“Gaining the World and Losing Their Soul”: Exploring Representations of Buddhism and Hinduism in the Music of the Beatles and George Harrison.

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Introduction

The aesthetics and meanings of popular culture, specifically popular music, have conventionally been neglected in academic scholarship (Frith 1991, 103). Seen to fall between esoteric "high culture" and idealistic "adolescent deviance", popular music has been regarded as a 'no man's land' of sorts, capturing the sentiments of the masses it is seen to represent, but lacking the polished, aesthetic qualities to ascend the cultural hierarchy (Walser 2009, 17). Popular music can be defined as mainstream, often commercially successful songs, reaching global populations through platforms, such as radio, rendering 'pop' music a familiar, constantly evolving, and accessible cultural format. However, in popular music's capacity to appeal to individual listeners directly and articulate commonplace occurrences and emotions, including love and loss, its significance is striking, with its study beginning to feature within scholarship, albeit only recently (Frith 2001, 96). Indeed, popular music can act as a mirror to society, reflecting back thoughts and feelings, and as an opportunity to encounter, explore, and entertain new and existing ideas. These ideas can extend into the realm of culture, including religion, enabling listeners to discover new ways of thinking and believing. Therefore, popular music's broadening of horizons accentuates its importance and insight as an object of study, especially within the discipline of International Relations. Popular music's contribution to intercultural dialogue and exchange clarifies how audience interpretations of other cultures are moulded by the continually moving medium of music (Middleton 1990, 7).

One important popular musical act showcasing the role of popular music in shaping how people perceive the world is the Beatles. Emerging into the public eye in the early 1960s, John, Paul, George and Ringo swiftly came to be labelled innovative "trailblazers of change", even outside the musical field (Collins 2020, 2). Until their break-up in 1970, the band arguably provided the score for the pop explosion of the 1960s (Garofalo 1992, 2). Their works embody realism and escapism, opening our eyes to the hidden lives of "lonely people" in 'Eleanor Rigby' (1966), and taking us to a mystical land of "tangerine trees and marmalade skies" in 'Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds' (1967). The Beatles', and later Harrison's, bold, eclectic musical compositions thereby seized the "popular imagination" and hearts of their predominantly young, Western listeners, sonically transporting them to vibrant, at times hallucinogenic, worlds (Cox 2020, 269). The bond forged between the Beatles and young fans is especially important, leading the group to become associated with the counterculture movement. In creating songs about revolution and psychedelic adventure, the Beatles' ties to the counterculture were consolidated, resulting in the musicians becoming "representatives" of

an increasingly unified youth culture in the late 1960s that aligned itself with the counterculture's ideals of peace and togetherness (Lebovic 2017, 48). The band's affiliation with this movement enabled them to become a mouthpiece for countercultural, fervent anti-establishment sentiment, substantiating the claim that "music inspired and carried the best insights of the counterculture", adding a key cultural dimension to the movement's efforts (Roszak 1995, xxxiv).

However, it is plausibly the Beatles', and notably George Harrison's, engagement with traditional Asian religions, expressly Buddhism and Hinduism, from the mid-1960s that constitutes one of the musicians' most remarkable exploits (Leng 2006, 58-9). Non-Christian faiths were mostly unknown in the West at the time and were often superficially dismissed as "romantic" and "mystical" by Westerners, attempting to delineate tangible difference from familiar Judaeo-Christianity (Flood 1996, 249). Yet, in appearing to offer believers freedom and autonomy, Buddhism and Hinduism were regarded as providing answers to larger, metaphysical questions Western faiths had failed to answer adequately. With capitalism, materiality, and warfare, notably in Vietnam, rife in the West, these religions encapsulated adaptability and enlightenment for counterculture adherents seeking spiritual nourishment outside of rigid paradigms of established, Western religions (Oliver 2014, 32). Such philosophical matters equally determined song writing approaches for the Beatles and Harrison, as a Beatle and solo artist (Collins 2020, 85), with two-thirds of the 1968 'White Album' composed during a pilgrimage in India (Hamelman 2020, 285). Their musical creations, some of which will be evaluated in this thesis, offer multifaceted depictions of spiritual concepts, mirroring prominent contextual determinants and personal spiritual introspection among the musicians.

Therefore, to comprehend how representations of religious concepts take shape in the works of these musicians, and, more broadly, what the ramifications of such portrayals might be, this thesis' central research question will be: how did the music of the Beatles and George Harrison act as a channel for Hindu and Buddhist values? This research question will allow for the music of Harrison and the Beatles to remain the main object of focus and, fundamentally, how the works grappled with visionary religion (Whiteley 1992, 59). Furthermore, responding to this overarching question will not only contribute to relatively nascent scholarship regarding the relevance of popular music as a focus of research, but will also take a novel approach, fusing analysis of religion, cultural representation, and popular music. To formulate an answer to the research question, this thesis will be composed of three chapters. Firstly, it will

investigate the contextual forces at play during the pinnacle of Beatle fame that stoked an interest in Buddhism and Hinduism for the musicians, and what these faiths symbolised for them. Secondly, it will analyse four selected Beatles and Harrison-penned songs to assess how religious ideals are framed. As such, it will aim to assess how effective these representations are in communicating belief in the faiths, or if these portrayals are intended to fulfil alternative, spiritually unrelated, agendas. Thirdly, the thesis will employ Orientalism, a theory used to comprehend depictions of an 'Orient', seen as the West's opposite, as a framework to deconstruct the implications of conveying Asian religions in the selected songs. Hence, this thesis will contend that the songs analysed comprise a channel for Hindu and Buddhist beliefs, but nonetheless exhibit considerable influence from prevailing circumstantial factors, at times leading to spiritual values being decontextualised.

Methodology

Before proceeding to the three chapters mentioned, this section will furnish definitions of the religious concepts to be evaluated in the chosen Beatles and Harrison songs and will briefly outline the approach to comprehend their depiction.

The themes shared in Buddhist and Hindu doctrine can largely be divided into three categories to streamline analysis of how spiritual concepts are presented in the songs: social harmony, transformation of consciousness, and recognition of everyday life as illusory. These values, though not considered pillars of the religions, are critical to how the faiths are understood in the West. The first concept, social harmony, is complex to characterise because Buddhism, especially, emphasises "compassion", *karuna*, towards living things (Harvey 1990, 209). "Compassion" appears ambiguous, perhaps simply denoting innate respect for all living creatures, thus leaving room for individual interpretations of *karuna* to surface. Nonetheless, considering the empathy *karuna* designates, it is appropriate to construe the value as selfless love towards living creatures, human or otherwise, and unity within a shared experience of reality. This reading is applicable to how the counterculture, with its strong desire for world peace, grappled with these religions, as will be outlined in Chapter One (Oliver 2014, 41). Meanwhile, transformation of consciousness entails striving to foster proximity with God and achieving liberation, or *moksha.* Key to this value is *bhakti,* qualified as devotion, in which the individual "participates" in the deity, demonstrating how transformation of consciousness triggers personal identities dissolving into the Divine (Frazier 2014, 22). While traditional methods, like Transcendental Meditation, where sacred phrases, 'mantras', are spoken and

repeated, are believed to engender transformation of consciousness, the psychedelic experience, credited with expanding consciousness, was equally employed by the counterculture to this end, highlighting tangible discrepancies between traditional and contemporary receptions of spiritual belief (Echard in Cox 2020, 271-72). Finally, both religions employ *maya,* describing everyday material existence as illusory, and encourage abandonment of *avidya,* ignorance, to recognise the materialistic world as unfulfilling (Patton 2012, 181). Interpretations of these values as rejecting consumer culture and capitalism in the 1960s thereby seem in line with the concept's spiritual source. Assessing the depiction of these values thus enables a holistic exploration of how the musicians contended with these faiths, and if their interpretations diverge from traditional religious meanings.

The method evaluating these representations is discourse analysis. Its use in deciphering wide ranges of textual material, visual and written, allows the method to lend itself to analysis of sonic sources, namely songs (Rose 2016, 218). Utilising discourse analysis offers a multifaceted assessment of the musical works and how they channel religious belief, exploring formation of discourse, in this instance, portrayal of spiritual values, and how this influences the forging of ideas and knowledge, expressly regarding Asian faiths (Rose 2016, 251). The sources are YouTube videos from the official channels of the artists cited which allows for reliable provenance and pausing or replaying songs at will. Additionally, analysis of the videos is complemented by the publication *Complete Works,* listing the entirety of the Beatles' catalogue and lyrics until 1968. Combining sonic and visual sources ensures versatility and comprehensiveness throughout the process by accounting for the impact of both lyrics and compositional features, including melody and instrumentation. Additionally, Buddhist and Hindu holy texts are referenced to inform codes pertaining to religious concepts which are sought in the songs. Details concerning these codes, and the songs analysed, are provided in Chapter Two.

Despite discourse analysis' utility in interpreting the effects of representations within artistic sources (Rose 2016, 219), the method harbours limitations which curtail its efficacy in this thesis. As the method is predominantly employed to assess visual images, its application to sonic sources entailed a much lengthier analysis process to account for evaluation of meanings held in lyrics and melody. Furthermore, in paying extensive attention to social practices of discourse, cultural factors shaping its production and reception are at times overlooked (Rose 2016, 218). Although this thesis has sought to integrate such considerations, particularly through using Orientalism as a theoretical framework in Chapter Three, reflection

upon cultural differences among creator and audience could endow this method with greater reflexivity and precision regarding how discourse alters power and knowledge dynamics (Rose 2016, 251).

Chapter One:

"Turn off Your Mind, Relax and Float Downstream": Setting the Scene for Buddhism and Hinduism in 1960s Culture and Society.

As astutely alleged by musicologist Simon Frith, music provides access to a social world and narrative, demonstrating its ability to proffer distinct depictions of the world and individual places within it (Frith in Middleton 2001, 222). Comprehension of musical creations and their reflection of broader society is relevant considering the careers of the Beatles and George Harrison. During the 1960s, as the Beatles' career reached its zenith, the West, namely the USA and UK, the home of the musicians to date, was the archetype of modernity. Yet, the USA was unsettled by seemingly endless war with Vietnam (Lewis 2013, 3), and the Beatles' rise to stardom coincided with the decline of British conservativism (MacDonald 2005, 35), meaning the mid-20th Century was characterised by stasis regarding Protestant work ethic, capitalism, and traditional sexual mores (Osto 2016, 41). However, as the Beatles' prominence grew exponentially, this mirage of steady, bourgeois life foundered. In its place, emerged the counterculture, a daring movement striving for mobilisation against corporate, socially restrictive, Judaeo-Christian norms (Roszak 1995, xvi). Though separate forces, both the Beatles and the counterculture exhibited similar dissatisfaction towards the status quo, seeking to disrupt it in comparable ways. Both benefitted from a young base of devotees and embedded their contempt towards capitalism and material gain into the messages they propagated to wider society. Inherent to the works of the Beatles and the counterculture was fascination with Buddhism and Hinduism, believed to represent alternative, sincere, and enlightening alternative values to those revered within the West (Cohen 2021, 26). These faiths predicated social harmony, recognition of everyday existence as material and illusory, and transformation of consciousness to foster proximity with the Divine. Evaluating how the Beatles' music made sense of this clash in long-standing and countercultural societal values, this chapter's main question is: what did the historical context reveal about Buddhism and Hinduism's appeal to the Beatles and George Harrison? Focusing upon the relevance of the counterculture, the role of the Hindu spiritual guru, the Maharishi, and how Harrison grappled with Hinduism, this chapter will assess how the historical and cultural backdrop laid the foundations for the musicians' intrigue towards these religions. In doing so, it will argue the artists viewed the West as unfulfilling and this sense of disenchantment fuelled their interest in these faiths as clarification to the ongoing metaphysical and social crises of the time.

The Counterculture

Firstly, the role of the counterculture is fundamental in comprehending the appeal of Buddhism and Hinduism to the Beatles and Harrison given the movement's espousal of religious values to redefine and disseminate notions of social harmony and togetherness.

The counterculture, a term coined by academic Theodore Roszak, was considered an audacious movement in the 1960s and early 1970s, reacting to the repressive "technocracy", namely, the materialism and capitalism defining postwar Western society, resulting from accelerating industrialism (Roszak 1995, 21). Counterculture followers took part in practices regarded as socially taboo, such as protesting the Vietnam War, living in communes in the Haight-Ashbury district of San Francisco, and partaking in nonmarital sexual activity and (hallucinogenic) substance abuse. By participating in these activities, adherents actively sought to uproot a pervasive technocracy and the erroneous, myopic sense of prosperity and security they believed it had offered their parents' generation (Roszak 1995, 13). Moreover, counterculture conduct presented the opportunity to subvert the pre-eminence of conformity within society, moulded by Judaeo-Christianity and correlation of success with strictly material gains, enabling individuality and new modes of thinking, talking, and behaving to surface (Pichaske in Reck 1985, 90). Therefore, scholar Christopher Gair's viewpoint that the counterculture brought the "limits of national doctrines of 'freedom' to the surface" is telling, highlighting the restraining, indoctrinating character of the technocracy at the time (Gair 2007, 10).

In resorting to behavioural tactics considered unacceptable, the counterculture reshaped and propagated new, youth-approved notions of 'freedom' intertwined with self-expression. Author J Stillson Judah asserts the counterculture rejected "not only the political and social structure of the culture, but also the entire society of the establishment itself for its failure to live by its own ideals" (Stillson Judah 1974, 125-26). While he, like Gair, acknowledges the trailblazing qualities of the movement, he goes a step further, claiming the counterculture condemned society and its conceptions of freedom, still predicated upon a grandiose, antiquated 'American Dream', in which opportunities for fortune and self-realisation were achievable for all. For counterculture followers, these romantic 'ideals' upon which their country had been established were far-removed from the reality of continual warfare and omnipresent capitalism with which they were surrounded. Conformity to ensuring one's own success and defending one's own country was inevitable for the youth and thereby became a source of general rebellion (Duncan 2013, 156).

Against this backdrop of forced obedience to coercive societal norms, Buddhism and Hinduism, as non-mainstream religions, became a guiding force to the counterculture through their messages of social harmony. As argued in the Introduction, *karuna* was reappropriated by the counterculture to connote togetherness and social harmony. Instrumentalisation of these faiths allowed counterculture followers to come together and fulfil *karuna*, pursuing meaningful escape from the West's disappointing truths. Believers could seek and unite with the Divine, or as playfully advertised by publicity campaigns of the Hindu-inspired Hare Krishna organisation, "stay high forever", referencing the counterculture's frequent hallucinogenic drug use, particularly LSD (Burke Roachford Jr. 2018, 44). With two thirds of people joining Hare Krishna between 1967 and 1971 affiliating themselves with the counterculture, the allure of these faiths to movement followers is tangible.

As such, it is plausible this utopian youth vision of togetherness and egalitarianism, though manifested in resistance and upheaval, sparked the Beatles' curiosity for these religions and decision to weave spiritual reflections into their songs (O'Dell 2017). By fusing musical creation with Buddhist and Hindu dogma, the band could construct a world they desired to see that was irrefutably more meaningful and equal, thereby aligning themselves with the counterculture's ambitions and the faiths with which it became associated. Thus, as accurately noted by historian Marcus Collins, the Beatles, inspired by this movement and its related religions, provided the soundtrack for countercultural 'revolution' and contemporary spiritual discovery (Collins 2020, 86).

The Maharishi

Conversely, the role of the Maharishi Mahesh Yogi[1] is important, albeit partially, in fuelling the allure of Hinduism for the Beatles, especially Harrison, with the spiritual guru's influence over the group transcending mere authority and, instead, enabling a channel of religious instruction to materialise and become apparent in musical creations. The Maharishi was an Indian spiritual leader and founded the Transcendental Meditation movement, helping followers control the flow and nature of their thoughts (Oliver 2014, 57-8). The Beatles' learning of Hinduism originated in 1966, when Harrison was introduced by his wife, Pattie, to the Maharishi's teachings, and reached a peak in 1968, when the group undertook a highly public journey to India to meet the leader in his ashram residence (Oliver 2014, 63). While writers recognise the significance of this trip in highlighting the potential of a spiritual East to

[1] Henceforth referred to as the Maharishi.

teach a rational West, the close relationship fostered between the Maharishi and the Beatles proved fundamental in Hinduism becoming a personal source of clarity for the group (Begley in Goldberg 2010, 289). Upon Beatles' manager Brian Epstein's untimely death in 1967, a void was left in the Beatles' lives and careers for the spiritual figure to fill. As such, the Maharishi intervened, providing consolation to the group in the form of Hindu doctrine. He explained everyday experience was illusory, and that Epstein's passing meant little as he had simply gone to another stage and would be reincarnated (Bellman 1997, 126). Therefore, the Maharishi's comforting input rendered Hinduism synonymous with guidance and protection in the face of uncertainty for the Beatles, in turn strengthening the band's attachment to him and the appeal of the faith (Hamelman 2020, 284). Epstein's death and the contemporaneous closeness fostered with the Maharishi thereby marked a transitory phase for the band. Through his rational, commercial approach to managing the Beatles, Epstein seemed to personify the West, assimilating profit with success (Inglis 1996, 67). His passing marked an abandonment of the West for the Beatles, where they had been labelled agreeable, innocent "kids" writing pleasant, lucrative, radio-friendly songs (Hobsbawm in Heilbronner 2011, 87). Rather, their career arguably moved eastwards as it became characterised by reflection, innovation, and spiritual engagement, reaching its epitome with the widely praised 1967 album, *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band* (Kruppa 2020, 214). Hinduism's allure for the Beatles, as incarnated by the Maharishi, thus lay in its ability to provide personal and, subsequently, musical direction.

Nevertheless, the Maharishi, though a personal and spiritual confidant of the Beatles, can equally be viewed as promoting an artificial variant of Hinduism, thus compromising the appeal of the faith in providing genuine enlightenment and direction for the band and the religion's followers. Notably, the Maharishi claimed adherents to Hinduism need not give up material luxuries and advocated a version of the faith that eliminated veneration of multiple deities (Reck 1985, 110). As such, this belief system can be regarded as simplified and, conceivably, more compatible with Western, Judaeo-Christian traditions of monotheism. Though educating the Beatles on the illusory nature of life, the Maharishi seemed to proffer a version of Hinduism that was more congruous with modern, materialistic society. This justifies spiritual author Philip Goldberg's damning opinion of the Maharishi as "selling mantras", emphasising the capitalism-friendly spinoff of Hinduism the guru marketed (Goldberg 2010, 160). Consequently, band member Paul McCartney's later, regretful realisation the band had "made a mistake" and "thought there was more to [the Maharishi] than there was" is particularly poignant in disproving the spiritual leader's unconquerable power in converting

the group to Hinduism (McCartney in Reck 1985, 117). This sense of error and disillusion demonstrates that, while Hinduism, as epitomised by the Maharishi, had initially presented promise and a new, meaningful outlook for the group, it increasingly resembled the unsatisfying reality from which they had been trying to escape – commercial gain and capitalism. Only Harrison, affectionately termed the "metaphysical Beatle" for his unwavering interest in Hinduism, despite the Maharishi's inauthenticity, managed to keep the faith and followed the pull of Hinduism enough for it to feature in his compositions from 1967 onwards (Goldberg 2010, 152).

Harrison and Hinduism

The appeal of Hinduism for Harrison enabled him to break free from traditional Western musical formats, thus delineating how his quest for transformation of consciousness to unify with the Divine that Hinduism granted took shape through composition of musical works. In this respect, Harrison's learning of the sitar, an Indian variation on the lute, is pivotal in comprehending the intrigue the musician had for Hinduism. Harrison came across the sitar on the filmset for *Help!* with fellow Beatles in 1965, and the instrument proved transformative for the musician (Oliver 2014, 65). The sitar's drone-like qualities show a marked difference from the acoustic and electric guitars that had prevailed in Western, and even the Beatles' music. The sitar captured the essence of transformation: it required change mentally, as playing the instrument necessitated specific knowledge, which Harrison acquired from renowned Indian musician, Ravi Shankar, and called for spiritual renewal as the sitar formed part of a Hindu tradition whose sound patterns were believed to elevate the consciousness of those who played and listened to it (Tillery 2011, 56). Consequently, the reading of music biographer, Gary Tillery, that the sitar for Harrison, "was not meant merely for entertainment", seems apt, with "entertainment" denoting frivolity and superficiality (Tillery 2011, 56). For Harrison, the sitar, as a means of experimenting with different ways of making music, acted as a springboard to reflection upon more existential questions Hinduism seemed to answer, including how to become one with God. In Harrison's own words, delving into Hinduism and its related sonic traditions "unlocked this […] big door at the back of my consciousness", with the connotations of "unlocked" referring to the ways historical Western mindsets and means of musical composition had ultimately proved restrictive for the musician (Harrison in Bellman 1997, 119).

Likewise, the reverberations of the sitar's allure, and the Hindu faith with which it was linked, in broader society are indicative of the appeal of Asian belief systems at the time and

rendered Harrison a spiritual and musical role model for listeners, albeit mostly in the West. Although some scholars credit first use of the sitar in Western music to artists slightly preceding Harrison and the Beatles, including the Kinks and the Yardbirds (Bellman 1997, 125), the feature of this instrument in Harrison's compositions, namely, 'Norwegian Wood' and 'Love You To', is striking and pioneering in its introduction of alternative, musical compositional methods to Western audiences. Through its novelty, the inclusion of the sitar into Harrison's arrangements can be read as an encouragement to young listener bases to turn to Asian ideas, thereby cultivating the appeal of non-Western religions (Oliver 2014, 65). In this way, the sitar demonstrated that musical traditions, principally originating in the West, could be moulded, and modernised, by incorporation of international means of making music, thus rendering music a vehicle for incarnating spiritual values. The success of this technique, as exhibited in the Beatles' and, later, Harrison's music canon, presents Western audiences as receptive and welcoming of this compositional upheaval. Western musical standards, though having hitherto been undefeatable, were beginning to falter and demonstrate need of restyling. Their fusion with spirituality enabled consideration of how different patterns of reflection and belief represented by Hinduism and Buddhism, as portrayed through popular music, could transcend the realm of sound to affect the culture and philosophy of listeners and musicians alike. Therefore, the ground-breaking and bold presence of the sitar in Harrison's works, as accurately stated by composer Howard Goodall was instrumental in carving out a new musical "mainstream" (Goodall in Collins 2020, 3-4). Such a viewpoint emphasises how the instrument, and Harrison's use of it, provoked a rethinking of how belief systems, as mediated by music, function in the West.

Still, it remains apparent that Harrison, despite the divine awakening experimentation with the sitar offered, would have been influenced by the countercultural movement, occurring contemporaneously to the height of Beatles fame and weaving Asian belief systems into their ethos. With Timothy Leary, one of the counterculture's figureheads, calling for followers to experiment with hallucinogenic drugs and 'turn on, tune in, drop out', efforts to transform consciousness were rife within the movement, but inevitably associated with a psychedelic, and not strictly religious, revolution (Partridge 2017, 299). Observing how elements of spirituality were paraded by the counterculture captured Harrison's desire to become "God-conscious" and united with the Divine, thereby featuring in his choice of instruments and, manifestly, his lyrics (Harrison in Scorsese 2011). These lyrics, imbued with calls to abandon the material world and endeavour to find God, will constitute the focus of the next chapter.

Conclusion

In conclusion, though varying in their efficacy, there were multiple contextual factors contributing to, and emphasising, the appeal of Buddhism and Hinduism to the Beatles and Harrison. As demonstrated in this chapter, in the face of ideals moulded primarily by Judaeo-Christianity and capitalism, dissatisfaction and despondency towards the West was replete among the young, thus fuelling demands for freedom, equality and autonomy that had not been fulfilled (Oliver 2014, 5). The Beatles, as music pioneers, were well-placed to channel this frustration and desire for novelty into their works, enabling them to represent young, spiritually aware culture by the late 1960s. While repudiation of Western, technocratic standards manifested itself among youth in unruly behaviour, the collective sense of disenchantment nonetheless fuelled the appeal of Buddhism and Hinduism. These faiths appeared to offer their believers personal and social therapy founded upon social equality and freedom, thus providing a more profound way of life than that encompassed by a warring, capitalist West (Jacobson 1986, 3). Such philosophies greatly complemented the counterculture's aims, seeking to defy the pre-eminence of unrelenting bourgeois mores by exploring belief systems that posited alternative messages to remedy society's ills (Stillson Judah 1974, 116). Similarly, through incorporation of instruments like the sitar, Harrison was able to utilise music as a means of pursuing spiritual awakening. As rightly stated by writer Joshua Greene, Harrison invoked the attraction of Hinduism through "the most traditional of means", namely, creating music for mass audiences (Greene 2006, 240). Although the counterculture and turn to non-Western instruments effectively showcase the appeal of Buddhist and Hindu faiths for the musicians, the Maharishi also stoked Hinduism's allure, albeit deceitfully. The guru may have successfully exploited his proximity with the band during a difficult phase to open their minds to Hinduism as a form of personal and spiritual guidance, yet by presenting a version of the faith that seemed reconcilable and not rejecting of Western lifestyles, the aura of the religion as a deviation from the West became progressively erroneous. Consequently, it seems fitting to argue the Beatles were both a product of, and active agent in forming, the historical context that strengthened the enticement of Asian faiths. Most notably influenced by the counterculture, the musicians implemented the instrumental and spiritual tools at their disposal to channel and propagate disillusion towards the establishment within their songs. What meanings and values were contained in these works will constitute the object of study in the next chapter.

Chapter Two:

"Talking About the Space Between Us": Analysing Hindu and Buddhist Elements in the Music of the Beatles and George Harrison.

Having outlined the context in which the Beatles and Harrison created their musical works, the focus of this chapter will be on the songs themselves. As noted in the previous chapter, against a backdrop of pervasive capitalism and spiritual stagnation, a disaffected and alienated youth perceived the non-Western religions Hinduism and Buddhism as providing the clarity they lacked in their lives in the West (Roszak 1995, 35). Additionally, as delineated in the introductory section, three concepts broadly shared by Buddhism and Hinduism include adoption of social harmony, understood as *karuna,* transformation of consciousness to obtain unification with the Divine, referring to *bhakti* and *moksha,* and finally, recognition of everyday material existence as illusory, encompassing *maya* and *avidya.* Collectively, these communal Hindu and Buddhist values differ from accepted Western norms in the 1960s and 1970s, offering those disillusioned by these standards refreshing, more profound, alternatives. The Beatles, as a musical act claiming indomitable influence over the hearts, minds, and ears of their young listeners, were well-placed to expose Hindu and Buddhist beliefs to audiences, though mostly Western (Oliver 2014, 65). By blending messages of abandoning the material world and exclusively seeking love with mystical, memorable melodies, the Beatles and Harrison posited persuasive messages that encouraged their devoted listeners to rethink and reject values inherent to their everyday. Nevertheless, with spiritual and societal frustration rampant at the time, the motives behind exploring Hinduism and Buddhism through the music of these artists remain unclear. Namely, did these works harbour genuine reverence for these belief systems, or were they a means of acknowledging and expressing the dissatisfaction of the era, as illustrated by the counterculture and the pervasion of the psychedelic experience? Thus, this chapter's main question will be: what did the music of the Beatles and George Harrison reveal about its ability to channel Hindu and Buddhist values? Focusing upon the outlined religious values, this chapter will evaluate how these faiths took shape in the music of the Beatles and Harrison, and how credible this presentation is. It will argue the songs offer convincing demonstrations of these religions but fall short at times, implying they were partially geared at resonating with contextual factors at play at the time.

Methodology

As detailed in the introductory section, discourse analysis will be implemented to explore how Buddhist and Hindu values play out within the works of the Beatles and Harrison. Given the breadth of these artists' musical catalogue, the analysis sample will consist of four songs: 'All You Need is Love' (1967), 'My Sweet Lord' (1970), 'Within You Without You' (1967), and 'Tomorrow Never Knows' (1966). Though limited in number, these songs are indicative of the broader works the musicians issued, with two songs emerging from the renowned Lennon-McCartney authorship ('All You Need is Love' and 'Tomorrow Never Knows'), and two by Harrison, as a Beatle ('Within You Without You'), and solo artist ('My Sweet Lord'). The Lennon-McCartney compositions draw inspiration from Buddhism, and the Harrison works from Hinduism. The religious ideals against which the songs are evaluated derive from two seminal Hindu and Buddhist texts: the *Bhagavad Gita* and the *Tibetan Book of the Dead*[2] respectively. The *Bhagavad Gita,* as the first Hindu text to thematise and thoroughly explain *bhakti* (Pechilis in Frazier 2014, 107), is chosen for its emphasis on this notion of commitment to Krishna, which is apparent in Harrison's works (Patton 2012, 179-80). Though critiqued as a product of American, rather than Tibetan, spiritualism (Lopez in Davis 2018, 55), *TBD* is nonetheless pertinent because of its adoption by the counterculture. Specifically, the text inspired Timothy Leary, among other countercultural figures, to publish *The Psychedelic Experience,* a guidebook on navigating psychedelic drug 'trips' (Lopez 2011, 8-9). Together, both works act as contextually relevant frameworks for assessing how Buddhist and Hindu beliefs are conceived and transmitted in the selected songs.

While scholars have acknowledged other Beatles songs, like 'Rain' and 'Love You To', as exhibiting spiritual traits, the works comprising the sample contain elements relating closely to the Buddhist and Hindu values delineated above (Van der Lee 1998, 55). Similarly, though the songs chosen include qualities related to all three of the religious beliefs outlined, this chapter divides the sample songs into categories to signal the values they conceivably demonstrate the most and how. The analysis process assesses the songs against coding categories reflecting the three religious values. 'Love' and 'existence' are some words sought within the songs, along with the quantity of personal pronouns, such as 'we' and 'you', representing togetherness and proximity with the Divine. Furthermore, analysis extends to lyrics and melody, including use of instruments and tempo. The process thereby offers structural and linguistic assessment of how recurring themes and, in this instance, sonic,

[2] Henceforth referred to as *TBD.*

patterns influence the spiritual message the artists endeavour to posit within their songs (Rose 2016, 204). This threefold assessment of language, sound, and religious characterisation, as denoted by excerpts from holy texts, allows evaluation of what writer Gillian Rose calls "complexity and contradictions internal to discourses"; namely, how effectively and consistently messages are conveyed to audiences (Rose 2016, 212). Therefore, this analysis answers this chapter's research question by clarifying how well the songs channel the religious ideals that ostensibly inspired their creation.

Social Harmony

Firstly, social harmony features clearly within the Beatles' music, underlining influence from Buddhist doctrine, but the notion of love this value denotes is reappropriated by the band for their own ends, enabling them to mark a transition in their career, rather than exclusively convey religious belief. Within Buddhism, *karuna*, encompassing togetherness and love for living creatures, including humans, animals, ghosts, and hell beings is intrinsic (Lopez 2018, 67). This can be seen in the plea within *TBD* for all humans, upon death, to pray their rebirth may be "for the sake of" and "of extensive benefit to all living beings" (*TBD* 2005, 211). The connotations of "sake" and "benefit" emphasise inherent altruism in *karuna* and how loving kindness towards humans transcends priority of self (Swearer 1997, 88).

These ideals appear, on the surface, conspicuous in 'All You Need is Love'. The song was released at the height of the Summer of Love in 1967, where thousands of counterculture members gathered in Haight-Ashbury to live out communal fantasies powered by hallucinogenic drug use and free love (Cox 2020, 268). Therefore, as appropriately claimed by Beatles scholar, Kathryn Cox, against this background of blissful togetherness, the Beatles achieved this objective "through singing their simple, repeated message, 'all you need is love, love is all you need'", highlighting how the Beatles' musical creations reverberated among their audiences (Cox 2020, 276-77). This idea of simplicity is crucial to the song's success, as demonstrated by the rudimentary lyrics and their placement within the song. The verses and chorus follow specific patterns respectively, with 'nothing' repeated seven times, and 'all' 17 times. The lyrical proximity of 'love' and 'all' is telling, presenting 'love', repeated a colossal 38 times, as an 'answer' and notion hitherto absent from our lives.

Meanwhile, the song's circulation and composition accentuate *karuna* and enable it to resonate with listeners on an immense scale. 'All You Need is Love' premiered during the 1967 *Our World* television broadcast, reaching 150-400 million viewers globally (Scott 2008, 62).

In the studio, the Beatles were accompanied by an audience chanting the refrain as the song's tempo progressively increased. The audience reception and engagement transcended tacit spectatorship (Scott 2008, 66); their role in witnessing and participating in the song's theme meant they could become the "living beings" benefitting from the acts of togetherness the Beatles sought to nurture through their creation.

Notwithstanding the pervasion of 'love' within the song, it exhibits inconsistency with Buddhist thought regarding *karuna*, thus compromising ability to channel this value and implying its inclusion might indicate an alternative agenda for the band. Despite the togetherness cultivated by the song's refrain, the presence of linguistic devices denoting unity, like personal pronouns 'we' or 'us', is scant, mentioned only twice during the song. This absence renders the song's plea for social harmony artificial and superficial. In turn, the framing of 'love' under this guise of togetherness could expose an egotistical motive among the band, ensuring their song benefitted themselves over their listeners. This hypothesis seems legitimate when considering stylistic features bookending the song. As the piece opens, the French national anthem, *La Marseillaise,* plays for roughly ten seconds and is eventually replaced by multiple chants of 'love'. Though endowing the song with an orchestral, grandiose feel, using *La Marseillaise* and, subsequently, 'love', portrays the latter as an agenda to which audiences can pledge allegiance – an ideology to which counterculture followers, seeking direction amidst disillusionment with capitalist, Western life, would have subscribed. This is consolidated by the reference of 'She Loves You' (1964) one of the Beatles' earliest records, as 'All You Need is Love' fades to a close. The shouting of 'She Loves You' lyrics offers a distorting, distancing effect, insinuating the 1964 song's message is irrelevant and belongs to the past. The Beatles sung about love in these preliminary works, but the 'love' envisioned in their 1967 song evokes unity (Cox 2020, 276). This, thereby, displays distinct change from purely visceral, teenage infatuation that had been inherent to their first songs, allowing the Beatles to present themselves, and their works, as more mature and reflective upon external factors, socially and spiritually. Consequently, although musicologist Andrew Scott interprets Beatles past and present "colliding" in 'All You Need is Love', inferring incompatibility, it seems more apt that the group, and their conception of 'love', evolved, rather than mutated entirely (Scott 2008, 68-9). The inclusion of *La Marseillaise* and 'She Loves You' signals the start of a new chapter for the band, one markedly removed from their past that sought to weave more spiritual rhetoric into their future, albeit not conclusively (Scott 2008, 63-4). The band may have been inspired by Buddhist ideals of social harmony, *karuna,* to promote a more

fulfilling, satisfying philosophy of life in their songs, yet compositional features ultimately qualify the song as serving the Beatles' career, rather than wholly portraying Buddhist belief (Campbell 2006, 117).

Transformation of Consciousness

Conversely, transforming consciousness to become closer to the Divine is tangible within Harrison's works through depiction of Hinduism as equally legitimate, accessible, and providing of insight and salvation as traditional Western belief systems. Within the *Bhagavad Gita*, the Hindu deity Vishnu, incarnated by Krishna, epitomises wisdom, with redemption promised to those who seek to venerate Him: "think upon Me only, and fight. With mind and reason set on Me, without doubt thou shalt come to Me" (*Bhagavad Gita* 1926, 147). Here, the emphasis is placed on *bhakti,* rather than needlessly exhibiting "doubt" at trivial, material matters, as a means of transforming consciousness and uniting with the Divine (Oliver 2014, 59). Prioritising God above all else is key to merging worshipper and God, in turn attaining "supreme Peace" (*Bhagavad Gita* 1926, 92).

Transformation of consciousness is conspicuous within Harrison's solo piece, 'My Sweet Lord', demonstrating profound reverence for, and understanding of, Hindu belief. 'My Sweet Lord' was released in 1970, on *All Things Must Pass*, the solo album credited with launching Harrison as a powerful contemporary musician, independent of the Beatles (Greene 2006, 225). Lyrically, grammatical structures appear indicative of the desire to be close to God, with 'you', used 16 times to address God directly. The ubiquity of this pronoun, used in tandem with 'I', only appearing five times, evokes individual commitment to obtain wisdom to be with God. As such, the personal connotations of these grammatical devices encapsulate *bhakti*. In repeating 'I' and 'you', the song resembles a Hindu hymn, *bhajan,* in which the singer adopts a role resembling Radha, Krishna's consort (Menon 2002, 183). Similarly, these personal connotations enable Harrison to liken himself to Arjuna, the *Bhagavad Gita*'s pious, yet fearful warrior, who strives to become close to Krishna by fighting. Such associations between Harrison and revered Hindu figures lead to the musician's personal identity being dissolved through this expression of *bhakti.* As theology scholar Jessica Frazier claims, *bhakti* entails "realising that the deity is already one's true identity", showcasing the proximity with, and integration into, the Divine *bhakti* promises, which Harrison achieves through this song (Frazier 2014, 22).

Additionally, composition in ‘My Sweet Lord’ is paramount in channelling this Hindu value. Whereas Harrison’s other spiritually influenced works, like ‘Love You To’ and ‘Within You Without You’, include instruments believed to enhance religious experience, namely the sitar, ‘My Sweet Lord’ provides melodic modesty. The use of the acoustic guitar here is constant, arguably rendering his intention to “be” with God sincere and void of intervention or distraction. Similarly, the overlaying of Harrison’s leading vocals against choruses of ‘Hallelujah’ and ‘Hare Krishna’ provided by backing vocalists is striking set against the simple melody and triggers change in consciousness. As Harrison biographer, Gary Tillery, claims, Krishna is embodied in utterances of his name, or the *maha-mantra*, a holy phrase containing repetition of ‘Hare Krishna’, ‘Hare Hare’, and ‘Hare Rama’, designating the practice as central to expressions of *bhakti* (Tillery 2011, 58). Therefore, as the two sets of vocal performances prevail within the song, coupled with gradual escalation in tempo towards the electric guitar interlude at the 2:40 mark, the vocalisation of the *maha-mantra* becomes tangible. Transformation is elicited at the level of the song’s composition and among listeners by encouraging them to join the *maha-mantra*, thereby becoming united with God. Thus, the reading of author, Joshua Greene, that ‘My Sweet Lord’ is the “Western pop equivalent of a mantra” is appropriate, with “pop” denoting accessibility for large audiences (Greene 2006, 223). Although “mantra” appears a strictly spiritual term, its use in characterising the song underlines how Harrison’s work effectively channels Hindu values.

Furthermore, the presentation of Hinduism and transformation of consciousness in the song is predominantly done through mirroring with Christianity, a conventional Western religion at the time. In total, ‘Hallelujah’ and ‘Hare’, as Christian and Hindu utterances of worship respectively, appear an identical number of times (‘Hallelujah’: 16, ‘Hare’: 15). Thus, through simultaneous and comparable incorporation of these religions in the song, both faiths become characterised as legitimate. Although Christianity had hitherto supplied the general frame of reference for human life, Hinduism is depicted as countering this religious monopoly in providing another path to salvation (Ross 2008, 2). Transforming consciousness can thereby be attained by considering alternative, though lesser-known, faiths, as exhibited in the mutation of ‘Hallelujahs’ in the song’s refrain into ‘Hare Krishna’ and ‘Hare Rama’ (Reck 1985, 125). While similar presentation of Christian and Hindu forms of worship might seem counterproductive, rendering the identity of God ambiguous and, consequently, compromising the song’s ability to convey transformation of consciousness, the gradual transition from Christianity to Hinduism eliminates uncertainty. By using Christianity as a foundation, the song

espouses a perennialist standpoint, delineating both faiths as equally providing of a common source of truth for their followers, enabling them to unify with the Divine. However, whether this deliberate mirroring of Christianity and Hinduism was implemented to depict the latter in a way that would resonate with Western audiences will be the focus of the following chapter (Collins 2020, 91).

Everyday Material Existence as Illusory

Moreover, within the Beatles' musical creations, criticism of everyday existence can be detected, thus enabling their songs to channel religious thought, albeit through critiquing the pervasiveness of materiality and seeking resonance with counterculture ideology. Recognition of everyday material existence as illusory is visible within Hinduism, with Lord Krishna in the *Bhagavad Gita* proclaiming, "I am the abode of the Eternal, and of the indestructible nectar of immortality, of immemorial righteousness, and of unending bliss" (*Bhagavad Gita* 1926, 261). The notion of divine permanence afforded by this verse contrasts with the idea of *avidya* that might be associated with human existence, highlighting abandonment of profane materiality as paramount to attaining *moksha* (Patton 2012, 181). Similarly, *TBD* declares, "we remain attached, clinging to this cycle of existence" and pleads for this harmful cycle to be reversed (*TBD* 2005, 10). Here, the Buddhist stance towards human material existence reads more condemning than that of Hinduism, as epitomised by the derogatory connotations of "clinging" to existence. Therefore, within both faiths, a clear distinction surfaces; existence is fleeting and meaningless, whereas the religions encapsulate immortality and truth, providing a permanent, divine solution to brief, flawed human existence.

Two Beatles songs in which condemnation of everyday material existence is distinct are 'Within You Without You' and 'Tomorrow Never Knows', thereby portraying Hinduism and Buddhism respectively. Fundamental to the depiction of this value in the songs is viewing the human body as the epitome of materiality, calling for listeners to renounce 'embodied' experience as central to human existence. In 'Within You Without You', the tambura's harp-like sound in the beginning section transports listeners to a drifting, dream-like state, transcending the bodily experience afforded by the continual, heartbeat-like percussion (Farrell 1988, 197). Though critics exploit this introduction to label the piece a "dreamy, philosophical love song", dismissively likening it to the Beatles' early, radio-friendly works, the opening harbours spiritual depth. Creation of an otherworldly state within this song informs listeners of the possibility, and wisdom, awaiting them beyond a reality lived exclusively through the

impermanent human body. Moreover, the song's repetition of the tambura and percussion starting sequence after the interlude at 3:30 denotes cyclicality, thereby accentuating the belief of "unending bliss" faith provides. Here, a contrast can be drawn between ephemeral human life, and the eternity of the Divine, justifying scholar Steve Hamelman's reading of the song as generating a "deep, meditative state", encouraging listeners to reassess the temporary nature of their embodied lives (Hamelman 2020, 283). Likewise, 'Tomorrow Never Knows' denounces human materiality. With Lennon's vocals progressively drowning in mesmeric electronic noises, bodily presence, as encapsulated by voice, becomes distant, highlighting the shallowness and restrictiveness of the corporeal form (Martin in Van der Lee 1998, 55).

Correspondingly, both songs' lyrics provide bitter critique of everyday material existence through paradoxes and contrasts, exposing materiality as foolish and deceitful. In *TBD*, human materiality is disparagingly connoted as a "compounded body of flesh and blood", which must be recognised as "a transient illusion" (*TBD* 2005, 33). The joint incorporation of "compounded", denoting wholeness and duration, and "transient", representing impermanence, reads paradoxical, arguably reinforcing the denunciation of attachment to human materiality. Use of contrasts is noticeable within the songs, demonstrating faithful representation of Buddhist and Hindu beliefs. 'Tomorrow Never Knows' implores listeners to "listen to the colour of your dreams" and offers them the alternative of "play[ing] the game existence to the end, of the beginning", whereas 'Within You Without You' cautions listeners to the present "wall of illusion" and those who "gain the world and lose their soul". Although assimilation of irreconcilable, contradictory concepts gives the songs an absurd, non-sensical quality, perhaps distancing the band from their listeners, their placement in proximity reveals flaws in widely accepted ways of thinking. By depicting "gain" and "loss", or "beginning" and "end", as congruous, the song pleads for detachment from ephemeral things and rationality, seen to encapsulate *avidya*, and advises search for more enduring, spiritual meaning (Oliver 2014, 50). This judgment appears consolidated by the inclusion of specific calls to abandon rational thought, with the Lennon-McCartney work urging listeners to "turn off your mind" and "lay down all thought", and Harrison warning "they don't know, they can't see". Here, embodied elements, such as sight, and rational thinking, or the mind, are depicted as misleading. Alternatively, turning towards Hindu and Buddhist beliefs, emphasising the transitoriness of human materiality and predicating eternal salvation, are seen to promote achievement of divine purpose.

Yet, in 'Tomorrow Never Knows', relinquishing materiality, though accordant with Buddhist teachings, coincides more with the prevalence of the psychedelic experience, thus highlighting greater orientation of the song to contemporary audiences than religious doctrine. The song's opening line, "turn off your mind, relax, and float downstream" reads identically to Leary's *TBD*-inspired manual, *The Psychedelic Experience,* guiding readers "whenever in doubt, turn off your mind, relax, float downstream" (Leary et al. 1964, 14). While an initial reading would credit the Lennon-McCartney work with endorsing psychedelic drug consumption, including this lyric might instead encourage listeners to disconnect from an empty, deceptive, materialist world, as encapsulated in "mind" and in the use of verbs denoting detachment, like "relax" and "float". Nonetheless, the direct replication of Leary's words ensures the countercultural, psychedelic references take precedence over spiritual messaging. Thus, seeking reverberation with countercultural audiences appears the overarching motive for incorporating Buddhist-inspired rhetoric, even though Leary and Buddhism recognise the need for rupture from material existence. While this might have bridged a gap between counterculture followers, disillusioned with Western ways of life, and faith systems presenting deeper purpose and meaning, as discussed in Chapter One, the blatantness of stimulus from prevalent, cultural voices of the era dampens the ability of 'Tomorrow Never Knows' to channel Buddhist beliefs surrounding the illusoriness of everyday material existence.

Conclusion

To conclude, the Beatles and Harrison songs analysed in this chapter act as consistent, effective channels for Hindu and Buddhist beliefs. As demonstrated, the three ideals shared between the two faiths are apparent within the musical creations examined, with the songs presenting varied and profound exploration of religious values through lyrics and melody. However, the songs equally exhibit significant influence from external, circumstantial factors which, plausibly, compromise the overall ability of the songs to constitute efficient vehicles of these faith systems. By conveying notions of *karuna*, the Beatles persuasively showcase a Buddhist value of service to and unity with other humans, allowing this message of harmony to become salient and memorable within their musical legacy (Heilbronner 2011, 101). Nonetheless, the depiction of social harmony more strikingly shows reappropriation by the band to fulfil their own agendas, allowing them to enact a transformation in the version of 'love' they posited within their works (Cox 2020, 276). Meanwhile, the dichotomous construction of Christianity and Hinduism within Harrison's solo work proves pioneering in its introduction of then-unfamiliar Hindu values into Western pop music (Leng 2006, 51). Above accentuating the

accessibility of Hinduism, especially through melodic simplicity, Harrison's piece mirrors the religion with Christianity, an established Western counterpart. It therefore succeeds in ensuring transformation of consciousness by inspiring realisation of other religions promising salvation and truth among listeners. In this way, 'My Sweet Lord' plausibly emerges as the most convincing depiction of Hindu values within the sample, as echoed by journalist Monica Furlong's interpretation that the song comprises "genuine mystical vision", showing reverence towards Harrison's spiritually informed music (Furlong in Collins 2020, 92). Yet, 'Within You Without You' and 'Tomorrow Never Knows' do not go far enough in altogether conveying everyday material existence as illusory. Despite offering intelligent critique of attachment to materiality through complex lyrical structures, the Lennon-McCartney composition particularly is ultimately more influenced by the context of its release, as shown through emulation of counterculture publications. Therefore, even though the songs demonstrate how the artists helped develop clear connections between musical and cultural worlds, they at times fall short of conclusively channelling religious values (Bellman 1997, 125). Evidence of influence from contextual factors, including countercultural thought, reveal greater commitment to ensuring musical works resonated with audiences of the era, than highlighting the significance of Buddhism and Hinduism, notwithstanding the visibility of these religions' values within the songs. Whether the presentation of spiritual belief within the songs of the Beatles and Harrison prompted a wave of musical Orientalism by framing Asian religious values as reconcilable with Western ways of life and thought will constitute the focus of the next chapter (Reck 1985, 87).

Chapter Three:

"People Who Hide Themselves Behind a Wall of Illusion": Using Orientalism to Understand the Music of the Beatles and George Harrison.

Having established how, and how effectively, religious values are channelled within the selected Beatles and Harrison songs, this chapter will address the implications of these presentations. As the preceding section outlines, the musical pieces analysed reflect Buddhist and Hindu ideals pertaining to social harmony, transformation of consciousness to foster proximity with the Divine, and recognition of everyday material existence as illusory. Nonetheless, the Lennon-McCartney compositions exhibit greater alignment with contextual, countercultural ideals, than religious doctrine (Cox 2020, 276). In turn, this raises questions regarding how the religious values featuring within the songs are interpreted, and if they are purposefully misinterpreted to communicate specific messages to audiences. A theory explaining how these values might reverberate among predominantly Western audiences is Orientalism. Orientalism, a postcolonial theory posited by academic Edward Said in 1978, can be defined a style of thought founded upon a radical distinction between the West, or 'Occident', and a Western-created notion of the 'Orient', or 'East', namely Asia and the Middle East (Said 1978, 2-3). Though frequently critiqued as facilitating an 'Othering' process between 'East' and 'West', Orientalism can prove a helpful lens for comprehending the impact of the Beatles' and Harrison's depictions of religious principles (Huggan 2005, 125-26). It claims the 'Occident' developed techniques to contain and represent the 'Orient', to make the 'Orient' visible and exert authority over it (Said 1978, 3, 20-2). Exploring representations of religious belief in these songs through Orientalism elucidates if, and how far, they conform to ongoing intercultural dialogue and understanding of life beyond the West, enabling the artists to act as a bridge between a then disconnected world (Heilbronner 2011, 87). However, with Orientalism's binary construction of 'Orient' and 'Occident', differentiating principles as Western and non-Western and exoticising the latter, this framework plausibly overlooks the possibility of genuine reverence for Asian belief systems – a quality embodied by Harrison in his musical exploration of Hinduism. Thus, this chapter's central question will be: what does viewing the music of the Beatles and Harrison through an Orientalist lens reveal about the songs' channelling of Hindu and Buddhist values? It will use Orientalism as an overarching theoretical framework to further the analysis of the presentation of religious ideals in the selected songs from the preceding chapter. In so doing, this chapter will argue that the musical works exhibit some Orientalist tendencies in their portrayal of Hindu and Buddhist values, thus

raising questions about the appropriateness of Orientalism as a model against which to judge the songs' presentations of religious belief.

Orientalism as a Theoretical Framework

Orientalism, credited with exposing pervasive, overt misrepresentations of the 'Orient' (Varisco 2007, 12), will be applied as a theoretical framework to review how religious ideologies are reproduced within the chosen Beatles and Harrison songs. Orientalist traditions have been apparent within literature and art, albeit within the 19th and early 20th Centuries (Said 1978, 2-3), thereby accentuating the theory's suitability in analysing the creations of cultural powerhouses, the Beatles, and how they represent Asian religious belief. The crux of Orientalism lies within the notion of representation, as can be noted within Said's definition: "Orientalism is a style of thought based upon an ontological and epistemological distinction made between 'the Orient' and 'the Occident'" (Said 1978, 2). The "basic distinction" Said equally identifies between 'Occident' and 'Orient' not only further emphasises the innate imprecision in portraying the non-Western world, but indicates inherent perception of obvious, arguably irreconcilable differences between the two poles (Said 1978, 2-3). Orientalism thus entails Western styles of dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the 'Orient' (Said 1978, 3), ensuring the 'Occident' retains the agency to shape understandings of the 'Orient' and enable the power dynamic between the dyad to tilt in the West's favour (Said 1978, 3). Nevertheless, 'Occident' and 'Orient', as outlined by Said, appear intrinsically linked, with the former "setting itself off" against the latter, implying a deep-set, though unequal, connection between the two, and a means of the 'Occident' exploiting the 'Orient' to legitimise its own existence (Said 1978, 3). This interpretation of the 'Orient' validating the 'Occident' is relevant within the context of the Beatles and Harrison. The music they issued, inspired by Asian religious principles, helped cement their status as the 20th Century's most important band, enabling their spiritually inspired works to mould music, and culture, for subsequent years (Gair 2007, 167). Inclusion of Buddhist and Hindu values involves the musicians, as Westerners, exercising control over representations of the Orient, in this instance via songs. The artists not only emerge the more powerful entity, culturally and commercially, thus perpetuating a skewed 'Orient'/'Occident' balance of which Said warns, but employ these calculated representations to justify their supposed superior position.

Yet, though apt in comprehending cultural instances of an 'Occident' commanding an 'Orient', Orientalism exhibits shortcomings that reduce its applicability to the music studied and highlight the need for more flexible theoretical approaches in deciphering the repercussions

of these songs. As bluntly highlighted by political thinker, Wael Hallaq, Orientalism has "remained straightjacketed […] from the very substructures of thought that it gave rise to in the first place", namely, cultural bias and imperial domination (Hallaq 2018, 4). By condemning the theory as "straightjacketed" and constrained, this insinuates Orientalism cannot evolve alongside the (cultural) artefacts it purports to analyse and is thereby a rigid binary, founded upon an 'Us' and 'Other'. This critique reveals shortcomings in Orientalism's appropriateness in assessing the channelling of Hindu and Buddhist values within the selected songs. Harrison's pieces, especially, offer a convincing illustration of Hindu belief, as detailed in Chapter Two.

Correspondingly, another theory, positing greater parity between the two poles, could be more fitting in assessing the implications of religious exploration in the sample songs. Such a potential counterargument lies in the Easternisation of the West thesis. Proffered by Colin Campbell, the theory argues "the concept of the East is as necessary for the construction of a Western sense of identity as that of the West itself" (Campbell 2007, 46). Such a reading denotes mutual dependence between 'Orient' and 'Occident', eliminating the uncompromising distinction Orientalism sketches between them. Moreover, Easternisation alleges that 'Eastern' values "impacted directly on the way of life of Westerners" (Campbell 2007, 22). This interpretation counters Said's view of the Occident never directly engaging with the 'Orient', undertaking only an "imaginative examination" of it as constructed through Occident-created cultural representations. Instead, Easternisation demonstrates the 'Orient' has the potential to shape Western lifestyles; a standpoint that appears useful in analysing the chosen musical works and how they resonated with contemporary contextual phenomena, particularly the counterculture.

However, the differences between Easternisation and Orientalism seem fundamentally subtle, therefore weakening the former's credibility as a challenge to Orientalist thinking and a different model for deciphering the selected songs. Campbell notes Asian ideas "were principally employed, often in thinly disguised forms, to bolster what were essentially Western movements" (Campbell 2007, 29). The concept of "bolster[ing]" connotes purposeful exploitation to enhance existing Western-centric agendas, representing a parallel with Orientalism and its vision of the 'Occident' using the 'Orient' to offset and, in this sense, "bolster" its own ideas. Despite depicting the Orient as having greater agency in shaping Western lifestyles and thought processes, Easternisation nonetheless bears too much likeness to Orientalism to be labelled a legitimate rival argument. Inevitably, both theories are centred

upon an 'Orient'/'Occident' dichotomy. Thus, Orientalism emerges as the most appropriate framework against which to assess the presentation of Asian religion in the musical sample. Using this lens will help determine, as critic David Reck astutely states, if the spiritual values are deliberately watered down, or "appropriately repackaged" to convenience Western audiences, or if their representation nurtures intercultural, and interreligious, dialogue (Reck 1985, 93).

Looking for Orientalism in the Music

Building on from the discourse analysis findings in Chapter Two, Orientalism can clarify if the reappropriation of Buddhist and Hindu values within the songs occurred with the intention of positing specific (cultural) agendas, thereby overlooking the religious beliefs' original meanings. Two songs within the sample where employing Orientalism is telling in understanding the implications of Buddhist principles are the two Lennon-McCartney compositions: 'All You Need is Love' and 'Tomorrow Never Knows'.

'All You Need is Love' arguably contains Orientalist reinterpretations and representations of spiritual values, rendering the song more a response to countercultural associations than an attempt to portray religious ideals. Although Buddhist doctrine attributes *karuna* to selfless love of all living beings, undercutting an attachment to self (Harvey 1990, 209), this is not discernible within the song's lyrics. The omission of personal pronouns, 'we' and 'us', as mentioned in Chapter Two, characterise the song as making a feeble effort at calling for unconditional unity among listeners. Similarly, in consoling audiences that they can "sing", "make", and "save" without limit, emphasis is placed on the power of the individual, rather than how their actions might serve others, underwriting the altruism encapsulated by traditional Buddhist conceptions of *karuna.* In turn, the 'love' the Beatles proclaim here seems disconnected from original Buddhist thinking, insinuating its representation more convincingly seeks to ensure reception among countercultural adherents. Scholar Paul Oliver remarks that young counterculture followers sought a faith system which was "sympathetic" to goals of world peace and a more participative society (Oliver 2014, 41). The significance of "sympathetic" denotes a precedent of reappropriation, ensuring values or movements affiliated with the counterculture would enhance the legitimacy of the latter. On the face of it, for the counterculture, Asian religions symbolised universal harmony and peace, as evident in the considerable conversion of counterculture members to Hare Krishna noted in Chapter One. Yet, the discrepancy between Buddhist thought and the version of 'love' incorporated in the song point to deliberate reappropriation of the belief to serve countercultural aims, rendering

Orientalism apparent through this intentional decontextualisation of the 'Orient', as exemplified through Asian religion. This justifies the claim of academic Colin Campbell that this presentation of love constitutes "quasi-Eastern mysticism", featuring in Beatles compositions even after 1967, with the occult connotations of "mysticism" emphasising how distant the Beatles' perception of love is from original ideals of *karuna* (Campbell 2006, 117).

Additionally, the reappropriation of Buddhist ideals in 'Tomorrow Never Knows' exhibits consistency with the Orientalist model by wilfully interpreting the value to align with countercultural discourse. Buddhist studies scholar Rupert Gethin identifies *avidya* as forming the "background to all our past actions," conveying *avidya* as intrinsic to the human condition and worldly phenomena determining human behaviour (Gethin 1998, 150). However, the understandings of *avidya* in the typical Tibetan Buddhist context and the Lennon-McCartney composition differ drastically. While Buddhism views *avidya* as innate ignorance, and *maya* as the illusory nature of the world (Cohen 2021, 25), the song interprets *avidya* as a state of blindness that can be overcome through use of hallucinogenics, expressly LSD. As explored in Chapter Two, the origins of 'Tomorrow Never Knows' stem from *The Psychedelic Experience,* published by Leary and associates, with both works calling upon listeners to relinquish restrictive and rational corporeal forms epitomising *avidya.* Such calls to abandon rationality present clear parallels with countercultural ideologies reverberating throughout the West at the time of the song's release. Drawing on *TBD,* Leary encourages readers to rupture conceptions of identity and reality through psychedelic experience and trauma, thus attempting to echo similar Buddhist notions of renouncing materiality (Davis 2018, 53). In this way, the necessity of Asian values in forging Western identities, as described by Easternisation, is pertinent (Campbell 2007, 46). Nonetheless, in the context of Leary and the Beatles, LSD is considered central to transcending *avidya* and perceiving the world as *maya,* namely, tantamount to the establishment and capitalism (Stillson Judah 1974, 16). By equating hallucinogenic 'acid trips' to a panacea to the world's illusoriness, the disconnect between Buddhist thinking and contemporary practice is stark. Values of *avidya* and *maya* are thus turned on their head, demonstrating how the song can effectively be classed Orientalist. In the song, prompted by Leary's work, non-Western religion is paralleled to alternative states of consciousness. Beyond simply engaging with an "imaginary" 'Orient' as Said outlines, the Beatles engage with a "psychedelic" version of the 'Orient' they, based on Leary's influence, concocted. Therefore, the Beatles cannot be seen as engaging with the 'Orient' or its belief systems, as contained

within *TBD*, but rather, misinterpret it to guarantee the song's reception among audiences sympathetic to the counterculture and its appreciation of hallucinogenics.

Transcending the Orientalist Binary

While Orientalism traces are noticeable in the Lennon-McCartney-penned works, Harrison's songs demonstrate sincere engagement with Hindu beliefs, thereby transcending the strict binary posited by Orientalism and exposing the framework as an unfit standard against which to judge his works.

Through deliberate and consistent mirroring between Christianity and Hinduism, Harrison's reverence towards Hinduism is revealed in 'My Sweet Lord'. In Hindu thought, *bhakti* (devotion) is regarded as crucial to becoming one with a transcendent and immanent Lord and attaining *moksha* (Flood 1996, 125). *Bhakti* is thus key to providing refuge to the crisis of the external, material world and transforming consciousness to become united with the Divine (Flood 1996, 11). As examined in Chapter Two, *bhakti* is manifest in Harrison's 'My Sweet Lord' in the song's likeness to the Hindu *bhajan* musical tradition, in which the musician endeavours to take on the role of companion to Krishna, erasing their own identity in the process. In ensuring closeness to Krishna precedes personal character, Harrison allows for devotional *bhakti* to come to the fore, negating critic Anjali Roy's reproachful view of popular music's understanding of Hinduism being "superficial" and based on "desacralisation", implying inherent misapprehension (Roy 2017, 143). This expression of *bhakti* and transformation of Harrison's role as musician does not denote Occidental "power" over the 'Orient' (Said 1978, 6); Harrison immerses himself in Hindu doctrine in this work, surpassing Orientalism's unyielding model and proving it unsuitable for comprehending religious representation within his music.

Furthermore, Harrison's drawing upon familiar codes of Western worship in this song, including refrains of 'Hallelujah', presenting Hinduism as a mirror image of Christianity, further transcends Orientalism's 'Orient'/'Occident' binary by alerting audiences to new, though evenly valid, messages of salvation. Accordingly, this comparison helps create a bridge between Hinduism and historic Western faiths. This technique is equally present in 'Within You Without You', as Harrison takes inspiration from the Bible verse "what good will it be for someone to gain the whole world yet forfeit their soul?" to complement Hindu values of condemning attachment to deceptive materiality (Mt 16:26 NIV). Hinduism and Christianity are in turn depicted as equals of one another in the *moksha* they offer to believers. Unlike the

Lennon-McCartney songs that have been shown to be dependent on decontextualisation, incorporating warped versions of religious concepts to sustain contemporary counterculture discourse, Harrison's work refrains from reappropriation and cannot be considered as harbouring Orientalist tendencies. Orientalism's core lies in its 'Orient'/'Occident' dichotomy, wherein the 'Orient' is represented as a "manifestly different world" (Said 1978, 12), demonstrating that the Beatles songs exhibiting Orientalism strengthen this distinction. Yet, Harrison's approach of mirroring Hinduism and Christianity does not neatly correspond to this model, founded upon a dynamic of 'Us' and 'Other', or even Easternisation, predicated upon support of 'Eastern' influences towards Western worldviews (Campbell 2007, 162). Rather, blending imagery from these two religious helps build a bridge between them, accentuating their similarities and promise of single, common truth. In this context, the comment of Hare Krishna spiritual leader, Mukunda Goswami that, "everything George did [was] spiritual and that was always on his mind" is telling (Scorsese 2011); it is emblematic of Harrison's fascination for Hinduism and how his intention to express his faith is represented reverently in his works.

Similarly, 'Within You Without You' offers a convincing exploration of *avidya,* further accentuating Harrison's respect towards Hinduism and the shortfalls of an Orientalist benchmark for analysis. Scholar Gavin Flood, identifies the harmfulness of *avidya* which "clouds our vision of the sound absolute", with "sound absolute" referring to a higher, sacred power (Flood 1996, 228). The evil of *avidya* is recognised by Harrison in this song through condemnation of material gain, delineating transformation of consciousness as the antidote to this detrimental concept. In denouncing those who "gain the world and lose their soul", Harrison acknowledges the capacity of *avidya* in preventing humans from rising above empty, materialistic existence to realise a more divine purpose. In this sense, the traditional Hindu conception of *avidya* and its illustration in the song seem homogenous. Critic Paul Oliver notes 'Within You Without You' emerged out of Harrison's study of Hinduism and constitutes an "encouragement to young people to turn to Eastern ideas" (Oliver 2014, 65). Here, "encouragement" can be read as Harrison, in a position of enlightenment, calling upon listeners to consider and engage seriously with Hindu concepts recognising materialist existence as meaningless. Harrison's depiction of *avidya* implores listeners to see the flaws in Western attachment to everyday material existence and detach themselves from it. Furthermore, the notion of "encouragement" to value Asian religion is accentuated by the song's instrumentation, with the use of tambura clearly evoking Indian ragas and generating a lifting

among listeners into a dream-like trance (Bellman 1997, 119). This sonic and corporeal effect the instrumentation engenders heightens the gentle, yet genuine, incentive the song attempts to create regarding the futility of everyday material existence. This dual utilisation of condemnation of material gain and raga-like melody negates the applicability of the Orientalist, and even Easternisation, lens. In opposing Orientalist tendencies of purposeful misappropriation of 'Oriental' ideas to sustain those prevalent in the West, 'Within You Without You' instead points out the possibility of discovering and implementing them into ways of believing and living. The binary of 'Occident' and 'Orient', or 'us' and 'Other', contained within Orientalism is irrelevant and transcended in Harrison's song. Harrison's works thus act as a bridge between the two poles, to discover and converse with the other.

Conclusion

In conclusion, given the stark differences in representation of Hindu and Buddhist beliefs in the Beatles' and Harrison's compositions, it is difficult to label the songs analysed as wholly Orientalist in their channelling of religious concepts. As evaluated in this chapter, the Orientalist framework, though appropriate in comprehending the implications of exploring Buddhist values in the Lennon-McCartney compositions, does not go far enough in explaining the portrayal of Hindu doctrine in Harrison's works. Buddhist ideals of *karuna*, as exhibited in 'All You Need is Love', appear decontextualised, sustaining an interpretation that representation of these concepts aimed to appeal to existing needs, namely those felt among countercultural audiences, searching for transcendental escapes from disappointing Western lifestyles (Gair 2007, 136). Orientalism, with its assertion of the 'Occident' having authority over representations of the 'Orient' and moulding perceptions of it, is thus fitting (Said 1978, 3), delineating how the Beatles, as a Western act, instrumentalised their influence to proffer specific, contrived, versions of Buddhist values that could fulfil their own objectives. However, Campbell's Easternisation thesis constitutes an intriguing, though hardly compelling, counterargument to Orientalism, partially clarifying the reappropriation of *avidya* apparent in 'Tomorrow Never Knows'. Moreover, the Orientalist model's inconsistencies are most vehemently exposed by Harrison's songs. By mirroring Hinduism with Christianity in 'My Sweet Lord', Harrison effectively presents both faiths as equally conducive to *moksha*. Similarly, the subtle, yet persuasive, encouragement in 'Within You Without You' epitomises the musician's genuine mystical vision and spiritual appreciation, thereby exposing the flaws of the binary contained within Orientalism (Furlong in Collins 2020, 92). Arguably, Harrison's works emerge as more genuine representations of Hinduism, compared to those espoused by

Lennon and McCartney in their psychedelic and counterculture-inspired compositions. Harrison's songs are not founded on a restrictive 'Orient'/'Occident' dichotomy, wherein 'Orient' represents mysticism, and 'Occident' rationality and conformity, thus revealing Orientalism's insufficiency in accounting for the complexity of Harrison's sincere and lifelong interest in Hinduism (Leante 2000, 105).[3] Though helpful in comprehending how cultural works have represented a seemingly mysterious 'Orient' and engaged with related, 'imaginary' understandings of it, Orientalism cannot conclusively explain the implications of how the Beatles or Harrison channelled Asian belief systems in their music. Indeed, the songs all exhibit interpretations of spiritual beliefs, albeit at differing levels, but the shortcomings of Orientalism, as exposed by Harrison's quest for *bhakti* in his works, underline the need to reassess Orientalism's applicability in discerning representation and reappropriation of other cultures. Such rethinking could present ramifications for intercultural dialogue and comprehension of how ideas transcend geographical boundaries via culture. Said believes every culture seeks other, competing "alter ego" cultures to legitimise its own existence, but the songs studied somewhat dispute this claim (Said 1978, 332). The Orientalist binary harbours deep-set shortfalls, as Harrison's works show, demonstrating ideas can be channelled with admiration and understanding.

[3] Translated from French. All translations are my own.

Conclusions

In conclusion, the music of the Beatles and George Harrison, as analysed within this thesis, reveal that the songs indeed constitute a channel for Hindu and Buddhist values, albeit with varying levels of consistency in their representation and with evidence of explicit influence from prevalent, contextual factors. As highlighted in Chapter One, while there were numerous circumstantial factors leading the artists to become familiar with these Asian religions, hitherto mostly unknown in the West, the most prominent in establishing the musicians' interest was the counterculture. In striving to break away from the 'rational' "line" the Western conservative establishment embodied, its suppressive societal mores and the pre-eminence it attached to capitalism, the counterculture emblematised the disillusion harboured among the era's youth towards life in the West (Duncan 2013, 152-53). Buddhism and Hinduism, in incarnating ideals of peace and non-violence, inevitably provided aspiration and hope to countercultural adherents (Oliver 2014, 55), thus paving the way for the Beatles, especially, to intertwine these concepts into their music, ensuring their works reverberated among their primarily young, Western listeners. Nonetheless, although the counterculture's input is apparent in the Lennon-McCartney compositions comprising the sample, notably the movement's association with psychedelic experience or, as alleged by Theodore Roszak, "politics of consciousness", Harrison's creations represent a markedly different stance (Roszak in Whiteley 1992, 58-9). Unlike his fellow Beatles, Harrison demonstrates deep-set reverence and appreciation of Hinduism, as exemplified in his use of the sitar as a springboard for spiritual contemplation and, as examined in Chapters Two and Three, his deliberate blending of Hindu and Christian imagery. This approach, distinctly illustrated in 'My Sweet Lord', helps create a bridge between the two faiths, fostering a perennialist standpoint of both religions vowing the same truth and message of salvation for their listeners.

With the Beatles and Harrison influenced differently by contextual considerations at play, the musicians' representation of Buddhist and Hindu concepts exposes similar discrepancies in how these ideals are communicated through music to audiences. *Karuna,* denoting selfless love in its original Buddhist form, is reappropriated by the counterculture and the Beatles to signify social harmony and unity. Alignment between the artists and counterculture in how *karuna* is perceived and enacted is present within 'All You Need is Love'. This may have guaranteed the song's successful reception among contemporary listeners, allowing the band to signal a clear break from the sensibilities of romantic life that had characterised their early career (Campbell 2006, 116-17), but demonstrated incongruity

with traditional Buddhist interpretations of *karuna*. Meanwhile, while there are likenesses between classic, spiritual readings of *avidya* and how the Beatles and Harrison interpret this concept, contrasts arise nonetheless in 'Tomorrow Never Knows' and 'Within You Without You'. Indeed, both implore listeners to rise above *avidya* and recognise the illusory veil of *maya* enveloping the world, yet the parallels between the Lennon-McCartney creation and *The Psychedelic Experience* indicate that, ultimately, contextual matters took precedence over sincere spiritual curiosity. According to the religions studied, transformation of consciousness is key to surpassing *avidya* and seeing the world's intrinsic *maya*, yet for the Beatles, this promise of transcendence was contained in LSD 'acid trips', delineating misapprehension of Buddhist teachings (Gair 2007, 135). By and large, intentional decontextualisation and dissociation from original structural context appear inherent to the Beatles' creations investigated in this thesis (Farrell 1988, 197). It is only Harrison, in seeking closeness with God within his solo piece, 'My Sweet Lord', who defies the tendencies of reappropriation adopted by his fellow Beatles. His efforts to emulate the *bhajan* sonic tradition and thereby take on a role of companion to Krishna effectively achieve *bhakti*, allowing Harrison's identity to vanish within expression of devotion to, or as outlined in the song's lyrics, simply "be with", God. It therefore seems fitting to conclude that Harrison's songs evade decontextualisation of spiritual beliefs and can tentatively be labelled authentic representations of Hindu values.

Moreover, given the visible disparities in how Buddhist and Hindu beliefs take shape in the songs analysed, Orientalism proves insightful in comprehending the implications of these representations, albeit only partially. As investigated in Chapter Three, a clear divide can be noted between how Lennon-McCartney and Harrison compositions dealt with and construed spiritual concepts. In misapprehending conventional, religious messages, Lennon and McCartney prioritised conversing with mass audiences and thus fulfilling existing needs of promoting psychedelic experience, notwithstanding under the guise of spiritual practices providing deeper meaning to disillusioned populations (Ramachandran and Vertinsky 2020, 525). Orientalism, predicating "imaginative examination" of the 'Orient' by the 'Occident' as a means of controlling the former thereby proves enlightening in comprehending the nature of how religious values are conveyed in the Lennon-McCartney creations. Nevertheless, despite its use in dissecting discourse and cultural relations between 'Orient' and 'Occident' (Wilson and Gabriel 2021, 4), Orientalism as a model to assess Harrison and Beatles songs bears significant shortcomings, as blatantly highlighted by Harrison's creations. His choice of blending Christian and Hindu codes of worship draws parallels between the two faith traditions,

portraying both as equally legitimate in promising believers salvation, undermining the "ineradicable distinction" Said perceives between 'Orient' and 'Occident' (Said 1978, 42). In turn, Orientalism reads as inadequate in accounting for complex, yet profound, explorations of faith, such as that Harrison attempts to posit in his works.

Broader Considerations

This thesis, even though centred upon assessment of how Buddhist and Hindu values are channelled within selected songs of the Beatles and George Harrison, raises broader questions surrounding engagement with other cultures and religions, and how these are represented through popular cultural formats. Within the realm of International Relations, which has historically viewed study of popular culture as entirely separate, exploring the relevance of how ideas are conceived and communicated to worldwide audiences through popular music could significantly enrich the discipline (Grayson et al. 2009, 155). It could clarify how cultural modes continue to inform intercultural dialogue and how independent this discourse is from ongoing contextual factors. As critics have illustrated, "contextual elements" meant the Beatles' creations "entered the world under determinate sociohistorical conditions and, subsequently, established the horizon within which the life histories of their songs could play themselves out" (McGann in Womack 2007, 164). Recognising this bond between cultural production and the social settings in which creations emerge can thereby shed light on how popular culture can act as a breeding ground for ideas concerning different cultures and faiths, even if, as highlighted in this thesis, these conceptions can vary from their original, intended meanings.

Similarly, the contrasts exposed in how Beatles and Harrison-penned creations grapple with Asian religious ideals points to the need to reflect upon the validity of models incorporated in scholarship, expressly Orientalism, to judge representations of other cultures. Notwithstanding Orientalism's pervasiveness in analysing literature and art (Varisco 2007, 10), the theory's shortfalls are obvious, particularly in failing to elucidate attempts at engaging with the 'Orient' honestly. Yet, in explaining the implications of decontextualising religious values in the Lennon-McCartney songs, the theoretical approach retains some relevance. Orientalism, with its foundations within an unwavering 'Orient/'Occident' binary might be considered inappropriate in evaluating cultural creations arising in a modern, post-colonial era, but reappropriation of ideas pertaining to the 'Orient' to sustain agendas of a seemingly separate 'Occident', as apparent in 'Tomorrow Never Knows' and 'All You Need is Love', perpetuate this dichotomy. Popular music may be recognised as an intersection between "reality and

musical experience", implying representations within these cultural forms are intrinsically true to source and appropriately contextualised (Whiteley 1992, 3). However, distinctions of 'East' and 'West', as harboured in some of the songs explored, can continue to shape common perceptions of different cultures, particularly if they are purposely dissociated from their traditional forms to bolster contemporary societal movements, like the counterculture. Therefore, Orientalism can prove insightful in investigating cultural works such as those included in this thesis but cannot be deemed conclusive in comprehensively accounting for certain, perhaps more 'truthful', representations of different cultures and beliefs.

Nevertheless, it remains to be evaluated why spiritual beliefs were woven into the songs at all and what their significance was. Lennon and McCartney on one side, and Harrison on another, manifested their interest in Asian spirituality through musical composition, but with markedly different approaches. Ultimately, the works of both sets of musicians indicate a common denominator – that Asian religions symbolised a panacea to the ills of Western society. These faiths constituted the alternative that post-war Western society, increasingly alienated and deprived of emotional or moral satisfaction, ardently sought and was willing to instrumentalise to suit its demands (Campbell 2007, 181). Sociologist Alfred Weber perceives culture as giving "meaning to people's experience of life and the world", showing culture, including its mainstream, popular branch, as profoundly enlightening (Weber in Campbell 2007, 11). This reading is especially poignant given this thesis' findings; it signifies that elements embedded within culture, religious or otherwise, directly inform perceptions and qualify experiences, among creator and audience, even if these representations sometimes harbour misappropriations.

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