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## RAGA ROCK

### Popular Music and the Turn to the East in the 1960s

*"I don't know how the song ['Love You To'] would sound to eastern ears; but to my western ears--and remember the Beatles are recording for a western audience--it is a lovely and expressive composition."<sup>1</sup>*

In the 1950s and 1960s a vibrant trans-Atlantic pop-rock music community developed, with British and American artists featuring in pop charts on both sides of the Atlantic, and influences and inspirations flowed back and forth. In the 1950s American music had a greater impact on Britain than British music did on America; however, from around 1964 to 1967, the momentum shifted the other way, primarily due to the phenomenal success of The Beatles in the United States. But then a curious thing happened: in 1965, a handful of artists on both sides of the Atlantic began to incorporate Eastern, mainly Indian, instruments, rhythms and themes into their music. And within a few years, these Eastern influences became a major ingredient of psychedelic "Hippy music," which contemporary music commentator Burton Wolfe defined perceptively as a hybrid, "an outgrowth of Negro blues, rock-and-roll, country-western, and finally, ragas from India."<sup>2</sup> This hybrid form quickly acquired the nickname of "raga rock." Referred to by one music journalist, somewhat dismissively, as "rock music based on a few raga ingredients,"<sup>3</sup> its typical components, according to the musicologist Jonathan Bellman, were "drones, harmonic stasis, flattened seventh scale degrees, keening vocals, hypnotic beat, ragalike melody, and lyrics that suggest that the singer's inner reality is at least as real as the outer, physical one."<sup>4</sup>

In this paper we analyse the development, nature and significance of "raga rock." We will consider, firstly, the milieu within which these changes took place, and then analyse the methods and motivations of those western artists who took inspiration from the East. We identify the circumstances which caused this "turn to the East" and we explore why audiences were receptive to the musical experimentation of British and American recording artists. Our focus here is primarily on the United States because British connections with India are much easier to explain

<sup>1</sup> Paul Williams, Rev. of *Revolver* (USA: Capitol, 1966) in *Crawdaddy!* 5 (Sep 1966), 3-5.

<sup>2</sup> Burton H. Wolfe, "The New Music and the New Scene" in Jonathan Eisen, ed., *The Age of Rock: Sounds of the American Cultural Revolution* (New York: Random House, 1969), 30-41 (at 31).

<sup>3</sup> Francesco Adinolfi, "Exoticism" in John Shepherd, David Horn, Dave Laing, Paul Oliver & Peter Wicke, eds., *Continuum Encyclopedia of Popular Music of the World*, Volume 1: Media, Industry and Society (London: Continuum, 2003), 220-23.

<sup>4</sup> Jonathan Bellman, ed., *The Exotic in Western Music* (Northeastern University Press, 1998), 303.

and have already received significant scholarly attention. Jonathan Bellman has argued, for example, that because of London's "large and thriving" Indian community, plus the rich heritage of the Raj "and its resonances in British comedy and music hall (particularly of the satiric, *Goon Show* variety)," Indian culture was "undoubtedly more familiar in England than it was in the United States. (Indeed, in mid-60s London, exposure to it may have been virtually unavoidable.)"<sup>5</sup> Therefore, for our purposes, when we refer to British recording artists it is therefore mainly in the context of the aforementioned trans-Atlantic pop-rock music community.<sup>6</sup>

We consider these interactions in the context of several journeys to the East, some virtual (the interest in Oriental religions, the adoption of Eastern musical forms) and some real (notably the journeys taken to the East by some musicians and by thousands of young people on the Hippy Trail). The Trail—one of the great expressions of the counterculture—dates approximately from the mid-1950s until the late 1970s: tens of thousands, perhaps hundreds of thousands of young people followed it to the East. The most celebrated route was from London to Kathmandu, although many stopped in India in places like Goa and Benares, and there were subsidiary routes across the Mediterranean, to North Africa and the Middle East. When the overland path was all but closed by the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and the Iranian Revolution, travellers found other routes and other destinations, but the Hippy Trail remains the most iconic journey, and perhaps the last major *happening* of the 1960s.<sup>7</sup> Our aim is to demonstrate that these virtual and actual journeys represented a "neo-Orientalist" position which resembles the older, imperialist Orientalism in its tendency to simplify and romanticize the East, but is different from it in the passionate sincerity of its appreciation for certain Eastern forms. Of course "Orientalisms," whether past or present, often feature admiration for the "other," so this appreciation does not by itself indicate anything new about the turn Eastwards in the 1960s. What, however, *is* distinct about the neo-Orientalism of the 1960s is that it formed a platform

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<sup>5</sup> Jonathan Bellman, "Indian Resonances in the British Invasion, 1965-1968," *The Journal of Musicology*, Volume 15, No 1 (Winter 1997), 116-36 (at 117).

<sup>6</sup> We do not mean to imply that British pop stars shared the same cultural social, political and economic milieu as their counterparts in the United States: that is clearly not the case. However, audiences on both sides of the Atlantic did embrace their music: they connected with the lyrics, danced to the rhythms and sounds, and adopted the imagery. And when British musicians turned towards the East, Americans followed willingly.

<sup>7</sup> This far no one has published a historical monograph about the Hippy Trail, although there have been numerous memoirs (mostly self-published), an oral history—David Tomory's *A Season in Heaven: True Tales from the Road to Kathmandu* (London: Thorsons, 1996)—and Rory MacLean's *Magic Bus: On the Hippie Trail from Istanbul to India* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 2007), which offers a spirited evocation of the trail.

from which to challenge dominant cultural and even political norms within the West; it was also unique in that it was not linked to any colonialist or imperialist project, but was rather rooted in a belief that embracing the music, culture and religions of the "East" could help achieve a deeper knowledge of the human experience.

### Echoes: Transatlantic Musical Influence

The type of clean cut pop-rock music that developed contemporaneously in Britain and the United States in the post-war years was eagerly embraced by young audiences in both countries. Generally, musicians were well-groomed, besuited and cheerful in the 1950s: surly, nihilistic, long-haired rebels would not appear until the mid-1960s. In the 1950s in the UK, major artists included Tommy Steele, Marty Wilde, Billy Fury, Adam Faith and Cliff Richard; in the USA, Elvis Presley, Buddy Holly, Jerry Lee Lewis, Eddie Cochran, Little Richard and Chuck Berry held sway. There was no question at that point who was imitating who: musicologist Charlie Gillett notes, for example, that most of Wilde's hits were cover versions of American hits, whereas critic Nik Cohn adjudged Cliff Richards merely as a "sub-Elvis rebel," and Adam Faith "a poor man's Buddy Holly."<sup>8</sup> When The Beatles performed in Hamburg in 1962 almost all of their set-list were covers of already released songs by American artists such as Carl Perkins, Chuck Berry and Ray Charles<sup>9</sup>; in later years they would acknowledge American influences such as The Everly Brothers and Buddy Holly.<sup>10</sup> The Rolling Stones had similar American influences: their first single release was a cover of Chuck Berry's "Come On," their first UK number one a cover of The Valentinos "It's All Over Now," and their first US top ten hit a cover of Irma Thomas's "Time Is on My Side."<sup>11</sup> Out of 12 songs on their debut album release *The Rolling Stones* (1964), only one was not a cover version of an American song.

However, after the musical "British Invasion"<sup>12</sup> of America in 1964, this trend shifted when British bands began to influence American music more prominently: British bands regularly

<sup>8</sup> Charlie Gillett, *The Sound of the City: the Rise of Rock and Roll* (London: Souvenir, 1983), 257; Nik Cohn, *Awopbopaloobop Alopbamboom: Pop from the Beginning* (London: Pimlico, 2004), 71.

<sup>9</sup> See, for example, *The Beatles Live! at the Star-Club in Hamburg, Germany; 1962* (Germany: Lingasong/Bellaphon, 1977).

<sup>10</sup> Ian MacDonald, *Revolution in the Head: The Beatles' Records and the Sixties* (Random House 1997), 293; Charlie Gillett, *The Sound of the City: the Rise of Rock and Roll* (London: Souvenir, 1983), 263.

<sup>11</sup> Charlie Gillett, *The Sound of the City: the Rise of Rock and Roll* (London: Souvenir, 1983), 268-69.

<sup>12</sup> A term used to explain the phenomenal success of bands such as The Beatles, The Rolling Stones, The Who, The Kinks and The Animals in the United States from around 1964 to 1967. Journalist David Kamp provides some statistics which illustrate the scale of this success: "Prior to 1964, only two British singles had ever topped *Billboard's* Hot 100 chart—Acker Bilk's 'Stranger on the Shore' and the Tornados' 'Telstar,' both instrumentals—and between them they held the No. 1 spot for a total of four weeks. In the 1964-65 period, by contrast, British acts were at No. 1 for an astounding 56 weeks combined. In 1963 a

toured the USA, just as American influences continued to flow in the other direction. Jim McGuinn of The Byrds revealed, for example, "we were influenced by The Beatles and other British groups."<sup>13</sup> Joe Walsh of The Eagles claimed it was The Beatles' appearance on the Ed Sullivan Show in 1964 that inspired him to become a musician: "I took one look on The Ed Sullivan Show and it was, 'Fuck school. This makes it!' I memorized every Beatles song and went to Shea Stadium and screamed right along with all those chicks."<sup>14</sup> The exchanges and the rivalry between, for example, the Beatles and the Beach Boys are well known.<sup>15</sup> Other examples of interactions are easily to find. The Byrds' David Crosby considered the Beatles taught him what a band was supposed to be.<sup>16</sup> Jimi Hendrix first performed as a professional musician in the USA, but it was in the UK, and with a British bass-player and drummer, that he formed his first successful group. John Mayall was born in Macclesfield (UK), and first came to public attention with his Bluesbreakers (including Eric Clapton) in 1965-66. But by 1970 he was living in Los Angeles, recording with largely American musicians, and singing of the wonders of California and his home in Laurel Canyon.<sup>17</sup> At this point, it is difficult to decide if he should be judged a British or an American musician. Furthermore, audiences on both sides of the Atlantic responded to these artists and their music in similar ways, to the extent that Jim McGuinn of The Byrds suggested there was little difference between British and American audiences.<sup>18</sup> Film footage of "Beatlemania" in Britain and America, as well as contemporary concert reviews of Beatles' tours in both countries, support McGuinn's observation in that they reveal no significant dissimilarities in how British and American audiences reacted.

The shared tastes of artists and audiences in the UK and USA suggest that a trans-Atlantic musical community had developed, sharing ideas, sounds, styles and musical traits. Looking back on this era, historian Arthur Marwick adjudged one of its main characteristics as a "participatory and uninhibited popular culture, whose central component was rock music, which in

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mere three singles by British artists cracked the American Top 40. In 1964, 65 did, and in 1965, a further 68 did." "The British Invasion," *Vanity Fair*, Nov. 2002.

<http://www.vanityfair.com/culture/2002/11/british-invasion-oral-history>

<sup>13</sup> David Griffiths, "The Byrds: 'That Criticism Is Fair!'" *Record Mirror*, 21 Aug. 1965.

<sup>14</sup> Cameron Crowe, "Joe Walsh, Child of the Silent Majority: Ex-James Gangster Tends His Garden" *Rolling Stone*, 181, 27 Feb. 1975.

<sup>15</sup> See Philip Norman, *John Lennon: The Life* (London: Harper Collins, 2008), 480 and Ian MacDonald, *Revolution in the Head: the Beatles' Records and the Sixties* (London: Vintage, 2008), 214-15.

<sup>16</sup> Marcus Collins, "The Beatles' Politics," *British Journal of Politics and International Relations*, Volume 16, No 2 (May 2014), 291-309 (at 304).

<sup>17</sup> "California" on his *Turning Point* (1969) and "Laurel Canyon Home" on his *Blues from Laurel Canyon* (1968).

<sup>18</sup> David Griffiths, "The Byrds: 'That Criticism Is Fair!'" *Record Mirror*, 21 Aug. 1965.

effect became a universal language."<sup>19</sup> Arguably these exchanges are the norm in musical cultures rather than the exception. Take, for example instrumental music, which, in not depending on written texts or articulated language, has a long history of being moulded and re-shaped through contacts with different cultural influences. Centuries before the 1960s, English, German, Bohemian and Provençal musicians met on the road to Santiago de Compostela in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries and swapped tunes, and so assisted in the transmission of Breton lays into the rest of Europe, and the circulation of troubadour lyric poetry.<sup>20</sup> In a similar vein, Mozart, Vaughan Williams and Holst all studied and made use of Oriental themes in their musical writing, while Javan gamelan music inspired Debussy.<sup>21</sup> In 1958, jazz musician Dave Brubeck was touring with his quartet in Istanbul. He heard street musicians playing in 9/8 time, and was inspired by them to compose his "Blue Rondo à la Turk" which appeared on his celebrated *Time Out* LP of 1959.<sup>22</sup> Throughout the 1950s and 1960s there are many further examples of such exchanges and borrowings, including the popularization of black jazz and black blues by white musicians, the reception of American rock'n'roll and rhythm and blues by British musicians,<sup>23</sup> and the adoption of folk music by British and American leftists.<sup>24</sup>

The interest in Eastern music by rock, pop and folk musicians in the 1960s is therefore not, in itself, radically new or noteworthy. What is significant is the scale of their activities, the challenge that eastern forms represented for western musicians, the connection some artists made between music and elevated spirituality, and the fact that their musical borrowings were linked to a real journey to the East by thousands of young Westerners on the Hippy Trail. This is an important distinction between the post-1945 fascination with the East and the earlier iterations: in the 1960s in particular, westerners actively sought out Eastern experiences. They travelled to North Africa, India and Nepal to experience for themselves what had previously only been available to them mediated through the experiences of others. Unlike older audiences, who had only been exposed to performances of Indian music in the Western music hall tradition, or

<sup>19</sup> Arthur Marwick, "Introduction: Locating Key Texts Amid the Distinctive Landscape of the Sixties" in *Windows on the Sixties: Exploring Key Texts of Media and Culture*, Anthony Aldgate, James Chapman, and Arthur Marwick, eds., (London: I.B. Tauris, 2000), xi-xxi.

<sup>20</sup> Francisco Márquez Villanueva, *Santiago: tragectoria de un mito* (Barcelona: Bellaterra, 2004), 114-18.

<sup>21</sup> Rob Young, *Electric Eden: Unearthing Britain's Visionary Music* (London: Faber & Faber, 2010), 56-82; Peter Burke, *Cultural Hybridity* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2009), 23.

<sup>22</sup> Philip Clark, "He Got Rhythm," *Guardian*, 7 Dec. 2012.

<sup>23</sup> Gillian A.M. Mitchell, "Reassessing 'the Generation Gap': Billy Haley's 1957 Tour of Britain, Inter-Generational Relations and Attitudes to Rock'n'Roll in the late 1950s," *Twentieth Century British History*, Volume 24, No 4 (December 2013), 573-605.

<sup>24</sup> See Jens Lund and R. Serge Denisoff, "The Folk Music Revival and the Counter Culture: Contributions and Contradictions", *Journal of American Folklore*, 84 (October-December 1971), 394-405 and also Julia Mitchell, "'Farewell to 'Cotia': The English Folk Revival, the Pit Elegy, and the Nationalization of British Coal, 1947-70," *Twentieth Century British History*, Volume 25, No 4 (December 2014), 585-601.

through the theatre, opera, cinema or vinyl records, the 1960s generation was not passive in its reception of this music: they actively travelled to find it. Amongst those were a handful of dedicated musicians including British folk guitarist Davy Graham (who popularised the DADGAD tuning later used by Jimmy Page in the 1975 song "Kashmir"), Graham Nash, who wrote about his experiences in the song "Marrakesh Express" (which became a huge hit for Crosby, Stills and Nash in 1968), Jimmy Page and Robert Plant of Led Zeppelin, members of the Rolling Stones, Jimi Hendrix and Frank Zappa, who all visited North Africa; others travelled to India, such as Cat Stevens, Donovan, Wilko Johnson (the guitarist of Dr. Feelgood), Mickey Hart of The Grateful Dead, and most famously The Beatles. While the musicians travelling to India were definitely a minority of the artists that contributed to the "raga rock" genre, their influence was widespread and long-lasting, and it was a journey to the East that inspired their music.

Unlike the British experience, looking to the East was a major shift in American outlook. Previously, America had faced westwards, guided by its "Manifest Destiny" to populate the American continent from the east to west coasts. In 1893, three years after the closing of the American frontier, historian Frederick Jackson Turner asked how Americans would cope without the potential for further westward migration and how restrictions on mobility would shape their national character. Just over half a century later, Beat novelist Jack Kerouac picked up on this theme in *On the Road* (1957), which is often cited as a key inspirational text by those who travelled east because it advocated spontaneity, absence of a fixed itinerary, and, most importantly, due to Kerouac's insistence that the inner journey is as important as the physical one. In the novel, Kerouac expressed disillusionment with the United States and talked of a "groaning and awful continent" and a "senseless nightmare road."<sup>25</sup> Kerouac felt he had to leave America (for Mexico) to find a taste of the freedom he thought of as his American birth right. Other artists and writers examining the soul of America in this period echoed Kerouac's disenchantment with the staleness and stultifying nature of the American continent. When John Steinbeck took a similar journey around the United States in 1960, documenting it in his travelogue *Travels with Charley in Search of America* (1962), he also became disillusioned with the country's political and cultural conformity, and with the victory of consumerism over values. In 1961, President John F. Kennedy spoke of new frontiers that would keep alive the American spirit of adventure. The nagging question was this: where could Americans find the authenticity and freedom that Kerouac and Steinbeck elegised; and where were these new frontiers?

In *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas* (1971), Hunter S. Thompson wrote that the trajectory of a new spirituality ran from the West to East, but that this wave of countercultural ideals

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<sup>25</sup> Jack Kerouac, *On the Road* (New York: Penguin, 1991 [1957]), 259 and 254.

which swept from California, broke on the skyscrapers of Las Vegas, and then rolled back.<sup>26</sup> But the influence of the counterculture was more widespread and longer-lasting than Thompson perceived and, to develop Thompson's metaphor, it not only continued eastwards but was active far away from the shores of the United States on the "Hippy Trail." However, these journeys were both internal and external: writing in the mid-1970s, religious anthropologist Harvey Cox noted "a wave of interest among Americans in Oriental spirituality whose scope and intensity is unprecedented in the history of American religion." While earlier transcendentalist poets and thinkers Ralph Waldo Emerson and Walt Whitman had read the *Bhavad Gita*, the new faithful of the late 1960s actually wanted to practice Eastern religions.<sup>27</sup> Some did that in the United States while others travelled to India on the Hippy Trail in search of a religious or spiritual experience that was both authentic and an alternative to western religiosity. American musicians were thus part of a broader counterculture that "turned to the East" for religious, cultural and musical inspiration, in order to make sense of their own society's perceived barren cultural landscape and to search for inspiration for social rejuvenation.

### **See my Friends?—the lure of India**

The trend of British and American musicians adopting and utilising Eastern spirituality, clothing, instruments, symbols began around 1965 and flourished until the end of the decade; however, the "journey" of these musicians and icons did not follow a single, simple pattern. It is particularly worth considering why the United States in this period was such fertile ground for Indian-inspired music: after all, in previous decades the roles assigned to Indians in the United States were limited to "a fortune-teller, a snake charmer, a magician or a freak."<sup>28</sup> There was nothing remarkable about India, at least in the American imagination, that made it venerable. Moreover, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, there were few prestigious roles available in the USA to people of Asian extraction. They were often employed as cheap labour to build America's railroads, to work in factories, on farms in southern California, on sugar plantations in Hawaii, as miners during the California Gold Rush, in restaurants and laundries in San Francisco, on fishing boats from west coast ports, or as labourers and loggers in the Pacific north west. The low point was after World War One, when a combination of union agitation against cheap labour and "100 percent Americanism" campaigns by patriotic groups such as the

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<sup>26</sup> Hunter S. Thompson, *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas: a savage journey to the heart of the American Dream* (New York: Vintage, 1998 [1971]), 68.

<sup>27</sup> Harvey Cox, *Turning East: the Promise and Peril of the New Orientalism* (London: Allen Lane, 1977), 9.

<sup>28</sup> Krishnalal Shridharani, quoted in Rachel Rubin and Jeffrey Paul Melnick, *Immigration and American Popular Culture: An Introduction* (New York: New York University Press, 2007), 146.



American Legion and Asiatic Exclusion League, prompted changes in US immigration law.<sup>29</sup> In 1924 the Immigration Act set strict quotas on immigration which favoured north Europeans and almost entirely excluded those from Asian and Pacific countries.

While in the early years of the twentieth century America moved to exclude Asians from its shores, some Americans were fascinated by "Eastern" culture. For example, in a 1939 essay entitled "The Indian Menace", Christian advocate Mersene Sloan noticed a "considerable craze for eastern things, even to the point of cherishing oriental fabrics, colors, musics and entertainments."<sup>30</sup> One recurring stereotype was that Indians were more spiritual than westerners, and that particular swamis or gurus such as Swami Vivekananda<sup>31</sup> offered a path to spiritual enlightenment. Even here though, there was hostility: some American men thought these gurus were "sex-crazed," and that vulnerable women were being taken advantage of by swarthy foreigners.<sup>32</sup> This minority fascination with the "East" continued in the years following World War Two. While American animosity towards the Japanese intensified considerably during the war, in its aftermath Japan became an ally in the Cold War battles against communism. In contrast, American attitudes towards former World War Two ally, China, changed considerably after the Communist revolution there in 1949. As Tom Engelhardt points out, while during World War Two, the Chinese had been admired for being "hardworking, honest, brave, religious, and intelligent," as the Cold War intensified, the Chinese "gained the wartime 'Japanese' traits of being ignorant, warlike, sly, treacherous and cruel" in American discourse.<sup>33</sup> Yet while attitudes towards individual countries often changed quickly during this period, fascination with a homogenous, mythic "East" continued unabated.

The Cold War and subsequent proxy wars—between 1941 and 1975 the United States went to war with three different Asian nations—certainly played a part in this. If it is true that, as satirist Ambrose Bierce once supposedly said, "war is God's way of teaching Americans geography," then these wars helped keep South-East Asia in the American public and

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<sup>29</sup> See Ronald Takiki, *Strangers From a Different Shore: A History of Asian Americans* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1989); Marcus Duffield, *King Legion* (New York: Cape, 1931); and Stephen Prothero, "Mother India's Scandalous Swamis" in Colleen McDannell, ed., *Religions of the United States in Practice*, 2 (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2001), 418-432.

<sup>30</sup> Quoted in Rubin and Melnick, *Immigration and American Popular Culture...*, 144-5.

<sup>31</sup> In 1893, Vivekananda attended the World's Parliament of Religions in Chicago. He then went on a well-received lecture tour and in 1894 established the Vedanta Society, which became the largest Hindu organization in the United States at this time. See Prothero, "Mother India's Scandalous Swamis."

<sup>32</sup> See Stephen Prothero, "Hinduphilia and Hinduphobia in American Culture" in Anna Lannstrom, ed., *The Stranger's Religion: Fascination and Fear* (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 2004), 13-37 and Kurt Vonnegut, "Yes, We Have No Nirvanas" in his *Wampeters, Foma and Granfalloon* (London: Grafton Books, 1988 [1976]), 48-57.

<sup>33</sup> Tom Engelhardt, *The End of Victory Culture* (New York: HarperCollins, 1995), 58.

political sphere. For instance, the Vietnam War has been called the "television war" or the "living room war" because it was the first American war to be given prominent television coverage.<sup>34</sup> On an almost daily basis, Americans were exposed to images of combat and suffering. Moreover, the Vietnam War caused huge divisions in American society, leading many to question the state of American values, particularly as the United States remained the only country in the world to use atomic weapons in anger, and against an Asian enemy. Philip Goldberg, an expert on Eastern spirituality, reflects that by the time of the "Summer of Love" in 1967, "a hundred Americans a week were dying in Vietnam, and riots were erupting in Newark and Detroit, and the need for a new kind of consciousness had never been more obvious."<sup>35</sup>

War and its consequences, however, cannot fully explain the continued American fascination with the "East": after all, many Americans were either repulsed by the war to the extent that they dropped out entirely from the political conversation or they despised the Vietnamese and simply wanted the war won. A further plausible reason was the legacy of Mahatma Ghandi. His anti-colonial stance resonated with Americans raised on origin stories of overthrowing British rule. Moreover, Ghandi's advocacy for non-violent resistance to oppression influenced Dr Martin Luther King in his struggle for equal civil rights for African Americans.<sup>36</sup> Certainly, some understood Eastern religions to represent forms of pacifist humanism.<sup>37</sup>

Moreover, in this era, many Americans lost faith in traditional religions: until the 1960s, most Americans belonged to the seven main Protestant churches, which were the Baptists, Congregationalists, Disciples of Christ, Episcopalians, Lutherans, Methodists and Presbyterians. There were also thriving Jewish and Catholic communities.<sup>38</sup> While the post-war "baby boom" supplied a new population of parishioners for these mainstream churches, it also provided a generation that questioned the traditional roles of organised religion and authority in general. In particular, this rebellious generation was shaped by social and political movements for racial and gender equality. As musicologist Susan Fast notes, "Their attraction to the East came, at least in part, from the countercultural impulse to look somewhere other than the dominant culture for their spiritual and social truths."<sup>39</sup> As in many other areas of American life, an established religious consensus gave way to fragmentation, which—as journalist Thomas Hine notes—"opened

<sup>34</sup> Michael J. Arlen, *The Living Room War* (New York: Viking, 1969).

<sup>35</sup> Philip Goldberg, *American Veda: From Emerson and the Beatles to Yoga and Meditation: How Indian Spirituality the West* (New York: Random House, 2010), 149.

<sup>36</sup> On the effects of Eastern-inspired pacifism on one black militant, see: Jan Willis, *Dreaming Me: Black, Baptist and Buddhist: One Woman's Spiritual Journey* (Somerville: Wisdom Publications, 2008).

<sup>37</sup> Warren Hinckle, "A Social History of the Hippies," *Ramparts*, Mar. 1967, 5-26 (at 17).

<sup>38</sup> Neil Campbell and Alasdair Kean, *American Cultural Studies: An Introduction to American Culture*, 2nd Edition (London & New York: Routledge, 2006), 112.

<sup>39</sup> Susan Fast, *In the Houses of the Holy: Led Zeppelin and the Power of Rock Music* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 92.

the door to celebration of a number of different ways of life," including an open-minded approach to Eastern religious belief and practices such as yoga, reflexology, reiki and transcendental meditation.<sup>40</sup>

The notion of a more spiritual "East" seemed to offer an alternative to the deficiencies of western consumerism and provided a lesson "how to live a fuller and spiritually rich life in America."<sup>41</sup> Furthermore, as the horrors of the Vietnam War played out on American television screens and in the news media, Eastern religions offered an alternative approach to Christian theodicy—the question why a benevolent God would allow such evil to exist. Non-Western religions such as Buddhism and Hinduism developed quickly in post-World War Two United States. In 1977 Harvey Cox counted between forty and fifty "neo-Oriental" religious movements in his hometown of Cambridge (Mass.), including Zen Buddhism, Sufism, Sikhism, Transcendental Meditation, Tibetan Buddhism, Yoga and Tai Chi.<sup>42</sup> He estimated that several million Americans must be following these movements.<sup>43</sup> Religious Studies scholar Jacob Needleman found a similar enthusiasm. "Following upon the great popularity of Timothy Leary, the Maharishi was the first person the alienated masses of young people would listen to" appealing to both the "post-acid generation" and the solid middle-classes.<sup>44</sup> These developments created a network of alternative institutions for the musicians of the counter-culture. For example, drummer John Densmore and guitarist Robby Krieger of the Doors met keyboard player Ray Manzarek at a meditation centre in Southern California in 1965.<sup>45</sup>

There was also a shift in the world of literature in the 1950s, which reflected a desire for a greater understanding of "Eastern" culture and spirituality. In the years before World War Two the most popular Eastern literature in the United States was Iranian or Persian literature such as the *Arabian Nights* and the poetry of Omar Khayyam. Western fiction about India was also popular: Rudyard Kipling's novel *Kim* (1901) and short story "The Man Who Would Be King" (1888) were probably best known in the USA, alongside E. M. Forster's *A Passage to India* (1924). Religion scholar Richard Hughes Seager identified a number of key texts that raised the profile of Buddhism in the United States, such as Paul Carus' *The Gospel of Buddha* (1894) and Dwight Goddard's *Buddhist Bible* (1932). However, in the 1950s it was the works of Kerouac, T.D. Suzuki,

<sup>40</sup> Thomas Hine, *The Great Funk: Falling Apart and Coming Together (on a shag rug) in the Seventies* (New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux), 11.

<sup>41</sup> Rachel Rubin and Jeffrey Paul Melnick, *Immigration and American Popular Culture: An Introduction* (New York: New York University Press, 2007), 132. For a more general survey, see: Colin Campbell, "The Easternisation of the West: Or, How the West was Lost," *Asian Journal of Social Science*, 38 (2010), 738-57.

<sup>42</sup> Harvey Cox, *Turning East: the Promise and Peril of the New Orientalism* (London: Allen Lane, 1977), 10.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, 93.

<sup>44</sup> Jacob Needleman, *The New Religions* (New York: E.P. Dutton, 1977 [1970]), 129.

<sup>45</sup> Michael Lydon, "Jim Morrison and the Doors," *New York Times*, 3 Dec. 1968.

Alan Watts and others in the Beat Movement that marked a distinctive breakthrough in raising the profile of Buddhism in the United States.<sup>46</sup> In addition, Herman Hesse's *Siddhartha* (1922), was published in the U.S. in 1951 and quickly became popular with those looking for an accessible introduction to basic Buddhist themes. And for those interested in hallucinogenic experiences, Timothy Leary's *The Psychedelic Experience: A Manual Based on the Tibetan Book of the Dead* (1964) suggested enlightenment could be found in Tibetan Buddhist writings.

Indian religions seemed to offer other attractions: the best known Indian literature in the United States was probably the *Kama Sutra*, the so-called "bible of sex positions" and historian Theodore Roszak notes how those searching for a religious sanction for sexual permissiveness could find it in the apparently erotic religions of the East.<sup>47</sup> Already-established Orientalist writing referred to a vaguely defined "East," which was supposedly a place of intense sexuality. Some of the best-known examples of Eastern literature in the West were erotic in nature—the aforementioned *Arabian Nights* or *Kama Sutra*—and the Western tourist industry promoted India as a romantic or erotic destination with its Taj Mahal "temple of love" and risqué Khajuraho monuments. According to these stereotypes, the East was inevitably romantic or erotic in nature, and this resonated with a new generation of Americans who grew up in a more permissive and sexually aware society than had their parents' generation.

As Edward Said has noted, in the type of Asian literature that has been popular in the West, recurring themes pertain to sexuality, primitiveness, and alien-ness. Said points out, for example, that many of Kipling's admirers "spoke of his representations of India as if the India he wrote about was a timeless, unchanging and 'essential' locale."<sup>48</sup> The rich and diverse history and cultures of the "East" were reduced to a monomyth of exotica, erotica, and danger—or, as Peter Bishop contends in his perceptive study of travel writing about Tibet, "a place of pilgrimage, a spectacle, a totally homogeneous and coherent world of exotic customs, of disturbing yet alluring sensuality, combined with horrific bestiality and perverse morality."<sup>49</sup> Said labelled this Western view of the East "Orientalism"<sup>50</sup> and its lure proved attractive in the imaginations of Western writers. Generations of American children grew up reading the adventures of Mark Twain's characters Huckleberry Finn and Tom Sawyer, in which Tom dreamed of ambushing "Spanish

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<sup>46</sup> Richard Hughes Seager, *Buddhism in America*. Columbia Contemporary American Religion (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012), 4.

<sup>47</sup> Theodore Roszak, *The Making of a Counter Culture; Reflections on the Technocratic Society and Its Youthful Opposition* (Berkeley, Los Angeles & London: University of California Press, 1995 [1969]), 136.

<sup>48</sup> Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1994), 134.

<sup>49</sup> Peter Bishop, *The Myth of Shangri-La: Tibet, Travel Writing, and the Western Creation of Sacred Landscape* (University of California Press, 1989), 7.

<sup>50</sup> Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Random House, 1978). Said's analysis is, of course, much deeper and more nuanced than this short summary can relate. Said also argued, for example, that these attitudes were embedded in serious historical and academic writing, not just in popular literature.

merchants and rich A-rabs...with two hundred elephants, and six hundred camels...all loaded down with di'minds."<sup>51</sup> These now familiar tropes of sensuality, mysticism and adventure would also define much of the Western music about the East, a subject we will return to later.

While sympathetic, the enthusiastic new followers of Eastern religions frequently made mistakes. Historian Carl Jackson pinpoints how beatniks saw Buddhism as a loose, spontaneous, "hip" form of religious faith, and ignored or underestimated the degree of discipline and dedication that Buddhism could demand.<sup>52</sup> Harvey Cox warned that the Orient could easily become "a convenient screen on which the West projects reverse images of its own deficiencies."<sup>53</sup> If *On the Road* was a template for how hippies might (un)structure their journeys to the East, Kerouac's attitude to the most significant "other" in his life, African-Americans, has been the subject of some deserved criticism. His easy appropriation of jazz music, the nights he spent at Black jazz clubs, and his expressed desire to live the supposedly simple but exciting life of a Negro, have led to accusations ranging from naivety to appropriation. In his study of blackface minstrelsy social historian Eric Lott suggests that such fascination with "blackface" is not just an attempt at appropriation and subjugation, it developed out of racial desire and features homoerotic undertones.<sup>54</sup> And certainly that is a running theme of *On the Road*, to the extent that Kerouac's publisher insisted he fictionalise character names so that real-life protagonists might avoid prosecution for homosexual activities. Lott argues that blackface minstrelsy developed because of white fascination with, and fear of, black males. Furthermore, he contends, whites were obsessed with the black body and therefore projected their own masculinity onto it. Both Kerouac and author Norman Mailer (in *The White Negro*)<sup>55</sup> admired the supposed spontaneity, everyday existentialism, and "primitiveness" of African-Americans. They sought to be part of black culture, while always having the option to still be white.<sup>56</sup> It is possible that this "racial desire" (using Lott's term) help explain Western fascination with the East in the 1960s. For instance, in the white imagination, both supposedly offer more "authentic" experiences

<sup>51</sup> Mark Twain, *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1884), chapter three.

<sup>52</sup> Carl Jackson, "The Counterculture Looks East: Beat Writers and Asian Religion," *American Studies*, Volume 29, No 1 (Spring 1988), 51-70. On the Beatniks' reception of Buddhism, see also Alan W. Watts, "Beat Zen, Square Zen and Zen," *Chicago Review*, Volume 12, No 2 (Summer 1958), 1-11.

<sup>53</sup> Harvey Cox, *Turning East: the Promise and Peril of the New Orientalism* (London: Allen Lane, 1977), 149.

<sup>54</sup> Eric Lott, "Love and Theft: The Racial Unconscious of Blackface Minstrelsy," *Representations*, No 39 (Summer 1992), 23-50.

<sup>55</sup> Norman Mailer, "The White Negro: Superficial Reflections on the Hipster," *Dissent*, No 4 (1957) 276-93. See also Eric Lott, "White Like Me: Racial Cross-Dressing and the Construction of American Whiteness," in *Cultures of United States Imperialism*, ed. Amy Kaplan and Donald Pease (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1993), 474-98.

<sup>56</sup> As Ulrich Adelt notes perceptively, to "take everything but the burden from Black culture." Ulrich Adelt, *Blues Music in the Sixties: A Story in Black and White* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2010), 59.

than those available to whites in consumer-orientated western cultures. However, it would be an error to assume that the same processes of white/black relationships were identical to the processes of cultural borrowing of Asian music in the 1960s. The relationships between white/black in the United States and that of whites and Asians are too dissimilar to apply Lott's analysis to the latter. For example, Lott focuses on the black male body; however, in the 1960s' turn to the East, the focus was primarily on spiritual uplift.

Demographic factors played a role in the rise of neo-Oriental religion too: there were more Indians in America at just the time when Americans were becoming more open to the East. In 1965, for example, the Hart-Celler Act established an immigration system based mainly on family ties to those already living in the United States and those with preferential skills. This made it possible for qualified people from Asian countries to migrate to the United States, and many thousands did.<sup>57</sup> Among their ranks was Indian musician Ravi Shankar, whose groundbreaking performance at the Monterey Pop Festival in June 1967 did much to bring Indian music into the American popular consciousness.<sup>58</sup> Shankar's collaborative album with classical violinist Yehudi Menuhin, *West Meets East*, won a Grammy for Best Chamber Music in 1967 (in the same year that *Sgt. Pepper's* was Album of the Year and Duke Ellington's *Far East Suite* won best Instrumental Jazz performance).<sup>59</sup> Shankar became a familiar figure at major musical events, performing, for example, at the Monterey Pop festival in 1967, at Woodstock in August 1969, and opening the show at the Concert for Bangladesh in 1971.<sup>60</sup> Shankar was not just a musician, however, he was also a cultural phenomenon. According to American Studies scholars Rachel Rubin and Jeffrey Melnick, he "provided Americans with an occasion to talk about Vietnam, race relations in the United States, religion, drugs, and the meaning of consciousness."<sup>61</sup> He taught George Harrison to play the sitar, and indirectly acted as a kind of guru to many American hippies. In fact, there were so many Indian gurus travelling and teaching in the United States that *Time* magazine named 1968 the "Year of the Guru."<sup>62</sup> That Shankar spoke out against drugs and was unhappy with the over-commercialisation of Indian music did not seem to matter, because for his audiences he was an authentic symbol of the supposed wisdom and superior knowledge of

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<sup>57</sup> Dennis Wepman, *Immigration* (New York: Infobase, 2008), 311-13.

<sup>58</sup> Rachel Rubin and Jeffrey Melnick, *Immigration and American Popular Culture: An Introduction* (New York: New York University Press, 2007), 131; 139.

<sup>59</sup> Dr Erik Wallrup, *Being Musically Attuned: The Act of Listening to Music* (Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate, 2015), 236.

<sup>60</sup> Indian religious guru Swami Satchidananda also gave a spiritual blessing on stage on the opening day of the festival. See Mike Evans & Paul Kingsbury, *Woodstock: Three Days that Rocked the World* (New York: Sterling, 2009), 77.

<sup>61</sup> Rubin and Melnick, *Immigration and American Popular Culture...*, 132.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, 152.

the East. He had the seal of approval of opinion shapers like Harrison, and represented, as cultural theorist Stuart Hall has noted, "a return to contemplation and mystical experience."<sup>63</sup>

It is evident then that in post-1945 America, a confluence of factors both abroad (three wars in South-East Asia) and at home (the declining resonance of "traditional" Protestant religions and the search for alternative forms of religious practice, plus major cultural and demographic shifts), all served to foster a growing interest in and fascination for the ideas, religions and culture of the "East" within the United States. This intensified and expanded from the mid-1960s, and the musical culture of India in particular played a vital part in the growing trend of "new internationalism" among American artists, and their counterparts in Britain. As we shall see as we explore individual examples of "raga rock," British artists took the lead: David Courtney, who grew up in Houston (Texas) and travelled to India to study tabla-playing, provides a perceptive summary of this new situation:

the explosion began when the Beatles started studying with the Maharishi Mahesh Yogi. Concurrent with this was George Harrison's study of the sitar under Ravi Shankar. Members of ISKCON (aka Hare Krishnas) could be seen proselytising on the street corners... The sitar freely mixed with electric guitars in popular music. The youth regularly sat around in their flats smoking "good old mother nature's best" and listening to Ravi Shankar. Public lectures given by Indian holy men were always well attended.<sup>64</sup>

The role of Indian music and religion in the creation of "raga rock" culture therefore cannot be underestimated. Nor, indeed, can the fundamental importance of music itself to many trans-Atlantic rock-pop musicians in this period of counterculture and experimentation. As Jan Wenner, the founder of the new music magazine *Rolling Stone*, said in 1968, it was rock and roll, not politics or protest, that was seen as "the only way in which the vast but formless power of youth is structured."<sup>65</sup> The substance of this viewpoint is debateable but it does indicate, at least, that popular music played a significant role in the "youthquake" of the 1960s. For example, Paul Williams founded music magazine *Crawdaddy!* in 1966 because, he claimed, "music was the most tangible part of our lives."<sup>66</sup> Musicologist David Reck also argues persuasively for the

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<sup>63</sup> Stuart Hall, "The Hippies: an American moment." Stencilled Occasional Paper. Sub and Popular Culture Series, No 16 (Birmingham [West Midlands]: Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies, University of Birmingham, 1968).

<sup>64</sup> David Courtney, *An American in Hyderabad: Life in India in the 1970s* (Houston: Sur Sangeet Services, 2012), 8-9.

<sup>65</sup> Qtd in Abe Peck, *Uncovering the Sixties: the Life & Times of the Underground Press* (New York: Pantheon, 1985), 108.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, 166.

influence of music in the 1960s: "Music—far from being an ornament on the periphery of any of...events, a nonessential (though sometimes highly cultivated) amusement as it tended to be in "establishment" culture—was a prime energy center (both in gatherings and private life), an incessant credo hammering out the values and concerns of the counterculture while simultaneously creating new ones."<sup>67</sup> As a "prime energy center" then (to use a yoga term), music was a key language through which to articulate and experiment with ideas in this period.

### East-West

Western appreciation of Eastern, mainly Indian musical culture was expressed in diverse ways: in musicians' clothes and choice of instruments, in the scales and rhythms they used, and in their lyrical themes. Among the first examples of western artists using sitars or sitar-like sounds were three songs released in 1965 by British bands: The Rolling Stones' "Paint it Black" (featuring Brian Jones playing sitar), The Kinks' "See My Friends" (which had an Indian-style drone played on a 12-string guitar) and The Yardbirds' "Heart Full of Soul" (in which a Jeff Beck guitar solo was made to sound like a sitar). But it was the Beatles—and specifically George Harrison—who pulled such borrowings into the musical mainstream. During the filming of *Help!* (1965), their surreal film about an Eastern cult's search for a magic ring, Harrison was given a sitar as a prop. He became intrigued with the instrument and bought one of his own, which he played later that year on John Lennon's song "Norwegian Wood" on *Rubber Soul* (1965).<sup>68</sup> One critic observed that "Harrison's introduction of the sitar" in that song made The Beatles "ultimate trend setters... [Harrison] gave the idea a root of growth (even though others, like the Byrds, had used the instrument before), and since Indian music was so basically new and exciting to Western audiences, Harrison instantly set a precedent."<sup>69</sup> The band took to wearing Nehru jackets on stage, and this garment received massive exposure when the Beatles played Shea Stadium on 15 August 1965.<sup>70</sup>

The following year, Harrison travelled to India to take sitar lessons from Ravi Shankar. For him, this wasn't simply about music: "Indian music just seemed to have something very spiritual for me," he commented, "and it became a stepping stone for me to find out about a whole lot of other things."<sup>71</sup> The *Detroit Free Press* reported further comments from Harrison: "Indian music is hip, yet 8,000 years old...I'd like to see more people interested in it, honestly interested.

<sup>67</sup> David R. Reck, "Beatles Orientalis: Influences from Asia in a Popular Song Tradition," *Asian Music*, Volume 16, No 1 (1985), 83-149 at p.90.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, 83-149 (at 99). Reck finds that some 20 Beatles' songs show Asian influences: one can argue that their borrowings from Indian music were vital to their overall sound.

<sup>69</sup> Mike Bourne, "Another Turban in the Ring," *The Spectator*, 13 Nov. 1967, 10.

<sup>70</sup> Annette Lynch and Mitchell D. Strauss, eds., *Ethnic Dress in the United States: A Cultural Encyclopedia* (Lanham, MD.: Rowman & Littlefield, 2014), 210.

<sup>71</sup> Nick Jones, "Beatle George and Where He's At," *Melody Maker*, 16 Dec 1967.



Not just to cash in on the sitar boom."<sup>72</sup> He deployed his new skills on "Love You To" on the 1966 *Revolver* album. In a *Crawdaddy!* review of that album, Paul Williams wrote: "Harrison's attempt at composing a song in something approximating raga form; as an essentially western piece with eastern influences, it is surprisingly successful [and] Harrison shows a great deal of respect for the tradition he is working in."<sup>73</sup>

Harrison also played sitar on the Beatles' next album, *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band* (1967), and the album artwork included images of four Indian gurus: Sri Yukteswar, Mahavatar Babaji, Paramhansa Yogananda and Lahiri Mahasaya. The influence this album had, and thus the effects caused by their adoption of eastern musical themes, cannot be over-stated. In the late 1960s The Beatles were unparalleled cultural leaders: as musician Neil Innes states, "the Beatles didn't catch the bus, they were the bus."<sup>74</sup> One critic applauded the band for making "old forms new with sitar and raga" and "advanc[ing] fifty years of musical development in four. Thank you Sergeant Pepper" [sic].<sup>75</sup> Harrison continued to believe that musical exchange with non-western instrumental compositions could facilitate spiritual growth and understanding: in an interview with Barry Miles in *International Times*, he explained that a spiritual person such as Ravi Shankar could transmit his spirituality wordlessly, through his sitar. "Through the music you reach the spiritual," he explained, "It's so attuned to the spiritual scene."<sup>76</sup>

The Beatles were not the only artists turning East for new ideas and sounds: American musicians also followed their example. Written in 1966, and released in January 1967, Jim Morrison's "The End" is an early example of the "raga rock" sound, featuring sitar-like guitar by Robbie Krieger. As Lavezzoli notes, Krieger "discovered an interest in Indian raga and modal improvisation [and] utilized many of the same techniques" in this song.<sup>77</sup> Also in 1966, guitarist Roger McGuinn of The Byrds used a 12-string guitar to imitate a sitar in the song "Eight Miles High." Both McGuinn and band mate David Crosby were influenced by the music of Ravi Shankar and of John Coltrane who, since the late 1950s, had been experimenting with different musical structures, including the Indian raga.<sup>78</sup> Crosby's lyrics are about a plane journey to a foreign land, but are also suggestive of a psychedelic drug trip. Mike Bloomfield's guitar work on the Paul Butterfield's Blues Band song "East-West" (1966) is an attempt to emulate the raga drone of

<sup>72</sup> Loraine Alterman, "The Beatles: Four Smiling, Tired Guys Talk About Their Music," *Detroit Free Press*, 19 Aug 1966.

<sup>73</sup> Paul Williams, Rev. of *Revolver* (USA: Capitol, 1966) in *Crawdaddy!* No 5 (Sept. 1966), 3-5 (at 3).

<sup>74</sup> *Arena: The Beatles Magical Mystery Tour part 1*. Dir. Francis Hanly. BBC Arena/Apple Films, 2012. Broadcast BBC Four, 24 Oct 2015.

<sup>75</sup> Don Speicher, "The New Music '68," *Great Speckled Bird*, Volume 1, No 4, 26 Apr-May 9, 1968, 8.

<sup>76</sup> "The way out is in," *International Times*, Volume 1, No 13, 19 May 1967, 8-9.

<sup>77</sup> Peter Lavezzoli, *The Dawn of Indian Music in the West* (New York and London: Continuum, 2006), 158.

<sup>78</sup> See Carl Clements "John Coltrane and the integration of Indian concepts in jazz improvisation," *Jazz Research Journal*, Volume 2, No 2 (2008), 155-175; and Lavezzoli, *Dawn of Indian Music...*, 154.

Indian classical music.<sup>79</sup> Heavily influenced by the Beatles, Dave Mason of the British band Traffic wrote and sang "Hole In My Shoe," a psychedelic pop track featuring sitar and tambura. In the United States, the Grateful Dead's drummer Mickey Hart began using an 11-count measure that he picked up while studying music in India. According to historian Dominick Cavallo, this was the "first use of this time signature in rock-and-roll."<sup>80</sup> Artists from across the musical spectrum began looking to the East for inspiration. For example, American folk group, Folkswingers, released an album called *Raga Rock* (1966), which featured a sitar.<sup>81</sup> Finally, the cover art of the Jimi Hendrix Experience's *Axis: Bold as Love* (1967) depicts the guitarist as various forms of Vishnu. These examples suggest the beginnings of a significant musical turn to the East in the years 1965-67.

The eastern influence became more than a musical trend, and the connection these musicians made between Indian music and elevated spirituality set the template for others to follow. The Beatles took an interest in the teachings of Maharishi Mahesh Yogi and in 1967-68 visited his ashram in Rishikesh.<sup>82</sup> Philip Goldberg comments that after the Beatles met Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, "[s]pirituality in the West would never be the same."<sup>83</sup> They were "captivated by the Maharishi's promise of bliss without effort," notes Lennon biographer Philip Norman.<sup>84</sup> Their journey certainly raised the profile of Eastern spirituality. The Maharishi actually toured with the Beach Boys in 1968.<sup>85</sup> Ravi Shankar opened a sitar school in Los Angeles in 1967.<sup>86</sup> All four Beatles, at various points, made positive comments about their encounters with Indian culture, and all were initially sincere in their attempts both to improve their spiritual health through Transcendental Meditation, and to develop their artistic abilities through learning from non-western music. Harrison perhaps held the most affirmative view, perhaps best illustrated in a 1969 interview he gave to *International Times*, in which he explained the deep influence of Paramhansa Yogananda's *Autobiography of a Yogi*: "it really explained so much for me," he said, "It filled me in on all sorts of things to do with the physical world and the other existences, the

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<sup>79</sup> Lavezzoli, *Dawn of Indian Music...*, 158.

<sup>80</sup> Dominick Cavallo, *A Fiction of the Past: The Sixties in American History* (New York: St. Martin's), 160.

<sup>81</sup> Rachel Rubin and Jeffrey Paul Melnick, *Immigration and American Popular Culture: An Introduction* (New York: New York University Press, 2007), 161.

<sup>82</sup> See, for example, David R. Reck, "Beatles Orientalis: Influences from Asia in a Popular Song Tradition," *Asian Music*, Volume 16, No 1 (1985), 83-149.

<sup>83</sup> Philip Goldberg, *American Veda: From Emerson and the Beatles to Yoga and Meditation: How Indian Spirituality the West* (New York: Random House, 2010), 150.

<sup>84</sup> Philip Norman, *John Lennon: The Life* (London: Harper-Collins, 2008), 505.

<sup>85</sup> Loraine Alterman, "The Maharishi, the Beach Boys and the Heathens," *New York Magazine*, 6 Mar. 1968.

<sup>86</sup> Anon, "Ravi Shankar: My Music Not for Addicts," *KRLA Beat*, 29 Jul. 1967.

other frequencies—the astral worlds and the understanding of karma.<sup>87</sup> His fascination with Hinduism continued well into his solo career after the Beatles disbanded in 1970.<sup>88</sup>

Eastern influences in popular music were manifested through use of Indian musical instruments (sitar, tambura and tabla), in song lyrics (often about a journey of discovery), in album artwork featuring Hindu lithographs and Sanskrit writing, and in the clothing these artists wore in promotional images or when performing, including Nehru jackets, robes, beads, and sandals. Broadly speaking, the way these musicians adopted and integrated Eastern themes into their music and identity fell into three loose categories. Some musicians were “seekers,” exploring both Eastern religions and music to further understand their place in the cosmos, and often attempting something akin to a full-scale reproduction of Indian techniques in their music (for example, George Harrison). Others, in contrast, sought to expand their musical knowledge, utilising Indian time signatures and instruments to enhance their performances as musicians (e.g. John Lennon); artists in this category were not so deeply interested in Eastern religions or new forms of spirituality. A final category of artists was more commercially minded: these performers used Indian instruments for their novelty value. The lyrics were trite or nonsensical, and the album artwork superficial. Their interest in the music of the East was transitory, and would last only as long as their audiences’ attention spans. (Traffic’s “Hole in My Shoe” can be cited as an example of this tendency.)

Eastern-themed music became closely associated with the hippie movement and with drugs, and for some artists and their followers the sitar seemed to represent a kind of psychic shortcut to some other form of consciousness. For example, Scott McKenzie’s 1967 hit “San Francisco (Be Sure to Wear Flowers in Your Hair)” became synonymous with the “Summer of Love” that year: a sitar appears briefly in its middle-eight. Eric Burdon and the Animals signalled their shift from blues rock to more contemporary psychedelic rock by releasing their *Winds of Change* album. Sitar featured heavily in the eponymous title track, which was a commentary on the state of rock music at that time. Five songs on the follow-up album, *The Twain Shall Meet*, would also feature a sitar.<sup>89</sup> Some adopted the sounds of the East without the spiritual baggage. Prior to his iconic, career-enhancing appearance at Woodstock in 1969, Richie Havens played sitar on his first three albums and tambura on two of those albums. Havens’ background was in folk and blues, but he was one of the pioneers of what would later be known as “fusion” music, combining elements of different musical styles to create new, distinctive sounds. On his 1968 album *Something Else*

<sup>87</sup> “You can’t even say what it was,” *International Times*, Volume 1, No 63, 29 Aug. 1969, 3 & 5.

<sup>88</sup> For example, the music on his 1973 album *Living in the Material World* was influenced by his spiritual guru, Abhay Charanaravinda Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada. Harrison invited Indian musician Zakir Hussain to play on the album, and the album sleeve artwork was “an exquisitely colorful painting of Lord Krishna driving a chariot in a scene from Bhagavad Gita.” See Lavezzoli, *Dawn of Indian Music...*, 9.

<sup>89</sup> These are “No Self Pity,” “Orange and Red Beams,” “All Is One,” “We Love You Lil” and “Monterey”.

*Again*, Havens plays sitar and tambura on a three-minute instrumental track. This was no mere scene-setter: the remainder of the album illustrates Havens' aptitude towards a variety of musical styles—folk, psychedelic, easy-listening jazz. Havens avoided using Indian artwork on his album covers and inner sleeves, and his lyrics were eclectic, ranging from the optimism of "Putting Out The Vibration (And Hoping It Comes Home)," which promised brighter days ahead, to the Orwellian title of his 1968 album *Richard P. Havens 1983*, which was a much darker affair than previous albums. One song on that album, "Indian Rope Man," suggests Havens was sceptical about the ability of gurus to impart knowledge to westerners. Havens is, therefore, a prime example of a musician in this time period experimenting with Indian musical instruments, but without adopting Indian spirituality.

It is, however, difficult to draw a clear divide between genuine interest in Eastern music and the commercial reality that psychedelia was briefly popular among a mainly young, white, middle-class audience. Teen idols jumped on the bandwagon. "This Just Doesn't Seem To Be My Day" by The Monkees begins with a sitar solo, although the lyrics are about a relationship break-up rather than a quest for knowledge. Ricky Nelson, a teen idol in the early 1960s, tried to stay relevant late in the decade. His *Another Side of Rick* (1967) featured one song, "Marshmellow Skies," with abstract lyrics and jangling sitar. Even some Elvis Presley songs featured an electric sitar. These included "You'll Think of Me" (1969)<sup>90</sup> and "Snowbird" (1970).<sup>91</sup> But perhaps the most surprising attempt to exploit Eastern influences by a band with some stature came from the Rolling Stones. In 1967, the band released a psychedelic-influenced album entitled *Their Satanic Majesties Request*. One song, "Gomper," features an extended raga, with "tabla, sitar, and gently intoned chanting"<sup>92</sup>; another, "2000 Light years From Home," mixes science-fiction lyrics with an Arab-themed rhythm played on a Mellotron. The cover features the band sitting in front of a domed Indian-looking building, with a snow-covered mountain range as the backdrop. The album art includes Indian mandalas, and the Stones are draped in costumes reminiscent of the Orient. It was heavily influenced by *Sgt. Pepper*: the cover art even has the faces of the four Beatles as part of a montage which includes a camel and exotic birds. *Satanic Majesties* demonstrates the transient nature of "raga rock": the LP was "the lowest of low points in their career" notes biographer Philip Norman: unpopular with critics and fans alike, and disowned since by members of

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<sup>90</sup> Roben Jones, *Memphis Boys: The Story of American Studios* (Jackson: Mississippi University Press, 2010), 206.

<sup>91</sup> Michael Jarrett, *Producing Country: The Inside Story of the Great Recordings* (Middletown CT.: Wesleyan University Press, 2014), 70.

<sup>92</sup> Sheila Whiteley, *The Space Between the Notes: Rock and the Counter-Culture* (London & New York: Routledge, 2003), 97.

the band.<sup>93</sup> It trivialised both the counterculture and eastern-influenced music, with the Stones deploying these themes, sounds and images as mere commodities to be bought and sold in the marketplace.

Of course, there are no firm boundaries between the three aforementioned categorizations. However, the differences between two sitar-based instrumental albums by Big Jim Sullivan are revealing. Sullivan, a respected session musician and friend of George Harrison, released *Sitar Beat* in 1967 and *Lord Sitar* in 1968. Clearly, the sitar as the main musical instrument was the albums' major selling point. Sullivan's first effort was a genuine if modest attempt to produce something new (a full album of sitar-orientated music by a western musician): it had some artistic merit. *Sitar Beat* included three original compositions by Sullivan, alongside cover versions of popular hits such as Procol Harum's "A Whiter Shade of Pale," Donovan's "Sunshine Superman," and "She's Leaving Home" and "Within You, Without You" by the Beatles. While the covered songs are interpreted in simple instrumental way that follows the rhythm and beat of the original hits, Sullivan's three compositions are more experimental. "Flower Power" and "LTTS" try to emulate Indian classical music, with a raga melody, beat and drone, and effects created by sitar, tambura and tabla, whereas "The Koan" is an attempt at jazz fusion, featuring tablas. The follow-up album, *Lord Sitar*, is, however, an entirely commercial affair, which was marketed with the suggestion that "Lord Sitar" was actually George Harrison. Comprised mainly of cover versions of popular hits, Sullivan contributed no original compositions. The non-hits on the album were composed by producer John Hawkins, and they have only passing resemblance to Indian classical music. The album also includes a crass version of "If I Were a Rich Man" from the musical *Fiddler on the Roof*. The difference between the first and second album suggests that Sullivan's artistic impulses were overwhelmed by the profit motive.

Some artists were interested in exploring new Eastern-influenced musical and spiritual ideas and—at the same time—were aware that artists and record companies were using such themes for commercial gain. In 1968, British band the Moody Blues released *In Search of the Lost Chord*, a concept album concerning the quest for knowledge in the form of both physical journeys and drug-induced trips. The band used sitar, tambura and tabla to create a "helix of spiritual and philosophical ideas that appeared to offer both enlightenment and new ways of living."<sup>94</sup> The band were listed on the album credits as "Members of the Expedition", and the liner notes provide explanatory notes about chants and meditation practices. Album artwork emphasizes the journey motif: Philip Travers' painted cover art features an embryo in the womb

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<sup>93</sup> Philip Norman, *The Stones* (London: Elm Tree Books, 1984), 224. See also Jann Wenner, "Mick Jagger Remembers," *Rolling Stone*, No 723, 14 Dec. 1995. Available online at:

<http://www.rollingstone.com/music/news/mick-jagger-remembers-19951214>

<sup>94</sup> Rob Hughes, "Revolution in the Head," *Classic Rock*, No 184, Jun. 2013, 68-71, 131.

and a skull, separated by an ascending figure with outstretched arms; the internal artwork includes a yantra, an Indian diagram/symbol and important meditation aid. Taken together, the artwork might suggest that growth and enlightenment can be found through Indian meditation techniques, hallucinogenic drugs, or some combination of both. One song, "Om" (meaning "answer"), refers directly to Hindu mantras, and the lyrics make it clear that "Om" is the "lost chord" of the album title. While Jonathan Bellman<sup>95</sup> suggests that the band may simply have been "cashing in" on a genre of music that had already proved lucrative, lead singer Justin Hayward hints at satirical intentions when they made reference to the *Tibetan Book of the Dead* or Timothy Leary: "We could always see the funny side...There was this wicked sense of humour within the band that didn't allow you to take too much seriously."<sup>96</sup>

The high water mark of Western dalliance with Indian music was arguably the Concert for Bangladesh, actually two separate performances by a host of artists on 1 August, 1971 at Madison Square Garden, New York. This was a benefit concert, organised by George Harrison, on behalf of the millions of Bangladeshi refugees stranded following the devastating secession war with Pakistan. The show opened with Ravi Shankar and Ali Akbar Khan performing Indian classical music to an audience of tens of thousands, and later to a greater audience via critically acclaimed and commercially successful audio and cinematic releases.<sup>97</sup> "Everything that was good and famous and beautiful in rock and roll during the '60s came together in a glorious flaring of emotion at Madison Square Gardens, New York, on the night of August 1, 1971" commented one British reporter, suggesting the degree to which Shankar's sitar-playing had become accepted as part of the rock mainstream.<sup>98</sup>

However, in spite of this high point, Indian-inspired music was losing its attractiveness. In 1971, The Mamas & The Papas used a sitar on five tracks from what would turn out to be their final studio album, *People Like Us*. The critical and commercial failure of this album by one of the most emblematic bands of the 1960s suggests the ebbing of the flower power/raga rock musical subgenres. Perhaps this was due to the fickle nature of the music business where new trends and fads quickly replace existing ones. However, it may also be that some of the factors that influenced its growth had now become less prominent and less urgent. The Vietnam War was winding down, for example. The era of the Dr King/Ghandi-inspired Civil Rights Movement was also over: Dr King's assassination in 1968 fractured the movement, which, in any event, was already under challenge from separatist and confrontational "Black Power" ideology. With many of the major battles about voting rights, segregation and education having been won, the movement's

<sup>95</sup> Jonathan Bellman, ed., *The Exotic in Western Music* (Northeastern University Press, 1998), 303.

<sup>96</sup> Quoted in Hughes, "Revolution in the Head," 70.

<sup>97</sup> Lavezzoli, *Dawn of Indian Music...*, 66. David Hepworth, *1971: Never a Dull Moment* (London: Bantam Press, 2016), 205-37.

<sup>98</sup> Richard Williams, "The Concert for Bangla Desh," *Melody Maker*, 1 Jan 1972.

main focus shifted to issues of poverty and class division, and these were much more intractable problems that could not be solved simply with the stroke of a pen. The Hippy Trail to the East that had once been the domain of a small number of "intrepids" now was marked by regular commercial bus routes and mapped by guide books. Musically, what was novel and exciting in the mid-1960s had become both mercenary and passé by the end of the decade: when even Elvis Presley songs now featured a sitar, it was clear the "raga rock" genre was suffering from music's worst possible criticism: it had become unhip.

### **Good as Gone?—Musical Depictions of the Hippy Trail**

We suggested earlier that the experiences of the Hippy Trail journeys inspired some of the musician-travellers to embrace musical styles from the "East": but how did subsequent trans-Atlantic pop-rock music represent the Hippy Trail itself? While there are a few instances of Trailers incorporating their experiences into their music—for example, the German band Embryo's 1979 album *Embryo's Reise* [Embryo's Travels] was inspired by their nine-month bus trip to India in that year (it is subtitled "Recordings from Afghanistan, Pakistan and India," and features songs such as "Road to Asia," "Far East" and "Himalaya Radio")—overall, there are relatively few direct representations of the Hippy Trail in mainstream popular music. While in Rishikesh in 1968, The Beatles wrote many of the songs that appeared later on their *White Album*, but they did not write specifically about the Hippy Trail, hippies, or India.

Nevertheless, some performers did compose songs inspired by the Trail, albeit with mixed commercial and artistic success. It is useful to consider some examples of such songs as it opens up new perspectives of the musical turn to the East. The following discussion is indicative rather than exhaustive, and will focus mainly on composition, addressing in particular whether these songs show any sympathetic understanding of their subject matter or if they deal in caricatures of the exotic other and are marked by appropriation, consumerisation and superficiality.<sup>99</sup>

Only a handful of pop songs mention the Hippy Trail directly or indirectly.<sup>100</sup> To our knowledge, only one song—"Down Under" (1981) by Australian band Men at Work—uses the phrase "Hippie Trail." Other songs, though, refer specifically to Hippy Trail destinations, or focus on the "hash trail" or "opium trail" mythology. The quality that links these songs is their emphasis on the importance of the journey either as a means of escape or of finding some utopian "shangri-la." Jonathan Bellman contends that the two things most associated with raga rock are transcendental meditation and drugs, and these only really came to the fore in the late 1960s

<sup>99</sup> See for example Susan Fast, *In the Houses of the Holy: Led Zeppelin and the Power of Rock Music* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 101-04.

<sup>100</sup> An explanation for this may be that the phrase "Hippy/Hippie Trail" was not widely used until around 1970. Before that, the trail was known by other names such as Road to Kathmandu and Overland to India. In their 1968 song "Sympathy for the Devil", for example, the Rolling Stones refer to a journey to Bombay.

with the emergence of psychedelic rock.<sup>101</sup> His easy conflation of raga rock and drug-taking can be challenged: Indian spiritual guides such as Maharishi Mahesh Yogi and Meher Baba insisted that drugs were not required to meditate.<sup>102</sup> The Who's Pete Townshend, a follower of Baba since 1967, insisted: "One minute I was freaked out on acid and the next minute I was into Baba."<sup>103</sup> Moreover, The Beatles went to Rishikesh, in part, to learn Transcendental Meditation as an alternative to drugs: Ian MacDonald stresses the extent to which their temporary abstinence from drugs stimulated their creativity.<sup>104</sup> Nevertheless, the belief that hallucinogenic drugs and elevated spirituality were connected was enticing: Aldous Huxley made, perhaps, the most articulate case in *The Doors of Perception* (1954), suggesting that LSD might alter his "ordinary mode of consciousness so as to be able to know, from the inside, what the visionary, the medium, even the mystic were talking about."<sup>105</sup> Huxley's experimentation muddied the water between science, philosophy, religion, and pleasure, and his experiences convinced many to embrace LSD as a catalyst towards raised consciousness and a spiritual or religious pilgrimage.

"Psychedelics," asserts intellectual and cultural historian Nick Bromell, "are powerful and... distinctive." He goes on: "As research in the fields of psychopharmacology, religion, and anthropology makes perfectly clear, psychedelics do something no other drugs can, and that mysterious something lies very close to the human sense of wonder that is formalized in the world's religions."<sup>106</sup> It is perhaps for this reason that many people in the mid-late 1960s tended to conflate Indian music and spirituality with drug use: this was driven, undoubtedly, by popular conceptions of India as a stop on the "Hash Trail."<sup>107</sup> Drugs were often named according to their geographic source, for example, Moroccan Gold, Afghan Black, Lebanese Red and Acapulco Gold, and this reinforced the assumed connection between drugs and exotic places. "A Passage to Bangkok" (1976), by the Canadian band Rush, imagines a journey from Columbia, through Jamaica, Morocco, Bangkok, Lebanon and Afghanistan, ending in Kathmandu, with travellers sampling drugs

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<sup>101</sup> Jonathan Bellman, "Indian Resonances in the British Invasion, 1965-1968," *The Journal of Musicology*, Volume 15, No 1 (Winter 1997), 116-36 (at 134-35).

<sup>102</sup> Timothy Miller, *The Hippies and American Values* (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1991), 48.

<sup>103</sup> Ira Robbins, "Pete Townshend: What Came Next: Pete Townshend Goes It Alone," *Who Came First* (Rykodisc) 1992 [1972].

<sup>104</sup> Ian MacDonald, *Revolution in the Head: The Beatles' Records and the Sixties* (London: Vintage, 2008), 278-79.

<sup>105</sup> Aldous Huxley, *The Doors of Perception and Heaven and Hell* (London: Flamingo, 1994 [1954]), 5.

<sup>106</sup> Nick Bromell, *Tomorrow Never Knows: Rock and Psychedelics in the 1960s* (Chicago & London: University of Chicago, 2000), 62.

<sup>107</sup> Seth E. Blumenthal, "Nixon's marijuana problem: youth politics and 'law and order', 1968-1972," *The Sixties*, Volume 9, No 1 (2016), 1-28.



at each stop. Guitarist Alex Lifeson claims the song was influenced by Led Zeppelin's "Kashmir,"<sup>108</sup> although Lifeson's guitar solo is more reminiscent of Mike Bloomfield's atonal guitar work in the Paul Butterfield's Blues Band song "East-West." The song also features the clichéd "Oriental riff," a "formulaic [bit] of music...used to indicate that the setting is now Cairo, Baghdad, or Peking."<sup>109</sup> There is a clear continuity here with nineteenth-century images of the exotic Orient, as the song effectively reduces countries and cultures to drug suppliers. While one critic speculates that "A Passage to Bangkok" will make you "wince with embarrassment,"<sup>110</sup> lyricist Neil Peart claims the song was meant to be light-hearted, to provide some relief from the layered conceptual story that is side one of the album *2112*. Peart states: "There was this pressure—I felt pressure from the other guys anyway—to be lighter in tone and write some funny songs."<sup>111</sup>

Not every song that leant towards the East celebrated drug use however: Steppenwolf's "Snowblind Friend" (1970) uses the same "flying high" imagery of The Byrds' "Eight Miles High," as well as an electric sitar, to paint a picture of a drug user dying in a toilet of an overdose. The lyrics "unholy" and "ungodly" used to describe the bathroom suggest a rejection of the psychedelic culture which enticed naive westerners into believing that hallucinogenic drugs would open the doors of perception. Two songs written by Phil Lynott and performed by Thin Lizzy are in the Orientalist tradition but also carry a message about the perils of drug addiction. In "Opium Trail" (1977), Lynott refers to drug abuse. Here the protagonist takes a drug-induced hallucinogenic journey to the East, during which he encounters "exotic dancers" and "flashing lancers." Lyrical themes of mysterious, untrustworthy, and dangerous locals highlight the protagonist's ambivalence towards the drug that both eases his pain but also leads to addiction. In "Chinatown" (1980), Lynott suggests an exotic destination, while also using the lexicon of drug users (China White is a type of heroin) such as "getting high" and "coming down," to warn that this is one trip the traveller/user won't come back from. This was something Lynott could speak about with authority as both he and Californian guitarist Scott Gorham were heroin users.<sup>112</sup>

The turn to the East also drew folk musicians towards new themes, quite distinct from the protest music of the early 1960s. Some considered the Hippy Trail. For example, the main theme of "Good as Gone" (1966) by the Incredible String Band is escape from an unrewarding job and unrewarding life by taking a southward road to pursue one's (unspecified) dreams. Interestingly,

<sup>108</sup> "Alex Lifeson and Geddy Lee of Rush Choose 22 Songs That Inspired Them Most," *Guitar World*, 28 Sep. 2014. Viewed 7 Jul. 2015. <http://www.guitarworld.com/60-minutes-alex-lifeson-and-geddy-lee-rush?page=0,7>

<sup>109</sup> Fast, *In the Houses of the Holy*, 102-3.

<sup>110</sup> See Carol S. Price and Robert M. Price, *Mystic Rhythms: The Philosophical Vision of Rush* (Gillette N.J.: Wildside, 1998), 78.

<sup>111</sup> Classic Albums Presents *The Making of 2112 & Moving Pictures*. BBC 4/VH1 & Eagle Rock Entertainment, 2010.

<sup>112</sup> Alan Byrne, *Thin Lizzy* (London: SAF Publishing, 2006), 168-9.

this song looks to the future and avoids the nostalgia for a better and simpler rural past that had been a major theme in folk music. The opening bars of the song—a rhythm-less introduction, played on solo guitar—resemble the “taksim” that often introduces Arab songs.

Before it became more commonly known as the Hippy Trail, travelers often referred to the journey as “RTK,” the Road to Kathmandu, and Nepal’s capital has been the subject of at least two popular songs, “Katmandu” (1970) by Cat Stevens and “Katmandu” (1975) by Bob Seger. The diegesis of each song relates to the idea of Kathmandu as a kind of Shangri-la. Stevens’ composition is reflective and tender, featuring acoustic guitar and flute played at a slow tempo; in contrast, Seger’s mid-tempo song features electric guitar, and is “sing-along” in style. Whereas Stevens emphasises Kathmandu’s spiritual attraction, Seger is almost apologetic in explaining his reasons for abandoning America. He tells his listeners that he loves America but, in tongue-in-cheek fashion, explains that his music is no longer popular so he might as well go to Kathmandu. Seger relies on the same cultural reference as Stevens: Kathmandu is a magical place of refuge, which offers escape from western values. Not everyone saw the “East” this way though: Steely Dan’s “Bodhisattva” (1973) pokes fun at those selling their American homes (a capitalist act) to finance a journey east in search of enlightenment. The lyrics mock these ostensibly naïve and gullible individuals cannot tell the difference between India, China and Japan.<sup>113</sup>

The Hippy Trail route into North Africa was celebrated by a number of popular artists including Crosby, Stills and Nash, Donovan and Led Zeppelin. “Marrakesh Express” (1969), written by Graham Nash and recorded by Crosby, Stills & Nash,<sup>114</sup> focuses on a mode of transport as a means of escape but in this case the North African destination adds an exotic element. The song is based on a real journey taken by Nash, and details what he saw and felt. The lure of the Orient is in what makes it different from the West: snake charming, traditional clothing, and the promise of an unknown (to the traveller) continent further to the south. “The Year Of The Cat” (1976) by Al Stewart tells of a coach traveller in north Africa who spends the night with a mysterious and beautiful woman and who is left behind when the coach leaves the next day. The song has a number of Orientalist themes:<sup>115</sup> the exotic setting, the mysterious hidden door, and

<sup>113</sup> Rachel Rubin and Jeffrey Paul Melnick, *Immigration and American Popular Culture: An Introduction* (New York: New York University Press, 2007), 159-60.

<sup>114</sup> Simon Philo, *British Invasion: The Crosscurrents of Musical Influence* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2015), 149-50.

<sup>115</sup> In *Music and Capitalism: a History of the Present* (Chicago & London: University of Chicago, 2016), Timothy D. Taylor identifies the following themes Western modernity attributes to the mysterious “Other”: universality of cultural practices—making non-Western cultures available for use by Western artists; grouping different cultures into a homogenous mass; and mythologising the “Other” as being closer to nature or in a natural state of being compared to Westerners (102). Taylor explains also that a typical metaphor used by Western pop stars is that of the colonial explorer discovering a previously untouched or little known non-Western culture (pp. 99-100). In *Modernity’s Ear: Listening to Race and Gender in World*

the sensual woman. It also conflates Africa and Asia into a single narrative: for example the "Year of the Cat" is one of the zodiacal signs of the Vietnamese calendar. The references to blue tiles, markets, drum beats, silk, and incense designate the location as foreign, colourful and exotic. One can almost smell the patchouli! In "Tangier" (1968), singer songwriter Donovan uses more seedy and unsettling imagery, that of beggars, disease, and starving children, but this is still a narrative of progress as the locals, we are told, have a longer life expectancy than their forebears.

### West Meets East

Despite its title, Led Zeppelin's "Kashmir" (1975) is another example of a song influenced by the Hippy Trail destination of North Africa. With a lyrical theme of a journey or quest for knowledge, the song is epic in ambition and daring in conception and execution. "Kashmir" nevertheless evokes classic Orientalist themes. It thus provides the best opportunity here to discuss the aforementioned topics of appropriation and exploitation.

Jimmy Page wrote the music for "Kashmir" and Robert Plant the lyrics. Both had developed an interest in non-Western music. In 1972, after a concert tour to Australia, Page and Plant visited Bombay and performed two songs, "Four Sticks" and "Friends," with local musicians. While this was a one-off event, Plant expressed an ambition to travel through Asia and repeat the experience.<sup>116</sup> In 1975, Plant told *Circus Magazine* "It's my ambition to go to Kashmir...it's not wine and roses or even the spiritual aspects of life there that I'm interested in. Its day to day experiences...There's so much to learn there, so much that we here in the West have lost."<sup>117</sup> That same year, Page told *Rolling Stone* journalist Cameron Crowe, "I think it's time to travel, start gathering some real right-in-there-experience with street musicians around the world. Moroccan Musicians, Indian musicians...As a person and a musician. That's how you grow."<sup>118</sup> While these ambitions went mostly unrealised, Plant did travel through the Sahara in 1973, which inspired him to write lyrics that would eventually become those of "Kashmir." Page used an alternative DADGAD tuning to imitate the droning, cyclical riffs he had heard in Morocco in 1975.<sup>119</sup> Plant writes about the otherness and exoticism of the landscape, as well as its harshness, and along the way he sits with tribal elders who share with him their spiritual knowledge.

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*Music* (New York & London: New York University Press, 2015), Roshanak Kheshti suggests that hybridity, appropriation, and authenticity are familiar tropes deployed in the critical examination of world music (11).

<sup>116</sup> Mick Wall, *When Giants Walked the Earth: a biography of Led Zeppelin* (London: Orion, 2009), 283.

<sup>117</sup> Fast, *In the Houses of the Holy*, 89. See also Sidharth Bhatia, *India Psychedelic: The Story of Rocking Generation* (India: Harper Collins, 2015).

<sup>118</sup> Fast, *In the Houses of the Holy*, 89.

<sup>119</sup> *Ibid.*, 88.

The song features musical patterns of classical Moroccan, Indian and Middle Eastern music. "I had a sitar for some time and I was interested in modal tunings and Arabic stuff. It started off with a riff and then employed Eastern lines underneath," Page explained. He called this the CIA influence (Celtic, Indian, Arabic). He was a fan of the celebrated Egyptian singer Oum Kaltoum and, as Fast points out, "Kashmir has rhythmic similarities to some of his work, as well as other Egyptian and Arabic music."<sup>120</sup> Novelist William Burroughs also saw North African influences, claiming that Led Zeppelin music "bears some resemblance to the trance music found in Morocco which is magical in origin and purpose—that is, concerned with the evocation and control of spiritual forces."<sup>121</sup>

Is "Kashmir" an example of appropriation of traditional North African music or of the band's resourcefulness and willingness to learn from non-Western music? And what standards should be applied when drawing a conclusion? At first glance, the song's title seems to clash with the North African landscape that inspired Plant's lyrics, and it thus follows the Orientalist tradition of conflating "different" non-Western countries into one homogenous mass. Why "Kashmir" and not "Marrakech," "Sahara" or "Morocco"? The timeframe is important here: by the mid-1970s, Morocco had become over-explored by Westerners, particularly from the hippie travelling community, and no longer seemed exotic: writing in 1971, *OZ* editor Jim Anderson claimed "Morocco is a good, safe place for the average freak. The frontiersmen of the itinerant, emerging hippie nation, the acid gypsies with their uniquely evolved life style are much more likely to be found in Indonesia, East Africa or Columbia these days. Morocco is a trail which was blazed many years ago."<sup>122</sup> In contrast, Kashmir's remoteness from the tourist industry made it more representative of the mysterious, ancient land that Plant invokes in his lyrics.

Jimmy Page is arguably more aware now of the issue of appropriation than he was in the 1970s. In a recent interview he was asked if fans would ever get to hear him play his sitar. He replied "I still have the sitar and I still play, but you don't mess with two thousand years of culture."<sup>123</sup> Critical opinion is divided: musicologist Steve Waksman regards "Kashmir" as an example of "appropriation and cultural colonization," with the original source music being de-contextualised and therefore open to any interpretation westerners may wish to place on it.<sup>124</sup> Susan Fast calls it "filtering" rather than appropriation, but suggests the effect is the same, that

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<sup>120</sup> *Ibid.*, 94.

<sup>121</sup> Quoted in Steve Waksman, *Instruments of Desire: The Electric Guitar and the Shaping of Musical Experience* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999), 274-75.

<sup>122</sup> Jim Anderson, "Somerset Maugham in Morocco," *OZ* No 39, Dec. 1971, 8-9 (at 8).

<sup>123</sup> Jimmy Page, interview with Mark Blake. *Classic Rock*, No 213, Aug. 2015, 76-80 (at 80).

<sup>124</sup> Waksman, *Instruments of Desire*, 268. More generally, see the sceptical notes in Julie Stephens, *Anti-Disciplinary Protest: Sixties Radicalism and Postmodernism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 48-72.

authentic Arab/Asian musicians do not get their music heard in the West and instead groups like Zeppelin interpret "cultural experiences far removed from the white, Western middle class." Western musicians, Fast argues, have the economic clout and power to "invent" (i.e. imagine, interpret) Eastern sounds and cultures, and to speak for these sounds and cultures, rather than let them speak for themselves. (Similar criticisms have been raised about white artists interpreting black or Asian music.)<sup>125</sup> Nevertheless, Fast's criticism of such "filtering" is nuanced and non-binary: she acknowledges, for example, that "Kashmir" blurs the identities between East and West and that Page and Plant show some awareness of their privileged position. In contrast to Waksman, musicologist Gregg Akkerman praises the song unreservedly, adjudging its lyrics to be "brilliant in their vivid imagery and poetic sophistication." Akkerman notes too that the composition is solid enough to be "adaptable to classical orchestration, choral arrangements and even hip hop treatments."<sup>126</sup> Akkerman's analysis of the song—one of the most in-depth considerations by an academic—does not offer an opinion about appropriation: he treats the song as an artistic achievement whose worth is to be judged by the poeticism of the lyrics and the musicality of the composition. Outside academic writing, critiques of "Kashmir" tend to apply the same standards as Akkerman: for example, writing in *Creem* in 1975, music journalist Jaan Uhelszki called Kashmir "certainly the best cut on the album"; *New Musical Express* journalist Nick Kent adjudged the song's arrangement "pretty impressive"; and *Sounds* journalist Mick Houghton called "Kashmir" the "total achievement" of the album.<sup>127</sup> How then should the song be judged?

Considering it simply on its own merits seems inadequate: cultural scholars such as Frederic Jameson have argued, compellingly, that cultural products such as music cannot be separated from the historical circumstances in which they are created.<sup>128</sup> For oppressed people to whom power over their own economies, cultures and lives has been denied, the question of appropriation has real-life consequences. So when Oliver Lovesey argues that the Incredible String Band "involved listeners in a type of passive moral complicity" in the appropriation of North

<sup>125</sup> Fast, *In the Houses of the Holy*, 86. This balancing between a creative "borrowing" of other musical tropes and an exploitative appropriation remains a serious dilemma today. For a stern warning concerning such practices see "Postmodern(ising) Qawwali" in Sohail Inayatullah and Gail Boxwell, eds., *Islam, Postmodernism and Other Futures: A Ziauddin Sardar Reader* (London: Pluto, 2003), 219-29.

<sup>126</sup> Gregg Akkerman, *Experiencing Led Zeppelin: A Listener's Companion* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2014), 91.

<sup>127</sup> Jaan Uhelszki, Rev. of *Physical Graffiti*. *Creem*, May 1975; Nick Kent, Rev. of *Physical Graffiti*. *New Musical Express*, 7 Dec. 1974; Mick Houghton, "Led Zeppelin: Interview with Jimmy Page," *Sounds*, 10 July 1976.

<sup>128</sup> See, for example, Frederic Jameson, *The Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1981).

African music, he certainly gives pause for thought.<sup>129</sup> However, Lovesey does suggest a position which denies legitimacy to any form of musical experimentation, borrowing or exchange; or at least that such experimentation might have consequences for those whose music is being appropriated. The musicians of the 1960s were probably unaware that they were the inheritors of a long-standing tradition in Western culture. In fact, the first "Orientalists" were a minority current within the embryonic British administration in India in the early nineteenth century. They admired much of what they found local cultures and religions, and it was due to their efforts that the first English-language translations of classic Hindu religious texts such as the *Bhagavad Gita* were published.<sup>130</sup> However, they lost their argument within the British administration. Majority opinion saw Indian cultures as backward and primitive, and therefore suitable to be replaced—where possible—with Western structures. The Orientalist tendency, however, survived as a minority current within Western culture: one can trace it through organisations such as Helena Blavatsky and the Theosophists, and onto the early twentieth-century composers mentioned earlier in this paper.<sup>131</sup>

Despite their undoubted admiration for the East, this tendency incurred Said's wrath in his *Orientalism*. Said's argument was they did not represent a substantial alternative discourse to mainstream imperialism: they celebrated the backward and the primitive; they romanticized; they spoke in vast, over-generalised terms of an "Oriental spirit" which stretched from Morocco to Japan; the knowledge they produced was often little more than cliché. Above all, they denied the possibility of change: the East had to stay East in order to be true to itself; attempts to develop, to draw inspiration from Western influences were seen as corrupting and inauthentic. "Praise without knowledge is precisely what exoticism aspires to be" noted philosopher Tzvetan Todorov some twenty-five years ago: his comments capture an important aspect of Orientalism.<sup>132</sup>

The question we face is: how different were the Indian-inspired musicians of the 1960s from the earlier Orientalists? Of course, they were operating in a different situation. Formal imperial structures had largely been dismantled, although frequently they were replaced by forms of neo-colonialism. This changed context also alters the content of the musicians' initiatives: while some did display the traits mentioned by Said, they cannot be seen as providing a soft,

<sup>129</sup> Oliver Lovesey, "The 'world' before globalisation: Moroccan elements in The Incredible String Band's music," *Popular Music*, Volume 30, No 1 (January 2011), 127-43 (at 128). Lovesey also claims that for Led Zeppelin, "Arab influence signified doom, the barbarian invasion, or instant Valhalla" (138).

<sup>130</sup> Charles Allen, *The Buddha and the Saints: the Men who discovered India's lost religion* (London: John Murray, 2002).

<sup>131</sup> Poul Pedersen, "Tibet, Theosophy, and the Psychologization of Buddhism," in Thierry Dodin and Heinz Räther, eds., *Imagining Tibet: Perceptions, Projections & Fantasies* (Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2001), 151-66. Tom Neuhaus, *Dreamworld Tibet: Western Illusions* (Trumbull, CT, USA: Weatherhill, 2004).

<sup>132</sup> Tzvetan Todorov, *On Human Diversity: Nationalism, Racism and Exoticism in French Thought*, translated by C. Porter (Cambridge Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1993), 265.

romantic justification of imperialism, which is a main thrust of Said's criticism. Moreover, this "turn to the East" led to some very different results from the previous Orientalist cultures. Let's briefly turn to the Beatles' *Sgt. Pepper's*. Consider "Getting Better": about half-way through the song, Harrison introduces the sound of a tambura, and the mood of the song changes to briefly refer to domestic violence: this passage is in sharp contrast to the generally sunny, upbeat, optimistic mood of the song. The approximately twenty-second passage makes no reference to India, Buddhism, meditation or travelling east: presumably McCartney and Lennon felt that the unusual sound of the tambura identified the third verse as different from the rest. Is this Orientalism in practice? Almost certainly not. McCartney and Lennon are merely using an Indian instrument as one more colour on their palette; this is a measured, careful form of innocent appropriation, and an example of the sort of borrowing that musicians have been doing for centuries. To argue that such uses constitute a "passive moral complicity" in colonialism seems absurd. (Bagpipes probably originated from the area now occupied by Turkey: however, it would be unreasonable to ask every Celtic pipe-band to renounce their instruments on the grounds that they are not authentically Celtic).

More problematic is the Harrison approach, represented by his "Within You, Without You" on *Sgt. Pepper's*. Here, Harrison used musicians from the London-based Asian Music Centre to create something resembling a wholesale imitation of Indian musical forms: the song features no chord changes, and makes use of a structured dialogue between Harrison's sitar and a violin. The song itself often attracted criticism: it was a "repetitious recitation of elementary Far Eastern philosophy" for the anonymous reviewer of *Hit Parader*.<sup>133</sup> This comment also shows a danger inherent in the song: Harrison was not Indian, nor—truly speaking—Hindu. Yet he was being accepted by Western audiences as representing these communities, and so encouraging Orientalist-style fantasies about Indians: they were all spiritual, they all practiced meditation and yoga, and they possessed the secrets of universe. The "hall of mirrors" effect of such visions has been noted. Indian commentator Gita Mehta observes: "The seduction lay in the chaos. They thought they were simple. We thought they were neon. They thought we were profound. We knew we were provincial. Everybody thought everybody else was ridiculously exotic and everybody got it wrong". After suffering the indignity of having their names mis-pronounced for decades, Indians could now see hippies changing their Western names into Indian names that they can't pronounce.<sup>134</sup>

On the other hand, many commentators and fans have responded positively to the song. For music critic Ian MacDonald, "Within You, Without You" represents "the conscience" of the LP.

<sup>133</sup> "The Beatles: Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band," *Hit Parader*, Nov. 1967.

<sup>134</sup> Gita Mehta, *Karma Cola: The Marketing of the Mystic East* (London: Random House, 1998 [1979]), 5 and 33.

MacDonald also speculates on what it might have meant for Harrison himself. "Stylistically, it is the most distant departure for the staple Beatles sound in their discography—and an altogether remarkable achievement for some who had been acquainted with Hindustani classical music for barely eighteen months."<sup>135</sup> MacDonald's comments also suggest another aspect to "the turn to East": it was conducted at a time of musical experimentation, when pop musicians were attempting to demonstrate that they were different from the previous generation of popular musicians. Instead of being mere crooners, they wanted to convey that they were independent *artists*, capable of producing memorable works of complexity and depth. A decade earlier, marginalised musicians facing this issue would respond by comparing their music to classical music, such as Ahmad Jamal, who released his *Chamber Music of the New Jazz* in 1956. In the late 1960s, Oriental-inspired musical forms were being used in a similar manner: musicians hoped that music rooted in the "East" conferred a type of legitimacy on the artist, and that the very difficulty of their forms could demonstrate the technical proficiency of the musician. But there was more to it than this: as discussed above, the East was also used as a source of counter-legitimacy to dominant Western norms. For those seeking a sexually-affirmative, tolerant religion, Buddhism seemed as if it presented answers. For those wishing to demonstrate that they could play something more than the three chords required for a 12-bar blues, the sitar was a solution.

It should not be forgotten that this experimentation with musical forms and religions such as Buddhism was done largely outside of the structures or impulses of colonialism. To our knowledge, none of the Oriental-inspired music of the late 1960s makes any reference to India's previous status as a colony. Arguing that George Harrison was an agent of neo-colonialism seems to ignore a more obvious interpretation, that he went to India (literally and metaphorically) in order to learn, not to proselytise, to exploit or to conquer. The Western musicians generally saw Indian musicians as approximate equals: people who possessed a musical culture as valid and as interesting as their own. Quite possibly "raga rock" was received by Western audiences in a different way, and certainly a romantic, utopian understanding of life in India was one of the inspirations of the Hippy Trail, but these points do not invalidate the entire culture of "raga rock."

Rather than seeing the "turn to the East" as exploitation, it seems better to see it as an experiment in cultural translation, if a flawed one.<sup>136</sup> Some cultural commentators are open to such ideas of "borrowing." Philosopher James O. Young considers, for instance, that cultural appropriation allows music to flourish and can be "interesting and creative."<sup>137</sup> George Lipsitz

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<sup>135</sup> Ian MacDonald, *Revolution in the Head: the Beatles' Records and the Sixties* (London: Vintage, 2008), 243-44.

<sup>136</sup> On cultural translation, see Peter Burke, *Cultural Hybridity* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2009). Despite this work's title, Burke presents some convincing arguments for not using the term "hybridity."

<sup>137</sup> James O. Young, *Cultural Appropriation and the Arts* (New York & Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 28.



warns of the problems created by artists appropriating other cultures if those artists are unwilling to "examine their own relationship to power," but he also argues persuasively that cultural appropriation can create hybrid music and can be a form of empowerment for working-class people from different races and ethnic groups.<sup>138</sup> By its very nature, "raga rock" created something new, a fusion of western sounds and musical patterns with those from the east. It would be illogical, therefore, to accuse the genre of being inauthentic. Hybridity, though, is not an unproblematic concept. Cultural anthropologist Roshanak Kheshti argues, for example, that the idea of hybrid African-Western music refers back to historic fears of miscegenation and Darwinian ideas of race-mixing, in which the white race always held the dominant power relationship. In short, any form of hybridism involving western music cannot be separated from the historic legacy of colonialism, racial inequality and exploitation.<sup>139</sup>

Some critics suggest that Said's interpretations are too negative—an important point to note when considering the "raga rock" form: in an essay in the museum catalogue for the exhibition "China: Through the Looking Glass" (Metropolitan Museum of Art, Spring 2015) curator Andrew Bolton claimed that the exhibition "attempts to propose a less politicized and more positivistic examination of Orientalism as a locus of infinite and unbridled creativity." While recognising Said's contribution to the study of Orientalism, crucially Bolton argues that it is possible to "rethink" Orientalism as "an appreciative cultural response by the West to its encounters with the East."<sup>140</sup> For Bolton, the potential for artistic creativity, cultural exchange and mutual understanding, offers an alternative viewpoint to the mainly negative connotations offered by Said. In the same work, art historian Homa King offers an intriguing analysis of cinematic depictions of the East, arguing that instead of simple binary opposition between East and West, or one-way exploitation through "fetishistic curiosity or xenophobic projections," cinematic *mise-en-scène* (literally, what we see on screen) creates a liminal, enigmatic landscape which undermines the West's construction of its own identity. King argues that the West's fascination with the East "might stem from the uncanny realization that one's own culture is a mosaic of fragments that arrived, once upon a time, from elsewhere." King suggests that rather than simple exploitation or the construction of hybrid East-West culture, Western fascination with the East creates an area of unknowability that offers both West and East the opportunity to reflect on their interactions with each other. Simultaneously, King suggests that previous

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<sup>138</sup> George Lipsitz, *Dangerous Crossroads: Popular Music, Postmodernism and the Poetics of Place* (London: Verso, 1994), 63.

<sup>139</sup> Roshanak Kheshti, *Modernity's Ear: Listening to Race and Gender in World Music* (New York & London: New York University Press, 2015), 82-91.

<sup>140</sup> Andrew Bolton, with John Galliano, Adam Geczy, Maxwell K. Hearn, Homa King, Harold Koda, Mei Mei Rado and Wong Kar Wai, *China: Through the Looking Glass* (New York Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2015), 17.

criticism of Western depictions of the East focuses too much on pointing out and attempting to redress the inauthentic nature of these depictions, and might instead focus on the impossibility of finding such authenticity in art.<sup>141</sup>

To relate this back to our discussion of music, Page and Plant seemed genuinely interested in expanding their musical repertoire and in exploring at least some aspects of non-Western cultures. They did so, as Fast notes, from a position of power but also in an open and self-effacing way. "Kashmir" is clearly a powerful and exciting song, and Plant hoped it will supersede the more well-known "Stairway to Heaven" (1971) as the band's most important musical accomplishment.<sup>142</sup> However, there is no escaping from the fact that when wealthy western musicians "discover" and adopt non-western music as their own, it raises problems and complexities. It continues the western colonial tradition of taking without giving back, and employs the old power relationship between the coloniser and the (ex) colonised. Page and Plant are not responsible for the past, any more than the Incredible String Band bear moral responsibility for colonialism: one might question though what they gave back in return for what they took.

### Conclusion

In this paper, we have shown then that the musical turn to the East took many forms and artists were motivated by a number of musical, spiritual and commercial reasons. At times, the Eastern influence was substantial: to add to the examples already mentioned, *Yes's Close to the Edge* (1972) was heavily influenced by Herman Hesse's *Siddhartha* (1922) and the structure of *Yes's* follow-up album, *Tales from Topographic Oceans* (1973) is based entirely on Hindu scripture.<sup>143</sup> In contrast, while Janis Joplin's 1971 version of Garnet Mimms and the Enchanters' 1963 song "Cry Baby" amends the original lyrics to include a reference to Kathmandu, it is mentioned only in passing and adds nothing substantial to the song's original lyrics or meaning. Similarly, John Lennon's "Nobody Told Me" (1984) refers to Kathmandu in a casual way, without the spiritual connotations of earlier Beatles songs. Some artists deeply immersed themselves in the music of the East, or in the culture, or in both. Others saw only an opportunity to cash in on the exoticism of Eastern musical tropes and fashions, to make a quick profit, or to reinvent themselves by jumping on the "Beatles Orientalis" bandwagon. Of the aforementioned artists, only a few actually went East: Cat Stevens, The Beatles, Donovan, Mickey Hart, and Plant and Page of Led Zeppelin, and a handful of others. But most were content to imagine the East, sometimes

<sup>141</sup> *Ibid.*, 71. See also Homay King, *Lost in Translation: Orientalism, Cinema, and the Enigmatic Signifier* (Duke University Press, 2010).

<sup>142</sup> Susan Fast, *In the Houses of the Holy: Led Zeppelin and the Power of Rock Music* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 88.

<sup>143</sup> See John Covach, "Progressive Rock, 'Close to the Edge,' and the Boundaries of Style," in *Understanding Rock: Essays in Musical Analysis*, John Covach & Graeme M. Boone, eds., (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 3-31.

copying it directly from Shankar or second-hand from The Beatles. Most, however, relied on familiar Orientalist tropes, with predictably stereotypical results.

We have also seen that the concept of a journey, a pilgrimage or a trip had long been a central mythos of American popular music: music journalist Mick Gold notes, for example, "Much of American blues, country and western, and rock and roll, music which was the major part of the Beatles' earliest musical resources, offers the idea of the journey or trip, whether brief or lasting a lifetime, as the most direct means of escape from the troubles of the world."<sup>144</sup> And by the mid-late 1960s, music was more self-aware, more experimental, and more open to musical and spiritual influences from outside western culture. Because of this, and due also to the popularity of hallucinogenic drugs, the concept of a "trip" had become as much internal as external, and "raga rock" reflected a significant manifestation of the synthesis of eastern and western musical forms. The temptation to associate an actual journey east with contemporary popular music is, therefore, compelling. For example, Rory MacLean entitled his study of the Hippy Trail "Magic Bus" even though bus travel was only one of a number of modes of travelling the Trail.<sup>145</sup> Similarly, when Peter Maddick wrote his memoir of the Trail, he contextualized his story by referencing iconic artists and album releases from the 1960s, as well as musical events such as the Beatles' visit to Rishikesh.<sup>146</sup> These instantiations suggest—perhaps erroneously—that historical events of the 1950s, '60s and '70s and the music of those decades are inextricably intertwined. For those involved in events, the music helps them recall the time and place (Maddick's memoir is a prime example of this); for those who came later, the music suggests ways of remembering that may or may not have any bearing on reality: after all, the lyrics of Led Zeppelin's "Kashmir" bear no relationship to the geographical region of Kashmir, its peoples or its cultures.

The material surveyed in this paper suggests both the extent and depth of the musical "turn to the east". The idea of the journey inspired and bewitched: some reacted in a literal manner and bought tickets to travel to India, but others reacted more subtly: their "journey" was virtual and metaphorical. The results varied: from the crass to the exceptional, from the spiritual to the self-indulgent, from naked profiteering to original, creative work. The extent of these experiments makes the "turn to the east" something arguably more substantial than other musical fashions: it is difficult to think of other movements which had similar musical, spiritual, philosophical and artistic dimensions. Moreover, some of these changes have had permanent effects on musical culture in the West. The idea of "world music" was developed during the years

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<sup>144</sup> Mick Gold, "The Act You've Known for All These Years: The Beatles and Sgt. Pepper," unpublished, 1974. <http://www.teachrock.org/resources/article/the-act-youve-known-for-all-these-years-the-beatles-and-sgt-pepper/> Accessed Sept. 5, 2016.

<sup>145</sup> Rory Maclean, *Magic Bus: on the Hippy Trail from Istanbul to India* (London: Penguin, 2007). And like the authors of this paper, Maclean was unable to resist using song titles as "signposts."

<sup>146</sup> Peter Maddick, *Once Upon a Time in the Sixties* (London: Bookline & Thinker, 2013).

of the Hippy Trail, although the arguments concerned appropriation, borrowing and inspiration continue to circulate.

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