (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2008), 144-160.

⁹³ In this section, I am using the phrase “thematic development” to encompass “cyclical variation,” “developing variation” and “thematic transformation,” since the fine distinctions between them are beyond the scope of this thesis.

⁹⁴ Richard Middleton, “Form” in *Key Terms in Popular Music and Culture*, ed. Bruce Horner and Thomas Swiss (Malden, Mass.: Blackwell, 1999), 146.

music (binary dance and sonata). The use of these different types of repetition breaks the piece out of the common popular music forms, creates a balance between new material and repeated material, and helps to sustain the listener's interest for the length of its forty-three minutes. This section begins by briefly discussing the Romantic composers' use of thematic development and leitmotif to give insight into the manipulation of musical themes found in *Thick as a Brick*. This will lead to an analysis of the three ways in which repetition is used in the music of *Thick as a Brick*: local repetition, reprise, and thematic development.

Thematic Development in the Romantic Period

More than one progressive rock scholar has pointed out the connections between concept albums and the programmatic works of the Romantic composers, especially the symphonic poem.⁹⁵ In program music, the form of a work is dictated by a poetic or other extra-musical idea the composer conveys through music, rather than the common forms such sonata, rondo, or minuet and trio. Thematic development and the manipulation of leitmotifs play a large role in giving unity and shape to a piece of music that eschews exact repetition and the Classical era forms. The symphonic poems of Franz Liszt were one of the first manifestations of this Romantic paradigm, and Richard Wagner brought it to a fuller fruition with leitmotif manipulation in his music dramas. In its use of thematic development, *Thick as a Brick* bears resemblances to Liszt's symphonic poems, but is even closer to a work he began composing before any of his symphonic poems, his Piano Concerto no. 2 in A major. The concerto has six sections, but they are merged together into one continuous movement through the development of several themes. Detlef Altenberg writes that both of Liszt's piano concertos had "enormous significance for Liszt's compositional development, being preparations for such techniques of

⁹⁵ Macan, *Rocking the Classics*, 58; Kevin Holm-Hudson, *Genesis and The Lamb Lies Down on Broadway* (Aldershot, England: Ashgate, 2008), 15; David Nicholls, "Virtual Opera, or Opera between the Ears," *Journal of the Royal Musical Association* 129 no. 1 (2004): 103.

the symphonic poem as thematic transformation and the compression of several movements in one.”⁹⁶

Just as Liszt united the distinct movements of a Classical era concerto into one extended, organic piece, Jethro Tull took the distinct song forms of popular, folk, and rock music and fused them into a concept album consisting of one extended, organic rock song. In another light *Thick as a Brick*, because it contains sung text, could be thought of as the concatenation of the separate songs of a song cycle (another important Romantic era form), or its equivalent form in rock music, a rock opera like The Who’s *Tommy* (1969). While *Thick as a Brick* bears resemblances to some of Liszt’s works in its use of thematic development, it also can be compared to Wagner’s music dramas in its manipulation of leitmotifs. All of the themes in *Thick as a Brick* are short and fragmentary enough to be considered motives. Yet the motives in *Thick as a Brick* have primarily a unifying function, and do not carry the musico-poetic meanings that Wagner invests in his leitmotifs.

Musical Repetition in *Thick as a Brick*

Reiterating Richard Middleton’s quote, the repetition in *Thick as a Brick* “tends to be absorbed into an irregularly shaped, prose-like discourse.”⁹⁷ Both the music and the lyrics are treated in this fashion. In a 1972 interview during the tour to promote *Thick as a Brick*, Anderson said: “I don’t want to get caught up in ... the commercial aspects of repetition. I don’t really like repetition unless it serves a very definite purpose musically within the context of a whole piece. [Speaking of *Thick as a Brick*]: If you look at that record ... there is some repetition, but not a

⁹⁶ Detlef Altenberg, “Franz Liszt and the Legacy of the Classical Era,” *19th-CenturyMusic* 18, no. 1, Brahms--Liszt--Wagner (Summer 1994): 54.

⁹⁷ Middleton, “Form” in *Key Terms in Popular Music and Culture*, 146.

great deal.”⁹⁸ Doane Perry, Jethro Tull’s drummer from 1984 to the present, echoes this in speaking of form in the band’s music:

The song forms [in Jethro Tull’s music] didn’t really traditionally adhere to what is known as “AABA” song form. It was more linear, and you had parts that didn’t really repeat at predictable places; and, when they did repeat, they often repeated with a great deal of change. So it was more like classical music in that way. ... There would be certain familiar motifs that would appear here and there. The idea was to try to create an evolving series of parts that didn’t necessarily have to be repeated the way you would predictably hear music performed in a more pop format.⁹⁹

Thick as a Brick’s open-ended, organic form is similar not only to the Romantic era forms, but also to the Medieval *lai*, which was discussed in chapter 2. The *formes fixes* (fixed forms) prevalent during the Medieval and Renaissance eras (*virelai*, *ballade*, and *rondeau*) had predetermined rhyme schemes and musical structures while the *lai* was a more open-ended form.

There are three ways in which musical repetition is employed in *Thick as a Brick*, the first being the repetition of musical material within the sections that resemble popular song forms (such as the three A sections in AABA having the same, or similar, music). This will be referred to as “local” repetition. The second is the return of musical material later in the work, with only slight variations (commonly known as a “reprise,” which the Beatles employed on *Sgt. Pepper’s Lonely Hearts Club Band*). The third is thematic development of short vocal and instrumental motives, which composers from the Romantic era brought to perfection. What follows is not a comprehensive analysis of repetition and thematic development in *Thick as a Brick*, but a study of the most prominent instances in the work.

⁹⁸ From an interview with Ian Anderson by Dick Williams in Australia. Broadcasted on July 22, 1972. http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EsMYOO_lZeo (accessed on January 27, 2010).

⁹⁹ Doane Perry, quoted from an interview in Scott Allen Nollen’s *Jethro Tull: A History of the Band, 1968-2001* (Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland & Company, Inc., 2002), 189-190.

There are seven occurrences of local repetition, the repeat of musical material within the sections that resemble popular songs forms:

1. In Vocal 1 (0:00-3:01 side 1), which approximates AABA form, the first two A sections have the same melody, accompaniment and chord progression. (The last A section has a different melody, but a similar acoustic guitar accompaniment).
2. In Vocal 3 Parts 1 and 2 (6:09 and 9:21 side 1), which resemble verse-chorus form, the verses and choruses each have the same melody, chord progression, and instrumentation.
3. Vocal 5 (starting at 13:16 side 1), which is in strophic form, has the same melody, chord progression, and instrumentation for each line of text.
4. In Vocal 7 Parts 1 to 4 (starting at 17:41 side 1), which is in AABA form, the three A sections have the same melody and chord progression.
5. Vocal 9 (4:05-5:13 side 2) has the same melody, chord progression, and instrumentation for both of its stanzas.
6. Vocal 11 (starting at 6:51 side 2), which is in strophic form, has roughly the same melody, chord progression, and instrumentation for each of its three stanzas.
7. In Vocal 12 Parts 1 to 4 (starting at 13:15 side 2), which is in verse-chorus form, the verses and choruses each have the same melody, chord progression and instrumentation.

These sections sound tight-knit and self-contained, and adhere closely to common popular music forms, largely because of their use of local repetition. Because of this, two sections of *Thick as a Brick* have been extracted and turned into coherent “singles” (although no singles were taken from the album when it was released in 1972). Vocal 1 appears as “Thick as a Brick Edit #1” on Jethro Tull’s first greatest hits album *M.U. The Best of Jethro Tull* from 1976. Vocal 5 appears as “Thick as a Brick Edit #4” on *Repeat: The Best of Jethro Tull Vol. 2* from

1977. Vocal 1, which lasts 3:01, has become quite popular as a Jethro Tull “single” with much rotation on American classic rock stations to the present day.¹⁰⁰

Yet in almost all of these seven sections, exact repetition is avoided by changes in the melody and/or instrumentation. For instance in the first A section of Vocal 1, Anderson plays this theme on the flute after singing each line:



Example 1. *Thick as a Brick*, melody in first A section of Vocal 1, 0:11 side 1.¹⁰¹
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In the second A section, a different theme is played by the electric guitar, piano, bass:



Example 2. *Thick as a Brick*, melody in second A section of Vocal 1, 1:00 side 1.¹⁰²
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Further, the refrains of the A sections (“So you ride yourselves over the fields...”) have different instrumentation. The accompaniment in the first refrain is just acoustic guitar and flute. In the second refrain, piano, electric guitar, bass, and drums are added.

The second type of repetition used in *Thick as a Brick* is the reprise of sections, or blocks, of music later in the work with only slight variations. This type of repetition helps to “bookend”

¹⁰⁰ As Billy Joel sings in his single “The Entertainer” from *Streetlife Serenade* (1974), “It was a beautiful song but it ran too long / If you’re gonna have a hit, you gotta make it fit-- / so they cut it down to 3:05.” Needless to say, *Thick as a Brick* in its entirety was, and is now, very rarely heard on radio.

¹⁰¹ All the musical examples in the thesis (except where indicated) are my own transcriptions of the music from the remastered CD of *Thick as a Brick*. 7243 4 95400 2 6 (Chrysalis Records, 1997).

¹⁰² This theme actually appears for the first time at 0:20 side 1, echoing the word “shout.”

the piece by bringing back on side two something easily recognizable from side one. There are two instances of this type of repetition:

1. Vocal 13 Parts 1 and 2 (18:16 and 19:01 side 2) bring back the lyrics and melody of Vocal 7 Parts 2 and 4 (18:39 and 19:59 side 1) with slight changes in the instrumentation. This reprise of both lyrics and music near the end acts as a cue to the listener that the piece is drawing to its conclusion.
2. Vocal 14 (20:36 side 2) brings back the melody, instrumentation and lines 5-8 of Vocal 1 (0:38 side 1). This short reprise provides a satisfying conclusion to the piece by ending it with the same music with which it began. Anderson also employs this technique on “Wind Up,” the last song on the *Aqualung* album. He ends the song with lines he had sung earlier: “I don’t believe you / You had the whole damn thing all wrong / He’s not the kind you have to wind up on Sundays.”

The third type of repetition found in *Thick as a Brick* is the development or transformation of vocal and instrumental motives. It is in this category that *Thick as a Brick* goes beyond the conventional types of repetition found in popular, folk and rock music by employing more sophisticated and subtle compositional techniques found in classical music. Active and concentrated listening is required in order to hear how these motives are developed throughout the piece. While *Thick as a Brick* can be enjoyed without delving deeply into the music, the piece grows richer with every listen because there is much to find if one looks beyond the surface. It is here that Anderson’s views on active listening (quoted in full previously) are most pertinent:

I like to have to sit down and really work into the music. I think it’s important for the listener to feel that an effort has been made, that he has actually contributed in

some way to the enjoyment for the music. I try to entice the audience into wanting to listen.¹⁰³

The following seven motives are developed thematically in *Thick as a Brick*. All of these themes are short and somewhat fragmentary, thus they lend themselves well to melodic, harmonic, rhythmic and instrumental variation.

Motive 1

Motive 1 is the opening guitar pattern heard at the beginning of *Thick as a Brick*. It appears eight times in the piece.



Example 3. *Thick as a Brick*, Motive 1.¹⁰⁴ Copyright © 1976 Chrysalis Music Ltd. Reprinted by permission of Hal Leonard Corporation.

Table 3. Appearances of Motive 1.

<u>Section</u>	<u>Timing</u>	<u>Meter</u>	<u>Pitch Center</u>	<u>Instrumentation</u>
Vocal 1	0:00 side 1	12/8	F	Acoustic guitar
Instr. 6	16:24 side 1	12/8	F	Acoustic guitar
Vocal 7 Part 1	17:41 side 1	4/4, 12/8	F	Acoustic guitar with different picking pattern
Vocal 9	4:05 side 2	6/8 or 12/8	F	Acoustic guitar with new vocal melody
Instr. 12	5:48 side 2	12/8	G minor	Acoustic guitar
Instr. 18	18:50 side 2	7/8 and 9/8	C Dorian	Bass, electric guitar, organ
Instr. 19	19:51 side 2	6/8	C Dorian	Bass, electric guitar, organ
Vocal 14	20:36 side 2	12/8	F	Acoustic guitar

¹⁰³ Ian Anderson, quoted from an interview in Greg Russo's *Flying Colours: The Jethro Tull Reference Manual* (New York: Crossfire Publications, 2000), 76.

¹⁰⁴ Derived from Addi Booth, Bill LaFleur, Ryan Maziarz, and Andrew Moore's transcription of "Thick as a Brick," *Jethro Tull Guitar Anthology* (Milwaukee, Wis.: Hal Leonard Corp., [2008]), 123.

Although this motive sounds melodically similar every time it appears and is played almost exclusively on acoustic guitar, the band finds ways to alter it through its metrical ambiguity. This opening guitar pattern is in 12/8 meter, a compound meter which is easily manipulated into sounding like other compound or simple meters, depending on how the twelve notes are grouped or which subdivisions of the beat are accented. This meter can easily be heard in 6/8 or 4/4, with two or four primary beats per measure, and this is how the band varies the motive.

When the guitar pattern returns for the first time near the end of Instr. 6 (16:24 side 1), it is again in 12/8 meter, with the notes in four groups of three. Anderson reinforces this by strumming the four primary beats of 4/4 time prior to the entrance of the familiar picking pattern. Immediately after this, at the beginning of Vocal 6 (16:35), drummer Barriemore Barlow subtly suggests 6/8 meter using his hi-hat and, a little later, splash cymbal. (This hi-hat rhythm will return and be the foundation of Barlow's drum solo in Instr. 11). Meanwhile Anderson continues accenting the four primary beats of his 12/8 pattern.

The image shows three staves of musical notation. The top staff is labeled 'Acoustic guitar' and is in 12/8 time, featuring a repeating pattern of eighth notes grouped in fours. The middle staff is labeled 'Splash cymbal' and shows a single 'x' mark on the first beat of each measure. The bottom staff is labeled 'Hi-hat' and shows a repeating pattern of eighth notes with 'x' marks on the first and third beats of each measure.

Example 4. *Thick as a Brick*, 16:43 side 1. Copyright © 1976 Chrysalis Music Ltd.
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After Barlow drops out at 17:15, Anderson surrenders his 12/8 picking pattern and consents to the 6/8 meter using simple strumming. Then, convinced that Barlow is through pestering him with 6/8 meter, Anderson surreptitiously morphs his strumming back to 4/4 meter. Meanwhile, John Evans begins playing a variation of Motive 3 (see below) on the organ which suggests a 12/8 feel. Anderson picks up on this and begins playing a variation on the opening picking

pattern which, while still in 4/4, also suggests 12/8 because of the four dotted eighth notes in Evans' organ theme. Thus, in the span of a minute and a half of music, Anderson, Barlow and Evans play with the metrical ambiguity inherent in the 12/8 guitar pattern by first by imposing 6/8 onto 12/8, adopting 6/8 entirely, changing 6/8 to 4/4, then returning to 12/8 by implying it within the 4/4 meter. The following table summarizes this metrical progression:

Table 4. Metrical progression from 16:18-17:41, side 1.

Section Timing Event

Instr. 6	16:18	Anderson strums in 4/4
Instr. 6	16:24	Anderson picks in 12/8
Vocal 6	16:35	Barlow plays hi-hat and splash cymbal in 6/8
Instr. 7	17:15	Barlow stops, Anderson strums in 6/8
Instr. 7	17:26	Anderson continues strumming, but switches to 4/4
Instr. 7	17:31	Evans plays Motive 3 on organ in 4/4, but hints at 12/8
Vocal 7	17:41	Anderson picks in 4/4, but hints at 12/8

The opening guitar pattern returns again at Vocal 9 (4:05 side 2) in its original form, but Anderson soon alters it and sings a new melody over it, giving the section a different character. It also has more of a 6/8 swing to it rather than the four-square 12/8. This appearance is particularly refreshing because it brings order to the music after the chaotic playing in Instr. 11. Next, the motive appears briefly in Instr. 12 (5:48 side 2) in G minor, vanishing as quickly as it is noticed. The next two appearances of Motive 1 in Instr. 18 and 19 are discussed in the section on Motive 2 below, since the two motives are closely related. The last appearance of the motive is in its original 12/8 form, ending the piece in Vocal 14 (20:36 side 2).

Motive 2

Motive 2 is a *moto perpetuo* theme appearing first in Vocal 2 accompanying the lyrics "See there! A son is born -." It appears four times.



Example 5. *Thick as a Brick*, Motive 2. Copyright © 1976 Chrysalis Music Ltd.
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Table 5. Appearances of Motive 2.

<u>Section</u>	<u>Timing</u>	<u>Meter</u>	<u>Pitch Center</u>	<u>Instrumentation</u>
Vocal 2	3:05 side 1	5/4	C Dorian	Bass, electric guitar
Vocal 8	0:48 side 2	6/8	C Dorian	Bass, electric guitar
Instr. 18	18:50 side 2	7/8 and 9/8	C Dorian	Bass, electric guitar, organ
Instr. 19	19:51 side 2	6/8	C Dorian	Bass, electric guitar, organ

After its initial appearance in 5/4 meter near the beginning of side 1 (Vocal 2), this motive returns near the beginning of side 2 (Vocal 8) transformed into 6/8 meter with a swifter tempo. Two notes have been added to the initial ten note motive, and drummer Barlow gives it a swinging 6/8 feel. The note values are also changed (diminuted) from eighth notes into sixteenth notes.



Example 6. *Thick as a Brick*, Motive 2 in 6/8 meter, 0:48 side 2.
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This variation of Motive 2 bears a striking resemblance to Motive 1, the opening 12/8 guitar pattern (more on this below). The motive appears for a third time in its most sophisticated form in Instr. 18, where it is treated in a *fortspinnung* manner. *Grove Music Online* defines this term as “a short idea or motif [that] is “spun out” into an entire phrase or period by such techniques as

sequential treatment, intervallic transformation and even mere repetition.”¹⁰⁵ The motive is spun out using repetition, and the meter is changed yet again to 7/8 and 9/8.

The image shows two staves of musical notation for bass guitar. The top staff is in 7/8 time and contains an 'Extended version of Motive 2 (Example 6)' followed by an 'Addition'. The bottom staff is in 9/8 time and contains a 'Shortened version of Motive 2' followed by 'Motive 2 (Example 5)'. Both staves are in the key of B-flat major.

Example 7. *Thick as a Brick*, Motive 2 *fortspinnung* passage, 18:50 side 2.
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This extraordinary passage first presents the extended 6/8 version of Motive 2 (Example 6), heard in Vocal 8. Two sixteenth notes have been added to the end (C and B-flat) to round out the phrase and create a 7/8 bar. The 9/8 bar that follows contains two phrases, the first being a shortened version of Motive 2 (Example 5) with two notes, E and G, taken out. The second phrase is Motive 2 in its original form. In both of the phrases in the 9/8 bar, the notes values have been diminished from eighth notes to sixteenth notes. This is one of the passages in *Thick as a Brick* which showcases not only the band’s instrumental virtuosity, but also their compositional virtuosity.

The motive’s fourth and final appearance is a minute later in Instr. 19. In this section it is heard initially in its 6/8 guise in Vocal 8 (Example 6). Then it is truncated to six notes and interrupted three times by a string orchestra playing Motive 4 (see below, Example 11). After the three string orchestra interludes, the motive continues uninterrupted in the form it took in Vocal 8. As mentioned earlier, this 6/8 version of Motive 2 bears a striking resemblance to Motive 1,

¹⁰⁵ William Drabkin. "Fortspinnung." In *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online*, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/10024> (accessed March 22, 2010).

the opening 12/8 guitar pattern. This suggests a strong connection between Motive 1 (in 12/8) and Motive 2 (in 5/4), with the 6/8 meter version in Vocal 8 being the link between the two. When Motive 2 is changed from 5/4 to 6/8 in Vocal 8, it comes closer to the structure and feel of Motive 1, whose 12/8 meter has already been tinged with 6/8 connotations. Yet, it is difficult to hear the similarity between the two motives when they are presented in their original forms at the beginning of *Thick as Brick*. The 12/8 meter of Vocal 1 and 5/4 meter of Vocal 2 are in fact presented as contrasting sections, the first having mostly acoustic instruments, soft dynamics, and played in a folk style in F, the second having electric instruments, loud dynamics, and played in a rock style in C Dorian. They don't begin to congeal until the 6/8 meter of Vocal 8. In essence, the first appearance of Motive 2 can be thought of as a variation on Motive 1, since both of them have a continuous, *moto perpetuo* nature.

Motive 3

Motive 3 is first heard on electric guitar and flute in Instr. 2 and appears four times.



Example 8. *Thick as a Brick*, Motive 3. Copyright © 1976 Chrysalis Music Ltd.
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Table 6. Appearances of Motive 3.

<u>Section</u>	<u>Timing</u>	<u>Meter</u>	<u>Pitch Center</u>	<u>Instrumentation</u>
Instr. 2	7:16 side 1	4/4	G Dorian	Electric guitar and flute
Instr. 2	9:05 side 1	4/4	G Dorian	Electric guitar and flute
Instr. 7 through Instr. 10	17:31-21:08 side 1	4/4	F	Organ
Instr. 19	19:30 side 2	4/4	C Dorian	Electric guitar and flute

The first two appearances of this motive come at the beginning (7:16 side 1) and the end (9:05 side 1) of the electric guitar solo in Instr. 2. It reappears in Instr. 7 (17:31 side 1) in a very high register on Hammond organ and its melody is slightly altered.



Example 9. *Thick as a Brick*, Motive 3 on organ, 17:31 side 1.
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It is then played dozens of times on the organ throughout the next three and a half minutes in altered melodic and rhythmic forms, in different octaves and in different organ settings. It comes back for the last time near the end in Instr. 19 (19:30 side 2) where it is taken up again by the electric guitar and flute.

Motive 4

Motive 4 is presented first on organ, electric guitar and bass in Vocal 4 (11:24 side 1) accompanying the line “What do you do when the old man’s gone – Do you want to be him?”



Example 10. *Thick as a Brick*, Motive 4, 11:24 side 1.
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The motive returns over thirty minutes later played by the string orchestra in Instr. 19 (19:56 side 2) with the first cell inverted, making all four of them ascending. The motive is used three times in quick succession to interrupt the 6/8 version of Motive 2 (Example 6), which is truncated to its first six notes. The first violins ornament the motive with countermelodies in its second and third appearances.

The image displays three systems of musical notation for the piece "Thick as a Brick". Each system consists of five staves: Violin I, Violin II, Viola, Violoncello, and Bass Guitar. The music is written in a key signature of two flats (B-flat and E-flat) and a 3/8 time signature. The piece is divided into measures by a double bar line. The first system shows the initial entry of Motive 4 in the Violin I and II parts, while the Viola and Violoncello parts play a simple harmonic accompaniment. The Bass Guitar part plays Motive 2. The second system introduces an Ornamentation in the Violin I part, which is a more complex, rhythmic figure. The Violin II part continues with Motive 4. The Viola and Violoncello parts remain the same. The Bass Guitar part continues with Motive 2. The third system shows the Ornamentation in the Violin I part continuing, while the Violin II part continues with Motive 4. The Viola and Violoncello parts remain the same. The Bass Guitar part continues with Motive 2, which is now shown as a more complex, rhythmic figure.

Example 11. *Thick as a Brick*, Motive 2 interrupted by Motive 4, 19:56 side 2.

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Motive 5

This motive is heard first in the voice and glockenspiel in Vocal 6 at the line “You curl your toes in fun” (16:35 side 1). The descending phrase in the third measure of this melody is a diminution of Example 2, from which it most likely was derived. The motive is heard again on the flute and tubular bells in Instr. 11 (a fifth higher starting on G) over Barriemore Barlow’s drum solo (1:41 and 2:10 side 2).



Example 12. *Thick as a Brick*, Motive 5, 16:35 side 1.
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Motive 6

Motive 6 is a descending theme which appears four times. The first appearance of the motive is played in a semi-improvisational fashion with no definite pulse or meter. It has been transcribed in 6/8 since it is in that meter in all subsequent appearances.



Example 13. *Thick as a Brick*, Motive 6. Copyright © 1976 Chrysalis Music Ltd.
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Table 7. Appearances of Motive 6.

<u>Section</u>	<u>Timing</u>	<u>Meter</u>	<u>Pitch Center</u>	<u>Instrumentation</u>
Instr. 10	21:24 side 1	Free	C Dorian	Organ
Instr. 10	0:14 side 2	6/8	C Dorian	Flute and soprano saxophone
Instr. 11	1:24, 1:55, 2:54 side 2	6/8	G	Organ, electric guitar, bass
Instr. 19	20:14 side 2	6/8	C Dorian	Organ and soprano saxophone

This motive provides continuity between the two sides of the LP (or the two tracks on a CD or MP3 file) since it appears both at the end of side 1 and the beginning of side 2. Three reverberant chords on electric guitar and swirling wind sounds also help to provide continuity. Yet the second appearance of the motive at the beginning of side 2 is heard not on the organ, but on the flute and soprano saxophone (0:14 side 2). Also present here are punctuating, staccato figures by these same two instruments which imply a 6/8 feel, foreshadowing the 6/8 meter of Vocal 8, which begins at 0:48 side 2. The motive's third appearance occurs just as Vocal 8 ends with Martin Barre playing a version of the theme on electric guitar in Instr. 11 (1:24 side 2). The theme is heard twice more in this section on organ, electric guitar, and bass interrupting Barlow's drum solo at 1:55 and 2:54.

In its fourth appearance much later in Instr. 19 (20:14 side 2), the theme is played by the organ and the soprano saxophone. Also present are the punctuating, staccato figures on flute and soprano saxophone which accompanied the motive's second appearance at the beginning of side 2. This fourth appearance of Motive 6 is significant because it is layered on top of Motive 2 (played by the organ, electric guitar and bass). Yet this is the version of Motive 2 that has been transformed to 6/8 meter and is twelve notes long (Example 6) instead of the original ten in 5/4 meter. Because of this, the two motives lock perfectly in sync with one another in 6/8. They also accompany each other well because they are in contrary motion: Motive 2 is an ascending theme

while Motive 6 is a descending theme. This layering of the two themes creates an electrifying climax to the piece and makes the sudden reappearance of Motive 1 at the end all the more striking.

Example 14. *Thick as a Brick*, Motive 6 layered onto Motive 2, 20:14 side 2.

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Motive 7

Motive 7 has two sections, the A section being a dotted eighth-note motive and the B section being a descending sequential melody. The A section alone is first heard on flute and organ punctuating the end of an ascending melody in Instr. 13 (12:41 side 2). The A and B sections are presented together at 12:52 side 2.

Example 15. *Thick as a Brick*, Motive 7. Copyright © 1976 Chrysalis Music Ltd.

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This motive has a ubiquitous presence in Vocal 12 Parts 1 and 3 and in Instr. 13, 14, 15 and 16. In these four and a half minutes of music (12:41-17:14 side 2), it is heard dozens of times, sometimes with altered melodies and rhythms of both the A and B sections. Sometimes the A section appears alone and is repeated at different dynamic levels. Sometimes the B section is fragmented or sequenced downward. We hear the motive for the last time in Instr. 18 (18:42 side 2) where the B section is augmented and played by the organ and electric guitar.

Conclusions on Thematic Development

In Instr. 19 (19:30-20:36 side 2) Motives 1, 2, 3, 4 and 6 return in quick succession either fused together, pitted against one another, or layered on top of one another. First to appear in this section is Motive 3 at 19:30. Then Motives 1 and 2, presented at the beginning of the piece as contrasting themes, are fused into a single driving *moto perpetuo* theme at 19:51 only to be interrupted three times by the string orchestra playing Motive 4 at 19:56, 20:01 and 20:06. After these interruptions, the *moto perpetuo* gets going again with Motive 6 layered on top of it in contrary motion (20:14). After a grand crescendo, the band cuts out leaving Motive 1 to finish the piece where it began. This final flurry of leitmotifs is a technique that Richard Wagner used to perfection to bring acts, whole music dramas, and even the entire Ring cycle to a climactic end. Wagner took the wealth of leitmotifs built up in the first three music dramas of *Der Ring des Nibelungen* (*Das Rheingold*, *Die Walküre*, and *Siegfried*) and packed them all into *Götterdämmerung* with wild abandon. In *Götterdämmerung*, the leitmotifs are altered so far beyond their original forms and come at the listener in such profusion that it is virtually impossible to keep track of them. A similar technique on a much smaller scale is happening in the last minute and a half of *Thick as a Brick*. The band packs the end of the piece full of motives that emerged at a more leisurely pace in the first forty minutes of the work. This minute and a half of music shows how dedicated the band was to the craft of musical composition, something rarely found in such abundance in rock music.

This section highlights a conundrum that is characteristic of much of the best progressive rock music: the seemingly-incongruous blending of composition and improvisation. Although the bulk of this thesis so far has shown how compositionally dense the music is, *Thick as a Brick* still sounds somewhat improvisational and spontaneous. In the “Discography” section of Jethro

Tull's official website, we read this baffling sentence about the album: "Indeed, several segments were recorded in just one improvisational take."¹⁰⁶ In the interview that is included as a bonus track on the remastered CD, Anderson, Barre, and Hammond say that it only took eight to ten days to record the backing tracks, with many of them being first takes.¹⁰⁷ In fact, Ian Anderson said this in 1974: "[t]he things that appeared most calculated on my albums were figured out on the spot."¹⁰⁸ *Thick as a Brick* displays a compositional depth rarely found in rock, folk, or popular music, yet the music was written, arranged, rehearsed, and recorded in less than two months. Additionally, only keyboardists John Evans and David Palmer (who arranged the string orchestra parts in Instr. 19) had classical training. The rest of the band members, including Ian Anderson, are essentially self-taught musicians who cannot read nor write musical notation with any fluency.

To sum up this section on repetition and thematic development in *Thick as a Brick*, I would like draw an analogy to "organic form" in literary theory. In the late 18th century, literary critics such as August Wilhelm Schlegel and Samuel Taylor Coleridge propounded that literature was being shackled by its own stagnant forms and that new paradigms were needed. Their ideas about "open-ended form" and "organic form" became a central theme in Romanticism. These new ideas about form had their origins in literary theory but then spread throughout all the arts, especially music. Influenced by the theories of Schlegel, Coleridge wrote in a lecture he gave on Shakespeare:

The form is mechanic when on any given material we impress a predetermined form, not necessarily arising out of the properties of the material - as when to a

¹⁰⁶ From *Jetho Tull, The Official Website: Discography: Thick as a Brick* <http://www.j-tull.com/discography/thickasabrick/index.html> (accessed June 29, 2010).

¹⁰⁷ Ian Anderson, Martin Barre, and Jeffrey Hammond from interview on the remastered CD of *Thick as a Brick*. 7243 4 95400 2 6 (Chrysalis Records, 1997), 6:20-7:53.

¹⁰⁸ Ian Anderson, interviewed by Steve Gaines, "Ian Anderson Fights Back with *WarChild*," *Circus Raves* (November 1974) <http://www.tullpress.com/cnov74.htm> (accessed June 17, 2010).

mass of wet clay we give whatever shape we wish it to retain when hardened. The organic form, on the other hand, is innate; it shapes as it develops itself from within, and the fullness of its development is one and the same with the perfection of its outward form.¹⁰⁹

Similarly, Anderson describes the compositional process of *Thick as a Brick* as a spontaneous, organic process. His rambling, stream-of-consciousness description is itself spontaneous and organic:

I really wasn't aware if it had been done before or not. [Writing an album consisting of one long song]. Every day we just went in and a new bit of music came and we said rather than stop there, let's just join it together with that little bit you were playing yesterday, whatever that was. That was a great bit, just to kind of tail out of this and bring us into that. Or we could use that idea we used before and make that a link sequence. Every day ... we would add another three or four minutes worth of real time musical arrangement to the stew. The good thing about *Thick as a Brick*, in the making of it, was that it was relatively spontaneous. I would write a piece of music in the morning, go in to rehearsal ... and we would work on that during the day, tie it into what we had been working on the previous day and then have a run-through of everything to date. So we built up the album day by day. Each day I would come in with a new piece. I was reacting to what I had done before and it was built up in a very organic way.¹¹⁰

Thick as a Brick succeeds as an “organic form” because its composition and final form were not governed by the “laws” that governed popular music forms. It presents a large amount of continually new musical material, yet contains just enough repetition and thematic development to prevent it from sounding incoherent, or as if it was wandering aimlessly. This balance of new musical material, repetition and thematic development in both lyrics and music was a hallmark of the progressive rock style and created an audience which appreciated large-scale pieces of music.

¹⁰⁹ Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Coleridge's Criticism of Shakespeare*, ed. R.A. Foakes (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1989), 53.

¹¹⁰ Ian Anderson from YouTube video uploaded by TullTapes, “Part 2 Jethro Tull Thick as a Brick Making of 1972 8mm Film + Pics, Real Sound,” <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nnbeI2EZfPM&feature=related> (accessed February 25, 2010).

Instrumental Passages

While *Thick as a Brick* is full of memorable vocal melodies, it is in the instrumental passages that the compositional brilliance of the band really shines. Although each of them is very short (most are under two minutes), the nineteen instrumental passages are often more musically adventurous than the vocal sections because of their diversity in instrumentation, wealth of melodic and rhythmic inventiveness, and display of the musicians' virtuosity.

These passages serve different functions musically and can be placed into four categories: some function as transitions from one vocal section to the next, some feature virtuosic soloing by individual band members or the band collectively, some provide stark contrasts and take the music in new directions, and some repeat and reinforce the musical material found in the previous vocal section. Each of these categories will be considered in turn, pointing out specific passages that exemplify them. Almost all of the instrumental passages fall into more than one of these categories.

While all the instrumental passages in *Thick as a Brick* can be considered as transitions or bridges between the vocal sections, some are more "transitional" than others in that they perform many of the same functions as the modulating bridge and development sections in classical sonata form. These functions include taking the material of the previous section and destabilizing its key area, fragmenting its melodies into smaller motives and sequencing them, introducing new thematic material and key areas, and sometimes changing tempo and meter. For example, Instr. 1 (3:36-6:09 side 1) moves the music from the 5/4 meter and C Dorian mode of Vocal 2 to the 4/4 meter and G Dorian mode of Vocal 3. Instr. 6 (15:54-16:35 side 1) moves the music from the D pitch center of Vocal 5 to the F pitch center of Vocal 6. It also fragments the organ

melody which dominates Vocal 5 into a shorter motive while the acoustic guitar intersperses new material which turns into Motive 1 in Vocal 6.

Many of these transitional passages contain subtle shifts in instrumentation with different groupings of instruments trading and sequencing motives. In Instr. 3 (10:46-10:58 side 1), the organ trades an ascending dotted eighth note motive with the soprano saxophone and electric guitar. After a few measures, the flute joins the saxophone and electric guitar playing a related descending motive in triplets. In a few instances, the end of an instrumental passage introduces a new vocal section by presenting an instrumental version of the first stanza of the vocal section. This occurs in Instr. 1 (5:12 side 1), Instr. 4 (12:32 side 1), Instr. 7 (17:31 side 1) and Instr. 13 (12:52 side 2).

Yet the relationship between the vocal sections and the instrumental sections is more complex than just thinking of the vocal sections as “tunes” and the instrumental passages as “transitions.” Vocal 4 and 10 sound transitional because they are fragmentary and tonally unstable while Instr. 5 and 8 sound like tunes because they have memorable melodies and are tonally stable.

The second category of the instrumental passages is soloing, in which the virtuosic abilities of the band members are displayed. While all of the music on *Thick as a Brick* was composed and painstakingly rehearsed before the band went into the studio to record it, all the members of the band except for Jeffrey Hammond on bass have opportunities for improvised solos. Anderson solos on flute in Instr. 5, 9, and 10, Martin Barre solos on electric guitar in Instr. 1 and 2, John Evans solos on organ in Instr. 1 and Barriemore Barlow solos on drums in Instr. 11. After Barlow’s drum solo in Instr. 11, the entire band collectively improvises and brings the music to a sputtering standstill. All of the improvised solos appear in the first two-thirds of *Thick*

as a *Brick*, giving this portion a slightly looser feel. The band's compositional inclinations seem to take over after the collective improvisation in Instr. 11, since the music is tightly composed and arranged throughout the rest of the piece.

Jethro Tull, like many other progressive bands, thought of their songs as composed pieces of music and faithfully reproduced them live. While the band members had opportunities for solo improvisation and even impromptu comedy sketches (more on this in chapter 6, p. 124), they performed *Thick as a Brick* during the 1972 tour much like it was on the album. This is in contrast with other rock and jam bands like Led Zeppelin, the Allman Brothers Band, and the Grateful Dead, who saw some of their songs as having open or elastic forms and used them as vehicles for solo or group improvisation. The Grateful Dead's twenty-three minute version of "Dark Star" from 1969's *Live/Dead* and Led Zeppelin's twenty-six minute version of "Dazed and Confused" (recorded in 1973 and released on 1976's *The Song Remains the Same*) come to mind.

While much of music in *Thick is a Brick* is blended into a mellifluous whole, some instrumental passages introduce contrasting material with abrupt shifts in style, tempo, dynamics, key, meter, or instrumentation, taking the music in new directions. In Instr. 3 (10:45 side 1), Instr. 4 (12:00 side 1), and Instr. 6 (15:54 side 1), all the instruments drop out except for the organ. In Instr. 10 (21:08 side 1), the strict adherence to rhythm and meter that defined the first twenty minutes of the music is suddenly abandoned in favor of rising arpeggiated gestures that adhere to no specific meter. Meter and rhythm are downplayed throughout this three minute section until Vocal 8 bursts in with 6/8 meter. Instr. 11 is the section which contains the highest degree of stark contrasts with its drum solo interrupted by Motive 5, abrupt changes in dynamics including the use of silence, spoken word passages, and nod to free jazz. The next instance of

contrast appears in Instr. 17 (18:06 side 2) where an abrupt shift to F (the mode/key at the beginning) signals that the piece is drawing to its conclusion. Lastly, the unexpected string orchestra interludes in Instr. 19 (19:56-20:11 side 2) provide a new tone color and hint at the grandeur of symphonic music.

The final category the instrumental passages fall into is repetition. These passages maintain the meter, key area, tempo and melodic material of the vocal sections they follow. In Instr. 12 (5:13-5:40 side 2), Anderson continues to repeat the same rhythm on acoustic guitar after he has stopped singing in Vocal 9. Then the band takes up a variation on the rhythm and sequences it upward. In Instr. 13 (11:00-12:37 side 2), the band takes a rhythm from the previous vocal section (Vocal 11) and repeats it incessantly with progressive intensity. The most repetition employed in *Thick as a Brick* occurs from 12:41-17:14 on side 2. This is because of the constant presence of Motive 7 in Vocal 12 Parts 1 and 3 and in Instr. 13, 14, 15, and 16. In these four and a half minutes of music, this motive is heard dozens of times played by different instruments in different registers and at different dynamic levels. A final example can be found in Instr. 8, 9 and the beginning of 10, which occur within Vocal 7. Since these passages occur *within* a well-defined song form (AABA), and do not link two different vocal sections, there is no need for stark contrast or transition. This would encumber the integrity of the song form. Instead, they simply prolong the material in Vocal 7 with different instrumentation and accentuation. In many ways the repetition in these sections of *Thick as a Brick* resembles the ritornello in early Baroque vocal music, in which a melody is repeated after each stanza.

Analysis of the Instrumental Passages

The following is a detailed description of all the primary musical events in the instrumental passages, and the categories that each of them fall into:

Instr. 1 (3:36-6:09 side 1) Soloing, transition and contrast

- 3:36-4:06 Organ solo in C Dorian over 5/4 ostinato (Motive 2) on bass and electric guitar
- 4:06-4:21 Electric guitar solo over bass which leaves the ostinato behind in favor of more melodic, sequential lines
- 4:21-4:31 Shift to 4/4 meter and a short acoustic guitar interlude
- 4:31-5:13 Staccato rhythms by whole band in 5/4, ending on a diminished chord. Shift to 4/4 meter and G Dorian
- 5:13-6:09 Introduction to the harmonic and melodic material of Vocal 3

Instr. 2 (7:16-9:21 side 1) Soloing

- 7:16-7:27 Electric guitar and flute play Motive 3
- 7:27-9:05 Electric guitar solo in the left channel and another in the right channel (starting at 7:46) playing related material
- 9:05-9:21 Electric guitar and flute play Motive 3

Instr. 3 (10:30-11:20 side 1) Transition

- 10:30-10:46 Codetta of Vocal 3: descending, sequential passages
- 10:46-10:58 Organ trades motives with electric guitar, soprano saxophone and flute
- 10:58-11:20 Descending, sequential passages in 6/8 leading to D Mixolydian

Instr. 4 (11:52-13:16 side 1) Contrast and transition

- 11:52-12:00 Organ and flute play syncopated, staccato figure
- 12:00-12:32 Shift to B Aeolian. Organ plays syncopated melody and fragments of the accompanimental melody of Vocal 5. Shift from 4/4 to 12/8 meter and modulation to D pitch center
- 12:32-13:16 Introduction to Vocal 5 – organ, electric guitar and bass play accompanimental melody of Vocal 5 with flute punctuations

Instr. 5 (14:13-15:26 side 1) Soloing

- 14:13-14:56 Flute solo
- 14:56-15:26 Electric guitar and organ play a theme derivative of accompanimental melody of Vocal 5

Instr. 6 (15:54-16:35 side 1) Contrast and transition

- 15:54-16:24 Organ, then electric guitar, play variation of accompanimental melody of Vocal 5, augmented by acoustic guitar
 16:24-16:35 Introduction to Vocal 6 - shift to F pitch center, reappearance of Motive 1

Instr. 7 (17:06-17:41 side 1) Transition

- 17:06-17:15 Descending sequences in piano and bass
 17:15-17:30 Acoustic guitar strumming and change of meter from 6/8 to 4/4
 17:30-17:41 Introduction to Vocal 7 and reappearance of Motive 3 on organ

Instr. 8 (18:08-18:39 side 1) Repetition

- 18:08-18:39 Repetition of the same melodic and harmonic material of Vocal 7 Part 1, with different instrumentation

Instr. 9 (19:29-19:59 side 1) Repetition and soloing

- 19:29-19:59 Repetition of the same melodic and harmonic material in Vocal 7 Part 1
 Flute solo in the left channel and another in the right channel (starting at 19:39) playing related material

Instr. 10 (20:25 side 1 – 0:48 side 2) Repetition, soloing, contrast and transition

- 20:25-21:08 Repetition of the same melodic and harmonic material in Vocal 7 Part 1, with double flute solo. Brief shifts in meter between 4/4 and 6/8
 21:08-22:03 Shift to C Dorian. Staccato outbursts from electric guitar, piano, bass and drums interspersed with two organ flourishes (Motive 6), then treated with echo, reverb and delay effects
 22:03-22:39 Swirling wind sounds with pianissimo organ murmurs
 0:00-0:48 Swirling wind sounds. Flute and soprano saxophone play Motive 6. Heavily reverbed outbursts from electric guitar and drums

Instr. 11 (1:24-4:05 side 2) Contrast and soloing

- 1:24-1:32 Motive 6 played on electric guitar and organ in G
 1:32-3:00 Barlow drum solo in 6/8 interspersed with Motive 5 on flute and tubular bells and interrupted twice by Motive 6 on organ, electric guitar and bass
 3:00-4:05 Free form playing, spoken word dialogue and silence

Instr. 12 (5:13-6:00 side 2) Repetition and transition

- 5:13-5:40 Codetta of Vocal 9: Acoustic guitar, then whole band repeat riff in ascending intervals.
 5:40-6:00 Introduction to Vocal 10 – Shift to G minor with acoustic guitar playing Motive 1

Instr. 13 (11:00-13:15 side 2) Repetition and transition

11:00-12:37 Gradually intensified repetition of riff from Vocal 11 by whole band
 12:37-12:52 Riff lengthened by scalar passages and Motive 7A
 12:52-13:15 Introduction to the harmonic and melodic material of Vocal 12 – flute electric guitar and organ play Motive 7. Modulation to C Dorian

Instr. 14 (13:52-14:55 side 2) Repetition and transition

13:52-14:09 Repeat of Motive 7 on flute, electric guitar and organ
 14:09-14:38 Busy theme played by flute and harpsichord
 14:38-14:55 Dotted theme on flute, organ and electric guitar punctuated by timpani

Instr. 15 (15:10-16:14 side 2) Transition

15:10-15:23 Descending flute line repeated twice
 15:23-15:38 Trills and scalar passages on flute, harpsichord and organ
 15:38-16:14 March theme alternating between 3/4 and 5/4 meter with Motive 7A

Instr. 16 (16:50-17:21 side 2) Repetition and transition

16:50-17:05 Repeat of Motive 7 on flute, electric guitar and organ
 17:05-17:21 Dotted theme on flute, organ and electric guitar punctuated by timpani

Instr. 17 (17:51-18:16 side 2) Transition and contrast

17:51-18:06 Descending flute line repeated twice
 18:06-18:16 Abrupt modulation to F. Introduction to Vocal 13 Part 1

Instr. 18 (18:38-19:01 side 2) Transition and repetition

18:38-18:50 Varied and augmented version of Motive 7B on organ and electric guitar
 18:50-19:01 Faster tempo *fortspinnung* version of Motive 2 on electric guitar, organ and bass in odd meters

Instr. 19 (19:30-20:36 side 2) Contrast and transition

19:30-19:40 Flute, organ and electric guitar play Motive 3
 19:40-19:51 Flute and organ play ascending sequence
 19:51-20:11 Organ, electric guitar and bass play 6/8 version of Motive 2 interspersed with string orchestra interludes playing Motive 4
 20:11-20:31 Band play 6/8 version of Motive 2 while organ, flute and soprano saxophone overlay Motive 6
 20:31-20:36 Scalar passage leading to a climax on three repeated chords
 20:36 Introduction to Vocal 14 – band cuts out while acoustic guitar plays Motive 1

If the vocal sections are the bricks, then the instrumental passages are the mortar that binds them together. In fact, the musical edifice of *Thick of a Brick* is constructed more out of mortar than brick since the instrumental passages take up approximately twenty-three minutes of music while the vocal sections take up approximately twenty-one minutes. Many of the climaxes in the piece occur in the instrumental sections.

Instrumentation

Thick as a Brick was recorded using seventeen different instruments played by the five members of Jethro Tull. This goes beyond what is found on the group's previous four albums and far beyond most rock albums. This fact is pointed out in the tongue-in-cheek "review" of the album on p. 7 of the *St. Cleve Chronicle*:

Mr. Ellis told me that apart from a short orchestral passage, the members of the group played all the instruments themselves. In addition to his usual flute, acoustic guitar and singing roles, Ian Anderson extended his virtuosity to violin, sax and trumpet, while Martin Barre played a few lines on that delightful mediaeval instrument, the lute, as well as his electric guitar. John Evan¹¹¹ played organ, piano and harpsichord, Jeffrey Hammond-Hammond¹¹² played bass guitar and spoke some words, and new drummer Barriemore Barlow added the timpani and percussion parts.¹¹³

In addition to the instruments mentioned in the review, John Evans (presumably) created the swirling wind sounds at the end of side 1 and the beginning of side 2 on a synthesizer.¹¹⁴ David Palmer composed, arranged, and conducted the string orchestra passages in Instr. 19 (19:56-20:11 side 2). Barriemore Barlow played the drum kit, timpani, glockenspiel, and tubular bells.

While the organ, flute, electric guitar, bass, drums, and Anderson's voice are the primary instruments on *Thick as a Brick*, the soundscape is in a constant state of motion. It exhibits an

¹¹¹ In the 1970s, John Evans subtracted the "s" from his last name.

¹¹² In the 1970s, Jeffrey Hammond added an extra "Hammond" to his last name.

¹¹³ Julian Stone-Mason B.A. (Ian Anderson), "Music Review, New Tull L.P." from newspaper section of Jethro Tull's *Thick as a Brick*. MS 2072. 1 disc. 33 1/3 rpm (Reprise Records, 1972), 7.

¹¹⁴ These winds sounds may have been a studio effect added by Anderson or the sound engineers in the recording studio.

abundance of instrumental tone color not often found in rock music. In this regard, the piece resembles a concerto for orchestra in which many different instruments are given solo passages and a variety of tone colors are produced through the groupings of instruments. In some passages the group sounds like a typical 1970s rock band; in others it sounds like a traditional British folk group; in others still, it sounds like a chamber ensemble (especially in some of the instrumental passages, such as Instr. 3 and Instr. 6).

The following table and legend indicate what instruments the musicians play in all of the vocal and instrumental sections:

Table 8. Instrumentation of *Thick as a Brick*.

Section	AG	B	D	EG	F	G	H	L	OR	P	SS	ST	SW	SY	TB	TI	TR	VO	VI
Vocal 1	*	*	*	*	*	*			*	*								*	
Vocal 2		*	*	*					*									*	
Instr. 1	*	*	*	*	*				*	*									
Vocal 3 Part 1		*	*	*					*									*	
Instr. 2		*	*	*	*				*										
Vocal 3 Part 2		*	*	*					*	*								*	
Instr. 3		*	*	*	*				*	*	*								
Vocal 4		*	*	*					*									*	
Instr. 4		*	*	*	*				*	*									
Vocal 5 Part 1		*	*	*	*				*									*	*
Instr. 5		*	*	*	*				*										*
Vocal 5 Part 2		*	*	*	*				*									*	*
Instr. 6	*		*	*					*										
Vocal 6	*	*	*			*				*								*	
Instr. 7	*	*			*	*			*	*									
Vocal 7 Part 1	*								*									*	
Instr. 8		*	*	*	*				*								*		
Vocal 7 Part 2		*	*	*	*				*									*	
Vocal 7 Part 3		*	*	*	*					*								*	
Instr. 9		*	*	*	*				*										
Vocal 7 Part 4		*	*	*	*				*									*	
Instr. 10	*	*	*	*	*				*	*	*			*					
Vocal 8		*	*	*	*				*		*							*	
Instr. 11		*	*	*	*				*				*		*	*			
Vocal 9	*				*													*	
Instr. 12	*	*	*	*					*	*					*				
Vocal 10	*	*				*			*									*	
Vocal 11	*	*	*	*	*		*	*	*									*	
Instr. 13		*	*	*	*				*										
Vocal 12 Part 1		*	*	*					*	*								*	
Instr. 14		*	*	*	*		*		*							*			
Vocal 12 Part 2		*	*	*					*									*	
Instr. 15		*	*	*	*		*		*							*			

Vocal 12 Part 3		*	*	*					*	*								*
Instr. 16		*	*	*	*				*							*		
Vocal 12 Part 4		*	*	*					*									*
Instr. 17		*	*	*	*				*									
Vocal 13 Part 1		*	*	*	*				*	*								*
Instr. 18		*	*	*					*									
Vocal 13 Part 2		*	*	*	*				*	*								*
Instr. 19		*	*	*	*				*	*	*	*						
Vocal 14	*																	*

Table 9. Instrumentation Legend.

Abbr. Instrument Musician

AG	Acoustic guitar	Ian Anderson
B	Bass guitar	Jeffrey Hammond
D	Drums	Barriemore Barlow
EG	Electric guitar	Martin Barre
F	Flute	Ian Anderson
G	Glockenspiel	Barriemore Barlow
H	Harpsichord	John Evans
L	Lute	Martin Barre
OR	Organ	John Evans
P	Piano	John Evans
SS	Soprano saxophone	Ian Anderson
ST	String section	Arranged and conducted by David Palmer
SW	Spoken word	Jeffrey Hammond
SY	Synthesizer / Studio effects	John Evans
TB	Tubular bells	Barriemore Barlow
TI	Timpani	Barriemore Barlow
TR	Trumpet	Ian Anderson
VO	Vocals	Ian Anderson
VI	Violin	Ian Anderson

The remainder of this section will discuss each member of the band in turn, pointing out the elements in the instrumentation that make the sound of this album distinctive.

Ian Anderson

While Martin Barre's electric guitar dominates much of the music on *Thick as a Brick*, Anderson's acoustic guitar is put to the forefront in Vocal 1, 6, 7, 9, 10, 11 and 14 and in a few of the instrumental passages. Although the acoustic guitar is present in only twelve minutes of the forty-three minute work, it seems to have much more of a presence in the music because it is used in the most identifiable vocal sections (Vocal 1 and 14) and because it marks abrupt stylistic shifts in the music (i.e., from rock to folk). After its central role in Vocal 1 (0:00-3:01 side 1) and brief appearance in Instr. 1 (4:25-4:38 side 1), it is absent for almost twelve minutes until Instr. 6 (16:07 side 1) where it re-enters for two minutes and shifts the music from a rock style to a folk style. Near the beginning of side 2, after sections of music dominated by electric instruments and a powerful drum solo that slowly disintegrates into silence, the acoustic guitar enters and again grounds the music firmly back in the folk tradition in Vocal 9 (4:05 side 2) where it remains for four minutes. It is again absent for twelve minutes and the piece rushes on in electric abandon until Vocal 14 (20:36 side 2), the reprise of the opening section, Vocal 1. Again it is the acoustic guitar that marks an abrupt stylistic change from rock to folk music, ending the piece in the style in which it began. This practice of shifting between folk and rock styles will be revisited in the section below on stylistic changes.

Although Ian Anderson's singing has always been idiosyncratic, his vocal delivery early in his career shows similarities with other late 1960s British rock singers with their American Blues affectations and heavy doses of disaffected angst. On *Aqualung* (1971), Anderson's singing had reached a new level of sophistication and depth, and this is also apparent on *Thick as*

a Brick. Although there is plenty of spleen in his voice when he is singing of the ills of the British class and educational systems (like his inveighing against the Anglican church on *Aqualung*), Anderson more often adopts the tone of a storyteller or bard on *Thick as a Brick*. The repeated use of expressions derivative of English folk balladry such as “Let me tell you...” and “Come all ye...” (Vocal 12) require a bardic voice to sing them. Edward Macan captures well Anderson’s vocal style when he writes that his “reedy, nasal vocal delivery is far more suggestive of folk-rock vocal techniques than of the open, straight head tone favored by most other progressive rock lead vocalists.”¹¹⁵ Anderson seems to have taken care to leave ample sonic space for his vocals on *Thick as a Brick* and rarely sings over the band while it is playing at full force (as he does in “Aqualung,” “Hymn 43” and “Wind Up” from *Aqualung*). Many of the musical climaxes and fortissimo passages in *Thick as a Brick* are in the instrumental sections (Instr. 1, 2, 8, 11, 13 to 19) rather than the vocal sections.

Anderson plays most of his flute parts on *Thick as a Brick* with a clear, open tone, and rarely sings through the flute while playing or uses his identifiable flutter-tongue technique. An innovative development in his writing for the flute is his skill at pairing it with numerous other instruments to produce new textures and timbral effects. Anderson’s flute interacts with these instruments in many different ways, doubling them, playing in harmony, playing countermelodies, playing imitative counterpoint, or improvising solos over them. The flute appears in many of the vocal sections and in all but three of the nineteen instrumental sections, usually with a different arrangement of instruments in each case. Anderson’s flute is the musical “changeling” in the work, appearing in a different guise almost every time it appears. The following table shows the most obvious instances in which the flute is paired with fifteen other instruments:

¹¹⁵ Macan, *Rocking the Classics*, 135.

Table 10. Flute Paired with Other Instruments

<u>Instrument</u>	<u>Section</u>	<u>Timing</u>	<u>Texture</u>
Acoustic guitar	Vocal 1	0:11, 0:56, 1:52 side 1	Counter melody
Clean tone electric guitar	Vocal 1	1:56, 2:27 side 1	Harmony and counter melody
Glockenspiel	Vocal 1	2:23 side 1	Unison
Piano	Instr. 1	5:15 side 1	Counter melody
Distorted Electric guitar	Instr. 2	7:22, 9:05 side 1	Harmony
Organ	Instr. 3, 4	10:54, 12:48 side 1	Unison, harmony and counter melody
Violin	Instr. 5	14:13 side 1	Counter melody
Trumpet	Instr. 8	18:18 side 1	Octave doubling
Flute duet	Instr. 9, 10	19:29, 20:25 side 1	Two improvised, yet imitative, solos
Soprano saxophone	Instr. 10, 19	0:14, 20:19 side 2	Harmony
Tubular bells	Instr. 11	1:41, 2:10 side 2	Octave doubling
Lute	Vocal 11	6:35 side 2	Harmony
Harpichord	Instr. 14	14:09 side 2	Unison
Timpani	Instr. 14, 16	14:38, 17:05 side 2	Counterpoint
Voice	Vocal 13, Parts 1 & 2	18:16, 19:01 side 2	Octave doubling

In Vocal 11 and Instr. 13, Anderson alters the tone of the flute by giving it a tremolo effect similar to the guitar and vocal tremolo in Tommy James and the Shondells' 1968 song "Crimson and Clover." This effect was used previously on Martin Barre's guitar in "A New Day Yesterday" and on Anderson's voice on "Look into the Sun," both on the album *Stand Up* (1969).

The inflated phrase "Ian Anderson extended his virtuosity to violin, sax and trumpet" in the mock review was probably meant as a joke; he merely dabbles with these instruments on the album. Anderson plays the violin in the manner of a fiddle in the two parts of Vocal 5 and in

Instr. 5 which comes between them (13:16-15:40 side 1). The violin doubles much of what John Evans is playing on the organ in this passage. He plays the trumpet very briefly in Instr. 8 (18:18-18:39 side 1), augmenting the martial figure played by the flute, bass and drums. Anderson plays the soprano saxophone in four places, first very briefly in Instr. 3 (10:48-11:15 side 1) doubling first Martin Barre's electric guitar and then Anderson's flute. It appears more substantially in Instr. 10 (0:14-0:30 side 2) where, along with the flute, Anderson plays lilting gestures in 6/8 that emanate out the swirling wind sounds. It appears for a third time in Vocal 8 (0:52-1:32 side 2) where it doubles the vocal along with the organ and flute and then helps to articulate the strident gestures from the electric guitar, bass, organ, and drums. Lastly, he uses the soprano saxophone in Instr. 19 (20:19-20:31 side 2) to augment the organ and flute passages. These use of the soprano saxophone gives these passages attractive tone colors, but the writing is not nearly as idiosyncratic as Anderson's writing for his acoustic guitar, voice, or flute. Although Anderson never recorded with the violin or trumpet after *Thick as a Brick*, he did develop a distinctive voice on the soprano and sopranino saxophones on Jethro Tull's next two albums, *A Passion Play* (1973) and *Warchild* (1974).

Although Jethro Tull has always been a rock band that uses heavy doses of electricity, Anderson has said in numerous interviews that he regards himself primarily as an acoustic musician. This is well in evidence on *Thick as a Brick* where all six of his instruments are acoustic. They are the foil against the electric instruments and provide much of the timbral contrast that makes the piece so aurally compelling.

Martin Barre

The material that Anderson and the band wrote for *Thick as a Brick* is less "riff-oriented" than on earlier albums, where songs such as "Aqualung" or "To Cry You a Song" were defined

and shaped by their guitar riffs. As a consequence, Martin Barre's role on the album expanded well beyond merely playing the guitar riffs and soloing. He became an integral part of the arranging, and even the writing, of the music. In an interview, Barre said: "*Thick as a Brick* was probably the first album where there was a lot of input from other members. We've always arranged Tull music and within that term "arranging," you could say some of it is writing."¹¹⁶ Barre is present throughout *Thick as a Brick*, sometimes playing riffs and soloing with heavy distortion, sometimes subtly doubling other instruments with a clean tone to provide color and shading. The section where Barre shines the brightest in is Instr. 2 (7:27-9:04 side 1), where he plays a guitar solo and then adds a different, but complementary, overdubbed solo (beginning at 7:46). Barre plays the lute alongside Anderson's strumming on acoustic guitar in Vocal 11 (6:30 side 2).

John Evans

While many of the virtuoso rock keyboard players of the early 1970s such as Keith Emerson and Rick Wakeman were drawn to the new Moog and ARP synthesizers, musicians like Jon Lord of Deep Purple and John Evans channeled most of their creativity into an old standby, the Hammond B-3 organ combined with a Leslie rotating speaker. Evans' Hammond organ is the most prominent instrument on *Thick as a Brick*, present in the soundscape for all but approximately five minutes. It takes a central role as a solo instrument in Instr. 1 and is the main accompanimental instrument in Vocal 3, 5, 7, 10, 11 and 12. Evans brings out the versatility of the instrument by creating a multitude of tone colors. For instance, the organ's distorted timbre rivals Barre's electric guitar in Instr. 1 (3:36-4:06 side 1) and a clean timbre evokes a cathedral-like ambience in Instr. 4 (12:00-12:20 side 1).

¹¹⁶ Martin Barre interview from "Mostly Rock 'N Roll" show, November, 2003
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z7P-DAGWG1Q> (accessed March 17, 2010).

For most of the five minutes in which the organ is not present, Evans is either playing the piano or harpsichord. It is a credit to his creativity that he was able to write keyboard parts to complement whatever shifts in style the music took, whether it be hard rock (organ in Vocal 2 and 8), folk/pastoral (piano in Vocal 3), dance-like (organ in Vocal 5), free form (organ in Instr. 10 and Instr. 11), or Renaissance/Baroque (harpsichord in Vocal 11 and Instr. 14 and 15).

Jeffrey Hammond

Jeffrey Hammond shows amazing precociousness on *Thick as a Brick*, which is only the second album on which he played bass for Jethro Tull. Although Hammond played in the Blades and the John Evan Band (both precursors to Jethro Tull), he quit those bands in 1966 and spent a few years pursuing an art degree before Anderson asked him to replace Glenn Cornick for the *Aqualung* album in 1971. Anderson said of Hammond during the *Aqualung* sessions: “we were teaching him to play the bass as we recorded the album .. and therefore [he] relied on just being taught sequentially the notes that he should play, and memorizing it all.”¹¹⁷ In addition to laying the harmonic foundation for the music on *Thick as a Brick*, Hammond plays highly melodic bass lines all through the album, developing the thematic material alongside the flute, guitars, and keyboards. His bass is the driving force in the first appearance of the 5/4 riff in Vocal 2 (Motive 2), its returns in 6/8 meter in Vocal 8, and finally the extremely difficult *fortspinnung* passage in Instr. 18 (18:50 side 2). The rapid sixteenth-note runs in this passage are especially difficult to execute on bass guitar because of the thickness of the strings.

Barriemore Barlow

Like John Evans and Jeffrey Hammond, Barriemore Barlow played in the pre-cursors to Jethro Tull, the Blades, the John Evan Band and the John Evan Smash. His first recording with

¹¹⁷ Ian Anderson, interviewed on July 3, 1989 by John Pidgeon in *Classic Albums: Interviews from the Radio One Series* (London: BBC Books, 1991), 52.

the band was *Life's a Long Song*, a five song British EP (extended play) recorded in May 1971 and released in autumn of that year. While Barlow's debut on that EP is impressive, his playing on *Thick as a Brick* (recorded just a few months later) is nothing short of phenomenal. His drumming is a central element in defining the stylistic changes, tempo shifts and meter shifts that characterize the album. Unlike the many ponderous drum solos that plagued late 1960s and early 1970s rock (Iron Butterfly's "In-A-Gadda-Da-Vida" for example), Barlow's solo passage at the beginning of side two (Instr. 11) is concise and well integrated into the flow of the music. In a 1990 *Modern Drummer* interview specifically about the drummers of Jethro Tull, Anderson had this say about Barriemore Barlow:

I'm also quite sure albums like *Thick As A Brick* would've been very different-sounding if somebody else had played drums on them other than Barrie Barlow. All the drummers who've played in Jethro Tull have played very firm roles in the way the music's turned out. ... [H]e's playing less for the moment and more with a view towards an overall arrangement and a level of detail. He's a more intellectual sort of drummer, like maybe Bill Bruford was with Yes.¹¹⁸

On *Thick as a Brick*, Barlow also plays timpani (Instr. 11, 14, 15 and 16) glockenspiel (Vocal 1, 6, Instr. 7) and tubular bells (Instr. 11 and 12).

David (now Dee) Palmer

David Palmer's relationship with Jethro Tull began on their first album *This Was* (1968) when he arranged the brass and woodwinds on the track "Move On Alone." On *Thick as a Brick*, Palmer arranged and conducted the string orchestra interludes in Instr. 19. Palmer joined Jethro Tull in 1976 as a full time member and played keyboards (mostly portative organ) along with John Evans while continuing to compose orchestral accompaniments to many of their songs.

¹¹⁸ Ian Anderson, interview from "The Drummers of Jethro Tull," *Modern Drummer* (December 1990) <http://www.tullpress.com/mddec90.htm> (accessed March 19, 2010).

Stylistic Changes

As with many large-scale progressive rock songs, *Thick as a Brick* is a restless piece of music, with unrelenting shifts in musical style, meter, key area, tempo, texture, dynamics, instrumentation, and mood. The listener's interest is maintained throughout the piece because there is always some new and unexpected turn in the music which continually propels it forward.

Speaking of certain songs on the *Aqualung* album, Anderson said:

Even within the context of an individual song I still like the idea that you can have perhaps a loud riff to start the thing off, and then it goes into a gentle acoustic passage, and then it does some other big stuff and then it changes tempo and feel and goes off into something else, round the houses, a couple of guitar solos, whatever, and back to something else. I like that in music.¹¹⁹

Yet the stylistic diversity on *Thick as a Brick* is not the type that is found on Frank Zappa and the Mothers of Invention's *Freak Out!* (1966) or the Beatles' *White Album* (1968), where the songs overtly adopt and/or parody several different styles of music (dance hall, doo-wop, surf music, psychedelia, novelty songs, sound collage, etc.). These albums are like musical quilts in which separate squares made from different fabrics are patched together with the seams showing. *Thick as a Brick* is an organic and blended album, as if it were a tapestry woven on a loom. It contains stylistic changes, yet they are smoothed over with a wealth of transitional material, as discussed in the section on the instrumental passages.

Visual Songwriting

A major reason why *Thick as a Brick* succeeds as a large-scale composition is that it takes the listener on a journey. Peter Gabriel speaks of the Genesis song "Stagnation" from their second album *Trespass* (1970) as being a "journey song" which "went through a series of landscapes." He continues: "I think some of my favorite pieces of music are when I, as a listener,

¹¹⁹ Ian Anderson, interviewed on July 3, 1989 by John Pidgeon in *Classic Albums: Interviews from the Radio One Series* (London: BBC Books, 1991), 65.

get taken into different worlds made out of sound.”¹²⁰ This is characteristic of early-1970’s rock music, especially progressive rock. Yes’s music is evocative in this manner and this quality is accentuated by Roger Dean’s cover art which portrays fantastical imaginary landscapes. Although not associated with progressive rock, pianist Keith Jarrett pursued this idea in his improvisatory solo piano concerts and even wrote in the liner notes of his massive set *The Sun Bear Concerts* (1976), “think of your ears as eyes.” *Thick as a Brick* has this same quality and is a journey through diverse styles of music for more than forty minutes. In an interview from 2000, Anderson said:

I like singing songs that put people in a landscape. I have a picture in my head for each song that I write, and it's a framed, still image. My early training as a painter and drafter, I think, produced in me a way of writing music and lyrics that illustrate visual ideas. I try to bring some maturity to the thing I've been doing for most of my career, writing songs that tell people a story, not in the temporal sense, but a story they make up to fit the picture I suggest to them. It's like sending people a postcard.¹²¹

Along with the music, certain sections of the lyrics contain striking imagery and are very evocative, creating a picture in the mind’s eye as one listens. Vocal 3, 9 and 11 are evocative in this way, with their depictions of “people in a landscape.”

Shifts in Musical Style

While many styles of music can be heard in *Thick as a Brick*, the principal styles in the piece are rock and folk. This practice of shifting between rock and folk styles is a distinctive element in Jethro Tull’s music, and was first employed on their second album *Stand Up* (1969). At this early stage, most of their songs were in either a rock or folk style, and rarely contained both styles within the same song. By their fourth album, *Aqualung*, the band was deftly shifting

¹²⁰ Peter Gabriel, “Reissues interview 2007” from *Trespass* DVD audio. *Genesis 1970-1975*. R2 513942. CD/DVD box set (Atlantic/Rhino, 2008, 1970), 14:40.

¹²¹ Ian Anderson, interviewed by Steve Boisson, “Passion Plays: Ian Anderson's Three Decades of Visual Songwriting with Jethro Tull,” *Acoustic Guitar* (November 2000) <http://www.tullpress.com/agnov00.htm> (accessed April 5, 2010).

between the two styles within songs, often creating two very distinct moods or viewpoints. *Thick as a Brick* can be seen as an album-length employment of this practice with its musical dialogue between, as Allan Moore puts it, “lyrical folk introspection and hard rock declamation.”¹²²

The influence of classical music also plays a large role in *Thick as a Brick*. It was stated previously that this influence is mainly felt in the large-scale form of the work and in its use of thematic development. Yet the passages for string orchestra in Instr. 19 (19:56, 20:01 and 20:06 side 2) play a huge role in bringing the piece to its boisterous climax. On the use of classical instruments in Jethro Tull’s music, Anderson says this:

I know a lot of people don't like the idea of strings muscling their way into the rock format, and they can be dreadfully slushy and overly romantic, but I do have a love for acoustic instruments. I also love loud electric guitar playing and heavy drumming and bass playing, but the idea of the two being somehow successfully wed together has always and continues to appeal to me. We have stayed with that idea almost from the word go, and we've continued to use strings where we feel that it works.¹²³

Another influence on *Thick as a Brick* is musical forms and styles that are not commonly associated with rock music. Beginning with their cocktail lounge jazz version of J. S. Bach’s “Bourrée”¹²⁴ from *Stand Up*, Jethro Tull has occasionally toyed with Medieval, Renaissance, and Baroque dances and song forms. As discussed earlier, the form of *Thick as a Brick* resembles that of a Medieval *lai*. A section of Instr. 3 (11:00 side 1) has the rhythm of a *canarie*, a Renaissance and Baroque era dance which features dotted rhythms in a 3/4 meter. The bouncy, dotted rhythms underlying Vocal 5 and Instr. 5 and 6 (lasting from 12:32-16:18 of side 1) make these sections sound like a Baroque era gigue, or even an Irish jig.

¹²² Allan F. Moore, “Jethro Tull and the Case for Modernism in Mass Culture,” in *Analyzing Popular Music*, ed. Allan F. Moore (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 160.

¹²³ Ian Anderson, , interviewed by Bryan Matthew for “The Jethro Tull Story, Part 4: War Child to Minstrel In The Gallery” for BBC Radio, World Service, March 1979 <http://www.tullpress.com/bbc79d.htm> (accessed May 10, 2010).

¹²⁴ The bourrée is from J.S. Bach’s Suite for Lute in E minor, BWV 996. Anderson enjoyed referring to Jethro Tull’s version as “cocktail lounge jazz” in concerts, as can be heard on the *Living with the Past* DVD (2005), 48:30.

Another unconventional type of music found in *Thick as a Brick* is the march, which provides the rhythmic foundation for the music near the end of both sides 1 and 2. The first march is heard in Instr. 8 (18:18 side 1) with the entrance of the trumpet and Barlow's military rhythm on snare drum. The other march is heard in Instr. 11 (11:00-13:15 side 2) and the rest of the piece has a distinctly martial air to it. Vocal 11 (6:30-11:00 side 2) sounds almost like a dirge, characterized by its G minor key, funereal pace, monotonous strophic form and solemn mood. Lastly, the collective improvisation in Instr. 11 (2:58 side 2) reminds one of early jazz-rock fusion of Miles Davis, Ornette Coleman, the Mahavishnu Orchestra, and other bands from the 1960s and early 1970s. Along with shifts in musical style, *Thick as a Brick* contains frequent shifts in meter, texture, tempo and dynamics, each of which will now be briefly discussed.

Meter

Besides the obvious use of unusual meters in *Thick as a Brick* (such as the brash 5/4 sections of Vocal 2 and Instr. 1), there are many examples of the band's penchant for playing much more subtle metrical games. As discussed in the section on form, the band subtly manipulates the 12/8 meter of Motive 1 in several ways, morphing it into a straight 4/4 or a swinging 6/8. This fluidity of meter is a hallmark of progressive rock, especially with drummers such as Barriemore Barlow, Phil Collins of Genesis, Bill Bruford of Yes and King Crimson, and Neil Peart of Rush. Instr. 10, which is in 4/4, features two momentary forays into 6/8 meter (20:51, 21:00 side 1). The band accomplishes this by dropping a beat from the 4/4 meter for two measures and giving the two resulting 3/4 bars a 6/8 feel by Barlow accenting beats 3 and 6. Instr. 14 (14:38 side 2) and Instr. 16 (17:05 side 2) each contain passages that have consecutive measures of 5/4, 3/4 and 6/4. In Instr. 15 (15:38 side 2), a march theme is given quirky accents mainly by the swooping timpani, making it alternate between 3/4 and 5/4. Lastly, the most

outrageous meter games are played in Instr. 18 (18:50 side 2) in the *fortspinnung* passage (see Example 7). In the span of 11 seconds, the band rushes through measures of 7/8, 9/8, 7/8, and 9/8, dropping only the vaguest hints at where the bars lines are. Only through repeated listenings can one discover the meters used.

Texture

Textural contrast is a central element of the soundscape of *Thick as a Brick*, and takes many forms throughout the piece. The variety of instruments and how they are combined in the piece give it a diversity of texture rarely found even on progressive rock albums. The employment of homophony and polyphony will be covered first followed by a focus on four specific types of textural contrast.

The prevailing texture in *Thick as a Brick*, as in most popular and rock music, is melody-dominated homophony, in which a single melodic line (whether in a vocal section or instrumental passage) is supported by a chord progression provided by the rest of the band. Yet the type of homophony employed by progressive rock bands such as Jethro Tull borders on polyphony, in which two more melodic lines of equal importance are heard. While Anderson's voice and flute, Barre's guitar, and Evans' organ are the primary melodic voices in the music, Hammond's bass playing and Barlow's drumming also contribute many melodic ideas to the texture. This creates a wide variety of voices all competing for the melodic material. There are very few instances in the piece where Hammond is simply playing root position bass lines outlining the chord progression, or where Barlow is simply "keeping time" on drums. The typical *modus operandi* within most progressive rock bands is not just to complement each other, but to compete with each other.

The band not only employs a wide variety of textures in *Thick as a Brick*, they pit the textures against each other. The first specific type of textural contrast is homorhythmic playing (where two or more voices play the same rhythm) vs. polyrhythmic playing. Instr. 2 is a perfect illustration of this. This section commences with the entire band playing Motive 3 (7:16-7:27 side 1). Then begins a passage where Martin Barre plays a guitar solo with a different but complimentary overdubbed solo, while the flute, organ, bass and drums play their own semi-improvisatory parts. This creates a dense six voice texture (7:27-9:04). At 9:04, the instruments again congeal into a single entity playing Motive 3. It is like a beam of white light revealing its spectrum of colors and then enfolding them back up, as graphically portrayed on the cover of Pink Floyd's *Dark Side of the Moon*.

The second type of textural contrast is pitting a single instrument against the entire group. There are several places where the acoustic guitar is isolated from the rest the band. This occurs at the beginning of the piece, at 4:25 and 17:15 on side 1, and at 4:05, 5:40 and 20:36 on side 2. On side 1 (at 10:45, 12:00, 15:54), there are three places where the band drops out and only the organ is present. In Instr. 15 (15:10 side 2) and Instr. 17 (17:51 side 2), the flute alone plays a descending melody that is intermittently punctuated by other instruments. In two short sections, Anderson's voice is given the spotlight. The first occurrence is in Vocal 12 Part 3 (16:14 side 2) where he sings "Let me help you to pick up your dead." The second is at the very end of the piece where Anderson leaves off his acoustic guitar as he sings "thick as a brick." The last, and most obvious, example is Barlow's drum solo at 1:32 side 2 which is imposed upon by the flute and tubular bells, and then by the entire band.

A third type is the gradual addition or subtraction of instruments. This happens at the beginning of the piece where the acoustic guitar begins alone and then is joined by Anderson's

voice, flute, and the rest of the band in turn. Instr. 6 (15:54-16:10) begins with just the organ, then electric guitar and acoustic guitar join in. As an example of the subtraction, five instruments (flute, electric guitar, organ/piano, bass and drums) are gradually reduced to just one instrument (organ) between 10:30 and 10:45 on side 1.

The last and most extreme type of textual contrast is sound vs. silence. This occurs in two places, the first in Instr. 10 (21:08 side 1) where three staccato chords are accompanied by organ flourishes and then treated with reverb and echo effects drawing attention not only to themselves, but to the silences in between. A second occurrence is in Instr. 11 (2:58 side 2) where three episodes of chaotic, improvisatory playing are separated by silences. In these sections, the silences are as palpable as the sounds.

Tempo

Thick as a Brick contains several shifts in tempo, many of which occur during the most overt changes in mood or musical style. For instance, the switch from the acoustic folk of Vocal 1 to the hard rock of Vocal 2 (3:01 side 1) includes the quickening of the tempo. Although shifts in meter are quite frequent, the tempo remains relatively moderate throughout side 1. Side 2 features more noticeable shifts in tempo with the bustling 6/8 rhythm of Vocal 8 (0:48 side 2), the funeral pace of Vocal 11 (6:30 side 2), and the breakneck speed of the *fortspinnung* passage in Instr. 18 (18:50 side 2).

Dynamics

While Jethro Tull rarely uses the extreme contrasts in dynamics that King Crimson does in pieces like “Larks’ Tongue in Aspic Part 1” (1973), they do use dynamics as an effective expressive device in *Thick as a Brick*. Some of the most noticeable contrasts in dynamics occur when there is an abrupt switch from an acoustic folk section to an electric rock section, or vice

versa. These shifts occur at 3:01, 4:24, 4:35 on side 1 and 4:05, 20:36 on side 2. As mentioned in the section on texture above, there are three times when the band drops out and only the organ is present, at 10:45, 12:00, 15:54 on side 1. Instr. 13 (11:00-12:37 side 2) features a gradual crescendo that lasts a minute and a half and sounds as if an distant army is marching closer and closer. This is something that is rarely found in most rock music, but is quite common in progressive rock (for instance the gradual crescendo of the staccato riff near the beginning of Genesis' "Watcher of the Skies" from *Foxtrot* (1972)). As a last example, Motive 7 is played many times at different dynamic levels. The most obvious occurrence of this is the use of terraced dynamics where the flute and organ play the motive *piano*, then the band as a whole echoes playing it *forte* (Instr. 13, 13:12 side 2).

Yet for all its eclecticism and stylistic diversity, there is never a doubt that *Thick as a Brick* is essentially a rock album. Although it is obtuse, theatrical, and intellectual like much of progressive rock, it is still straight-forward. It is refined, yet it never ceases to be raw.

Harmony

While there is nothing strikingly unique about the harmonic language of Ian Anderson's songwriting in the early seventies music of Jethro Tull, it is richer in content and invention than most mainstream rock during this period. Like other British progressive rock bands in the early 1970s (such as King Crimson, Genesis, and Emerson, Lake & Palmer), Jethro Tull purposefully sought to broaden the harmonic vocabulary of rock music. Although their chord progressions contain many V-I and VII-I cadences, one also finds v-I, IV-I, and other cadences. Chord progressions are almost always colored with modal mixture, inversions and suspensions. The band's treatment of chords is also quite broad, embracing the spectrum from brash power chords (Martin Barre's electric guitar) to detailed ostinato picking patterns (Ian Anderson's acoustic

guitar) to arpeggiated flourishes (John Evans' piano and organ). The harmonic rhythm is swift and unpredictable, with chord changes often falling into irregular metrical patterns and dictated by the narrative flow of the lyrics. Lastly their use of sequences and imitative counterpoint makes their music more dense and layered than most mainstream rock, placing them alongside the other progressive rock bands listed above.

One harmonic characteristic that stands out in Jethro Tull's music is its modality, which connects it closely with folk music and Medieval/Renaissance music. Edward Macan writes: "progressive rock's modality...stems largely from the folk revival of the 1960s."¹²⁵ Similarly, Allan Moore says: "the Mixolydian/Dorian nature of much English traditional song, and its influence on "folk rock" is widely accepted."¹²⁶ Traditional British folk music is constructed from roughly the same modal structures that were used by the troubadours, trouvères, and minstrels from the Medieval and Renaissance eras and Jethro Tull finds much of its musical ancestry here.

A defining characteristic of *Thick as a Brick*'s harmonic language is its mixing of modal and tonal harmony. While some sections of *Thick as a Brick* use common tonal progressions with a clear subdominant moving to a major V chord and then to the tonic, most of the harmony in *Thick as a Brick* is governed by modality. This mixing of modal and tonal harmony is illustrated in a variety of ways in the three minutes of Vocal 1, which opens the record. The verses ("Really don't mind...") are dominated by the progression F, Cm, B-flat, F [I-v-IV-I] which is firmly in F Mixolydian mode. The minor v chord and IV-I cadence highlight its modal nature. Yet in the refrain of the verses ("So you ride yourselves..."), there is a recurring pattern of B-flat, C, F [IV-V-I] which is clearly a tonal progression in F major. The ten measure B

¹²⁵ Macan. *Rocking the Classics*, 51.

¹²⁶ Allan Moore, "The So-Called 'Flattened Seventh' in Rock." *Popular Music* 14, no. 2 (May 1995): 190.

section (bridge) of Vocal 1 (“And the love that I feel...”) winds its way through all the degrees of the scale and has both modal and tonal characteristics. The harmonic motion here is [I-v-VII-ii-IV-vi-I-III-IV-V-I]. The first two-thirds of the progression is modal since it contains a minor v chord and then a pattern of alternating major and minor chords ascending by seconds to I. Because of this pattern, the movement from vi to I does not feel cadential. As Edward Macan writes: “modal harmony is more wayward and unpredictable than functional harmony, since the relationship between chords in the modes is more ambiguous and less hierarchically determined than the major/minor system.”¹²⁷ Yet the last third of the progression gives a strong sense of tonal resolution with its IV-V-I cadence. The F major/F Mixolydian duality is even present in the opening guitar pattern, Motive 1, which contains both an E-natural (leading tone) in the first measure and an E-flat (flattened seventh) in the second measure.



Example 16. *Thick as a Brick*, opening guitar pattern.¹²⁸

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While a complete analysis of the harmony of *Thick as a Brick* is well beyond the scope of this thesis, Table 2 above, pp. 57-58, lists the mode and key areas of the various sections. Table 11 below shows the chord progressions of the major sections in the first eleven minutes providing a summary of harmonic movement throughout:

¹²⁷ Macan. *Rocking the Classics*, 53.

¹²⁸ Derived from Addi Booth, Bill LaFleur, Ryan Maziarz, and Andrew Moore’s transcription of “Thick as a Brick,” *Jethro Tull Guitar Anthology* (Milwaukee, Wis.: Hal Leonard Corp., [2008]), 123.

Table 11. Chord Progressions in the First Eleven Minutes of *Thick as a Brick*.

<u>Section</u>	<u>Timing</u>	<u>Progression</u>	<u>Lyrics</u>
Vocal 1 Verse	0:08	I-v-IV-I (modal)	“Really don’t mind...”
Vocal 1 Refrain	0:38	IV-V-I (tonal)	“So you ride yourselves...”
Vocal 1 Bridge	2:00	I-v-VII-ii-IV-vi-I-III-IV-V-I (modal and tonal)	“And the love that I feel...”
Vocal 2 and Instr. 1	3:01	i-IV-VII-i (modal)	“See there! A son is born...”
Vocal 3	6:09	i-VII-i-VII-IV-V-i (modal and tonal)	“The Poet and the painter...”
Instr. 2	7:16	i-VII-i (modal)	
Vocal 4	11:20	I-VII-IV (modal)	“What do you do when the old man’s gone...”

The modes and keys which are used most often in the piece are F major/F Mixolydian and C Dorian. The sections which are in an acoustic folk vein are mostly in F (Vocal 1, 6, 7, 9, 14, and some of the instrumental passages). The sections which are the darkest and most intense are in C Dorian (Vocal 2, 8, 12, and some of the instrumental passages). “Stormy” is the word which is commonly invoked when speaking of Beethoven’s use of C minor, and it is also an apt descriptor of the C Dorian passages in *Thick as a Brick*. These two areas, F and C Dorian, are the two polarities which are pitted against each other. First, the two most noticeable motives (1 and 2) are in these two modes. Second, as mentioned above, F is used most often in the softer, acoustic folk sections and C Dorian is used in the stormy, hard rock sections.

As discussed previously, the vocal sections alternate between popular song forms (AABA, verse-chorus, strophic) and through-composed (see Table 1, p. 55). The sections (Vocal 1, 3, 5, etc.) which are in the popular song forms exhibit strong tonal stability because they have chord progressions, melodies and motives that repeat and reconfirm the key area. The sections

which are through-composed (Vocal 2, 4, 6, etc.) have weaker tonal areas because they have less material that repeats and they tend to wander harmonically. For instance, in Vocal 4 a modulation occurs from D Mixolydian to B Aeolian, thus weakening the sense of harmonic stability. In general, the instrumental passages are more harmonically unstable because they are linking passages between the vocal sections. The most harmonically unstable are Instr. 1, Instr. 4, Instr. 12, the last half of Instr. 13, Instr. 15, and Instr. 19, which contain sequences, imitative counterpoint, and modulatory passages.

CHAPTER 6

THICK AS A BRICK LIVE AND CONCLUSIONS

Imagine seeing Jethro Tull for the first time during their tour for *Thick as a Brick* in 1972-1973. A tramp-like musician brandishing a flute and wearing a tattered Victorian waistcoat bounds across the stage looking like he's trying to find his way back to the Dickens novel from which he escaped. A telephone onstage rings, and the flautist stops the music to answer it. The electric guitarist and drummer disappear into a tent, then emerge a few minutes later wearing each others' clothes. The keyboard player walks to the center of the stage to read the current news and weather report. A giant white rabbit hops across the stage. Then a gorilla appears, gesticulating madly. One would expect to see this sort of thing on *Monty Python's Flying Circus*, but not at a rock concert.

Jethro Tull's tour for *Thick as a Brick* was truly original and entertaining, with the band playing the entire song and even extending it to over an hour with the integration of surreal comedy bits. But alas, there are no recordings or video of a complete live version of the song commercially available. There are bootleg recordings and video, but the sound and picture quality are questionable and they are difficult to obtain. The closest that one can come to experiencing a performance of *Thick as a Brick* from the 1972-1973 tour is Andrew Jackson's webpage, which includes photographs and a detailed description of a typical performance.¹²⁹

¹²⁹ "Thick as a Brick live" on *Jethro Tull Press* website <http://www.tullpress.com/brick.htm> (accessed July 27, 2010).

Scott Allen Nollen, Greg Russo and David Rees also have descriptions of the tour in their books.¹³⁰

Jethro Tull has not performed *Thick as a Brick* in its entirety since the tour to promote the album, yet a reduced portion of it has been a staple of their concert repertoire to the present day. The band performed a good bit of the album during their 1973 tour for *A Passion Play* and since then the band has played an eight to twelve minute edited version. Examining how the piece has been presented in live concerts shows the malleable nature of its form, which portions are the most popular, and which transfer the best to live performance. This section will briefly describe five versions of the piece (four are live recordings and one is a studio recording) from 1978, 1986, 1992, 2001, and 2008, and show how the form of the piece has been altered in various ways.

Madison Square Garden, New York, October 9, 1978

This is the best live version of *Thick as a Brick* commercially available, performed by most of the band members who originally recorded the song.¹³¹ This version, which lasts 11:35, is on the *Jethro Tull: Live at Madison Square Garden 1978* DVD, released in 2009. It is also included as a bonus track on the remastered CD of *Thick as a Brick*, released in 1997.

¹³⁰ Scott Allen Nollen, *Jethro Tull: A History of the Band, 1968-2001* (Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland & Company, Inc., 2002); Greg Russo, *Flying Colours: The Jethro Tull Reference Manual* (New York: Crossfire Publications, 2000); David Rees, *Minstrels in the Gallery: A History of Jethro Tull* (Middlesex, England: Firefly Publishing, 1998).

¹³¹ On this recording, bassist Tony Williams replaced John Glascock who was recovering from heart surgery. Glascock joined Jethro Tull late in 1975, replacing Jeffrey Hammond who played bass on the studio recording of *Thick as a Brick*.

Table 12. Form of *Thick as a Brick*, Madison Square Garden live version (1978).

<u>Section</u>	<u>Timing</u>	<u>Lyric</u>
Vocal 1	0:00-3:11	“Really don’t mind if you sit this one out...”
Vocal 2	3:11-3:52	“See there! A son is born...”
Instr. 1	3:52-5:02	
Vocal 3 Part 1	5:02-6:09	“The Poet and the painter...”
Instr. 2	6:09-8:22	
Instr. 4	8:22-9:03	
Vocal 5 Part 1	9:03-9:31	“I’ve come down from the upper class...”
Instr. 5	9:31-10:29	
Instr. 19	10:29-10:54	
Vocal 14	10:54-11:35	“So you ride yourselves...”

Vocal 1 is slightly condensed by leaving off the final A section (“Spin me back down the years...”). Vocal 2 is similar to the album version, but Instr. 1 does not have the organ and electric guitar solos, leaving only the section which introduces Vocal 3. Vocal 3 Part 1 is consistent with the album version and Instr. 2 contains some amazing interplay between Anderson on flute and Barre on electric guitar. The band skips over Vocal 3 Part 2 and Instr. 3 and jumps right into Instr. 4, which serves as an introduction to Vocal 5. Anderson sings the first two lines of Vocal 5, then plays the flute solo which characterizes Instr. 5. After this, the band leaps over twenty-five minutes of music on the album version and begins playing the 6/8 ostinato rhythm in Instr. 19. They leave out the string orchestra interludes, reach a climax on the final three chords of Instr. 19, and end on Vocal 14, with Anderson encouraging the crowd to sing the final word of the song: “brick.” The form of *Thick as a Brick* on Jethro Tull’s live album *Bursting Out* from 1978 is similar to this version from Madison Square Garden.

“Out in the Green” Festival, Dinkelsbuhl, Germany, July 5, 1986

This version is probably the most unusual version the band has ever done. It lasts 8:43 and is found on the *Jack in the Green* DVD, released in 2008. It was recorded in 1986 in Germany with Anderson, Barre, Dave Pegg on bass, Peter-John Vettese on keyboards and Doane Perry on drums.

Table 13. Form of *Thick as a Brick*, “Out in the Green” Festival live version (1986).

<u>Section</u>	<u>Timing</u>	<u>Lyric</u>
Vocal 1	0:00-2:41	“Really don’t mind if you sit this one out...”
Vocal 2	2:41-3:28	“See there! A son is born...”
Vocal 12 Part 3	3:28-4:05	“Let me help you to pick up your dead...”
Instr. 16	4:05-4:31	
Instr. 4	4:31-5:12	
Vocal 5 Part 1	5:12-5:39	“I’ve come down from the upper class...”
Instr. 5	5:39-6:46	
New music	6:46-8:43	

Vocal 1 and Vocal 2 are played just as they are from the 1978 Madison Square Garden concert. Then the band starts playing music from near the end of side 2: Vocal 12 Part 3 and Instr. 16. They then jump back to side 1 and play Instr. 4 and the familiar Vocal 5. Yet, instead of going into Instr. 19 and ending with the expected reprise of Vocal 14, they start playing new music which sounds like a Irish jig featuring Dave Pegg on bass and Peter-John Vettese on keyboards.

Studio Version from 25th Anniversary Box Set, CD 3: Beacons Bottom Tapes, 1993

This studio version, which lasts 9:01, was recorded in late 1992 for the four CD box set celebrating the band’s 25th Anniversary in 1993.

Table 14. Form of *Thick as a Brick*, 25th Anniversary Box Set studio version (1992).

<u>Section</u>	<u>Timing</u>	<u>Lyric</u>
Vocal 1	0:00-3:15	“Really don’t mind if you sit this one out...”
Vocal 2	3:15-3:56	“See there! A son is born...”
Instr. 1	3:56-5:17	
Instr. 4	5:17-6:04	
Vocal 5 Part 1	6:04-6:34	“I’ve come down from the upper class...”
Instr. 5	6:34-7:48	
Instr. 19	7:48-8:21	
Vocal 14	8:21-9:01	“So you ride yourselves...”

Vocal 1, Vocal 2 and Instr. 1 are very similar to the album version, yet the band ends Instr. 1 early and goes into the jig-like introduction to Vocal 5 at the end of Instr. 4. Anderson sings the first two lines of Vocal 5, then plays the flute solo in Instr. 5. The rumbling ostinato of Instr. 19 and conclusion with Vocal 14 round out the recording. The form of this version is very similar to the Madison Square Garden performance, except that Vocal 3 Part 1 (“The Poet and the painter...”) and Instr. 2 are left out. This version includes Anderson, Barre, Dave Pegg on bass, Andy Giddings on keyboards and Doane Perry on drums.

Hammersmith Apollo Theatre, London, November 25, 2001 and AVO Session Basel, Switzerland, November 15, 2008

These final two performances are included on the *Living with the Past* DVD, released in 2002 and the *Live At AVO Session Basel, 2008* DVD released in 2009. The form of these renditions of *Thick as a Brick* are the same as the studio version from 1992 (Table 14), implying that the piece has not been meddled with since then. With his penchant for mock melodrama and stage banter, Anderson introduces the song on the *Living with the Past* DVD by saying:

We’ve been everything to everybody. We started off as being a little old blues band, and then became a blues-rock band. A classic rock band, a folk rock band, art rock band, even a progressive rock band. Back in ’72, ’73 we were just for a

little while a progressive rock band who made [waving his arms and raising his voice] concept albums! Don't worry, we're not going to do that to you tonight ... well maybe just for eight minutes and fifty-four seconds ... which is going to seem like a bloody hour and three quarters.¹³²

When Jethro Tull has played *Thick as a Brick* live, Vocal 1, Vocal 2, Vocal 5 and Vocal 14 are almost always present. Vocal 1 is one of the most well known Jethro Tull "singles," even though it was never released as one, so it is instantly recognized by audiences once Anderson starts to play the acoustic introduction. Vocal 2 is heavy, fast and intense, and comes off well in a live setting. Vocal 5 was included on Jethro Tull's second greatest hits album *Repeat* (1977), so it is also a well-known passage. Of the instrumental passages, Instr. 1, 4, and 5 are usually included since they give opportunities for electric guitar, organ, and flute solos. So, in summary, the edited versions of *Thick as a Brick* present its most identifiable sections, allow ample time for soloing, and give an impression of its large-scale form with the return of Vocal 14 at the end. These live versions are still substantial musical creations, even though they present less than one-fourth of the music from the album version.

Conclusions

Thick as a Brick is one of the most original, and bizarre, rock albums from the late 1960s and early 1970s, an era that had its fair share of musical curiosities by the likes of Frank Zappa, Miles Davis, Pink Floyd, The Doors, and the late Beatles. How is *Thick as a Brick* unique and inventive as a rock album among the multiplicity of approaches to the medium that came out in this period? First, it was the first rock album that consisted of one continuous song. Second, its form is unique, blending vocal music and instrumental music in equal measures, and even resembling older classical forms such as the Medieval *lai* and late Romantic era symphonic

¹³² *Jethro Tull: Living with the Past*. DVD. Produced by Ian Anderson and Classic Rock Productions. 302 061 201 9 (Fuel 2000 Records, 2002), 23:33-24:12.

poem. Third, it is a concept album that spoofs concept albums. Fourth, its packaging was as expansive and entertaining as the music, with its twelve page mock newspaper.

Because it is both highbrow and lowbrow at the same time, *Thick as a Brick* raises interesting questions about experimental and mainstream music. How can an album which consisted of one forty-three minute song, and had no singles extracted from it to help promote it, reach number one on the pop chart? Were people interested in listening to such a long song, or was it just the novelty that attracted people to the album? What does it take to get a mainstream popular music audience interested in listening to a large-scale piece of music? *Thick as a Brick* succeeds as a long song because it presents a large amount of continually new musical material, yet contains just enough repetition and thematic development to prevent it from sounding incoherent, or as if it were wandering aimlessly. This balance of new musical material, repetition, and thematic development in both lyrics and music was a hallmark of the progressive rock style and created an audience, even a mainstream audience, which appreciated large-scale pieces of music.

Progressive rock scholars such as Edward Macan, Kevin Holm-Hudson, John Covach, and Allan Moore have brought new attention in the musicological community to progressive rock in the last two decades. One can find scholarly, book-length studies and numerous journal articles on Yes, Genesis, King Crimson, and Emerson, Lake & Palmer. Yet Jethro Tull, who was just as innovative and significant as these bands, has received less attention. There has been a fair share of biographies of the band written by fans and rock journalists, but few scholars besides Allan Moore have delved deeply into their music in order to delineate the band's characteristic style. I hope this thesis will spur more musicological interest in this band and their fascinating music.

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APPENDIX A: HAL LEONARD CORPORATION

Letter granting permission to reprint the words to *Thick as a Brick* in the thesis and include transcriptions (my own) of the music:



7777 West Bluemound Road
Post Office Box 13819
Milwaukee, WI 53213-0819

Tel: 414-774-3630
Fax: 414-774-3259
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dpeters@halleonard.com

February 11, 2010

Tim Smolko
245 Highland Park Dr.
Athens, GA 30605

RE: **Thick As A Brick**
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Sincerely,

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By _____
Tim Smolko

APPENDIX B: CHRYSALIS RECORDS LTD.

Letter granting permission to include scans (my own) of the original album cover of
Thick as a Brick in the thesis:



November 9, 2010
November 10, 2010 (revised)

VIA E-MAIL – tismolko@yahoo.com

Tim Smolko
245 Highland Park Drive
Athens, GA 30605

Re: Clearance for “Jethro Tull”

Dear Tim:

I am in receipt of your July 14, 2010 e-mail, a copy of which is attached hereto. This will confirm that Chrysalis Records Ltd. (“Chrysalis”) has no objection to your proposed use of the Jethro Tull album cover “Thick As A Brick” (the “Property”) solely for use in your thesis, as referenced in the aforementioned e-mail. Please note, Chrysalis’ has no objection to said use of the Property as long as the Property is to be utilized as originally scanned without any amendments or creative editing to the Property.

Please note that Chrysalis makes no representations or warranties whatsoever with respect to the nature or extent of its rights in and to the Property. Furthermore, you will be solely responsible for obtaining from third parties and the artist any and all further releases, consents and authorizations as may be or may prove to have been required in connection with your use of the Property and for all payments with respect thereto.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Dawn Clark".

Dawn Clark
Administrator, Business & Legal Affairs

DC/trr
Enclosure/Attachment

From: LeightonMedia@aol.com [mailto:LeightonMedia@aol.com]

Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 2:20 PM

To: timsmolko@yahoo.com; Nalis, Arthur

Subject: Re: Permission to use Thick as a Brick scans

Hi Arthur,

Thanks for helping us walk through EMI's legal affairs/rights dept.. Keep me and the researcher Tim Smolko in the loop.

His goal is below. chrysalis publishing isn't handling artwork. Thank you for everything,

Anne

718-881-8183

In a message dated 7/14/10 7:54:55 AM, timsmolko@yahoo.com writes:

Hello!

I am a graduate student at the University of Georgia working on a degree in Historical Musicology. I am working on my masters thesis, which is a musical analysis of Jethro Tull's *Thick as a Brick*. I would like to gain copyright permission to include scans of certain elements of the twelve page newspaper that came with the original packaging of the album. I've attached a Word document with the scans I'd like to use (I may want to include two or three more also). I've already gained copyright permission from Daniel Peters at Hal Leonard to reproduce the lyrics and music (my own transcriptions) in the thesis. I would use these scans only for the purposes of my thesis, not for any commercial purpose.

Who do I contact about gaining copyright permission to use the scans? I've tried to contact Marcia Burnett, director of publishing licensing at EMI/Capital, but she never responded to my email.

Thank you!

Tim Smolko