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Using Music to Teach English as a Second Language: A Guide to the Use of Song Lyrics

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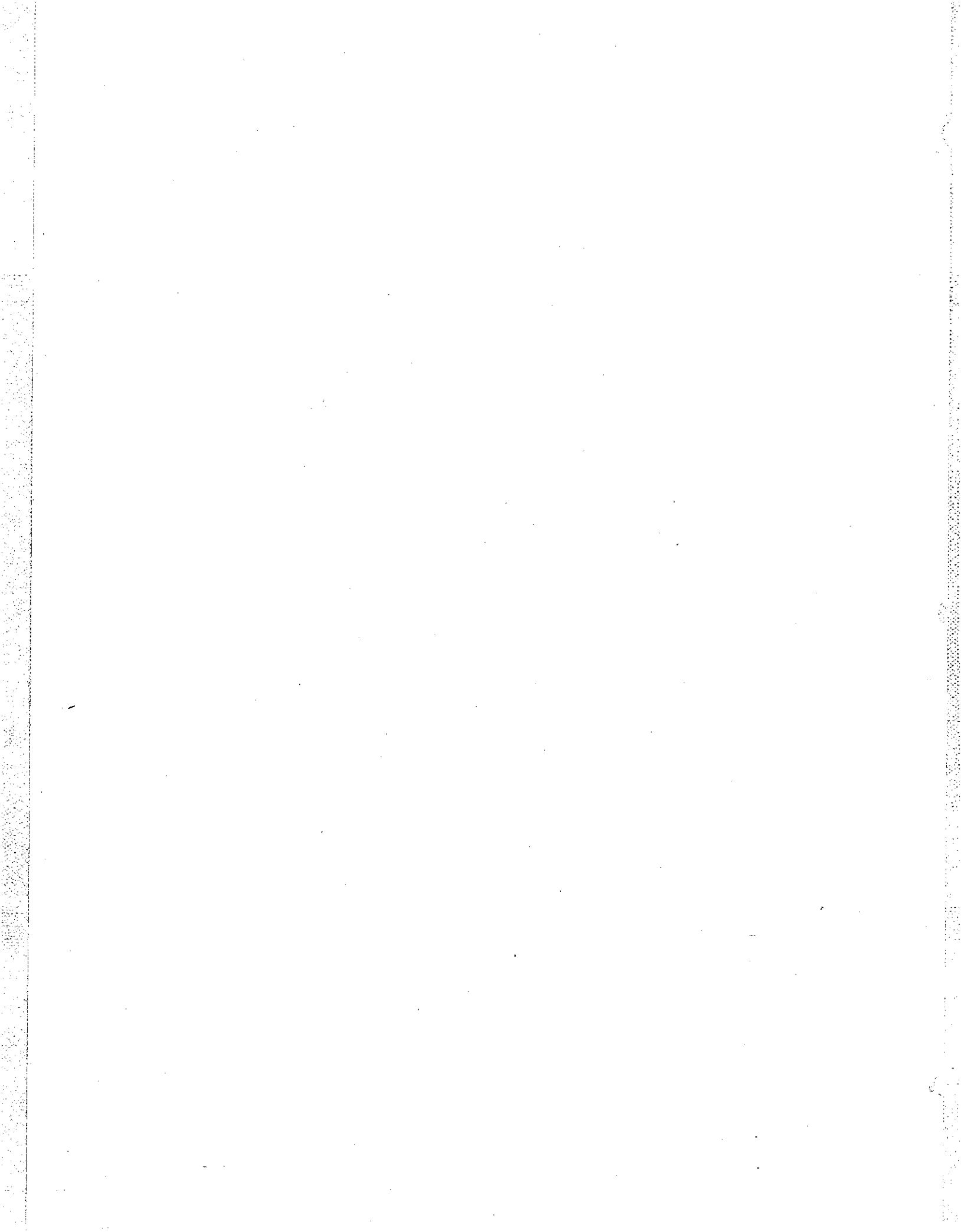
USING MUSIC TO TEACH ENGLISH AS A
SECOND LANGUAGE

A Guide to the Use of Song Lyrics

by Peter M. Carney

Submitted in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the Master of Arts in
Teaching degree at the School for International
Training, Brattleboro, Vermont

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This project consists of two parts: the first is a "guide", which lists seven distinct subject areas that can be taught or reinforced through the use of song lyrics. These seven areas are: Grammar/Structure; Conversation; Vocabulary; Idioms, Colloquial Expressions, and Two-word Verbs; Figures of Speech (Metaphors, Similes, Personification, Allusion); Writing; and Aural/Oral skills. The reason I refer to this as a "guide" is because it presents samples of different types of songs within each category, and suggests ways to use them.

The second part consists of thirty songs, each one of which refers back to at least one of the preceding seven sections of the guide. In some cases, if the song content merits it, more than one subject area is listed after the song for further use. Also, most of the individual song pages list additional song titles that likewise correspond to the specified subject area.

Taken as a whole, the guide and the representative songs illustrate the wide variety of topics that can be taught or reinforced by song lyrics in the teaching of ESL.

ERIC DESCRIPTORS

English (Second Language) 300
 RT Teaching Techniques
 Language Skills
 Second Language Learning

Music Education 140
 BT Education
 RT Music Activities

Music Activities 030
 BT Activities
 RT Music Education

Linguistic Competence 290
 RT Cognitive Processes
 Comprehension

English (Second Language) 300
 SN Non-English speaking students
 learning English as a second
 or foreign language
 UF TEFL, TESL
 BT English
 RT Instructional Materials

Linguistic Performance 290
 BT Performance
 RT Oral Expression

Linguistics 290
 NT Sociolinguistics
 RT English (Second Language)
 Social Dialects
 Language Usage
 Structural Analysis

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I have decided to write my Independent Professional Project on the use of music (when I use the word "music" in this paper I am referring to song lyrics) in teaching English as a Second Language for these reasons:

1. The I.P.P.s that have already been done in this area deal with using music only to teach grammar and structure. I think this is only one, and possibly not the most useful, reason for using music in the E.S.L. classroom.
2. In my teaching experience I have seen teachers using music in a very limited manner. Specifically, they use it in the language laboratory either as:
 - a) a "reward", if a class has finished the assigned exercises and they have "done well", or
 - b) if there is a small amount of time remaining in the period to be filled.

In either case, the music tapes are hastily thrown onto the console and the class is instructed to relax and listen. I have rarely seen a teacher hand out copies of a song's lyrics and spend time going over them either before or after listening to the song in the lab, or in the classroom itself.

3. If music is indeed a "universal language" then American popular music probably comes the closest to fitting that description. The influence of American and British popular music is so widespread that many students who come to this country to learn English have had at least a minimal exposure to the language through this medium. They might not know how to say "What's your name?" but the chances are good that they've heard at least one Beatles' song and wondered what the words meant as they sang along. I have found this to be especially true with the younger students, specifically those from Japan, Latin America, and Western Europe, because the influence of American culture has transferred our life-style to many other areas of the world.

4. I believe that music can be as effective a tool as any other to introduce and reinforce many aspects of the English Language.

The most obvious use of songs in an E.S.L. class is the teaching of grammar and structure. This aspect of music seems to be the main reason why it is used in teaching. In this paper I will outline and examine this and other ways in which songs can be effectively utilized as a teaching tool. I will also include several songs, plus alternates, that fall in each category and give the complete lyrics for them. I would prefer that this paper be taken as a guide, rather than as an end in itself, because musical formats and messages often change so quickly that, a few years from now, some of the songs included here may no longer be appropriate. I would rather demonstrate how the lyrics to a song can be used than present a list of songs to be used. My reasons for doing this, in addition to the aforementioned, are twofold:

- 1) Students should be encouraged to bring in their own "favorite" American songs, the majority of which will probably be current. The only drawback to this that I can see is the fact that the United States recording industry exports music to other countries (or the countries pick it up) that is popular for its rhythm, not for its lyrics. Although the reason for this is obvious and understandable the foreign student, as a result, has heard American music in his country that is basically pulsating in rhythm but depleted of verbal content, often employing words or set phrases repeated over and over. In essence, the music itself and not the lyrics is the focus of attention.
- 2) The teacher should take an active role in ferreting out current material because then the student will be more likely to hear it on the radio, thereby reinforcing his learning skills. I feel a student will be more satisfied in learning a song he is likely to hear over the radio than one which he probably won't. This also brings with it a feeling of accomplishment and makes for more active learning.

I have outlined seven separate areas of language acquisition skills that I feel can be constructively taught with music.

A. GRAMMAR AND STRUCTURE

Although I would not suggest using the lyrics of a song to teach grammar per se, I would use them to reinforce a grammar point once it has been introduced. My reasons for this are:

1) Most songs use different verb tenses and grammatical constructions in the same song. For example, Elvis Presley's "Heartbreak Hotel" includes the simple present, present perfect, past, and future verb tenses, in addition to a modal, in just one verse:

Well since my baby left
Well I've found a new place to dwell
It's down at the end of lonely street
That's Heartbreak Hotel
Where I'll be so lonely, baby
Well I'm so lonely
Well I'll be so lonely
I could die

2) Once a grammatical point has been presented a song can then be introduced to show how it is incorporated into the language, like saying "look here, we really do use this."

3) Song lyrics present a good example of language use in a controlled context. The lyrics can then be examined and the student can see why certain forms are used.

A sampling of songs that can be used to reinforce grammar are as follows:

present perfect "Where Have All The Flowers Gone?" by Pete Seeger

Where have all the flowers gone?
Long time passing
Where have all the flowers gone?
Long time ago
Where have all the flowers gone?
Young girls have picked them, everyone

present perfect continuous "I've Been Waiting For You" by Neil Young

I've been waiting for you,
And you've been coming to me
For such a long time now

conditional

There seem to be a large number of songs in the conditional in our language, probably because this form is well suited for the uncertainty of our love songs as they reflect our cultural psyche. For example, "If I Loved You" from Carousel; "If I Had A Hammer" by Peter, Paul, and Mary; "If You Could Read My Mind" by Gordon Lightfoot. It's even possible to find different forms of the

conditional:

"El Condor Pasa" is a fine example of the present unreal:

I'd rather be a sparrow than a snail,
Yes I would
If I could
I surely would

Bob Dylan's "Girl From The North Country", unlike Paul Simon's "El Condor Pasa", uses the present real/future:

If you're travellin' in the north country fair
Where the winds hit heavy on the borderline
Remember me to one who lives there

Dylan's "This Wheel's On Fire" combines the present unreal and future together, in addition to the past perfect tense:

No man alive will come to you
With another tale to tell
But you know that we shall meet again
If your memory serves you well

If I knew for sure that it was yours
But it was oh so hard to tell
But you knew that we would meet again
If your memory serves you well

And after every plan had failed
And there was nothing more to tell
You knew that we would meet again
If your memory served you well

I have chosen to mention only a few grammatical forms here because of the sheer volume of possibilities. What I would like to point out is the ability of songs to demonstrate such fine and close distinctions as the present perfect/present perfect continuous, and the different forms of the conditional.

As we saw earlier with "Heartbreak Hotel" it is difficult to find songs that use exclusively, or even primarily for that matter, only one type of grammatical construction. Practically all songs have a message to impart to the listener and in order to do so they frequently jump back and forth between the present and past to show the effect of past events and actions upon present situations, and then leap to the future to give a sense of importance to the present situation and suggest its probable outcome. However it's possible, although not commonplace, to find songs that use only one tense, as in Cat Stevens' "Rubylove":

Who'll be my love?
You'll be my love,
You'll be my sky above,
Who'll be my light?
You'll be my light,
You'll be my day and night*

Different structures can also be found in song lyrics and utilized in teaching. The passive is well exemplified in this 1950's rock n' roll ode to young love by Phil Everly:

I've been cheated,
Been mistreated,
When will I be loved?

Question and answer exchanges are a common feature of lyrics, as in "Where Have All The Flowers Gone?", and these lines from Dylan's "A Hard Rain's A Gonna Fall":

Oh where have you been my blue eyed son?
Oh where have you been my darlin' young one?
Oh what'll you do now...?
Whom did you meet...?
What did you see...?

"Blowin' In The Wind", also by Dylan, is another example:

How many times can a man turn his head
And pretend that he just doesn't see?
The answer my friend
Is blowin' in the wind.

Although a song might be chosen to teach one thing, for example the passive in "When Will I Be Loved?", most of the song is in the present perfect tense, so that can also be taught. Indeed, it is important when choosing a song in order to reinforce a certain structure or grammatical point that the student be familiar with not only the specific point the teacher wishes to emphasize but also whatever other forms appear in the song as well. Since I teach the passive after I have taught the present perfect, I take this into account before I use this particular song for the present perfect. "Blowin' In The Wind" includes modals and embedded statements, so this should be taken into consideration before I use this song for Question/Answer structure and Wh- question words. Actually, the same thing can be said for practically any song. The teacher should choose songs which reflect constructions the students have already learned or, if not, make sure the new concept is explained either at the time the song is presented or follow up on it later.

It is, of course, a simple matter to present a song and emphasize only one part of it while ignoring or glossing over a construction the teacher does not wish to point out at that time. Since a large majority of songs do contain varied assortments of grammar and structure this might be preferable.

Everything from prepositions to verb tenses to adjective clauses can be found in and taught through song lyrics. Although I don't wish to go into this further, because the possibilities are virtually limitless, I would refer the interested reader to Marcia Rollin's I.P.P., which lists and categorizes many of the parts of speech and gives examples of songs for each.

B. CONVERSATION

This section deals with lyric content and its potential use in the E.S.L. classroom.

The most important criteria for choosing discussion material are:

- 1). Universality, or applicability, so each student will be familiar with the topic being discussed.
- 2). Controversial quality, so students will, hopefully, forget their language inhibitions and, fueled by interest and a personal knowledge of the subject, open up a lively discourse which the teacher can moderate or direct as need be.

I would suggest handing out copies of the lyrics to the class, listening to the song via a portable cassette or record player, then discussing the applicability of the message as it affects each student's view of his own culture. The purpose of such an exercise would not be to arrive at any class conclusion or consensus because each student would be reflecting his own value system; and a qualitative judgment should not, ^{and} ~~nor~~ could not, be arrived at in such a situation. Rather, the sole objective would be to loosen up the class so they could practice and refine their aural-oral skills.

The different styles of American music carry with them different messages and attitudes. These messages and attitudes, with their differing value systems, can involve a class in a debate of how economic and social class, educational background, and even regionality can affect and shape a person's view of himself and his world. There are blues (both black and white), folk ballads, rock n' roll, rhythm and blues, country and western, work songs, protest songs, etc.

The songs I have included in this section fall roughly into three overlapping categories; Social, Political, and Economic. Since these are virtually universal subject areas, I think they can be effectively employed as vehicles to encourage class discussions.

SOCIAL

Most popular songs deal with the subject of love in one way or another. Being a universal subject, this topic can lead to a discussion of the role that love plays in a marriage arrangement, for instance. It can also be interesting to see how much importance is placed on love in different societies. Compare the messages in these two songs:

Bye bye love,
Bye bye happiness,
Hello loneliness,
Well I think I'm a gonna die.

Was in the Spring one sunnyday,
My sweetheart left me, Lord she went away,
And now she's gone, but I don't worry,
And Lord I'm sittin' on top of the world.

The message in the song "Bye Bye Love" (by F. and B. Bryant) is typical of the "white" rock n' roll of the 1950's. It tells of losing in love and being decimated by the loss. The other song, "Sitting On Top Of The World" (by Doc Watson) echoes the sentiments of the predominately black blues singers who tell of losing in love but what of it? It's far from being the end of the world: make the best of the situation and find someone else. This disparity is a good indication of the difference between Southern "black" blues and middle class Northern "white" blues, or rock n' roll. Southern blues is good music to teach with because it is basically an American expression from which other musical forms have evolved.

Many songs from the 1960's reflected and fostered social unrest and a growing dissatisfaction with existing social mores and standards. Bob Dylan's songs, including "The Times They Are A'Changin'," are excellent representations of this unrest:

Come mothers and fathers throughout the land,
And don't criticize what you can't understand,
Your sons and your daughters are beyond your command,
Your old road is rapidly agin',
Please get out of the new one
If you can't lend a hand,
'Cause the times they are a'changin'.

The abuse of drugs, long a problem in our country, makes for an interesting topic of conversation in a culturally mixed class. Many foreign students who come to the United States have heard about the widespread use of drugs here and they find it a difficult situation to understand. Drugs have always been with us but it was

not until the problem afflicted the white middle class that it became a "problem" and worthy of national attention and a concerted action to control it. Many rock n' roll songs from the 1960's are blatant drug paeans:

Drivin' that train, high on cocaine,
Casey Jones you'd better watch your speed...
from "Casey Jones" by The Grateful Dead

Well I've smoked a lot of grass,
Lord, I've popped a lot of pills...
from "The Pusher" by Steppenwolf

I've seen the needle and the damage done,
A little bit of it in every one,
But every junkie's like the setting sun.
from "The Needle And The Damage Done"
by Neil Young

Unlike rock n' roll, Country and Western songs tend to be socially and politically conservative in nature, reflecting the Southern rural areas from which this music emerged. An example is Merle Haggard's "Okie From Muskogee":

We don't smoke marijuana in Muskogee,
We don't take our trips on LSD,
We don't burn our draft cards down on Main Street...
I'm proud to be an Okie from Muskogee,
A place where even squares can have a ball...

Country and Western music also typically presents a pessimistic (but usually realistic) analysis of life, everything from broken marriages to broken car axles. "Mama Tried" by Merle Haggard is typical:

And I turned 21 in prison, doing life without parole,
No one could steer me right but mama tried, mama tried,
Mama tried to raise me better, but her pleadin' I denied,
Now there's only me to blame 'cause mama tried.

The instability of the modern day American family is well exemplified in today's "black music", as in "Papa Was A Rolling Stone" by the Temptations:

Papa was a rolling stone,
Wherever he laid his hat was his home,
And when he died,
All he left us was alone.

Another social problem, which is of a magnitude in this country not usually found in others, is what we do with our older generation. The messages in these following lyrics reflect not only our American system of values as to who or what is worthy or worthless, but ~~it~~ also says something about the instability and non-cohesiveness of

the nuclear American family. Many foreign students are from societies where three generations living under the same roof is the rule, not the exception. This situation can also lead into discussions of Americans' mobility, work ethic, shallowness of interpersonal relationships, etc.

When our kids are grown
With kids of their own
They'll send us away
To a little home, in Florida,
We'll play checkers all day
'Till we pass away...

from "Love Story" by Randy Newman

Can you imagine us
Years from today,
Sharing a park bench quietly?
How terribly strange
To be seventy.
Old Friends,
Memory brushes the same years,
Silently sharing the same fears.

from "Old Friends" by Paul Simon

ECONOMIC

Other topics which can liven up a discussion class include work songs such as union and labor organizing messages from our industrializing past. Since most E.S.L. students in the United States are from industrialized or rapidly industrializing countries, these topics can be of timely significance. "Sixteen Tons" paints one picture of pre-Union America:

Sixteen tons and what do ya get?
Another day older and deeper in debt,
St. Peter don't you call me 'cause I can't go,
I owe my soul to the company store.

The bleak message of a factory worker in Paul Simon's "Richard Cory" shows the enmity caused by economic inequality:

But I work in his factory
And I curse the life I'm living
And I curse my poverty
And I wish that I could be
Oh, I wish that I could be,
Richard Cory.

Some work situations that were true of our past still exist today, as shown in Woody Guthrie's "Deportee":

The crops are all in and the peaches are rott'ning,
The oranges piled in their creosote dumps;
You're flying 'em back to the Mexican Border,
To pay all their money to wade back again..

"Black" blues songs, often from the Mississippi River delta region, reflect the hardships of life, the trials of everyday living, but do not seek or suggest self-pity; they are merely a way of removing hardship and pain by singing it away. Blind Lemon Jefferson's "Bad Luck Blues" shows this:

I bet my money and I lost it, Lord, its gone,
Doggone my bad luck soul,
Mmmmmmm-lost it, Lord its gone,
I mean I lost it---years ago,
I ain't never gonna bet on that queen of spades no more.

Rock n' roll is the white middle class registering its attitude towards its country and the world in general, including a Beach Boys' salute to the material advantages of middle class life:

Well she got her daddy's car and she cruised to the
hamburger stand now,
Seems she forgot all about the library like she told
her old man now,
And with the radio blastin' out a tune just as loud as
it can now,
And she'll have fun, fun, fun,
'Till her daddy takes the T-bird away.

A negation of these same values can be seen in Jimi Hendrix' "If 6 Were 9":

White collar conservatives flashin' down the street,
Pointing their plastic fingers at me...

I think if there is a commonality among the countries of the world it is economic. "Money", from Cabaret, sums it all up:

Money makes the world go around, the world go 'round,
the world go 'round,
Money makes the world go 'round....

The rock group Pink Floyd, in their tune "Money", put it this way:

Money it's a crime
Share it fairly but don't take a slice of my pie,
Money, so they say,
Is the root of all evil today,
But if you ask for a raise
It's no surprise
That they're giving none away.

POLITICAL

Anti-war and political protest songs are particularly poignant in our country but students from such areas as Western Europe, Latin America, and Japan, have also had experiences similar to these in their own countries, especially in the late 1960's and

early 1970's. Some national groups, like Iranian students studying in the United States, are not free to protest in their own countries so they express their political feelings in our country. The reasons for and ways in which political protests come about, and the ways our respective governments respond to them, can involve an E.S.I. class in exchanges of candid personal opinions.

Anti-war ballads like "Draft Dodger Rag", by Phil Ochs, or these verses from "Fixin' To Die Rag", by Country Joe and the Fish, reflect the strong resentment felt by a large portion of the "younger generation" against forced military service during the last half of the 1960's:

Well come on all of you big strong men,
Uncle Sam needs your help again,
Got himself in a terrible jam
Way off yonder in Vietnam,
So put down your books and pick up a gun
Gonna have a whole lot of fun...

It would be interesting to compare verses like the above with songs from our past that were nationalistic tributes which, either directly or indirectly, glorified war, such as "When Johnny Comes Marching Home Again", "The Battle Hymn Of The Republic", or "Over There":

Over there, over there,
Send the word, send the word,
Over there,
That the Yanks are comin'
The Yanks are comin'
They're drum drum drummin' everywhere...
And we won't be back
'Til its over
Over there.

"Now That The Buffalo's Gone", by Buffy Ste. Marie, talks about the way the U.S. Government handled the "Indian Problem" of the past century. Far from being an isolated or unique event in history the message of this song is one of the oldest and most universal: man's inhumanity to his fellow man:

When a war between Nations is lost,
The loser, we know, pays the cost,
But even when Germany fell to your hands,
Consider dear lady, consider dear man,
You left them their pride
And you left them their land,
But what have you done to these ones?

OTHERS

I could not close out this section on Conversation topics without at least mentioning some other possibilities that don't specifically fall into Social, Economic, or Political categories.

American folksongs are an integral part of our national heritage and, as such, they are historical documents of our country's growth and of the people who built it. For example, we have cowboy ballads ("Home On The Range", "The Old Chisholm Trail", "Sweet Betsy From Pike", "The Streets Of Laredo"), railroad songs ("900 Miles", "Wabash Cannonball", "Casey Jones", "Rock Island Line"), sailing chants ("Erie Canal", "Sinking Of The Reuben James", "One More Day", "The Boston Come-All-Ye"), and other work-oriented songs. These songs were more often a vehicle for personal expression, a tribute to the importance of the individual, or simply a way to pass the time and ease the pain of loneliness, than they were complaints against life's injustices.

"The Streets Of Laredo":

"I see by your outfit that you are a cowboy,"
These words he did say as I proudly stepped by,
"Come sit down beside me and hear my sad story,
Got shot in the breast and I know I must die."

"Rock Island Line": (by Kelly Pace, adapted by Leadbelly):

Well, the Rock Island Line is a mighty good road,
If you want to ride it, got to ride it like you flyin',
Buy your ticket at the station on the Rock Island Line.

"The Boston Come-All-Ye":

'Tis advertised in Boston, New York, and Buffalo,
Five hundred brave Americans a-whaling for to go,
Singing, blow ye winds in the mo-orning,
Blow ye winds, hi-ho,
Heave away your running gear
And blow, blow, blow.

There are songs that eulogize the rugged individualism of our ancestors, whether good ("John Henry") or bad ("Jesse James", "John Harty"). In fact, many "bad guys" received adulation and respect because of their ability to successfully rebel against convention and make it on their own in the face of adversity:

John Henry started on the right hand,
The steam drill started on the left,
" 'Fo I'd let that steamdrill beat me down,
I'd hammer my fool self to death, Lawd, Lawd..."

John Harty was a desperate little man,
Carried a gun ev'ry day,
Killed a man in the West Virginia land,
Oughta seen little Johnny get away.

There are songs which glorified the country itself, picturesque odes to the physical beauty of the newly settled land: ("Red River Valley", "Shenandoah", "This Land Is Your Land");

This land is your land,
This land is my land,
From California to the New York Island,
From the Redwood forests to the Gulf Stream waters,
This land was made for you and me.

Southern mountain songs, which were often adaptations of ballads brought over from the British Isles, typically related tales of individual grief and woe: ("Old Blue", "Pretty Polly", "East Virginia", "Long Black Veil", "Tom Dooley"):

This time tomorrow,
Reckon where I'll be,
Down in some lonesome holler,
Hangin' from a white oak tree.

Gospels and Spirituals ("Go Tell It On The Mountain", "He's Got The Whole World In His Hands", "Swing Low, Sweet Chariot") reflected the deeply religious beliefs of the primarily Southern rural areas of the United States and played an important part in the life there:

Swing low, sweet chariot,
Comin' for to carry me home,
Swing low, sweet chariot,
Comin' for to carry me home.

Songs of freedom were one type of Spiritual that expressed a longing for the day when slavery would cease to exist, either through physical freedom ("Follow The Drinkin' Gourd") or death ("Oh, Freedom"):

Oh Freedom! Oh Freedom! Oh Freedom over me,
An' befo' I'd be a slave
I'll be buried in my grave,
An' go home to my Lord
An' be free.

There are many more types of regional folksongs, each reflecting the background of the people who settled there, with their distinct use of the language that sets them apart from the others and a message that is often unique to each sub-culture. For example, the French influence of Louisiana Cajun music; Mexican influence of Southwestern music; the British Isles sending over their music to be adapted in New England and the Southern Mountains; African rhythms being responsible for the development of the Blues in the Deep South; German and Swedish music being fused with those in

Pennsylvania and Minnesota, respectively; etc. The list is virtually endless and would necessitate a separate project to simply mention the majority of regional variations, let alone examine them in depth. I would suggest taking a few representative samplings and using them in the classroom to show the influence that other countries had in the development of American folk music and how the different grammatical and structural constructions used in these songs still exist today. "Young Roddy M'Corley" (by Pat Clancy), and "El Matador" (by Jane Bowers and Irving Burgess) demonstrate the effect of Irish and Mexican music on American:

Oh see the fleetfoot hosts of men
Who speed with faces wan,
From farmstead and from thresher's cot,
Along the banks of Ban...

Aye, Torero, she is here,
Aye, Matador.
I feel her eyes;
They are wide with excitement and fear.
I will be bold;
Brave and swift will I be....

Another interesting comparison to make is between the same song, but from different areas of the United States. Many times this occurs when a traditional regional song is adapted and "cleaned up" for big city and national distribution. "Staggerlee" is an adaptation of "Stack O'Lee" (Furry Lewis version):

Staggerlee and Billy
Two men who gambled late,
Staggerlee threw "seven"
Billy swore that he threw "eight"

I remember one September, on one Friday night.
Stackerlee and Billy Lyons had a great fight.
Cryin', "When you loose your money, learn to loose."
Billy Lyons shot six bits, Stackerlee bet he pass.

There are also different versions of the same song within the same area; "Casey Jones" (by Wallace Saunders) and "Kassie Jones" (by Furry Lewis) are both Southern Blues:

Some folks say Casey Jones can't run,
Stop and listen what Casey done,
He left Memphis at a quarter to nine,
Made Newport News 'fore dinner time...

Lord, some people said Mister Kassie couldn't run,
Let me tell you what Mister Kassie done.
He left Memphis, was quarter to nine.
Got to Newport News it was dinner time.

Understandably, it is not always possible to figure out the meaning of new vocabulary items through context. Invariably, a student will not understand every word in a song without the teacher giving the definition. Stevie Wonder's "Pastime Paradise" is a case in point: because of the fact that the lyricist uses a number of words and terms together in sequence, often without any obvious connection to one another, there is really no way to decipher their meaning through the context of the verse:

They've been wasting most their days
In remembrance of ignorance oldest praise
Tell me who of them will come to be
How many of them are you and me
Dissipation
Race Relations
Consolation
Segregation
Dispensation
Isolation
Exploitation
Mutilation
Mutations
Miscreation
Conformation....to the evils of the world.

Occasionally, the meaning of a verse will be implied rather than directly stated because the vocabulary is used in a figurative not a literal, way. In this instance, trying to figure out the meaning of words from the context of the verse is more difficult. This is a subject I will develop further in Section "E", but Joni Mitchell's "Both Sides Now" gives us an idea:

Bows and flows of angel hair
And ice cream castles in the air
And feather canyons everywhere....

Whether the meaning of a "new" word can be discovered by the student himself through the context of the verse, or needs to be explained by the teacher, is inconsequential when compared to the potential that music has for increasing a student's vocabulary. Therefore, vocabulary strengthening is a prima facie case for using song lyrics to teach English.

C. VOCABULARY

Many foreign students have an insatiable appetite for learning English vocabulary. Song lyrics are an excellent vehicle for achieving an expanded vocabulary because the student usually needs to be able to gather the meaning of the target word from the context of the verse or sentence. As in reading, the student should be encouraged to elicit the meaning of words he doesn't understand by examining the word in relation to the verse in which it is contained, and even to preceding and following verses if need be. This is not as easy to do with songs as it is with a sample reading passage because of the liberties that are frequently taken with the language of song lyrics (such as incomplete sentences, incorrect grammar, etc.), but it is still possible and desirable. Cat Stevens' "Hard Headed Woman" is a good example of the feasibility of this process:

I know a lot of fancy dancers
People who can glide you on a floor
They move so smooth but have no answers...

Chances are a student might not know the meaning of the word "glide" but clues abound as to its meaning: dancers, floor, move, smooth. Hence, the student should be able to ascertain the definition of "glide" by the presence of these associated words.

The task of learning new vocabulary is made easier when the meanings are more straightforward, as is the case with the use of antonyms in Pete Seeger's "Turn, Turn, Turn":

To everything there is a season...
A time to be born, a time to die,
A time to plant, a time to reap,
A time to kill, a time to heal,
A time to laugh, a time to weep.

Lyrics can also be used to demonstrate slightly different meanings between synonyms that are usually used interchangeably, as in Paul Simon's "The Sounds Of Silence":

And in the naked light I saw,
Ten thousand people, maybe more,
People talking without speaking,
People hearing without listening...

We can also find contemporary folksongs that attempt to piece together an explanation of our collective national identity. Paul Simon's "An American Tune" and "America" reflect this search for identity:

We come on the ship they call the Mayflower,
We come on the ship that sailed the moon,
We come in the age's most uncertain hour,
And sing an American tune,
But it's all right, it's all right,
You can't be forever blessed,
Still, tomorrow's going to be another working day,
And I'm trying to get some rest...

"Kathy, I'm lost," I said,
Though I knew she was sleeping.
"I'm empty and aching and I don't know why."
Counting the cars on the New Jersey Turnpike.
They've all come to look for America...

If we have difficulty examining and explaining ourselves we can always turn to other countries for help. Although I am stressing American music in this paper, any song in English can be useful in the classroom, especially one like "Don't You Hurry, Worry Me", from the movie "Windjammer", written and sung in Calypso.

De people come down here from de U.S.A.,
Dey say dey come here to relax,
Always in a hurry gotta spend de pay,
Before dey pay it in de tax,
So don't you hurry, worry me...

Many of the songs I have listed in this section on Conversation are definitely American in origin and character, but countries and people have a lot more in common than they are often willing to admit. I think a foreign student studying English in the United States can benefit from the exposure to such songs. These songs can not only give him an idea about this country and its people (which he might not care about knowing), but the messages in these lyrics more often than not will probably approximate similar situations that he has experienced, or will experience, in his own country. I have found that even if a student doesn't care about American culture, he can at least draw parallels to his own, and compare or contrast them. Discussions that deal with cultural differences and similarities are among the most interesting types of conversations to be involved in.

D. IDIOMS, COLLOQUIAL EXPRESSIONS, TWO-WORD VERBS

Closely linked to vocabulary, but often more difficult for the student to learn, are idioms, colloquial expressions, and two-word verbs. These are usually more difficult for the student to understand because he is often unable to determine their meaning through the context of a sentence, basically because they are composed of two or more separate words used together in a collective meaning. Also, as is the case with two-word verbs, these groups of words take on definitions that are different from those of the individual words that compose them; in essence, the "whole is greater than the sum of its parts."

I would explain the difference between colloquial expressions and idioms to a class in this way; when a saying or expression becomes an accepted part of our working vocabulary and is used by more than one segment of society then I think it is safe to call it an idiom. If it doesn't achieve wide usage then it remains a colloquial expression. Most colloquialisms are spawned or adopted by groups in society that are set apart by either economic or social differences, or both, from the mainstream of the society.

The following songs are good examples of colloquial expressions:

"Feelin' Groovy"
by Paul Simon

Slow down, you move too fast,
You got to make the morning last,
Just kicking down the cobblestones,
Looking for fun and feelin' groovy.

"Good Vibrations"
by the Beach Boys

I'm pickin' up good vibrations,
She's giving me excitations,
Good, good, good,
Good vibrations.

"Hey, Schoolgirl"
by Paul Simon

I'm gonna skip my homework,
Gonna cut my class,
Bug out of here real fast.

"Uptight"
by Stevie Wonder

Baby, everything is all right,
Uptight, out of sight...

The underlined expressions above were accepted terminology of the youth culture during the 1950's, 60's, and 70's, but have basically remained colloquial expressions because of their failure to be adopted into society as a whole. On the other hand, the following songs employ expressions that were initially colloquial but I think we can safely term them idioms because of their more or less common use:

"Over My Head"
by Fleetwood Mac

You can take me to paradise,
And then again you can be cold as ice,
I'm over my head
But it sure feels nice.

"Under My Thumb"
by the Rolling Stones

Under my thumb,
The girl who once
Had me down.

"I Fall To Pieces"
by Patsy Cline

I fall to pieces,
Each time I see you again.

"Sitting On Top Of The
World"

And now she's gone,
And I don't worry,
And Lord I'm sitting on top of the
world.

"Take It Easy"
by Jackson Browne
and Glenn Frey

Lighten up while you still can,
Don't even try to understand...
Take it easy, take it easy...

"What's Goin' On"
by Marvin Gaye

You know we've got to find a way
To bring some lovin' here today,
Talk to me so you can see
What's goin' on, what's goin' on...

Of the above idioms, "take it easy" and "what's goin' on" (or "what's happening?") are among the first expressions a foreign student will hear on the street when he comes to this country. For this reason alone I would consider it valid to use these or similar songs to either introduce these expressions or show how they can be properly used.

In the case of two-word verbs, the addition of a preposition to a verb affects the collective meaning of both words:

She called me up,
From down in El Paso...

from "Sitting On Top Of The World"

You just call out my name
And you know wherever I am
I'll come running
To see you again...

from "You've Got A Friend"
by Carole King

Call on me
Cause I love you
You know I do

from "Call On Me"
by Chicago

"Call on", "call up", and "call out" all have distinct meanings because of the addition of different prepositions. When the addition of a preposition or particle to a verb changes the original meaning of the verb, it then becomes a two-word verb.

For example, "carry" means "to transport", while "carry on" means "to continue", as we see in Bill Withers's "Lean On Me":

Lean on me when you're not strong,
I'll give you strength,
I'll help you carry on...

In the song "Call On Me" we can see how the addition of a preposition changes the definition of "count" from "to add or total" to "depend on":

If you need a friend,
You can always count on me...

Some two-word verbs have taken on newer, more colloquial, meanings in the last few years. For instance, "get back", "get down", "get around", "get it on", "get together", "get it together", "get up", are all either song titles or are used in popular song lyrics. "Get down", which usually means "climb down" or "duck", is now used to mean "to become involved in something"; "get it on" suggests "to have a good time"; "get it together" means roughly "to collect oneself"; and so on. To "put on" is currently used to mean to "goof" on someone, or play a joke on them, as in Lennon and McCartney's "I'm So Tired":

You'd say I'm putting you on,
But it's no joke,
It's doing me harm...

In the song "You Turn Me On, I'm A Radio", Joni Mitchell utilizes a number of two-word verbs, including "turn on", which assumes a double meaning: the commonly used definition of physically moving a switch to start some kind of appliance, and a colloquial meaning of "to stimulate or excite":

I'm sending you out this signal here,
I hope you can pick it up loud and clear,
But if there's no good reception for me,
Then tune me out...
You turn me on, I'm a radio...

Bob Dylan's "Tangled Up In Blue" uses a two-word verb twice in succession:

The only thing that I knew how to do
Was to keep on keepin' on
Like a bird that flew,
Tangled up in blue.

In "The Bright Green Pleasure Machine", Paul Simon demonstrate how much slang we occasionally include in our colloquial speech (I would explain "slang" to a class as the taking of colloquial speech another step further away from "conventional" or "standard" English):

Do people have a tendency to dump on you?...
Are you looking for a way to chuck it all?...

The rapidity with which certain colloquial definitions of two-word verbs slip in and out of use can be shown by Elvis Presley "All Shook Up" and Little Richard's "Twist And Shout":

I'm proud to say that she's my buttercup
I'm in love,
I'm all shook up.

Well shake it up baby now,
Twist and shout,
C'mon baby now...

"Shook up" and "shake it up" were popular expressions in the late 1950's and early 1960's, but have fallen into general disuse since that time.

Finally, "Paranoia Blues", by Paul Simon, uses two two-word verbs, two colloquial/slang expressions, and an idiom in one verse:

I got the paranoia blues from knocking around in New York
City,
Where they roll you for a nickel,
And they stick you for the extra dime,
Oh, I just got out in the nick of time.

A number of colloquial expressions, idioms, and two-word verbs were introduced or adopted and adapted by the youth "counter-culture" of the 1960's, and have found social acceptance today. They are also widely used in popular music, as we have seen. Additionally, colloquialisms, idioms, and two-word verbs play a large part in our day-to-day working vocabulary, but because they often tend to go in and out of fashion they can be difficult to use correctly. Furthermore, they frequently imply a cultural knowledge and can easily be over-used or mis-applied in inappropriate situations. However, foreign students want to know these expressions and how to use them because they constitute a sizable portion of the language we function with "on the street".

E. FIGURES OF SPEECH: SIMILIES, METAPHORS, PERSONIFICATION, ALLUSION

I have decided to discuss figures of speech in a separate section for these reasons:

1. They are typically found in written form as opposed to being a part of our spoken vocabulary.
2. Unlike learning new vocabulary, or even colloquialisms, idioms, and two-word verbs, figures of speech involve analogies and draw parallel and often vague references from one object or situation to another.

Probably an experience I find the most exciting as an E.S.L. teacher is when a student is able to use what I will loosely term a "cognitive thought process" in deciphering the often elusive language of song lyrics. The use of metaphors and similies abounds in popular music, and for a student to be able to understand the meaning of a word or phrase used in a context that is different from its usual one, is, to me, indelible proof the student is using the language, as opposed to simply repeating accumulated patterns. Instead of just absorbing and storing information in learning English, the student must stop and digest the information as it passes through.

SIMILIES

Similies are easier to recognize than metaphors, basically because of the use of "like" or "as". What a similie does is to compare two different situations and draw a parallel association between their similarities. Take, for example, this line from "Sad Lisa" by Cat Stevens:

Her eyes like windows,
Trickling rain...

In this example, a student can see the similarity in meaning between two separate situations: rain dripping down a window pane, and tears running from a person's eyes. Paul Simon's "Bridge Over Troubled Water" offers a similar comparison:

Oh when times get rough,
And friends just can't be found,
Like a Bridge over troubled water,
I will lay me down...

Again in this example we see a parallel association: just as a bridge is needed to get past a raging river, the author is suggesting that he will use himself as a "bridge" to help his friend get past his difficult moments.

The following songs present other examples of similes that draw upon parallel situations for their meaning:

"Over My Head" by Fleetwood Mac:

Your mood is like a circus wheel,
You're changing all the time...

"The Same Old Song" by the Four Tops:

You're sweet as a honey bee,
But like a honey bee's sting
You're gonna leave my heart in pain...

"How Can I Tell You" by Cat Stevens:

I need to feel my arms around you,
Like sea around a shore...

"Close The Door Lightly", by Eric Andersen, is more complex:

Take your tears to someone else's eyes,
They're made of glass and they cut like wounding lies,
Memories are drifting like the snow...

"Meet Me In The Morning", by Bob Dylan, draws two similes (ship, heart) from a single word (sun):

Look at the sun
Sinkin' like a ship,
Ain't that just like my heart, babe
When you kissed my lips.

METAPHORS

Unlike similes, which suggest a similarity between two things, metaphors imply that they are the same. "I Am A Rock", by Paul Simon, portrays this relationship:

I touch no one and no one touches me,
I am a rock,
I am an island...

Simon is stating that he is isolated and remote, just as a rock or an island is alone. His reasons for feeling this way come at the end of the song:

And a rock feels no pain,
And an island never cries.

I find the following selection, "The Expressway To Your Heart" by the Soul Survivors, a rich display of the versatility of the English language, while it also reflects the American's love affair with the automobile:

I got caught in the rush hour,
'Til it started to shower
You with love and affection
Now you won't look in my direction
On the expressway to your heart
That expressway is not the best way
At 5:00 it's much too crowded, much too crowded...

"Julia", by Lennon/McCartney, is virtually composed of metaphors:

Julia, seashell eyes, windy smile, calls me,
So I sing a song of love, Julia...
Her hair of floating sky is shimmering, glimmering...

"Sitting On Top Of The World" gives us an enigmatic example of metaphorical use with a sexual slant:

If you don't like my peaches
Don't ya shake my tree,
Get outa my orchard,
Let my peaches be...

Some metaphors have become so commonplace that they are accepted into our vocabulary. "Witchy Woman" by the Eagles:

Raven hair, ruby lips,
Sparks fly from her fingertips...

The list of songs that use similes and metaphors is endless, because most lyricists make use of these devices. It's fascinating to watch a class discover the meaning of similes and metaphors because the teacher knows a thinking process is going on, and not just a regurgitation of memorized, stored information.

We often find similes and metaphors together in the same song. When this occurs it is easy to compare them to see the differences and similarities. Additionally, we usually find that the similes are easier to understand and explain to the students than the metaphors are. Paul Simon's "Old Friends" gives us a chance to make this comparison:

Old friends,
Sat on their parkbench
Like bookends.
The old men
Lost in their overcoats,
Waiting for the sunset.

In the first verse we can see the imagery set up by the simile "like bookends" and understand how this relates to the way they are sitting. In the second verse, sunset signifies an end and a beginning: not an end to day and a beginning of night, in the ordinary definition, but an end to life and a beginning of death.

PERSONIFICATION

Another type of figure of speech that is sometimes found in song lyrics is personification, that is, giving human qualities to anything non-human, such as animals, inanimate objects, ideas, etc. The following selection from Bob Dylan's "You're Gonna Make Me Lonesome When You Go" gives us two examples of this:

Flowers on the hillside bloomin' crazy,
Cricket's talkin' back and forth in rhyme,
Blue river runnin' slow and lazy,
I could stay with you forever...

Obviously, crickets cannot "talk", let alone in "rhyme", but the writer's intent is clear: to compare the sounds made by crickets on a warm summer night with the sound of people engaged in conversation. The other example is so commonly used that it has become part of our language: rivers don't "run", nor are they "lazy" but, again, the lyricist is successful in presenting his images.

Another example is found in Eric Andersen's "Violets Of Dawn":

You may sing song me sweet smiles
regardless of the city's careless frown...

Whereas Andersen gave a human expression (frown) to an inanimate object (city), Paul Simon in "At The Zoo" gives human qualities to animals:

The monkeys stand for honesty,
Giraffes are insincere,
And the elephants are kindly,
But they're dumb.
Orangutans are skeptical...
Zebras are reactionaries,
Antelopes are missionaries,
Pigeons plot in secrecy,
And hamsters turn on frequently.

Graham Nash, in "Southbound Train", humanizes ideas:

Liberty laughing and shaking your head can you carry the
torch...
Quality quietly facing the fist are you angry and tired..
Fraternity failing to fight back the tears...

Personification can also be used "in reverse", by having a human take on or become something non-human. Joni Mitchell:

You turn me on, I'm a radio,
I'm a country station, I'm a little bit corny,
I'm a wildwood flower...

ALLUSION

A fourth type of figurative speech that can be found in song lyrics is allusive speech. This is when a person or place is referred to and used to describe something else, unrelated by time, place, context, whatever, but connected because of some kind of resemblance. The use of allusions pre-supposes the reader's or listener's knowledge of history, whether fictional or factual, geography, politics, or virtually any category that a "learned person" might be expected to know about. The main problem with using allusion to teach with is that it is often very culturally oriented in manner and content.

The following verse from "Violets Of Dawn," by Eric Andersen, contains a number of examples of allusion:

A Prince Charming I'll be on two white steeds to give
you dappled diamond crowns,
And climb your towers Sleeping Beauty 'fore you ever
know I've left the ground,
You can wear Cinderella Snow-White Alice Wonderlanted
gown...

The allusions presented in this dream-like song necessitate a previous knowledge of fairy tales, as does the Jefferson Airplane's "White Rabbit"

Go ask Alice when she's ten feet tall...
And the White Knight is toppling backwards,
And the Red Queen's lost her head,
Remember what the Dormouse said...

Paul Simon, in "A Simple Desultory Philippic", shows how culturally oriented allusive speech can be;

I been Norman Mailered, Maxwell Taylored.
I been John O'Hara'd, McNamara'd.
I been Rolling Stoned and Beatled till I'm blind.
I been Ayn Randed...

Obviously, allusion is the most difficult of the four figures of speech I have included here because unless a student has some previous knowledge of the person or thing being alluded to it is unlikely that he will understand how or why it is being used and miss the message completely.

F. WRITING

Song lyrics can be used to demonstrate different writing techniques in addition to strengthening the students' writing skills. This can be confusing, however, because lyrics are often incomplete sentences, fragments, clauses, phrases, etc. There is also frequent use of incorrect grammar. Nevertheless, this can work to the teacher's advantage. Take as an example the following from Dylan's "Don't Think Twice":

It ain't no use to sit and wonder why, babe,
It don't matter anyhow...

Even a beginning English student can spot the "ain't", the double negative with "ain't" and "no", and the incorrect use of "don't" for the third person singular.

The following verse from Jimi Hendrix' "If Six Were Nine" would be suitable for use with an intermediate class that had already been exposed to the conditional:

If the sun refused to shine,
I don't mind, I don't mind...

A student who was familiar with the use of the present unreal conditional would know that we use the past tense form of the verb with this type of the conditional, as in the first line with "refused"; therefore, he would know that the second part, "don't", is simple present and he would need a past tense modal such as "wouldn't".

I would suggest as an exercise the handing out of these, or similar, lyrics and having the students find the mistakes and correct them. This can be constructive learning and a fun exercise at the same time.

Bess, you is my woman now, you is, you is...

This line from George Gershwin's "Porgy and Bess" typifies many of the lyrics in this operetta, with numerous grammatical mistakes, but this example is also a reflection of cultural and sociological factors, as are the following.

In Country and Western music, the artist is trying to reach an often "unschooled" or "undereducated" audience, and talk to them in a language they both use and understand. This often brings with it unconventional use of the language, not for effect or as

a result of poetic license (which I will explain later in this section), but basically because of regional differences in speech patterns. "Are You Sure Hank Done It This Way?", a song about Country great Hank Williams by Waylon Jennings, shows this fact in the title alone, with the use of a participle, minus the auxiliary verb, instead of the simple past "did".

The song "Dust Can't Kill Me", by Woody Guthrie, is aimed at the rural inhabitants of the Southwest:

It blowed me out there towards Arizona (Aryyzzeenoo),
To the town of Tucson and it stranded me,
Darn nigh starved there at cotton boll gravvin'
But it didn't stop me girl,
It cain't stop me.

"Black English" is a language that is also a reflection of an American sub-culture and, like Country and Western, is found in written form that closely resembles the spoken dialect:

"You Can't Hurry Love" by the Supremes:

I can hear momma say,
You can't hurry love,
You just have to wait,
She said "love don't come easy,
It's a game of hesitate"...

Marvin Gaye's "Inner City Blues":

...money, we made it,
'fore we see it, you take it,
make me wanna holler
throw up both my hands,
Naw, naw baby...

I think that having a student find and correct "sub-standard" or "unconventional" English can demonstrate if the student is aware of what "conventional" English is. Then a discussion can be initiated as to the reasons why we use "sub-standard" English in so many of our songs, and the effects of regional and sub-cultural dialects on written and spoken English.

In the previously mentioned songs, the use of "done" in place of "did" is a typical speech error frequently found in the Southeastern United States. Likewise, "can't" when spoken with a drawl, comes out as "cain't", and it is written that way. "Black English" is not regional, per se, but it is sub-cultural: the lyrics of these songs, again, reflect the speech patterns of the people for whom the music is intended, so they can identify with it. I would refer the reader to the Conversation section in this paper for more information in this area.

Poetic license could be defined as an artist's freedom to experiment with or manipulate his medium once he is in solid control of the fundamentals of his field. Naturally, before someone can take liberties, or experiment, with any skill he must be firmly established in the basics, whether that skill is artistic athletic, musical, etc. The same is true with language. Our writers and poets, whether it's e.e. cummings with his disdain for capitalization and punctuation, or James Joyce with his stream-of-consciousness literary style, are masters of their craft. Many of our poets of the past twenty years have chosen the musical medium as their vehicle of expression. Hence, we have the use of double negatives, multiple contractions, incorrect verb tense, etc. for a number of reasons. One reason is for effect, or impact, which the writer is always trying to achieve, as in Dylan's "You Ain't Goin' Nowhere" and in much of his other material; the second reason is, given the constraints imposed by the musical format, the lyricist is limited by the restrictions of the music itself, so he exercises his poetic license as Paul Simon does in "Duncan":

Holes in my confidence, holes in the knees of my jeans,
 I was left without a penny in my pocket,
 Ooh hoo hoo wee
I's about destituted as a kid could be
 And I wished I wore a ring so I could hock it,
 I'd like to hock it.

If he chooses to have a rhyming scheme (wee, be) the lyricist might need to take shortcuts with the language in order to achieve his objectives, as we see in the underlined sentence above.

One type of writing style that is evident in song lyrics is the poetic form, usually with some sort of rhyming scheme as in "Duncan". Simon's "Scarborough Fair" and "The Sound of Silence" illustrate further the rhyming pattern:

Are you going to Scarborough Fair: (a)
 Parsley, sage, rosemary and thyme. (b)
 Remember me to one who lives there. (a)
 She once was a true love of mine. (b)

Hello darkness, my old friend, (a)
 I've come to talk with you again, (a)
 Because a vision softly creeping, (b)
 Left its seeds while I was sleeping, (b)
 And the vision that was planted in my brain (c)
 Still remains (c)
 Within The Sound Of Silence. (d)

G. IMPROVING AURAL COMPREHENSION AND ORAL SKILLS

With some songs, notably those with a slow "beat" and clear diction, it is possible to have the students listen to them without giving out the lyrics first. This type of procedure would depend upon the availability of songs that are sung slowly, clearly, and that use fairly simple vocabulary and grammar. A song like "Because", by the Beatles, would be a good choice:

Because the world is round,
It turns me on,
Love is old, love is new,
Love is old, love is you....

Presenting a song without first telling the students the lyrics is a good test of aural comprehension, discrimination, and retention. The emphasis in an exercise of this type might be the discrimination of minimal pairs, such as the underlined "new" and "you" in "Because". Since most songs use a rhyming scheme, as we saw in the last section, the amount of minimal pairs would be abundant.

A song that uses fairly elementary structure and grammar, and utilizes substitutions or simple transformations in the verses, would be another possibility. "Where Have All The Flowers Gone?" by Pete Seeger, is an example:

Where have all the flowers gone?
Long time ago,
Where have all the flowers gone?
2. (young girls)
3. (husbands)
4. (soldiers)
Young girls have picked them, everyone,
2. (Gone to husbands)
3. (Gone for soldiers)
4. (Gone to graveyards)
When will they ever learn?
When will they ever learn?

This song has six verses, each verse being identical to the preceding one except for simple substitutions of a few words. Therefore, a song of this type, one which basically repeats itself would be a likely candidate for an aural exercise.

After the class listens to a song like "Because" or "Flowers" the teacher could either have an oral discussion of what the lyrics were and what the message was, or the students could be given a set of written questions to test if they were able to discern

what the lyrics were and what they meant. Depending upon the capabilities of the class, the teacher might decide to go over selected vocabulary before listening to the song so the students will have a better understanding when they hear it.

Another variation of an aural comprehension exercise would be having the students take dictation while they listen to a song. This could be used by the teacher to test knowledge of vocabulary, word discrimination/minimal pairs, spelling, etc. Again, the availability of songs that would be available for this kind of exercise would be limited, but I think it could be productive if handled correctly.

For the venturesome teacher with a penchant for making music there are a variety of songs that lend themselves well to class singing. I would suggest using the better known American folksongs and "camp songs" for a sing-along, with an emphasis on those songs that repeat the verses cumulatively, such as "When I First Came To This Land":

When I first came to this land,
I was not a wealthy man,
So I built myself a shack,
I did what I could,
And I called my shack
Break my back,
But the land was green and good,
I did what I could.

The second time through, substitute "bought myself a cow" for "built myself a shack", then add "and I called my cow, no milk now" before "and I called my shack, break my back". The third time, substitute "got myself a wife" in line three, and add "called my wife, run for your life", then "called my cow...", "called my shack.. etc. With the verses accumulating each time the students will need to remember each one, in its correct order. The use of the minimal pair/rhyming words will facilitate retention. After three or four verses supplied by the teacher, the students can be encouraged to supply additional verses of their own, while trying to get them to rhyme. I think the merit of an exercise like this is obvious: it encourages class participation in a non-competitive format while strengthening various language skills.

Also, songs that are sung "in the round" are a good way to "loosen up" a class. I used this technique while student teaching in Mexico and found it to be very effective in setting a light

mood and encouraging participation. "Row, row, row, your boat" is a good starter and by splitting the class into two or three sections the students can compete with the other sections, making it more lively.

A song does not have to repeat itself or be "gimmicky" or be sung "in the round" however; any song, especially one which is previously familiar to the students, could be used. The teacher (or student, for that matter) could either write the lyrics on the blackboard or hand them out; then sing it through once or twice (if a guitar, piano, or other instrument is available, even better) then sing the song through, line by line, with the students; finally everyone sings the song through completely. The variations on how to approach and use songs for class singing would be left up to the teacher's discretion (while also taking into account the nature of the class).

Something that can be done on an individual basis, depending solely upon the interest or motivation of the student, would be to have a student tape record certain songs that he likes and then tape his own singing voice (with or without accompaniment) afterwards for comparison. Although stress and intonation might be different between spoken and sung lyrics, I think this could be a constructive exercise for improving aural/oral skills.

ADDENDUM

The following section presents examples, plus gives viable alternatives, of representative songs which correspond to the preceding sections of the guide. On the next page is a list of these songs, by category, and ^{which} ~~also~~ shows what specific target or subject area they can be used to teach. Some of the songs have additional categories listed after them: in these cases, I feel that the song is diverse enough in content to be effectively used for more than one subject area. Realistically, practically any song can be used to highlight any or all of the first three sections of the guide: namely, grammar/structure, conversation, and vocabulary. However, I have decided to include only those subject areas which I feel are outstandingly represented by the listed songs.

In addition to listing alternative subject areas for many of the songs, I have also included alternate songs at the bottom of most of the individual pages of the song section, which can be used instead.

As I explained at the beginning of this paper, this project should be taken as a guide, and thereby open to modification, rather than as an end product in and of itself. I am more interested in showing how diverse and adaptable song lyrics are for teaching or reinforcing many aspects of the English language than I am in detailing how the procedure should be approached or what songs should be used.

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AMERICA

by Paul Simon

"Let us be lovers,
We'll marry our fortunes together.
I've got some real estate here in my bag."
So we bought a pack of cigarettes,
And Mrs. Wagner's pies,
And walked off
To look for America.
"Kathy," I said,
As we boarded a Greyhound in Pittsburgh.
"Michigan seems like a dream to me now.
It took me four days
To hitchhike from Saginaw,
I've come to look for America."

Laughing on the bus,
Playing games with the faces,
She said the man in the gabardine suit
Was a spy.
I said, "Be careful,
His bowtie is really a camera."
"Toss me a cigarette,
I think there's one in my raincoat."
"We smoked the last one
An hour ago."

So I looked at the scenery,
She read her magazine;
And the moon rose over an open field.
"Kathy, I'm lost," I said,
Though I knew she was sleeping.
"I'm empty and aching and
I don't know why."
Counting the cars
On the New Jersey Turnpike.
They've all come
To look for America,
All come to look for America,
All come to look for America.

alternatives

"The Boxer" by Paul Simon

"Homeward Bound" by Paul Simon

AN AMERICAN TUNE

by Paul Simon

Many's the time I've been mistaken
And many times confused
Yes, and often felt forsaken
And certainly misused
But I'm all right, I'm all right
I'm just weary to my bones
Still, you don't expect to be
Bright and bon vivant
So far away from home, so far away from home

And I don't know a soul who's not been battered
I don't have a friend who feels at ease
I don't know a dream that's not been shattered
Or driven to its knees
But it's all right, it's all right
We've lived so well so long
Still, when I think of the road
We're traveling on
I wonder what went wrong
I can't help it, I wonder what went wrong

And I dreamed I was dying
And I dreamed that my soul rose unexpectedly
And looking back down at me
Smiled reassuringly
And I dreamed I was flying
And high up above my eyes could clearly see
The Statue of Liberty
Sailing away to sea
And I dreamed I was flying

We come on the ship they call the Mayflower
We come on the ship that sailed the moon
We come in the age's most uncertain hour
And sing an American tune
But it's all right, it's all right
You can't be forever blessed
Still, tomorrow's going to be another working day
And I'm trying to get some rest

I'm trying to get some rest?

BECAUSE

by The Beatles

Ahhhh...

Because the world is round,
It turns me on,

Because the world is round,
Ahhhh...

Because the wind is high,
It blows my mind,

Because the wind is high,
Ahhhh...

Love is old, love is new,
Love is old, love is you.

Because the sky is blue
It makes me cry,

Because the sky is blue,
Ahhhh...

THE BIG BRIGHT GREEN PLEASURE MACHINE *

by Paul Simon

Do people have a tendency to dump on you?
Does your group have more cavities than theirs?
Do all the hippies seem to get the jump on you?
Do you sleep alone when others sleep in pairs?
Well there's no need to complain,
We'll eliminate your pain.
We can neutralize your brain.
You'll feel just fine
Now.

Buy a Big Bright Green Pleasure Machine!

Do figures of authority just shoot you down?
Is life within the business world a drag?
Did your boss just mention that you'd better shop around.
To find yourself a more productive bag?
Are you worried and distressed?
Can't seem to get no rest?
Put our product to the test.
You'll feel just fine
Now.

Buy a Big Bright Green Pleasure Machine!

You better hurry up and order one.
Our limited supply is very nearly gone.
Do you nervously await the blows of cruel fate?
Do your checks bounce higher than a rubber ball?
Are you worried 'cause your girlfriend's just a little late?
Are you looking for a way to chuck it all?
We can end your daily strife
At a reasonable price.
You've seen it advertised in Life.
You'll feel just fine
Now.

Buy a Big Bright Green Pleasure Machine!

*note: This song is loaded with cultural and colloquial information,
in addition to idioms, two-word verbs, cliches, slang, etc.

alternatives (for colloquialisms)

"Feelin' Groovy" by Paul Simon

"Good Vibrations" by the Beach Boys

"Uptight" by Stevie Wonder

"Paranoia Blues" by Paul Simon

"Fakin' It" by Paul Simon

BOTH SIDES, NOW

by Joni Mitchell

Bows and flows of angel hair
And ice cream castles in the air
And feather canyons everywhere
I've looked at clouds that way

But now they only block the sun
They rain and snow on everyone
So many things I would have done
But clouds got in my way

I've looked at clouds from both sides now
From up and down, and still somehow
It's cloud illusions I recall
I really don't know clouds at all

Moons and Junes and Ferris wheels
The dizzy dancing way you feel
As ev'ry fairy tale comes real
I've looked at love that way

But now it's just another show
You leave 'em laughing when you go
And if you care, don't let them know
Don't give yourself away

I've looked at love from both sides now
From give and take, and still somehow
It's love's illusions I recall
I really don't know love at all

Tears and fears and feeling proud
To say "I love you" right out loud
Dreams and schemes and circus crowds
I've looked at life that way

But now old friends are acting strange
They shake their heads, they say I've changed
Well something's lost, but something's gained
In living ev'ry day

I've looked at life from both sides now
From win and lose and still somehow
It's life's illusions I recall
I really don't know life at all

I've looked at life from both sides now
From up and down, and still somehow
It's life's illusions I recall
I really don't know life at all

CLOSE THE DOOR LIGHTLY

by Eric Andersen

Turn around, don't whisper out my name,
For like a breeze it would stir a dying flame,
I'll miss someone if it pleases you to know,
But close the door lightly when you go.

Who was the one that stole my mind?
Who was the one that robbed my time?
Who was the one that made me feel unkind? (chorus)
So fare thee well sweet love of mine.

Take your tears to someone else's eyes,
They're made of glass and they cut like wounding lies,
Memories are drifting like the snow,
So close the door lightly when you go.

--chorus--

Don't look back to where you once have been,
Look straight ahead when you're walking thru' the rain.
And find a light if the path gets dark and cold,
But close the door lightly when you go.

--chorus--

Turn around, don't whisper out my name,
For like a breeze, it would stir a dying flame,
I miss someone, if it eases you to know
And close the door lightly when you go.

--chorus--

alternatives (similaries)

"Over My Head" by Fleetwood Mac

"Bridge Over Troubled Water" by Paul Simon

"Meet Me In The Morning" by Bob Dylan

"How Can I Tell You" by Cat Stevens

DON'T THINK TWICE, IT'S ALL RIGHT

by Bob Dylan

It ain't no use to sit and wonder why, Babe,
It don't matter anyhow,
And it ain't no use to sit and wonder why, Babe,
If you don't know by now.
When the rooster crows at the break of dawn
Look out your window and I'll be gone
You're the reason I'm trav'lin' on
Don't think twice, it's all right.

It ain't no use in turnin' on your light, Babe,
That light I never knowed
An' it ain't no use in turnin' on your light, Babe,
I'm on the dark side of the road.
Still I wish there was somethin' you would do or say
To try and make me change my mind and stay.
We never did too much talkin' anyway
So don't think twice, it's all right.

I'm walkin' down that long lonesome road, Babe,
Where I'm bound I can't tell
But goodbye's too good a word, Gal,
So I'll just say fare thee well,
I ain't sayin' you treated me unkind
You could have done better but I don't mind.
You just kinda wasted my precious time.
But don't think twice, it's all right.

It ain't no use in callin' out my name, Gal
Like you never did before
It ain't no use in callin' out my name, Gal,
I can't hear you anymore
I'm a thinkin' and a wond'rin' all the way down the road
I once loved a woman, a child I'm told
I give her my heart but she wanted my soul.
But don't think twice, it's all right.

alternatives

"You Ain't Goin' Nowhere" by Bob Dylan

"Outlaw Blues" by Bob Dylan

EAST VIRGINIA

traditional

performed by Joan Baez

I was born in East Virginia,
North Car'lina I did go,
There I courted a pretty young woman,
And her age I did not know.

Her hair was of some brightsome colour,
Her cheeks were of a rosy red,
On her breast she wore white lilies,
Many a tear for her I've shed.

In my heart you are my darlin'
At my door you're welcome in,
At my gate, I'll always meet you,
If your love I could only win.

When I'm asleep I'm dreaming of you,
When I'm awake I see no rest,
Moments seem to me like hours,
With achin' pains all acrost my breast.

I'd rather be in some dark holler,
Where the sun refuse to shine,
Than to see you another man's darlin',
And to know you'll never be mine.

When I am dead and in my coffin,
With my pale face towards the sun,
You can come and see me darlin',
See the deed that you have done.

alternatives

"Tom Dooley"(traditional) performed by the Kingston Trio

"Pretty Polly" (trad.)

"Old Blue" (trad.) performed by Cisco Houston

"Pretty Saro"(trad.) performed by the Kingston Trio

"Long Black Veil" (trad.) performed by The Band

FATHER AND SON

by Cat Stevens

Father: It's not time to make a change
Just relax take it easy,
You're still young that's your fault
There's so much you have to know,
Find a girl, settle down,
If you want you can marry,
Look at me
I am old but I'm happy,
I was once like you are now
And I know that it's not easy
To be calm when you've found
Something going on,
But take your time think a lot,
Think of everything you've got
For you will still be here tomorrow
But your dreams may not.

Son: How can I try to explain?
When I do he turns away again,
It's always been the same,
Same old story,
From the moment I could talk
I was ordered to listen
Now there's a way and I know
That I have to go away,
I know I have to go.

Father: It's not time to make a change
Just sit down take it slowly,
You're still young that's your fault
There's so much you have to go through,
Find a girl settle down,
If you want you can marry,
Look at me
I am old but I'm happy.

Son: All the times that I've cried
Keepin' all the things I knew inside
It's hard but it's harder to ignore it.
If they were right I'd agree
But it's them they know not me,
Now there's a way and I know
That I have to go away,
I know I have to go.

GIRL FROM THE NORTH COUNTRY
by Bob Dylan

If you're travellin' to the north country fair,
Where the winds hit heavy on the borderline,
Remember me to one who lives there,
For she once was a true love of mine.

See for me that her hair's hangin' down,
It curls and falls all down her dress,
See for me that her hair's hangin' down,
That's the way I remember her best.

If you go when the snowflakes fall,
When the rivers freeze and summer ends,
Please see for me if she's wearing a coat so warm,
To keep her from the howling winds.

If you're travellin' in the north country fair,
Where the winds hit heavy on the borderline,
Please say hello to one who lives there,
For she was once a true love of mine.

repeat first verse

alternatives (conditional--present real/future)

"If" by Bread

"If I Laugh" by Cat Stevens

"This Wheel's On Fire" by Bob Dylan and Rick Danko

"Moonshadow" by Cat Stevens

I AM A ROCK

by Paul Simon

A winter's day
In a deep and dark December;
I am alone,
Gazing from my window to the streets below
On a freshly fallen silent shroud of snow.
I am a rock,
I am an island.

I've built walls,
A fortress deep and mighty,
That none may penetrate.
I have no need of friendship;
friendship causes pain.
It's laughter and it's loving I disdain.
I Am A Rock,
I am an island.

Don't talk of love,
But I've heard the words before;
It's sleeping in my memory.
I won't disturb the slumber of feelings
that have died.
If I never loved I never would have cried.
I Am A Rock,
I am an island.

I have my books
And my poetry to protect me;
I am shielded in my armor,
Hiding in my room, safe within my womb.
I touch no one and no one touches me.
I Am A Rock,
I am an island.

And a rock feels no pain;
And an island never cries.

alternatives (metaphors)

"Julia" by Lennon/McCartney

"Witchy Woman" by the Eagles

"Sitting On Top Of The World" by Doc Watson

"Old Friends" by Paul Simon

"Expressway To Your Heart" by the Soul Survivors

"Heartbreak Hotel" by Elvis Presley

IF EVER I WOULD LEAVE YOU

from the musical "Camelot"

If ever I would leave you
It wouldn't be in Summer
Seeing you in Summer I never would go,
Your hair streaked with sunlight,
Your lips red as flame,
Your face with a lustre
That puts gold to shame.

But if I'd ever leave you
How could it be in Autumn,
How I'd leave in Autumn I never would know,
I've seen how you sparkle
When Fall nips the air,
I know you in Autumn
And I must be there.

And could I leave you running merrily through the snow,
Or on a wintry evening when you catch the fire's glow?

If ever I would leave you
How could it be in Springtime,
Knowing how in Spring
I'm bewitched by you so,
Oh no not in Springtime,
Summer, Winter, or Fall,
No never could I leave you
At all.

--repeat last verse--

alternatives (present unreal conditional)

"If I Had A Hammer" by Pete Seeger

"If You Could Read My Mind" by Gordon Lightfoot

"El Condor Pasa" by Paul Simon

"This Wheel's On Fire" by Bob Dylan

I GOT PLENTY O' NUTTIN'

From "Porgy and Bess"
by George Gershwin

Oh, I got plenty o' nuttin'
An' nuttin's plenty for me
I got no car, got no mule, got no misery.
De folks wid plenty o' plenty
Got a lock on dey door,
'Fraid somebody's a-goin' to rob'em
While dey's out a-makin' more
What for?
I got no lock on de door (dat's no way to be)
Dey can steal de rug from de floor
Dat's okay wid me,
'Cause de things dat I prize
Like de stars in de skies
All are free.

Oh, I got plenty o' nuttin'
An' nuttin's plenty for me
I got my gal, got my song, (chorus)
Got Hebben de whole day long!
No use complainin'!
Got my gal, got my Lawd, got my song

Oh, I got plenty o' nuttin'
An' nuttin's plenty for me
I got de sun, got de moon,
Got de deep blue sea,
De folks wid plenty o' plenty
Got to pray all de day.
Seems wid plenty you sure got to worry
How to keep de debble away, away.
I ain't a-frettin' 'bout hell
Till de time arrive
Never worry long as I'm well,
Never one to strive to be good, to be bad,
What de hell, I is glad I's alive.

--repeat chorus--

alternatives

"Bess, You Is My Woman Now" from "Porgy and Bess"

"Don't You Hurry, Worry Me" from "Windjammer"

I THINK I UNDERSTAND

by Joni Mitchell

Daylight falls upon the path, the forest falls behind
Today I am not prey to dark uncertainty
The shadow trembles in its wrath,
I've robbed its blackness blind
And tasted sunlight as my fear came clear to me

I think I understand
Fear is like a wilderland (chorus)
Stepping stones or sinking sand

Now the way leads to the hills, above the steeple's chime
Below me sleepy rooftops round the harbor
It's there I'll take my thirsty fill of friendship over wine
Forgetting fear but never disregarding her

--chorus--

Sometimes voices in the night will call me back again
Back along the pathway of a troubled mind
When forests rise to block the light that keeps a traveler sane
I'll challenge them with flashes from a brighter time

--chorus--

alternatives (metaphors and similes)

- "Sad And Deep As You" by Dave Mason
- "Kathy's Song" by Paul Simon
- "Sad Lisa" by Cat Stevens
- "Old Friends" by Paul Simon

I WISH IT WOULD RAIN by The Temptations

Hmmmm-----

Sunshine, blue skies, please go away,
My girl has found another and gone away,
With her went my future,
My life is filled with gloom,
So day after day I stay locked up in my room,
I know it might sound strange

But I wish it would rain,
Oh how I wish it would rain.

Ooh, so badly I want to go outside,
But everyone knows that a man ain't supposed to cry,
Listen---I got to cry 'cause cryin'---ooh
Kills the pain, oh yeah,
Even this hurt I feel inside,
Words could never explain

I just wish it would rain,
Oh baby, let it rain.

The ending of my tears they say,
Pressed against the window pane,
My eyes search the skies desperately for rain
'Cause raindrops will hide my teardrops,
And no one will ever know that I'm cryin',
Cryin' when I go outside,
To the world outside my tears
I refuse to explain

So I wish it would rain
Oh yeah I wish, I wish it would rain.

alternatives (wish sentences)

"I Wish, I Wish" by Cat Stevens

"Richard Cory" by Paul Simon

LOVE STORY

by Randy Newman

alternatives

I like your brother
And I like your mother
I like you
And you like me too
We'll get a preacher
I'll buy a ring
We'll hire a band
With an accordion
And a violin
And a tenor who can sing.

"Old Friends" by Paul Simon

"Talking Old Soldiers" by Elton
John

You and me
You and me, baby
You and me
You and me
You and me, baby
You and me (chorus)
You and me
You and me, baby
You and me
You and me
You and me

We'll have a kid
Or maybe we'll rent one
He's got to be straight
'Cause we don't want no bent one
He'll drink his baby brew
From a big brass cup
Someday he may be president
If things loosen up

--repeat chorus--

I'll take the train
Into the city
Every mornin'
You may be plain
But I thik you're pretty
In the mornin'

Some nights we'll go out dancin'
If I am not too tired
And some nights we'll sit romancin'
Watchin' the late show by the fire

When our kids are grown
With kids of their own
They'll send us away
To a little home in Florida
We'll play checkers all day
'Till we pass away.

MAMA TRIED

by Merle Haggard

First thing I remember knowin'
Was a lonesome whistle blowin'
And a youngun's dreams of growin' up to ride,
On a freight train leavin' town
Not knowin' where I'm bound
No one changed my mind but mama tried.

One and only railroad child
From a family meek and mild
Mama seemed to know what lay in store,
'Spite of all my Sunday learnin'
For the bad I kept on turnin'
And mama couldn't hold me anymore.

And I turned twenty-one in prison doing life without parole,
No one could steer me right but mama tried, mama tried,
Mama tried to raise me better but her pleadin' I denied,
That leaves only me to blame 'cause mama tried.

Dear old daddy, rest his soul.
Left my mom a heavy load.
She tried so very hard to fill his shoes,
Workin' hours without rest
Wanted me to have the best
She tried to raise me right but I refused.

--repeat chorus--

NOW THAT THE BUFFALO'S GONE

by Buffy Ste. Marie

Can you remember the times
That you have held your head high
And told all your friends of your Indian claim?
Proud good lady and proud good man,
Your great-great-grandfather from Indian blood sprang
And you feel in your heart for these ones.

Oh it's written in books and in songs
That we've been mistreated and wronged
Well over and over I hear the same words
From you good lady and you good man
Well listen to me if you care where we stand
And you feel you're a part of these ones.

When a war between nations is lost
The loser, we know, pays the cost
But even when Germany fell to your hands
Consider dear lady, consider dear man,
You left them their pride and you left them their land
And what have you done to these ones?

Has a change come about Uncle Sam
Or are you still taking our land?
The treaty forever George Washington signed
He did dear lady, he did dear man,
And the treaty's being broken
And what will you do for these ones?

Oh it's all in the past you can say
But it's still going on here today
The Government now wants the Iroquois land
That of the Canada and the Cheyenne
It's here and it's now you must help us, dear man,
Now that the buffalo's gone.

alternatives

"My Country Tis of Thy People Are Dying" by Buffy Ste. Marie

"Indian Sunset" by Elton John

OVER MY HEAD

by Fleetwood Mac

You can take me to paradise,
And then again you can be cold as ice
I'm over my head,
But it sure feels nice.

You can take me anytime you like,
I'll be around if you think you might love me baby,
And hold me tight.

Your mood is like a circus wheel,
You're changing all the time,
Sometimes I can't help but feel,
That I'm wasting all of my time.

Think I'm looking on the dark side,
But everyday you hurry my pride,
I'm over my head,
But it sure feels nice,
I'm over my head,
But it sure feels nice.

SITTIN' ON TOP OF THE WORLD

by Doc Watson

Was in the Spring one sunny day
My sweetheart left me, Lord she went away

And now she's gone and I don't worry (chorus)
And Lord I'm sittin' on top of the world.

She called me up from down in El Paso
She said "Come back daddy, ooh I need you so."

---repeat chorus---

If you don't like my peaches don't ya shake my tree,
Get outa my orchard, let my peaches be

--repeat chorus--

And don't ya come here runnin', holdin' out your hand,
I'm gonna get me a woman like you got your man

--repeat chorus

--repeat first verse and chorus--

alternatives (Idioms)

"Take It Easy" by The Eagles

"What's Goin' On?" by Marvin Gaye

"Under My Thumb" by The Rolling Stones

PASTIME PARADISE

by Stevie Wonder

They've been spending most their lives
Living in a pastime paradise
They've been spending most their lives
Living in a pastime paradise
They've been wasting most their time
Glorifying days long gone behind.
They've been wasting most their days
In remembrance of ignorance oldest praise
Tell me who of them will come to be
How many of them are you and me
Dissipation
Race Relations
Consolation
Segregation
Dispensation
Isolation
Exploitation
Mutilation
Mutations
Miscreation
Conformation....to the evils of the world.

They've been spending most their lives
Living in a future paradise
They've been spending most their lives
Living in a future paradise
They've been looking in their minds
For the day that sorrows gone from time
They keep telling of the day
When the savior of love will come to stay
Tell me who of them will come to stay
Tell me who of them will come to be
How many of them are you and me
Proclamation
of Race Relations
Consolation
Integration
Verification
of Revelations
Acclamation
World Salvation
Vibrations
Stimulation
Conformation....to the peace of the world.

They've been spending most their lives
Living in a pastime paradise
They've been spending most their lives
Living in a pastime paradise
They've been spending most their lives
Living in a future paradise
They've been spending most their lives
Living in a future paradise
We've been spending too much of our lives
Living in a pastime paradise.

RICHARD CORY

by Paul Simon

They say that Richard Cory owns one half of this whole town,
With political connections to spread his wealth around.
Born into society, a banker's only child,
He had everything a man could want: power, grace and style.

But I work in his factory
And I curse the life I'm living
And I curse my poverty
And I wish that I could be, (chorus)
Oh, I wish that I could be,
Oh, I wish that I could be
Richard Cory.

The papers print his picture almost everywhere he goes:
Richard Cory at the opera, Richard Cory at a show.
And the rumor of his parties and the orgies on his yacht!
Oh, he surely must be happy with everything he's got.

--repeat chorus--

He freely gave to charity, he had the common touch,
And they were grateful for his patronage and thanked him very much,
So my mind was filled with wonder when the evening headlines read:
"Richard Cory went home last night and put a bullet through his head."

--repeat chorus--

alternatives

"Deportee" by Woody Guthrie

"Sixteen Tons" by Tennessee Ernie Ford

"A Most Peculiar Man" by Paul Simon

RUBYLOVE

by Cat Stevens

Who'll be my love?
You'll be my love.
You'll be my sky above.
who'll be my light?
You'll be my light,
You'll be my day and night.

Ruby, my love
You'll be my love
You'll be my sky above
Ruby, my light
You'll be my light
You'll be my day and night
You'll be mine tonight.

alternatives (future)

"I Will" by Lennon/McCartney

"I'll Follow The Sun" by Lennon/McCartney

THE SOUND OF SILENCE

by Paul Simon

Hello darkness, my old friend,
I've come to talk with you again,
Because a vision softly creeping,
Left its seeds while I was sleeping,
And the vision that was planted in my brain
Still remains
Within The Sound Of Silence.

In restless dreams I walked alone
Narrow streets of cobblestone,
'Neath the halo of a street lamp,
I turned my collar to the cold and damp
When my eyes were stabbed by the flash of a neon light
That split the night
And touched The Sound Of Silence.

And in the naked light I saw
Ten thousand people, maybe more.
People talking without speaking,
People hearing without listening,
People writing songs that voices never share
And no one dare
Disturb The Sound Of Silence.

"Fools" said I, "You do not know
Silence like a cancer grows.
Hear my words that I might teach you,
Take my arms that I might reach you."
But my words like silent raindrops fell,
And echoed
In the wells of silence.

And the people bowed and prayed
To the neon god they made.
And the sign flashed out its warning,
In the words that it was forming.
And the signs said, "The words of the prophets
are written on the subway walls
And tenement halls."
And whisper'd in The Sounds of Silence.

TURN, TURN, TURN

by Pete Seeger

To every thing turn, turn, turn,
There's a season turn, turn, turn, (chorus)
And a time to every purpose under heaven,

A time to be born, a time to die,
A time to plant, a time to reap,
A time to kill, a time to heal,
A time to laugh, a time to weep.

--repeat chorus--

A time to build up, a time to break down,
A time to dance, a time to mourn,
A time to cast away stones,
A time to gather stones together.

--repeat chorus--

A time of love, a time of hate,
A time of war, a time of peace,
A time you may embrace,
A time to rephrase and contemplate.

--repeat chorus--

A time to gain, a time to lose,
A time to mend, a time to sew,
A time for love, a time for hate,
A time for peace, I swear it's not too late.

URGE FOR GOING

by Joni Mitchell
adapted by Tom Rush

And I woke up today and found
Frost perched on the town,
It hovered in a frozen sky
And gobbled summer down,
And when the sun turns traitor cold,
And shivering trees are standing in a naked row,
I get the urge for going, and I never seem to go,

And I get the urge for going
When the meadow grass is a turnin' brown, (chorus)
Summertime is a fallin' down,
Winter's closin' in.

And I had a girl in summertime
With summer colored skin,
And not another man in town
My darlin's heart could win,
And when the leaves fell tremblin' down,
And the bully winds did rub their faces in the snow,
She got the urge for going
And I had to let her go,

And she got the urge for going
--repeat chorus (in past)--

And the warriors of winter
Give a cold triumphant shout,
And all that stays is dyin'
And all that lives is gettin' out,
You see the geese in chevron flight
A laughin' and a racin' on before the snow,
They get the urge for going
And they've got the wings to go,

And they get the urge for going
--repeat chorus--

But I'll ply the fire with kindling
And pull the blankets to my chin,
And I'll lock the vagrant winter out
And bolt my wanderin' in,
I'd like to call back summertime
And have her stay
Just another month or so,
But she's got the urge for going
And I guess she'll have to go
And she gets the urge for going
When the meadow grass is a turnin' brown,
All her empires are fallin' down
Winter's closin' in.
--repeat chorus (omit last line)

alternatives (personification)

"At The Zoo" by Paul Simon

"I'm A Radio" by Joni Mitchell

"Violets of Dawn" by Eric
Andersen

"Southbound Train" by Graham
Nash

WHEN I FIRST CAME TO THIS LAND

traditional
adapted by Pete Seeger

When I first came to this land
I was not a wealthy man
So I built myself a shack

2. bought myself a cow
3. got myself a wife
4. got myself a duck
5. got myself a son

I did what I could
And I called my shack
break my back,

2. called my cow
no milk now
3. called my wife
run for your life
4. called my duck
outa luck
5. called my son
life's work done

But the land was green and good
And I did what I could.

(repeat verses cumulatively)

alternatives

"Hey Ho, Nobody Home" traditional

"Row, Row, Row Your Boat" traditional

WHEN WILL I BE LOVED? by F. and B. Bryant

recorded by The Everly Brothers

I've been made blue,
I've been lied to,
When will I be loved?
I've been turned down,
I've been pushed 'round,
When will I be loved?

When I meet a new girl
That I want for mine,
She always breaks my heart in two
It happens everytime.

I've been cheated,
Been mistreated,
When will I be loved?

When I meet a new girl
That I want for mine,
She always breaks my heart in two
It happens everytime.

I've been cheated,
Been mistreated,
When will I be loved?

alternatives (passive)

"I Shall Be Released" by Bob Dylan

WHERE HAVE ALL THE FLOWERS GONE?

by Pete Seeger

Where have all the flowers gone?
Long time passing.
Where have all the flowers gone?
Long time ago.
Where have all the flowers gone?
Young girls have picked them, everyone.
When will they ever learn?
When will they ever learn?

Where have all the young girls gone?
Long time passing.
Where have all the young girls gone?
Long time ago.
Where have all the young girls gone?
Gone to husbands, everyone.
When will they ever learn?
When will they ever learn?

Where have all the husbands gone?
Long time passing.
Where have all the husbands gone?
Long time ago.
Where have all the husbands gone?
Gone for soldiers, everyone.
When will they ever learn?
When will they ever learn?

Where have all the soldiers gone?
Long time passing.
Where have all the soldiers gone?
Long time ago.
Where have all the soldiers gone?
Gone to graveyards, everyone.
When will they ever learn?
When will they ever learn?

Where have all the graveyards gone?
Long time passing.
Where have all the graveyards gone?
Long time ago.
Where have all the graveyards gone?
Gone to flowers, every one.
When will they ever learn?
When will they ever learn?

repeat first verse

alternatives (present perfect continuous)

"Bitterblue" by Cat Stevens

"I've Been Waiting" by Neil Young

