

**CULTURAL REBELLION AND PROTEST NARRATIVES IN
SELECT SONGS BY THE BEATLES**

**A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT
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Cultural Rebellion and Protest Narratives in Select Songs by The Beatles

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In partial fulfillment of the requirements of the Degree of Doctor of
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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the thesis entitled “**Cultural Rebellion and Protest Narratives in Select Songs by The Beatles**” is the bonafide research conducted by F.Laltlankimi under my supervision. F.Laltlankimi worked methodically for her thesis being submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Department of English, Mizoram University.

This is to further certify that she had fulfilled all the required norms laid down under the Ph.D. regulations of Mizoram University. Neither the thesis as a whole or any part of it was ever submitted to any other University.

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DECLARATION

I, F Laltlankimi, hereby declare that the subject matter of my thesis is the record of work done by me, that the contents of this thesis did not form the basis of the award of any previous degree to me or to the best of my knowledge to anybody else, and that the thesis has not been submitted by me for any research degree in any other University/Institute.

This is being submitted to Mizoram University for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in English.

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CHAPTER 1

LOCATING THE RISE OF PROTEST CULTURE AND ITS IMPACT

This study aims to bring about a comprehensive understanding of the culture of protests and social rebellion in the context of popular music and the cultural changes within the societal and political spectrum that occurred during the counterculture era of the 1960s. The aim of this study is to render an in-depth critical analysis of cultures of rebellion that stem mainly from Western capitalist communities. It shall focus upon the interpretation of music, events and movements orchestrated by one of the leading figures of the 1960s cultural uprising, The Beatles. While doing so, the study intends to provide an understanding of youth-based cultural movements, narratives of social protests and their prevalence in popular culture and in the cultures of the avant-garde. For the purpose of critical analysis and theoretical understanding, the study will make use of twenty-four songs that are taken from seven albums that have been published by The Beatles, *Revolution In the Head: The Beatles' Records and the Sixties* (2005) by Ian MacDonald which chronicles and evaluates every song recorded by the band and *The Beatles Anthology* (2000) which contains interviews with all four members of The Beatles as well as their close associates in their musical career.

The legacy of the 1960s in the Western societies of the United Kingdom and the United States continues to be of significance in the development of cultural and societal practices. The decade starting from the 1960s is regarded by many as being a revolutionary decade given the number of occurrences in the cultural and political sphere. The social changes that occurred during this period can be characterized in terms of the fact that there was a significant decline and rejection of conservative ideals in Western communities; there was an increasing rise in the adaptation of ideals that rejected and denounced the principles of conservatism that had previously been recognized as the norm. Events that are associated with this era, collectively known as the counterculture movement, include pro-peace movements and demonstrations embodied in the form of the hippies and other subgroups, protest against the war in Vietnam, campaigns for the disarmament of nuclear weapons, liberation of sexuality and the advocacy of recreational drug taking. In general, there was a tendency amongst active members of the counterculture to be “critical of the fast pace and competitive nature of the outside world” (Gillieron 7).

The appearance of the British rock band in the year 1960 comprising of John Lennon, Paul McCartney, George Harrison and Ringo Starr known as The Beatles coincided with this period that witnessed the decline of the ideals of conservatism. Gradually becoming icons of the youth culture of rebellion, the fame of The Beatles spread not only throughout Britain but also in the United States and other parts of the world. Soon becoming an embodiment of the counterculture movement, the musical styles and artistic representation of The Beatles was very much swayed and influenced by the atmosphere of the countercultural narrative and likewise, the culture of protest that developed also gained audience and inspiration through the image of the band and their accomplishments in popular society. An enormous portion of the sixties is recognized alongside the image of popular culture undergoing a massive amount of alteration, and such alteration includes the style of music that was born out of the era's social and cultural uprisings. The Beatles, having a large amount of influence over the public, especially among those who identify with the counterculture ideals, came to be identified as the quintessential icons of the period as their music advocated the characteristics of anti-establishment and non-conformity. As such, it is just and appropriate to claim that in order for an enhanced and comprehensive understanding and appreciation of The Beatles, the period in which their name flourished must first be considered. Ian Macdonald has written:

As a rebellion of free essence against the restraints of outmoded form, the Sixties began with a flood of youthful energy bursting through the psychic dam of the Fifties. The driving force of this rebellion resided in The Beatles in their capacity – then suspected by one, least of all themselves – as ‘acknowledged legislator of populist revolt’. (7)

Hence, as the many cultural uprisings that were witnessed in the decade known as the ‘Swinging Sixties’ influenced the image and sound of The Beatles, the extent to which the ideals of the period paved the way for the success of the band is of great significance.

There was an outward projection of wealth and gratification in the Western societies after World War II which was, in part, due to the rise of the consumer society aided by full employment and job security. With no military responsibility and adequate income, it was becoming likely that it was ripe time for the formation of the nuclear family. It was the ideal time to get married and start a family as Western nations built and developed themselves in the cities and in the outer parts of the country. Home builders, anticipating the needs of young families, constructed suburbs that appealed to the many new home buyers who were looking to start new lives outside the cities. Household devices that were designed to save time and energy for housework became popular and almost every home possessed such devices ranging from electronic blenders to washing machines. Life in the post-World War tradition was thus, secure, stable, and ideal for the formation of a society where conservative ideals were to be held as the norm for the means of livelihood. Andy Bennett writes:

Following the Second World War...increasing affluence and technological breakthroughs in mass production resulted in consumption becoming an accepted part of life for the working classes too. The new demand for consumer products was met by a rapid expansion in the type of commodities available. A whole range of items from cars to electrical household appliances, such as washing machines, food mixers, electric irons, televisions and record players, became much more widely available than they had been before the Second World War. New techniques of mass production also meant that such items were more cheaply available than they had been before the war. (9)

The status quo that was established as a result of the post-World War lifestyle of conformity was soon questioned by the younger generation who found such ideals to be out-dated and constricting. The middle-class youngsters who, unlike the parent generation, had more money to spend and more means of self-expression, came to be greatly disillusioned by the means of livelihood that they were born into. Gary J. Clarke has noted:

counter-culture spearheads a dissent of the youth's own, dominant parent culture. Their disaffiliation was principally ideological and cultural. They directed their attack mainly against those institutions which reproduce the dominant cultural ideological relations- the family, the education, the media, marriage, the sexual division of labour. (qtd. in Titus 2)

The rebellious attitude of the youth culture was such that the younger generation became critical and disenchanted with the consumer-based values of the society. Rejection of traditional values such as marriage and authority came to be more and more prominent as the younger generation of Western societies searched for meaningful and spiritual experiences and drew themselves away from what they considered to be the monotonous consumer-driven lives that was ingrained in society.

James L. Spates has defined the movement of the counterculture as being based on "a total repudiation of the technological\scientific world-view long dominant in the West and an adherence to a mystical\humanistic alternative" (868). The decade of the 1960s has been recognized by many as defining the significant moments in popular culture such as in the field of ground-breaking music, fashion and the social justice movements and activities. There was a noticeable change in popular culture as youths took to different forms of self-expressions through means of clothing and lifestyle. In Britain, the capital of London came to known as the hub for the new form of culture that was progressive and daring and which stood for a completely different form of living contrary to that of the parent generation. As Ian MacDonald writes, "Hair lengthened, skirts shortened, and the sun came out over a Britain rejuvenated, alert, and determined to have the best of good times" (14). With the invention of the contraceptive pill that was developed in 1961 (Gillieron 8) sexual promiscuity become one of the many acts of the youth's rebellion and rejection of the post-world war lifestyle of the older generation. MacDonald writes:

homosexuality legalized, and women given the benefit of the pill and abortion on demand, the loosening of over-restrictive divorce laws inevitably created the conditions for the replacement of marriage by 'relationships' in

the seventies and widespread collapse of the nuclear family during the Eighties. Immediate sexual gratification became the ideal of a society in which church-going was falling in inverse relationship to the rise in television ownership. As tradition became outmoded and a dispirited Christianity forfeited influence, the public focus began to shift from nostalgia and the compensation of a reward in heaven to an eager stress on the present combined with an impatient hope for a social heaven on earth in the near future. (14-15)

In various fields of art, music, literature and academia, changes were happening that were in favour of a more progressive mind-set that revolves around inclusivity and equality in society. Expression in the form of art and creativity came to be greatly noticeable in London where the ideals of the counterculture picked up momentum; “the established repertoire of regional theatres was being challenged throughout the 60s and 70s with new works by political playwrights, advocating equality and social change” (Gillieron 9). Hence, London became a main attraction as ideals of the underground narrative came to be more widespread and acknowledged. MacDonald writes, “a new generation of fashion designers, models, and photographers followed Mary Quant’s lead in creating the boutique culture of Swinging London to which international film-makers flocked...” (14)

In the United States, the countercultural ideals were also becoming more and more prominent in society and the movement can, to a great degree, be associated with the period starting from the late 1950s with the group known as the ‘Beat Generation’ who “took the form of a radical ‘counterculture’ which, springing up in opposition to the materialism of mainstream society, arose in California with a special concentration in and around San Francisco” (MacDonald 15). The Beats and their works, which came in the form of literature, stood for individual, spiritual, and sexual liberation taking great influence from different religions and belief systems. In the countercultural communities of both the United Kingdom and the United States, the advocacy of recreational drug-taking was a prominent aspect; the use of one specific drug known as Lysergic acid diethylamide, popularly called LSD, became very commonplace amongst members of the counterculture.

While the cultural uprising has been primarily recognised as a youth-based movement, the shift and changes in the attitude of members of the society during the emergent period of the countercultural activism is not at all confined to the youth. The stability of the family relationship and the roles played by members of the family was continuously questioned by variant thinkers. In 1963, American writer Betty Friedan published her book titled *The Feminine Mystique*. In this book, the notion of domesticity is questioned in the form of looking into the way that American women were living their lives. Friedan took into account her notion that women were not truly content in the post-world war suburban homes where women were to live in a certain way; the woman of the house was expected to be a homemaker, having well pampered children and be a housewife who answers to all the needs of her husband who is the provider of the family. This was meant to project the image of the good family life which everyone was expected to strive for. It soon came to be evident that women were no longer content with the idea that being mothers and wives were the only thing that their future was holding. As Jeremi Suri has stated, “Surveys, interviews and observations revealed that countless women suffered from a problem that had no name within the standard lexicon of society at the time. They had achieved the ‘good life’ and yet they felt unfulfilled” (45). Although life in the suburbs provided women with ideal houses that came with modern technological advances that were designed to make their lives easier, existential angst was commonplace amongst these women as they soon felt incomplete about living their lives without any means of ambition and individuality.

This feeling of being dissatisfied and unfulfilled in the lives of domestic housewives during the era after World War II was shared in Britain as well. A study conducted by Ali Hagggett suggests that “symptoms of anxiety and depression in women have been directly related to the stresses inherent in domestic work and other disadvantageous aspects of the female role” (53). Thus, according to a feminist interpretation, Hagggett states that mental illness such as anxiety and depression are linked with domestic duties and further, it is stated that the voices of the homemakers, the wives and mothers of the post-war period were largely silenced in regards to the issue of domestic lifestyle and its connection to mental illness. During

the 1950s and 1960s, it was recorded that there was an increase in the production of tranquillizing drugs and anti-depressants, and directly or indirectly, this has a significant bearing on the domestic lifestyle of the suburban housewives. Haggett writes:

Walter Gove argued that married women were more likely to develop psychiatric symptoms than men from all marital categories. He suggested that it was 'reasonable to assume that a large number of women find their instrumental activities- raising children and keeping house- frustrating'. He further claimed that the housewife's role was 'invisible' and that the lack of structure may allow women to 'brood' over their problems. (54)

Hence, according to surveys and studies upon the subject of women and the roles provided to them in post-world war society, it is evidently known that mental disorder was very much associated with the anxiety of housewives who felt confined to their roles as home-makers. The questioning and uncertainty about the roles played by women that surfaced during this period is of great significance in the study of the international counterculture as the struggle for equality between men and women was one of the many noteworthy developments that occurred. The feeling of being alienated from their own environment, which is commonplace amongst countercultural activists, was witnessed within the lives of women and as such, the period gave birth to movements and activism for women's liberation and search for identities of their own.

The feeling of discontentment in the daily routines of the modern capitalist life that was provided, therefore, did not serve to satisfy the individual of his needs that pertained to spirituality, creativity and self-expression. Feminism of the 1960s, in this sense, provides an ample example for the uprising of countercultural activities that stood against the norm of the convention. Beside Betty Friedan, Ali Haggett mentions a few other women's writing that contribute to the questioning and empowerment of women and their roles in society during the period:

During the 1960s and 1970s, early feminist novels also depicted housewives as 'befuddled, a little dopey – a lot doped – a state generally induced by a

combined overdose of Valium and vacuuming'. Doris Lessing, Sue Kauffman and Penelope Mortimer were among those who characterized the neurotic housewife in their novels, and Marilyn French's much - publicised *The Women's Room* (1978) has been described as 'a turning point for "madwomen" who did not yet know how to be *mad* women'. The image of the 'desperate housewife' thus undoubtedly resonates within popular culture, across time, particularly during the second half of the twentieth century. (53-54)

The decade of the 1960s and also the following decade was, thus, an important time for the development, growth and popularity of feminist ideals. Forms of protest were gaining appeal not only within the domestic framework, but also in the social and educational realms of society. The civil rights struggle indeed embodied the era of the 1960s as protest and demonstrations of various kinds engulfed the western nations. Forms of protest gave birth to organized groups and agencies who took it as their goal to put an end to what they identified as inequality, discrimination and hatred in society.

The Black Panther Party were one such group that was formed in the interest of eliminating racial discrimination in society. Founded by two young black militants Huey P. Newton and Bobby Seale in 1966, the group of African-American youths that were based in California stood against the racial discrimination and unfair treatment of African-Americans and other minorities in college campuses and rural areas by the police and other authoritative forces (Harris 411). The Black Panther Party can be regarded as exemplary of the 1960s culture of protest because of the fact that the group, which had its ideals grounded on the notion of equality and justice, met with a large number of controversies and they were often known to get in confrontational violence with the authorities. Nevertheless, their numbers continued to grow, and they were able to gain support from different parts of the United States. Although violence can be stated to be inevitable with the issue of protest activities of the period, such groups gained momentum among civilians as they came to be a representation of a cultural revolutionary attitude that supported equality between different races, sexes and classes of people.

The Black Panther Party, in order for the achievement of equality for coloured people devised a ten-point program which they believe would bring justice to the otherwise discriminated black communities of American society. The programme that was devised included points such as “full employment of black people”, “decent housing”, “education that exposes the true nature of American society” and “end of police brutality to black people” (Harris 412). The Party designed the ten-point programme in order to meet the needs of the downtrodden black people who they believed have not been benefiting from the capitalist system of the society. The Party felt that the aspects of the society such as the education system continuously failed the black community as they saw schools as misinforming the youth about history and therefore, not allowing their intellectual freedom and liberation.

Like the Black Panther Party, other groups and communities that were fighting their own fight of social justice were often met with violence and confrontation with authoritative figures. In their pursuit for peace and understanding amongst all humankind, violence was often known to erupt that resulted in casualties and sometimes even death. People of homosexual orientation, during the 1960s, were very much denied rights to express themselves freely in public. Homosexuality was a rather big issue as communities, who were for the most part living conservative lifestyles, were not readily accepting of people who were of gay or lesbian orientation. In the United States, what is now remembered as the ‘Stonewall Riots’ is an important occurrence as it serves as a catalyst for gay rights movement not only in the United States but also other parts of the world as well. As recounted by Elizabeth A. Armstrong and Suzanna M. Crage, the raiding of the Stonewall Inn on June 27, 1969 was not unusual as police raids of homosexual bars were common. However, when the bar was raided that night “bar patrons fought back instead of passively enduring humiliating treatment. Their response initiated a riot that lasted into the night” (724). Martin Duberman and Andrew Kopkind have written regarding the night of the riot:

The police had left Stonewall a shambles...On the boarded-up front window that faced the street, anonymous protesters had scrawled signs and slogans:

THEY INVADED OUR RIGHTS. THERE IS ALL COLLEGE BOYS AND GIRLS IN HERE. LEGALIZE GAY BARS, SUPPORT GAY POWER - and newly emboldened same gender couples were seen holding hands as they anxiously conferred about the meaning of these uncommon new assumptions. (138)

Although the Stonewall Riots was not the first or the only gay liberation movement during the 1960s or even the period before that, it certainly remains one of the most well-known and is remembered as one of the starting points for movements that advocated rights for homosexuality.

The culture of protest that was widespread during what is now known as ‘the Long 1960s’ was such that it impacted different spheres of the community in Western societies. The discrimination on grounds of race, gender, sexual orientation was being continuously questioned as is evident from the many protest movements and organizations that were being formed. The realm of academia was much affected by the culture of protest that were political and social in nature. Ian Macdonald writes:

Born from the freedom-rides and marches of the civil rights movement, the American New Left offered an alternative route; a neo-socialist moral rearmament crusade aimed at discrediting the System – the ‘power elite’ perceived as directing the somnambulistic progress of a media-drugged mainstream ‘Amerika’ – and, more specifically, it’s supposed creation of the Vietnam war. Centred on Students for a Democratic Society, this coalition was campus-based, youth oriented, deeply idealistic, and highly self-righteous. As such, it had much in common with the burgeoning student protest movements in France and Germany with their Oedipal revolts against, respectively, the old Communist party and the post-war conspiracy of silence about Nazism. In each case the governing motifs were the ‘repressive tolerance’ of an unfeeling institutional hierarchy without moral mandate as against everything new, young, unprejudiced, experimental, and irresponsible. (15-16)

The cultural uprising, although youth oriented was thus, political in nature as the masses of countercultural activists upon the oppression of the working class by the political elites. The countercultural uprising recognised a system of power dynamics which they perceived to be beneficial only towards the higher rungs of the society. Western capitalism, where they felt that the system of power was in favour of only policy makers, was being protested and instead, a community of freedom, liberation and equality was the desired replacement in the minds of the counterculture activists.

Although political issues were an important and a relevant aspect of the cultural uprising, the idea of anti-establishment was equally important in the narrative of the countercultural atmosphere. The Hippie movement has become mostly identified with the era of counterculture as they are known to embody ideals of physical and spiritual freedom and creating a community of their own where unorthodox and unconventional ideas are introduced and explored. The use of drugs and hallucinogens such as marijuana and LSD were commonplace among such communities and many of their outlook upon society and life in general was steered by their use of the drug. As MacDonald has commented:

The LSD view of life took the form of a smiling non-judgementalism which saw 'straight' thinking, including political opinion across the board from extreme Left to far Right as basically insane. To those enlightened by the drug, all human problems and divisions were issues, not of substance, but of perception. With LSD, humanity could transcend its 'primitive state of neurotic irresponsibility' and, realising the oneness of all creation, proceed directly to Utopia. (15)

Those that identified as 'hippies' represented a portion of the members of the counterculture that chose to remove themselves from the establishment which they saw as bleak. The nature of hippiedom was such that non-conformity to the dominant social order was the main objective; self-proclaimed hippies excluded themselves from accepted social norms and instead, they chose to live their lives in accordance with what they believed will bring them peace and transcendence. John Robert

Howard writes, “Unlike revolutionaries, they attempted no seizure of power” (45). The purpose of their association with one another can be understood as creating a space for themselves where their choice of lifestyle and actions will not be judged or scrutinised. As they advocated love, peace and equality amongst all kinds of people, their way of living was greatly cheerful and optimistic. As Howard has written, “They assumed, implicitly, that what they created would be so joyous, so dazzling, so ‘groovy’ that the ‘straight’ would abandon his own ‘uptight - life’ and come over to their side” (45). Orientation with drugs was an important aspect of the hippie lifestyle as they believed that drugs and hallucinogens, when they take you out of one’s mind, had many benefits for the person’s spiritual upliftment.

The legacy of the hippie community continued to flourish in the following decade of the 1970s and in many respects, the hippie movement is representative of much of what is identified with the countercultural era. The changes in the social, political and cultural sphere, although they vary in aspects, highlighted the awakening of people in society towards a more liberal mindset that prompted them to question the norms and values of the dominant society of the time. Changes that were taking place in the different realms of society and every outlet of the community became a means of self-expression and identification. Academia, art, fashion, music and entertainment simultaneously witnessed a change in light of the cultural uprising which has had a major impact upon the formation of a world culture that is identifiable not only in Western societies but also in other parts of the globe that have been influenced by the West. This decade of ‘Free Love’ saw the genesis of many aspects of development in Western culture that would further develop and influence popular culture in the decades to come.

The media and entertainment industry, in particular, became important outlets for the popularity and awareness of the countercultural climate. Famous individuals, who oriented and identified themselves with the cultural uprising were becoming recognised as icons of the social movements. In Britain, music was a means through which ideals of the counterculture found expression. Although there emerged new and daring styles of music that embodied the countercultural ideals, British rock was one of the more noticeable forms of protest music that gained popularity in the

1960s. Em Ayson has noted, “British musical history is teeming with people and groups that created their own music, under their own rules, for their own purposes..” (241). Further, Ayson writes:

Whilst rock had been a staple of British musical culture since the 1950s, with the US artists such as Bill Haley and his Comets, Elvis Presley and Buddy Holly gaining popularity, it was not until the 60s that the iconic genre of British rock truly found its footing as pioneered by the Beatles, the Yardbirds, the Animals and the Rolling Stones. (241)

Conflict between the parent generation and their children can be accepted as a normal phenomenon in every generation, however, what led to the rebellious counterculture movement of the 1960s was such that the younger generation was not only revolting against their parents but also against the whole of society. The society which endorses war and which was preoccupied with consumerism was seen as depriving humans of their right to freedom in the sense that a particular way of living was seen as already being enforced which the youth had chosen to reject.

Protest against war was an important aspect of the counterculture movement; in their stance against the continued involvement of the United States government in the Vietnam conflict during the mid-1960s, there were demonstrations and teach-ins in various parts of the society and also on college campuses and academic institutions. Places where the teach-ins were taking place included Ann Arbor, Berkeley and Michigan where there were up to 30,000 participants (Sahlins 5). Marshall Sahlins writes:

In raising anti-war consciousness in the nation as a whole, far beyond the academic community, the teach-ins were a historic turning point in the politics of the Vietnam War. In principle, in a democracy where the people are sovereign and policy is referred to the ballot, raising consciousness is direct political action. (5)

Hence, the cultural uprising of the 1960s was politicised in nature and character. The nature of the anti-war protest was such that many youths refused to

join the army as they did not believe in the values of war and instead, they sought refuge in the countercultural communities such as the hippies. The hippie culture, challenging the old-world order, brought with it a new perspective on the outlook of Western society that did not necessarily have to do with conformity to the dominant status quo. The notions of love, peace and equality was upheld within such communities as they formed themselves into a society that had been built on progressive attitudes.

As the members of the counterculture turned their backs on the consumer-based capitalist society, they started to value the state of human emotions instead. What was felt to be spiritual and emotional barrenness was addressed by means of using drugs that were believed to have elements of enhancing consciousness. Ian MacDonald explains:

Advocated in America by former Beats like Ginsberg and Ken Kesey, psychedelic drugs exposed modernity's spiritual emptiness, challenging the 'unexamined life' of the consumer mass attempt to transcend the self in the absence of God and an echo of the 19th-century Romantics' use of opium to release the imagination from the tiresome constraints of rationalism. (30)

Mutual feelings of being peaceful rather than promoting war gained momentum amongst the underground scene, and thus, the music of the era became a means of communion across borders. Induced with a sense of intellectualisation, songs released by The Beatles reflected the shared feelings of the counterculture narrative that sought to question the system of power that was held up for so long in society. Songs such as "Eleanor Rigby" (1966) question the ideals of the straight society referring to the masses as "lonely people" because their primary concern in life seemed to be material gains and social security, which left no room for spiritual enlightenment. By taking such notions as inspirations behind their music, The Beatles were able to address issues that were related to the individual; mental issues that had to do with depression and anxiety as outcomes of the post-world war lifestyles obsessed with materialism were being continually questioned and brought to light through their progressive sounds. Although the economy was evidently

booming, jobs were secure and technological advancements were making the lives of human beings more convenient and easier, yet the essence of being alive and conscious of oneself was felt to be lost. Hence, there was a great emphasis on the consciousness of the human mind which was felt to be secondary under the regimes of the materialistic society. Ian MacDonald explains:

The truth is that, once the obsolete Christian compact of the Fifties had broken down, there was nothing- apart from, in the last resort, money – holding Western civilization together. Indeed the very labour saving domestic appliances launched onto the market by the Sixties' consumer boom speeded the melt-down of communality by allowing people to function in a private world, segregated from each other by TVs, telephones, hi-fi systems, washing machines and home cookers. (32)

What the capitalist society offered in terms of material gains was thus, rejected by the new order of the counterculture. What has been thought of as 'the good life' which included starting a family, corporate jobs, housing and overall conformity to the established ideals was seen as lacking in terms of individual interests. Material gains would only fill the void of the artificial need that people were told they needed, however, the void that fills the human soul cannot be sustained or satisfied by what the capitalist society had to offer. Instead, it was felt that there needed to be a system of community, a required establishment where experimentation was accepted. Exploring ideas and activities that were otherwise known as taboo in previous eras, the countercultural era of 1960s thus saw liberation in the fields of sexuality and recreational drug-taking. Hence, it is important to note that the acts of rebellion that took place by means of promiscuity and intake of drugs was not just an act of protest against the straight society, however, it was means of searching for an alternative means of living that was different from the type that was offered, free of segregation, monotony and violence with one another.

Capitalism, that was the dominant system by which the Western society was governed, can be interpreted as the main idea behind the revolt of the youth culture. Economic conditions were thriving and jobs were secure with steady pay checks

after the second World War, however, private ownership of resources or capital became a concern in the wake of the counterculture movement. Ralph W. Larkin explains the structure of capitalist countries in the contemporary context:

Complex societies, such as contemporary capitalist societies, contain dominant cultures and a variety of subcultures. The dominant culture is almost always associated with the political and economic elite. Subcultures are at variance from the dominant culture on ethnic, social class, racial, age, sexual orientation, and other differentiations. Subcultures exist with a larger multicultural context from the dominant culture, with which they share certain core values, but differ over significant point. (73)

Modelled after other subcultures that have existed before such as groups of racial ethnicities and religious communities, the underground culture of the 1960s established their breakaway from the dominant convention and recognition of the differences between them were explicitly made. A deep suspicion and distrust of the law-making body in society was established; it was felt that there was a gap between the owners of capital and those that were under their employment, and this distinction between classes of people was seen as detrimental and unfulfilling for the average individual. In other words, the counterculture narrative of the 1960s was such that it served as a critique of the dominant culture. What the activities of the counterculture movement entailed can be understood in terms of the notion that they displayed a form of living which excluded what had been taught in the dominant culture such as religious beliefs, familial construction, means of earning a livelihood and sexual orientation. By doing so, the counterculture movement, directly or indirectly, offered a critique of the 'straight society' by doing what they felt would fulfil their existence. The issue with the dominant capitalist society to which they countered was that it had nothing else to offer besides what was already presented. Ralph W. Larkin explains:

They perceived that society had reached a point at which the production of material goods was no longer an issue; inequitable distribution was. There was no need for humans to devote the majority of their waking hours

obtaining the necessities of existence. Life was to be lived in loving communities that coalesced in a common cause of bringing down a corrupt social system. From the outside, capitalism in its contemporary form was a system that made no sense. Production had been liberated from the satisfaction of basic human needs and had become an end in itself. Humans had become harnessed to an increasing frenetic system of production, distribution and consumption of commodities that they had to be convinced they needed. This system of waste production for waste consumption alienated human beings from meaningful social participation, demanded participation in labour that had little redeeming social value, was ecologically destructive, required sexual repression, and drained life of its ecstatic and joyful dimension. (74)

What came with this critique of capitalist means of living was a new cultural movement that impacted all areas of civilisation including the perception of music. Music was one of the most significant driving forces in the cultural uprising as musicians derived inspiration, and were stimulated by the changes around them. Young people, who were often at the centre of the rebellion, craved for things they could call their own. Innovative musical artists started to appear whose music reflected the angst, disillusionments and hopes of the new generation. Similar to how the political and cultural landscapes were impacted by the counterculture, the global musical spectrum also witnessed a change and gave birth to what can be labelled as 'protest music'. Music of the counterculture, where artists like Bob Dylan, The Beatles and Pink Floyd were leading figures, included different genres and sub-genres that included rock 'n' roll, folk music, psychedelic rock, and more which reflected the set of values and ideas held within the cultural movement.

A reaction to the dominant society and its recognition as a technocracy that hinders the individual and his potential in any area of life can be understood to be the premise of the counterculture. In their view of the dominant society as a means of constraint and restrictions by the elites upon the middle and lower classes, the movement of the counterculture can be understood and interpreted from a Marxist point of view. Peter Barry explains the aim of Marxism as, "to bring about a classless

society based on common ownership of the means of production, distribution and exchange” and that “it tries to explain things without assuming the existence of a world, or of forces, beyond the natural world around us, and the society we live in” (150). This state of attempting to bring about a classless society can be witnessed in the communities of the counterculture especially that of the hippies where acceptance of different of individuals and personalities was advocated. The dominant social values were regarded as artificial constructions and means of restraint and hence, somewhat of a withdrawal, whether literal or metaphorical, from the social construction altogether was practiced.

The anti-establishment narrative of the counterculture identified a form of subjugation in the society which they felt did not progress for the benefit of all classes and communities living in that society. Acting out against the dominant establishment in the form of protests, activism, and unorthodox means of livelihood, the counterculture attitude projected their rejection and criticism of the capitalist form of governance. This view of the members of the counterculture can be understood in terms of the views in the theory of Marxism. Dominic Strinati offers an explanation of Karl Marx’s views as:

‘the class which has the means of material production at its disposal, has control at the same time over the means of mental production.’ As a result ‘the ideas of those who lack the means of mental production are, in general, subject to’ the ruling class, while ‘the individuals composing the ruling class...rule also as thinkers, as producers of ideas, and regulate the production and distribution of the ideas of their age. Consequently their ideas are the ruling ideas of the age.’ (117)

According to the narrative of the counterculture, capitalist ideals inherent in society are a means of coercion that must be followed which ultimately diminishes individual perception and thinking. Here the concept of ideology is of importance as a means of putting constraints upon the individual; the dominant straight culture was acknowledged as circulating ideas that not only hinder people from realising their individuality but also enforces a structure that allows the dominant class to stay

dominant. Although other ideas may be present, ultimately the ideas of the dominant culture become the ruling ideas.

As a result of this view of the manner in which society was being governed, what fuelled the anti-establishment attitude was an endless search for an alternative kind of living; the use of hallucinogens, promiscuity, gender bending identities and a denunciation of westernised ideas of religion, and advocating the adaptation of eastern mysticism and beliefs all became defining characteristics of the cultural uprising. In forming themselves as a community that stood against traditional conventions, the groups of counterculture values thus, identified with the mystic, unorthodox and unusual. The music of protest that highlighted this sentiment of the unconventional thus established itself as a tool of major importance in driving the narrative of the movement.

As their career progressed, The Beatles greatly experimented with their music and sound. With the release of their 1967 album *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band*, The Beatles further cemented their place as icons of the movement. The overall sound of the album was unusual with a mixture of surreal ideals, rock, inventiveness, psychedelia and spirituality. The Beatles mystified their album by employing surreal and fantastical ideals and making up a fictional band that allowed them to further influence listeners. Such listeners strongly consisted of counterculture communities whose values were closely linked and similar to the kind of ideas that were put forth by The Beatles. Creating a fictional band named Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band, they presented to their audience songs such as "A Day in the Life" and "Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds" which not only appealed to listeners but it also created a sense of confusion with their unusual lyrics and this in turn, provoked the listeners to think. By continuously pushing such boundaries The Beatles were one of the unofficial speakers to the youth culture who had revolutionary tendencies and attitudes. Paul McCartney comments on the *Sgt. Pepper* album:

The mood of the album was in the spirit of the age, because we ourselves were fitting into the mood of the time. The idea wasn't to *do* anything to cater for that mood – we happened to be *in* that mood anyway...

There was definitely a movement of people...we weren't really trying to cater for that moment - *we were just being part of it*, as we always had been. I maintain The Beatles weren't the leaders of the generation, but the spokesperson. We were only doing what the kids in the art schools were all doing. (*Anthology* 253)

From this statement, it is seemingly evident that The Beatles valued the ideals of the counterculture and were genuinely swayed by the changes. Rather than urging their audience to involve themselves in the movement of anti-establishment, they were simply projecting in their music what the counterculture movement meant according to their own deliberations and interpretations.

Whether most of the participants of the counterculture were aware or not, they were part of a movement which was as much political as it were cultural. The anti-war protests, urge for equal rights for women, people of colour and homosexuals were indicative of how much political influence was present during the cultural uprising of the 1960s. As Tom W. Smith has stated "There was a general shift towards liberalism during the post-World War II period. A plurality of attitude trends had moved in the liberalism direction" (1). A general understanding of contemporary liberalism may include the following:

(1)reformist, opting for change and rarely satisfied with the status quo, (2)democratic, favouring a maximization of electoral rights... (3)libertarian, supporting full extension of social liberties such as free speech and right to assemble, (4)regulatory and interventionist, backing the management of business and the economy by the government, (5)centralist, using the federal government to set and enforce national standard and guide state and local governments, (6)humanitarian, establishing a social welfare system for the care and protection of society in general and the lower class in particular... (7)egalitarian, advocating as a minimum equal treatment for all and as a maximum of equal condition for all, and (8)permissive, tolerating and often approving of nontraditional life styles and practices. (Smith 3)

A political New Left was established which Andrew Milner and Jeff Browitt defines as its beginning - an organization of “independently minded left-wing British intellectuals” who “began to forge their own ‘third way’ both in practical politics and in cultural theory” (32). Although the broad range of the New Left may lack an exact definition, an impulsive reaction towards a libertarian and democratic transformation in the political and cultural sphere was its main characteristic. Emphasis being laid on the notion of class struggle, the objective of the New Left can be understood as an attempt to bring to light the injustice prevalent in a capitalist nation amongst which include segregation in terms of race and gender inequality. Generally operating by means of protests, rallies and public demonstrations, the New Left was understood to be without a definite set of ideologies or policies. By means of their civil disobedience and mass protests and direct action, the transformation of government policies was the end goal of this New Left activism which included independent socialists, young radicals and students of universities.

The movement of the counterculture and underground scene was thus, leaning towards the left-wing of politics. Although there were groups and communities who chose to live outside the domains of the economy, their values upon which their association with one another was formed was that of values that were similar to libertarian ideals. And as the movement gained widespread popularity, the cultural changes inevitably entered the realm of popular culture. In the field of music born from the counterculture movement, artistes that identified with the underground gained publicity largely due to their daringness to explore in terms of their song-writing. The Beatles, by the late 1960s, had completely shed their earlier image of clean-cut pop band persona. Instead, they grew their hair longer, dressed up with unconventional sense similar to the hippies and embracing personalities and characteristics not only for the sake of their albums but also as personal life choices.

With The Beatles, there can be numerous amounts of inquiries with regards to their behaviour, their rhetoric and their authenticity to the era. With The Beatles gaining worldwide recognition and having been given a mass platform to voice whatever it is that they create, be it music, movies or documentaries, questions can

be raised as to whether or not they can still be considered counterculture given their status as world renowned musicians and song-writers. The Beatles, similar to the countercultural and civil rights movement of the 1960s, entered into the mainstream society and from there, their impact upon the formation of popular culture up to the 21st century can still be felt.

The countercultural era of 1960s is considered to be an important time in the development of popular culture and music which in particular gave birth to many progressive and over-arching artistes that introduced audiences to new and innovative styles. Questions may be raised regarding the authenticity of The Beatles on whether or not they were sincere in the cause of the liberal minded counterculture of which they were regarded to be spokespersons and leaders. Em Ayson is of the notion that counterculture and subculture communities or the underground values can never really be separated from the society and the mainstream which they reject. Ayson writes:

...despite attempts by these groups to dissociate themselves from mainstream culture, the music through which they spread their subversive messages has still found its way into mainstream consciousness via commercialisation and technological change. Importantly, this has not entirely been to their detriment. Rather than diluting or perverting their anti-hegemonic styles and stances the amalgamation with mainstream cultures has given them a louder voice and a wider audience. Thus, the voices of these groups are no longer restricted by a lack of exposure and the change or challenge they call for may actually be realised when enough people learn about their wants and desires.
(256)

As icons and spokespersons of the countercultural movement, The Beatles were representatives of the working-class citizens. With their lyrics spreading rhetoric against the capitalist system of government, they were embodiments of the spirit of rebellion and social revolution. However, as Ayson has suggested, the realms of counterculture may not be separated from the mainstream for too long. In the case of The Beatles, they are one of the pioneers in the music industry who have established

themselves as leading figures in innovative and progressive styles of protest music. From their humble beginnings as a Skiffle act, they changed their musical style and were able to reach the heights of their career as a band during the era of the countercultural movement in the mid -960s. To a great extent, the popularity of The Beatles made it a possibility for the cultural uprising to be an international affair and as such, their ideals and cultural influences spread throughout the globe. Therefore, many can make the argument that The Beatles did not, in all sincerity, invest themselves into the movement of the anti-establishment ideals, and instead, they were only looking to rake in profits and become owners of capital as they were motivated by the aim of making huge sums of money.

Starting from a middle-working class background, The Beatles worked hard and by doing so, they made a name for themselves and became forerunners in the music industry. It can be stated that they were, indeed, capitalists who made money not only for themselves but also for their record and label company who distributed their music and persona to the audience worldwide. Hence, the question can be raised as to whether or not the band was a capitalist profit turning machine which the countercultural ideals were standing against. It was inevitable that there would be sceptics, especially amongst Left-wing policy makers, about the position of The Beatles and their stance in the anti-establishment era from which they gained notoriety.

Looking at the songs written by The Beatles, it is easily identifiable that there are numerous accounts of lyrics that are intended as critiques of the dominant capitalist systems. Some of those may include “Taxman” (1966), “All You Need is Love” (1967), “A Day in the Life” (1967), “Revolution” (1968) and “Across The Universe” (1970) to name a few. John Lennon in particular expressed greatly his advocacy of peace and communion in many of his songs with The Plastic Ono Band. These were “Give Peace a Chance” (1970) and “Imagine” (1971) which have gained great fame and admiration for its message of peace and understanding between all of humankind. Even though they might have been looking to turn profits from their musical creations, it cannot be denied that the songs of the Beatles greatly united people and their messages through their songs were that of hopefulness and optimism

that impacted a lot of their audiences. Therefore, as Em Ayson has noted, a counterculture narrative that makes its entrance into the mainstream market may not necessarily be a negative situation. In other words, underground aesthetic and counterculture rhetoric was given a wide range of exposure which would not have been possible if not for its popularization through the music of protest artistes such as The Beatles.

One of the reasons as to why The Beatles were regarded as pioneers of protest music can be attributed to the fact that they were one of the first musical acts who wrote their own music and lyrics. The band, going against the wishes and scepticisms of their record company, released their own songs which were written mostly by the song - writing partnership of John Lennon and Paul McCartney and George Harrison. Therefore, having control over the production of their music and their schedule, The Beatles can be regarded as not being submissive to the music and entertainment industry. In other words, although the earnings that The Beatles gained through their fame may be profited by the capital industry, it was the band themselves who had a certain amount of control as what they produced musically were their own creations and were outcomes of their experiences and imagination.

In explaining Theodor Adorno's concept and understanding of popular culture, John Storey has made an observation on popular music in which he states that its consumption "is always passive, and endlessly repetitive, confirming *the world as it is*" (69). He further writes:

Popular music operates in a kind of blurred dialectic: to consume it demands inattention and distraction, while its consumption produces in the consumer inattention and distraction.

...popular music operates as 'social cement'. Its 'socio-psychological function' is to achieve in the consumers of popular music 'psychical adjustment' to the needs of the prevailing structure of power. (69)

From this understanding of popular music as an instrument for which a hegemonic domination of capitalist society is maintained, it may be argued that The

Beatles should not be categorised under the term 'popular'. The reason for which can be attributed to the fact that their music is especially different to the type of music that was produced by the popular media during the height of the counterculture. And rather than being 'passive' and 'endlessly repetitive' like Storey has suggested, The Beatles were innovative and experimental which is evident from their exploration into other cultures and religions which they included into their art. Rather than demanding 'inattention' and 'distraction', the music of The Beatles was intended to leave their listeners with questions and speculations which were meant for open interpretation based on how they are perceived by each listener.

Having gained such a huge reputation and being regarded as leading figures in the music industry and spreading the message of the counterculture narrative, The Beatles without a doubt would have influenced, inspired and changed the perspective of many of their listeners. Hence, their popularity amongst the crowds of the underground communities could have indeed influenced popular audiences because of the idea that being counterculture and progressive was becoming the new mainstream. While the peak of their popularity can be located during the height of the counterculture in the 1960s, it need be acknowledged that The Beatles had already garnered a great amount attention from their earlier days in the pop music scene. While the lyrics of The Beatles may contain messages of love and peace and their music may invoke spirituality and philosophical world views, it is also to be taken into consideration that there will be listeners who do not necessarily experience the same type of impact upon their perspective of society. Again, John Storey has noted on the explanation of popular music by Theodor Adorno:

...popular music is mechanical in the sense that a given detail can be shifted from one song to another without any real effect on the structure as a whole. In order to conceal standardisation, the music industry engages in what Adorno calls 'pseudo-individualisation'. 'Standardisation of song hits keeps the customers in line by doing their listening for them, as it were. Pseudo-individualisation, for its part, keeps them in line by making them forget that what they listen to is already listened to for them, or "pre-digested".' (69)

When exposed to the amount of publicity akin to that of The Beatles at the height of their career, musical acts of any calibre will, to a significant degree, receive the same amount of anticipation and admiration from the public. This can be interpreted as being due to a hegemonic status of the artiste being already established due to their being sensationalised for whatever reason. Of course, the talent and ingenuity of the artiste cannot be discredited or dismissed, however, publicity, commercialisation, timing and marketing are indispensable factors that go into the making of popular culture and its leading figures.

The concept of hegemony and its role in society is an important factor in analysing the era of protest that existed in the 1960s. According to Italian philosopher Antonio Gramsci, the concept of hegemony is where consent is given by people to a dominant group that enforces a certain way of life, he also writes, “The function of organising social hegemony and state domination certainly gives rise to a particular division of labour and therefore to a whole hierarchy of qualifications in some of which there is no apparent attribution of directive or organisational functions” (145). This means that there has to be a consensus between dominant and subordinate groups of society in order for the dominant group to stay dominant. Therefore, Gramsci denotes that the subsidiary communities allow for a certain type of authority to be enforced upon their existence and this is reflected in forms of cultural expression.

The countercultural uprising of the 1960s was initially a reaction against the hegemonic dominance of capitalism in Western civilization; activists of the many protests and rallies for human rights and equal rights for humankind were driven by the narrative that people of the post-World War society have been made to conform to the ideals of the society from the moment that they were born. With their desire for a new form of culture and social relation where there would exist equality and acceptance of all types of people, the counterculture advocated all things new, unusual, and unconventional. In other words, they refused and rejected the traditional hegemony that they were subjected to accept from their immediate society. The legacy of the 1960s counterculture movement is such that when reviewed and analysed, it highlights the beginning of many cultural developments that gave way

for many significant outcomes in culture and politics. Therefore, a sense of awe and admiration is almost always associated with the figures of the countercultural era. As music was one of the many conduits through which the spirit of the underground could be acted out, it is imperative that the field is thoroughly analysed and examined in order for an enhanced understanding of the period and its influence on the protest culture that has developed in the eras that follow the 1960s.

The notion and role of hegemony is one that cannot be overlooked in the study of cultural changes pertaining to the decade of the 1960s. The 1960s counterculture is often known as a movement where power resonated with the people who presented a united front. Hence, the struggle of the new generation of rebels can be understood as people coming to realize the fact that they do not necessarily have to follow ideals that have been constructed by hegemonic forces. However, the aspect of hegemony also continues to be significant once the movement of the counterculture came to gain more attention and popularity. This can be because of the idea that as the counterculture grew into the mainstream, it can be considered to be hegemonic in its function. John Storey has noted, “Hegemony is never simply power imposed from above; it is always the result of ‘negotiations’ between dominant and subordinate groups, a process marked by both ‘resistance’ and ‘incorporation’” (83). Further he writes:

...youth subcultures appropriate for their own purpose and meanings the commodities commercially provided. Products are combined or transformed in ways not intended by their producers; commodities are re-articulated to produce ‘oppositional’ meanings...Youth cultures, according to this model, always move from originality and opposition to commercial incorporation and ideological diffusion as the culture industries eventually succeed in marketing subcultural resistance for general consumption and profit. (84)

This statement by Storey suggests that subcultural and countercultural ideas eventually become a part of the establishment that has originally been stood against. Hence, it becomes a point that the anti-establishment communities eventually

establish a hegemony of their own and become infiltrated with the mainstream in order for their purpose and goals to be heard.

The music of The Beatles is indeed a coherent representation of the 1960s and the cultural uprising that came with it. They truly are considered icons of the youth protest movement with their music reflecting the ideals of the time. The roles that The Beatles played in their musical careers and personal lives is one of importance that is pertinent to cultural development as it is established that cultural icons have a considerable amount of power in their possession to sway the public.

The revolutionary mindset of the 1960s sought to do away with the capitalist society and its hegemonic domination. However, the counterculture, to a huge degree, established its own form of hegemonic authority through its charismatic and admirable leaders and spokespersons of society. When looked into the type of subcultural domains that have evolved in the decades that follow the era of the counterculture, it becomes increasingly clear that there has been less of a differentiation between what are countercultural values and what are traditional values. Therefore, through the analysis of the cultural, social and political developments that occurred in the 1960s and the roles played by cultural icons, namely The Beatles, what constitutes as a counterculture in the context of popular society can be realised and identified.

CHAPTER 2

THE BEATLES AND THE IDEALS OF THE UNDERGROUND

The term 'underground', in the context of cultural implications, can mean resistance to dominant mainstream narrative and influence and the origin of the term is hard to locate. Christoph Lindner and Andrew Hussey have written that "the word probably first took on this meaning at some point in the 1950s in the United States". (13) The term was used wider after an essay by Norman Mailer entitled *The White Negro: Superficial Reflections on the Hipster* (1957) where the 'hipster' is defined as "an 'American existentialist' who rejects all forms of conformity as the enemy of real culture". (Lindner 14) With the coming of the counterculture in the 1960s, this culture of the underground eventually came to the attention of the general public. Sociologist Bernice Martin has described this underground culture as an 'Expressive Revolution'. Lindner and Hussey had written on Martin's description of the 'underground':

Across all of the arts, in politics, philosophy, psychoanalysis, the term 'underground' became a codeword to designate the way of thinking and behaving which, if it was not always totally new, was always at odds with received ideas...This cut across all oppositional movements and personalities of the era, she (Martin) implies ranging from the Beats to Timothy Leary to the Black Panthers. More precisely, she defines all of this activity as drawing together 'the pitting of freedom and fluidity against form and structure...a long and concentrated attack on boundaries, limits, certainties, conventions, taboos, roles, system, style, category, predictability, form, structure and ritual. It was the pursuit of ambiguity and the incarnation of uncertainty. (14)

This embracing of underground societal ideals soon evolved into a wave of protest that was imbued with political and cultural relevance. The protests called for reform and was usually carried out in the form of peaceful demonstrations and non-violent activism. Protesting in the outdoors was common in the movement of the counterculture and it was a form of gathering that allowed for protestors to share their opinions and views and it was also an effective way of providing information to the general public. John Scott provides an explanation of protests and collective mobilisation:

Protest is a counteraction that is organised into cohesive and solidaristic forms of collective action. This has often been seen in terms of the formation and development of social movements. Marxists, for example, have seen the working class as engaging in forms of collective resistance to state power that develop its revolutionary consciousness and produce a progressively radicalised labour movement. More recent theories, however, have attempted to explore the emergence of new social movements to protest concerned with gender and sexuality, race and ethnicity, and the natural environment. (111)

The adaptation of the lifestyles of the underground and the avant-garde was associated with the welcoming of new forms of expression in various fields of life. What was previously known as a lifestyle identified with underground cultures of society were becoming more and more desirable to the youth who were desperate to find means of expression which they felt conservatism did not provide. The aesthetic appeal of underground and subculture lifestyle was such that it represented an array of meanings that ultimately had no limits; it had the appeal of a communion of individuals who do not necessarily have to conform to a given system, a type of communal utopia. Beat writers like Allen Ginsberg became leading figures who made the lifestyle of the underground, drug taking cultures known to the public. Morgan Shipley writes:

Ginsberg articulates a mystical impulse to drop out from the “moral” restraints of modern society, restoring ways of being defined in and through an always already sense of togetherness, of community. This foundational altruism emerges intuitively and responds directly to problems resulting from the mechanization of daily life that limit “knowledge” and potential to dictums of impersonal science and rational fact. (233)

Without a doubt, music and creative expression through song was one of the significant developments of the era that led to the creation of different new sounds that, later on, came to be hugely popular. The Beatles, as a result of their continued experimentation with new sounds and styles, were representative of the spirit of the age where young people engaged themselves in new and unorthodox means of self-

expression through various means. From their beginnings as a purely crafted pop group, the evolution of The Beatles as a band that became one of the leading figures of the cultural revolution greatly reflects the impact that the counterculture had on popular society as a whole.

Among the new musical acts that emerged during the high influence of the counterculture and social activism, the impact of The Beatles is of immense significance to the ideals of the protest culture of the 1960s. One of the reasons for the significance of The Beatles to the cultural development of the era was such that the band can be understood as being products of the narrative that was being circulated; aspects that revered the notion of love, peace, spirituality and anti-establishment. Initially, the band was not formed under the influence of the counterculture climate, rather, their earlier music was based purely on elements of popular, mainstream music and did not explore forms of unorthodoxy as opposed to their works in the latter part of their career. Their importance for the 1960s era of cultural uprising can thus, be drawn from the fact that similar to other members of the counterculture, the band too witnessed a change in their art that was an outcome of the changes that were witnessed in society. Even as their popularity clashed with the narratives of the protest culture, the music and lyrics of The Beatles greatly appealed to the masses who looked toward them as leaders of the anti-establishment. Their works in music, film and social activism greatly influenced the development of a means of culture that stood for open-mindedness and the unorthodox. Their inclusion of elements of imagery, parody and fantasy into their music left them with a legacy that is remembered and credited alongside the social movements of the 1960s.

The success of the band cannot be attributed to a single member alone as The Beatles were a band that were known for their creative partnership and individual distinctiveness which they celebrated together as a group. All its members can be credited for their musical composition and artistic forms of expression in their making of short films and documentaries. The initial beginning of the band can be traced back to the late-1950s in Liverpool, England where John Lennon and Paul McCartney met as teenagers. John Lennon can be credited for the formation of the

band as he was the one who first recruited Paul McCartney into his band shortly after their first meeting. Lennon was born on 9th October 1940 to Alfred Lennon and his wife Julia whom Lennon describes as a housewife and a local comedienne (*Anthology 7*). After his parents divorced, Lennon lived with his aunt as, in his words, his mother “just couldn’t deal with him”. As Lennon himself recounts in *The Beatles Anthology*, “The worst pain is that of not being wanted, of realising your parents do not need you in the way you need them”. Although Lennon’s childhood was deprived of a normal family atmosphere, he does give credit to his situation as being responsible for his becoming famous as he states, “The only reason I am a star is because of my repression. Nothing would have driven me through all that if I was ‘normal’” (*Anthology 7*). According to his narration of his childhood, John Lennon always saw himself as being different compared to other children his own age. He states that he was aggressive with other children because he wanted to be a leader, showing his desire to be more than ordinary or mediocre. He states:

When I was about twelve, I used to think I must be a genius but nobody’d notice. I thought, ‘I’m a genius or I’m mad. Which is it? I can’t be mad because nobody’s put me away- therefore I’m a genius’...If there’s such a thing as genius, I am one. And if there isn’t, I don’t care. (*Anthology 9*)

Lennon states that, even as a young boy, he saw “a lot wrong with society”. He obviously did not identify himself with the norms and as such he states that he revolted against the orthodox means of livelihood. In his adolescence, Lennon was quite the rebel; shoplifting and reselling things that he had stolen with his friends. However, his rebellious early teenage years did not strip him of his artistic mindset and love for music. Lennon, along with his friends from school, formed their band known as The Quarry Men which would later be The Beatles. Later recruiting Paul McCartney and George Harrison, the three continued to play music together even though they would not perform anywhere. Like many other hopeful bands of Britain at the time, the band had their beginnings playing as a skiffle act. Skiffle was becoming greatly popular in the UK after the World War and as Carosso explains:

It was a hybrid of American jazz, folk, blues and country music, which would be performed with the makeshift instrumentation available in the penury of the war's aftermath. It only required guitar, a bass and a washboard to fully equip a band. Skiffle lay in the root of the Beat Revolution of the early 1960s and because it was home-made music, relying on cheap instrumentation and based on simple chords rhythms, it had a huge appeal on working-class teens with limited financial resources and limited musical skills, who found it the ideal formula for "instant music" and instant musicianship. (125-126)

Walter Everett describes John Lennon as "impossible to discipline" (14) as a teenager. Much of Lennon's demeanour from his youthful days may stem from his rather unpleasant childhood; being separated from his parents at such a young age, feeling unwanted and then losing his mother just when he was starting to reconnect with her. However, Lennon himself did not consider his childhood and teenage years as all suffering. He was "always well dressed, well fed and well schooled, and brought up to be a nice lower-middle-class English boy" (*Anthology* 14).

John Lennon's musical partner Paul McCartney was born on 18th June 1942 in Walton, Liverpool to a Catholic mother and a Protestant father. Paul's father James McCartney being a salesman, the family moved around quite a lot, so much so that Paul describes his family as "a pioneer family in a wagon train" (*Anthology* 17). McCartney's childhood was much more conservative as compared to Lennon's as he was born into a conventional family with loving parents who would make him and his brother attend Sunday School and live in a certain conformist sort of manner. McCartney has noted, "When I talk to John about his childhood, I realised that mine was so much warmer. I think that's why I grew up to be so open about sentimentality in particular" (*Anthology* 19).

McCartney gives credits to his father for his musical background whom he describes as an "instinctive musician". James McCartney played the trumpet and piano and it is from him that Paul developed his love for the piano. Just like his father, Paul McCartney learnt to play piano by ear and although he later took lessons, he gave it up shortly which resulted in him not knowing how to read or write music.

Paul's mother died of cancer when Paul was fourteen years old, as a result of this loss, he and John developed a stronger and deeper bond as John had also lost his mother at a young age. Hence, although their family backgrounds were different to each other, they shared a common bond which enabled them to have control over the turmoil of their losses. They started writing songs together when Paul was still in school and John in art college and gradually, their song-writing skills became better and more mature.

Entering music competitions, Paul McCartney recounts how they never won anything in musical contests. He describes, "We failed miserably in the contest- we always got beaten. We never won a talent show in our lives" (*Anthology* 23). Nevertheless, they continued with the band and even though they were without a drummer they would play as a three-member band who all played guitars. George Harrison was the third member who was introduced to the band by Paul McCartney. He was born on 25th February, 1943 in Arnold Groove, Liverpool. His father was a seaman who later became a bus driver. George Harrison, according to him, had a happy childhood; his family was considerably bigger in size with his parents, two brothers and a sister and a lot of relatives who were always around.

George Harrison's desire to play music started when he was hospitalized for kidney problems when he was in his pre-teenage years. His first guitar that he bought from a friend broke into two pieces and his brother fixed it for him a year later. And then, his father arranged for him to get guitar lessons which would eventually mark the beginning of his musical artistry. According to Harrison, after befriending Paul from their bus rides to school, he was introduced to the band and he suggested that they should get rid of members who were not contributing anything. So, the three men John, Paul and George became members of The Beatles (*Anthology* 30). Although his father wanted him to have a corporate job, George Harrison wanted to be in the band instead of working an office job. He states:

I wanted to be a musician and though there was no justification for it and no qualifications, when the group got together we all had an amazing, positive

feeling about being in the band full-time. I don't know why – we were just cocky. It was felt that something good was going to happen. (*Anthology* 31)

The last member of The Beatles Ringo Starr was born on 7th July 1940. Ringo states that during his childhood, his neighbourhood in Liverpool was bombed during the Second World War. Ringo describes his family as “ordinary, poor, working-class on both sides of the family” (*Anthology* 33). After his father left when he was three years old, he and his mother met with financial troubles. He states, “We were working-class, and in Liverpool when your dad left you suddenly became lower working-class” (*Anthology* 33). His grandparents from his father's side looked after him and his mother and when he was eleven years old, his mother re-married. As a child, Ringo was hospitalized with peritonitis. He spent two years in a hospital as he was again hospitalized when he was thirteen years old.

While being hospitalized, Ringo started playing the drums which he claims started in 1954. Although playing the drums started as a means of entertaining himself while during his stay in the hospital, he quickly became attached to it stating that although his family introduced him to other musical instruments such as the harmonica and piano, his sole passion became playing drums (*Anthology* 36). Working as an engineer by day and playing the drums by night, Ringo played in a number of bands in Liverpool. In 1959, he decided to quit his job as an engineer altogether and become a full-time musician by playing with his then band in Butlins. He went abroad to countries like France and Germany to play for the military with his band called The Hurricanes. Ringo and his band mates were greatly professional with their music unlike John, Paul and George who were still ‘the struggling artists’. He eventually became acquainted with The Beatles in 1960 when he and his band accepted an offer to play at Hamburg, Germany (*Anthology* 39).

John Lennon has stated, “I grew up in Hamburg, not Liverpool” (*Anthology* 45). This statement by Lennon can be interpreted in terms of the fact that the band can be said to have founded their distinctive style and taste of music during those years when they were playing their music at Hamburg from 1960-1962. Dave Laing writes of their time in Hamburg:

In place of the occasional booking and the art college shows, there were a competition, a tour, and a foreign residency. Each provided a new challenge and test for the nascent Beatles...For the tour, the group had to learn how to extend their range to encompass another artist's style and to adjust to alien audiences; they had never before played outside Merseyside. (46)

The Beatles went to Hamburg as five members with Pete Best on drums and Stuart Sutcliffe on bass guitar. Although there were many young and upcoming bands, they were offered the job at Hamburg because, according to Paul McCartney, they were cheaper than London groups. In Hamburg during 1960-62, the band was exposed to demanding hostile crowds and were made to perform for long hours. Although it was strenuous for them at the beginning, they became accustomed to living there and enjoyed their lives as professional performers who had access to drugs, alcohol and women. It has become an accepted notion that their time in Hamburg taught The Beatles what it means to be true showmen and that it was in Hamburg that they found their distinctive style.

After getting engaged, Stuart Sutcliffe decided to leave the band and stayed in Germany. When they returned to Liverpool, they found that their fame has earned them some recognition. After Brian Epstein, a record store owner in Liverpool, invested himself into what he saw as the band's potential he became their manager and tried endlessly to get them a recording contract. Eventually, the band secured an audition under Parlophone Records in 1962 with George Martin who quickly loved the sound of The Beatles. At the request of George Martin, Pete Best was replaced by Ringo Starr in the same year and the band that was nicknamed 'The Fab Four' was complete.

Before the countercultural movement characterised by protests and social activism engulfed the 1960s, there was an existing subculture of the youth that had their own means of self-expression and identity. In the early 1950s, Britain's so called 'Teddy Boys' and 'Teddy Girls' were leading the culture of the youth with their Edwardian fashion sense and mannerisms as a way of establishing themselves as distinct from the older generation and their sternness. Then, in the next decade,

there came to surface, groups that were known as ‘mods’ and ‘rockers’ which also were popularised mainly by the youths and their desire to distance themselves from the conservative lifestyles of the post-World War. Andrea Carosso writes:

The Rockers were associated with heavy and powerful motorcycles, favoured black leather and their musical taste ran in the direction of white first-wave American rock ‘n’ rollers such as Elvis Presley, Bill Haley, Buddy Holly and especially Eddie Cochran and Gene Vincent... By contrast, the Mods were influenced by the Teddy Boys in dress and made a conscious attempt to appear more in touch with the times, or “modern” (hence their denomination), by favouring Italian scooters, modern jazz, ska-influenced sounds and R&B. (4)

What was known as ‘British Beat’ soon came to be popular in the UK gradually from the late 1950s towards the 1960s. This can be understood as a mixture of popular genres of music of the time combined with locally based style of music that were already popular amongst the British people. As Carosso has explained:

Combining rhythmic elements of rock ‘n’ roll, the vocal textures of doo-wop, the jazz derived-cadences of skiffle, and the African American tradition of R&B and soul, British Beat not only further incorporated American rock ‘n’ roll into the British popular music tradition, but paradoxically turned it into a commodity for re-exportation to the American market. (126)

Members of The Beatles had often identified themselves to be ‘Teddy Boys’ before the start of their career. With the coming of the Mods and Rockers, it would be inaccurate to categorise them into any particular form of sub cultural group. Their initial type of music, Skiffle, was recognised to be a form of self-identification and distinction of the younger generation from the establishment and the norm of the post war society. Although traits of the British Beat were evident in their music, The Beatles, along with other bands based in Liverpool, had a distinctive sound which was known as “Mersey Beat”. During the start of their professional career in the early 1960s, The Beatles abandoned their previous skiffle sound and also their overall image under Brian Epstein who, as an upper middle-class man, wanted the

band to look more presentable in order to appeal to producers of radio, television and big record companies. Shedding their leather jackets and cutting off their long hair, the band was made to wear suits and shirts with their hair neatly cut which was a drastic transformation for some of them especially John Lennon who, with his rebellious nature, admits that he did not welcome the change.

After releasing mildly successful singles in the United Kingdom, their first album *Please Please Me*, which was recorded in a single session that was twelve hours long, was released in 1963 which quickly landed the band to stardom. From their debut album, what distinguished The Beatles from other musical acts of the time was that they were able to write their songs which was uncommon. As recounted by Paul McCartney, “the music-business network was made up of songwriters and groups” (*Anthology 77*) which means that musicians were normally not in positions to decide which song they were to release. However, The Beatles, insisted to George Martin that their song “Love Me Do” written by Paul and John embodied their originality, and convinced their label to take the risk of releasing their original song which became greatly loved by audiences. Although the type of music that they released at this time of their career is different as compared to the style they adopted later on in the era of the counterculture movement, their distinguishing characteristics as premier song-writers was already noticeable.

The popularity of The Beatles spreading to the United States is an important development in their becoming cultural icons as Brian Epstein even stated, “We knew that America would make us or break us as world stars. In fact, she made us”. (*Anthology 116*) On their first trip to America as a band in 1964, The Beatles were awaited upon and greeted by screaming fans at the airport much to their surprise. When they made their historic television appearance on The Ed Sullivan Show “seventy million people were reported to have watched the first show,” Paul McCartney states, “It is still supposed to be one of the largest viewing audiences ever in the States” (*Anthology 119*). The Beatles performed in front of sold-out audiences in Washington, D.C and New York City (Carosso 132) and in their exposition to the public through multiple interviews and television appearances, they won the hearts of American audiences through their quirky personalities and quick wit. Although they

faced levels of criticism from the American media, the band kept a healthy attitude and continued their hard work. As John had stated, “The main thing that kept us going when it’s been real hard work is the humour amongst ourselves, we can laugh at anything – ourselves included” (*Anthology* 120). This period during which The Beatles made their American debut has been dubbed by many as the British invasion of American music; they presented to their audience a new style of music, drawing inspiration from different genres and style that serves as a means of self-expression rather than simply a means for entertainment. Fans were quickly drawn to them as The Beatles represented a breath a fresh air amongst the mass produced, programmed system of popular music and musicians.

During this part of their career, The Beatles presented themselves as a band that was more pop oriented as compared to their image later on in their careers. With their second and third albums *With The Beatles* (1963) and *A Hard Day’s Night* (1964) there can be seen a constant and recurring theme that dealt with love and relationships between men and women. Their songs such as “Love me do”, “I Want to Hold Your Hand” and “Can’t Buy Me Love”, which were all widely successful, speaks of the love relationships between men and women. Such songs delivered by the young Liverpudlians appealed to their young audiences and as such, with screaming, sweating and fainting fans awaiting to see them wherever they went, what is known as ‘Beatlemania’, the reign of The Beatles as premier musicians and song-writers was well and truly underway. Ian MacDonald has written:

The Beatles introduced to the cultural lexicon several key Sixties motifs in one go: ‘mass-ness’, ‘working-class’ informality, cheery street scepticism, and most challenging to the status quo – a *simultaneity* which subverted conventions of precedence in every way. (22)

It is not to be doubted that The Beatles presented themselves as distinctive amongst other musical acts of the time and they were characterised by their spontaneity and untamed energy. However, at this point in their career, the purpose of the band can be understood as more of an image for popular music as opposed to being musicians that had meaningful messages behind their music. Although their

talent as singers and song-writers cannot be discredited in any way, the first part of their career in the beginning of the 1960s can be characterised as mainstream popular music as it were mostly based on the demands and interests of the audiences and as such, no deeper meaning or purpose can be found in their songs other than what is immediately perceived.

A change in the musical style and overall image of The Beatles can be witnessed by the mid-1960s. One of the earlier musical influences of the counterculture movement was Bob Dylan who was also a great influence on The Beatles. Dylan was unorthodox and evidently moving away from the conventions of the straight society through his music and lifestyle and meeting with him was an occurrence that helped influence The Beatles in their growth as cultural icons. Paul McCartney has remarked upon the genius of Bob Dylan, “Vocally and poetically Dylan was a huge influence. Lyrically he is still one of the best. Some of the long rambling poems he set to music are still some of my favourite pieces of work” (*Anthology* 158). As The Beatles had mentioned, Bob Dylan introduced the band to marijuana which he was smoking regularly. From their first meeting, Dylan introduced them not only to marijuana but also the surreal effects of the drug and seemingly, what marijuana does to the creative process of song-writing and making music (*Anthology* 158).

Bob Dylan’s poetic tendencies obviously left a mark on The Beatles who had a genuine love for art. At this point in their career, they changed their musical style, breaking away from traditional love songs and exploring other means of musical productions. An important aspect of what came with the development of The Beatles as a more progressive band was their inclusion of other forms of ideals from other cultures and the creative process of making music. George Harrison’s preoccupation with Indian culture and the Hindu religion starting from the mid-1960s is an important characteristic of the musical direction in which The Beatles were heading. While meeting a yogi in Hawaii on the set of their movie *Help!* (1965), Harrison became fascinated with the musical instruments as well as the philosophy of the yogi. Eventually, after meeting the yogi and listening to his teachings, George Harrison became a vegetarian, and he followed many ideals of the Hindu teaching.

Much of this influence of Indian culture went into the song-writing capability of The Beatles as they were making a shift to a type of music that had deep meaning and messages behind them.

The release of their 1965 album *Rubber Soul* can be identified as a turning point in the career of The Beatles as they made a significant shift in their sound and style of music. Music was a defining feature of the cultural uprising of the 1960s and as The Beatles began their exploration of a wide variety of themes in their music, they came to be more and more valued not just as musical artistes but also as icons of the youth culture. George Martin has remarked:

By the time of *Rubber Soul* they were ready for new musical direction. In the early days they were very influenced by American rhythm –and –blues. I think the so- called ‘Beatles sound’ had something to do with Liverpool being a port. Maybe they heard the records before we did. They certainly know much more about Motown and black music than anybody else did, and that was tremendous influence on them.

And then, as time went on, other influences became apparent: classical influences and modern music. That was from 1965 and beyond. (*Anthology* 194)

With their 1965 album *Rubber Soul*, The Beatles began to explore ideas and notions that were more unorthodox and daring. Much of the change in their musical direction was influenced and derived from the changes that were happening in the society. As the countercultural ideals were gaining momentum in cities such as London in the United Kingdom and San Francisco in the United States, what was demanded in terms of the means of self-expression through music was witnessing an alteration. They moved away from their previous sounds of tracks such as “Love Me Do” and moved on to more unconventionally influenced tracks. Their lyrics also became less obvious and straightforward; dealing in more unorthodox issues as opposed to their previous songs about love and relationships, their tracks became more obscure in terms of what they were trying to convey and thus, their lyrics were open for interpretation.

With the inclusion of musical instruments such as the sitar in their 1965 album *Rubber Soul*, which is not typical of Western popular music, The Beatles began their exploration into the nonconformist and unconventional thus, marking their development and maturity as creative and original song-writers. Ringo Starr has also remarked, “A lot was changing – our attitudes, our lives - at this time, and the *Rubber Soul* sessions were the start of the build-up to the end, in a way” (*Anthology* 199). Much of this change that was being undertaken by The Beatles included their advocacy for recreational drug taking. The use of LSD was becoming common amongst people who identified themselves with the counterculture. The Beatles, too, had their hands on the drug and it help them, to a significant degree, in their composition and poetic expression.

Regarding the effects of the drug, George Harrison noted:

The great thing about it for me was that, whereas with other drugs and alcohol you're under an influence and you feel intoxicated, with psychedelics you don't. It has an effect on your system but you're not feeling intoxicated; you're straight, with a twist – taken out of focus. Suddenly you can see through walls and you can see your body as if it wasn't a solid...People will say, ‘Well, he was under the influence of a drug’, but I believe it is actually the senses heightened to such a degree. (*Anthology* 179)

The use of hallucinogens was commonplace in the underground scene where different types of drugs were taken and living unconventionally was encouraged. The Beatles, whose popularity was soaring at this point of time, became somewhat dissatisfied with the life that came with being pop superstars. Feeling that they had no freedom of their own and doing things that had no meaning, touring altogether was becoming unfulfilling for the band. George Harrison made the following comment regarding their discontent with the routines that they were being made to do:

1963 – 65 was ridiculous. It was: make a movie, tour Europe, tour England twice, make four singles, three EPs and a couple of albums, tour America, tour the Far East...it was unbelievable. We were going all the time.

...We nipped about very quickly and then we were back home. Only then were we able to have personal lives, and we liked that, and wanted more of that. (*Anthology* 199)

With the cultural revolution of the 1960s characterised by numerous human rights movements and an advocacy of living against the norms, The Beatles adapted into the changing atmosphere of Western culture and through their music and lyrics, they sought to bring about a deeper and more philosophical worldview. Hence, their music became more and more progressive with each album after 1965 which brought together many individuals of the counterculture.

Progressive music has been defined in different ways; Edward Macan defines it as “a classical\rock fusion with some folk and jazz elements included” (qtd in Titus 3). While Bill Martin states that progressive music “expresses romantic and prophetic aspects of that culture” (qtd in Titus 3). And yet, another definition offered by Lucas Biela states that “Progressive rock (often shortened to prog or prog rock) is a form of rock music that evolved in the late 1950s and early 1970s as a part of mostly British attempt to elevate rock music to new levels of artistic credibility” (qtd in Titus 3). All such aspects of progressive rock, that was first recognised in Britain and then later in the United States and Europe, can be identified within the musical styles of The Beatles from the mid-1960s; moving away from straightforward lyrics and sounds to an intellectualisation of their musical creations; rather than singing about relationships, The Beatles, in changing their sound, posed questions of philosophical tendencies, invoking open - mindedness and provoking spiritual thinking.

Real life issues that were taking place in societies were talked about in forms of progressive music such as racial inequality, human rights, and sexual liberation to name a few. Protests were thus, very much a part of the popular youth culture. A breakaway from the conventions and norms of the conservative society was widely becoming commonplace amongst many youth groups of Western societies. Progressive music came to be a medium through which protests of the youth came to the limelight. Music that was produced, by and large, expressed the dissatisfaction

and disillusionment of the countercultural activists as they explored a wide variety of themes and ideas. Rejecting the consumer-based society that was preoccupied with materialism, the youth culture looked for an opportunity to revolt against the mechanised means of living that was offered by the parent society. Em Ayson writes:

Songs such as The Who's 'My Generation', the Rolling Stones' 'I Can't Get No Satisfaction' and Led Zeppelin's 'Whole Lotta Love' became anthems for a generation who were searching for something more than material security through experimentation with sex, drugs and eastern mysticism. Thus, rock appeared to be the catalyst for stringent generational divide in which young people rebelled against the values of their parents, who naturally wanted their children to work hard and build 'decent' lives for themselves, rather than frittering away resources on faddish leisure pursuits. (242)

Embracing the changes that were happening in society, The Beatles made significant changes in their song-writing procedure and as such, their songs came to be embodiments of the ideals of the counterculture movement. Their songs such as "Nowhere Man" highlighted the spirit of the subculture narrative as the song is indicative of disillusionment and can be interpreted in different ways for different listeners. Songs such as "Norwegian Wood" also greatly indicate the spirit of the counterculture; with the debut of George Harrison's sitar playing, the song not only influenced listeners through its lyrics, but also through its musical tone. Songs released by The Beatles from 1965 onwards were thus open for interpretation and they relied on the imagination of the listeners which may have been the intention when they were recording.

John Lennon stated the following regarding the cultural revolution during the mid-1960s:

The Sixties saw a revolution among youth – not just concentrating in small pockets or classes, but a revolution in a whole way of thinking. The youth got it first and the next generation second. The Beatles were part of the revolution, which is really an evolution, and is continuing.

We were all on this ship in the Sixties. Our generation - a ship going to discover the New World...We were part of it and contributed what we contributed; I can't designate what we did and didn't do. It depends on how each individual was impressed by The Beatles, or how shock waves went to different people. (*Anthology* 201)

It would be inaccurate to state that The Beatles changed their style of music for commercial gains only, as they themselves were a part of the generation that sought a different system of civilization that would cater to their physical and emotional needs. The dominant system of society that advocated conservative and traditional ideals were seen as outdated as the youth generation failed to value the ideals of the past. This feeling of disillusionment can be understood in terms of the notion that the generation of the counterculture were greatly critical and unnerved by the parent generation who lived through the Second World War; the aftermath of the war and all its outcomes, including all aspects that were drawbacks and advancements for the economy, were continuously highlighted in the sphere of society. For the younger generation who were born during the war, and thus, did not live through the war, the continuous obsession of the mainstream society with the dynamics of war became tiresome and tedious. This concept of being told and re-told about the war and its many dynamics was shared by many youths throughout Western society as wearisome and unnecessary. The Beatles too were not strangers to this norm that was being enforced by society. George Harrison has remarked:

We were the generation who didn't suffer from the war and we didn't want to have to keep being told about Hitler. We were more bright-eyed and hopeful for the future, breaking out of the leftover Victorian mould of attitudes and poverty and hardships. We were the first generation to experience that, so in that respect it was good. (*Anthology* 201)

Shedding the conservative tendencies that were associated with previous eras, The Beatles were daring, unpredictable and expressive of sensitive ideas in their music. Much of the youth culture that identified themselves greatly with the cultural changes were undoubtedly drawn towards the music and personality of The Beatles

who fully embraced the changes in the social and cultural dimensions. The era beginning from the late 1960s to the 1970s, marked by protest activities in favour of social justice, gave birth to social and cultural developments that impacted all spheres of life. It is important to note that this culture of protest was not concentrated on only one location, rather, there were protests and cultural uprisings of all sorts in different parts of the world. As Beate Kutschke has noted, protest movements and activities tend to “emerge in areas that provide the necessary concentration of people, institutions, diverse lifestyles, etc” (321). As the cultural uprising that was being witnessed was a movement that stemmed from different areas of the world, their goals and principles were thus, not similar and varied from place to place. However, the spirit of rebellion and uprising was found to be gaining great momentum. As Kutschke has commented:

While the dynamics of dissent, however, were urban, the spirit of its agents was *global*. Activists from one country travelled to activists in other countries. Across their national borders, they exchanged their socio-political critiques and, in doing so, shaped what is today considered the global *zeitgeist* of ‘1968’: the belief in universal human rights, and the rejection of heteronomy as well as a heightened awareness of other nations and other people’s concerns. (322)

The rebellious ideals that stemmed from the countercultural atmosphere was spread through different aspects of society and it impacted the convention in such a way that people were divided in terms of opinions and outlooks. There were questions regarding the society’s support of government policies on war and there was a desire to end all types of inequality and distinction in different communities. Activists of this cultural uprising were understood to be living against the norm of the dominant narrative of the society and therefore, they were welcoming of new things that many would regard as unacceptable or inappropriate behaviour.

Kenneth Wethues has noted, “a countercultural social movement is one that so radically opposes its parent society that it tends not toward far-reaching change of the existing social order but toward a sectarian alternative, an intentional island,

within it” (81). The cultural uprising was, to a great degree, radical and it was aimed at being in complete contrast with the conventional narrative. Social unrest and unwillingness to participate in the functioning of the conventional society was first apparent amongst certain individuals in society. At the onset of these rebellious tendencies of the post-world war generation, there were no immediate outlets upon which their frustrations and disillusionment could be channelled. As the spirit of the counterculture gained more and more popularity in the mid-1960s, major cities across the world became breeding grounds for sub-cultural activities ranging from protests to music, dance and art. Hence, it is noteworthy that although the cultural uprising wished to be unconventional and act as a separatist movement from the mainstream society, the communities associated with the movement still established themselves within the mainframe of the dominant culture.

The Beatles, whose music was closely associated with the societal unrest of the time, played an important role in bringing together the masses of young people in the spirit of peaceful coexistence and equality. As many people around the world were questioning their dominant societal affairs, similarly The Beatles were revolting and displaying traits of resistance in their own encounters through their music. As musicians under contract, their initial purpose was to appeal to the audience and make music that was according to the preference of their target audience, the youth. The change in the style of the music of The Beatles came with the social unrest of the youth culture. With their songs reflecting the sentiments of the times that wanted a reformation of the way society was functioning, the band quickly became cultural icons and were looked upon as leaders.

What was rejected by the countercultural narrative can be understood as the Western capitalist ideals of materialism, consumerism, and the principle of having to succeed at any cost over any other aspect of one’s livelihood. As James L. Spates has stated:

The early 1960s produced signs that a serious rejection of Western values was underway with the emergence of a college-age population in the United States highly critical of the manner in which governmental actions have been

utilized to enhance the orientation of “success at any cost” at the expense of such ideals as full equality of opportunity, justice for all and the like. (869-870)

In their rejection of the capitalist ideals of the Western civilization, it was not made specific as to whether an alternative system was offered, however, instant gratification and satisfaction was advanced by the rebellious new subculture. With alcohol, drugs and different types of hallucinogens becoming popular and widely used, there was a state of being that was free from oneself and the physical world when one was under the influence of drugs such as LSD. Many creative artists and musicians turned to drugs for creative production. Ian MacDonald writes on the functions of LSD, which The Beatles often used, as “temporarily to dismiss the brain’s neural *concierge*, leaving the mind to cope as it can with sensory information which meanwhile enters without prior engagement - an uncensored experience of reality which profoundly enters one’s outlook in it” (15). The use of drugs and the constant state of delirium and frenzy can be seen as much reflected in the song writing capacity of The Beatles. Their songs from the mid-1960s were indicative of the changing times where the young sought instant gratification, satisfaction, and intoxication.

With the release of their 1965 album *Rubber Soul*, The Beatles had become regular users of recreational drugs. Their *Rubber Soul* album being visibly different from their earlier image and sound, George Harrison has stated, “I liked the way we got our faces to be longer on the album cover. We lost the ‘little innocents’ tag, the naivety, and *Rubber Soul* was the first one where we were fully-fledged potheads” (*Anthology* 197). The album cover, in which a picture of the members appeared was, thus, purposefully altered in such a way that the faces of the four would appear longer; this in turn, was intended to showcase a stage of being hallucinated and high on drugs were during their song writing sessions and the compilation of the album.

With this change that was in accordance with the cultural changes occurring around them, the songs on their new album became riddled with meaningful lyrics that had messages behind them and were open for interpretation. Much of the songs

on the *Rubber Soul* album were written and made under an atmosphere of joyful associations and communion which can be indicative of the fact that the band had matured considerably as compared to their earlier times. With the 1965 *Rubber Soul* album, they can be said to be truly exalting in their musical abilities and as their popularity was already established worldwide, they were not as primarily motivated by the need to sell records. Instead of releasing their music with the sole aim of making a name for themselves, The Beatles started writing music that would cater to the deeper emotions and consciousness of listeners who would be able to receive them in accordance with their understanding and perception.

The song from the *Rubber Soul* album called “Norwegian Wood” is a prime example of how The Beatles altered their musical creativity. With the notion that they had found a new direction in which they would model their music, Lennon and McCartney wrote the song “Norwegian Wood” and presented it with an aura of comical story telling. With artists such as Bob Dylan and The Rolling Stones making progressive shifts in their musical directions, The Beatles knew that they had to succeed in terms of meaningfulness and depth in their music and lyrics. It is safe to state here that The Beatles were inspired by their contemporaries who were continuously widening their horizon and producing music that were progressive aesthetically and culturally. Ian MacDonald comments on the whole album:

Whether it was itself a joke or a genuine reflection of their uncertainty at this transitional point in their development is hard to say. Probably it was both. What is beyond doubt is that *Rubber Soul* -the swing – includes several songs written in the form of comic short stories. (163)

What has become a memorable part of the song “Norwegian Wood”, which MacDonald suggests is “a favourite among folk musicians in Britain and America” (166), is that the song is accompanied by George Harrison on the sitar which was inspired by the Indian sitar player Ravi Shankar. With this new style of musical expression came a theme that was more daring, unconventional and in sharp contrast with their previous love songs. The song tells the story of a chance encounter between a man and woman. Although the lyrics of the song that goes “I once had a

girl. Or should I say, She once had me?” never states that the man and woman engaged in a physical relationship, it is however clearly suggested as the song described their actions within the woman’s bedroom. It is not difficult to comprehend that the song is not a song about a romantic love, rather it is one that speaks of a promiscuous relationship with no emotional entanglements. John Lennon revealed his inspiration behind the song as he states:

‘Norwegian Wood’ was about an affair I was having...I’ve always had some kind of affairs going, so I was trying to be sophisticated in writing about an affair, but in such a smokescreen way that you couldn’t tell. I can’t remember any specific woman it had to do with. I was writing from my experiences; girls’ flats, things like that. (*Anthology* 198)

What came of the counterculture activities in their rejection of the dominant culture was a need for the shedding of all restraints. Along with the cultural revolution there was a need for instant gratification on the part of the individuals who have felt that their desires and fantasies have been restricted for too long. Sexual promiscuity was, therefore, one of the major developments of the rise of the counterculture.

The mid-1960s also witnessed that many younger generations no longer wanted to conform to the family life that had been propagated by the conservative society. Therefore, as a way of straying from the system, sexual revolution became a means through which conservative dominant culture was resisted. As it was felt that the dominant functions of society were keeping individuals from fully living to their potential, what was satisfying and pleasurable was promoted amongst the activists of the counterculture which means that there was an increase in sexual intercourse between people outside the marriage system and the number of people who were sexually active came to increase. The decade of free love, as it was known, brought about the sexual revolution that undermined the concept of celibacy and abstinence before marriage and the ages of people who were sexually active and promiscuous became lower than previously known. Dubbed “the greatest scientific revolution of

the 20th century” (Gillieron 8), the creation of the contraceptive pill, in part, contributed to the sexual revolution of the 1960s.

It was not only heterosexual liberation that were being established but also a wave of homosexual relationships was being formed. Gay liberation movements were being advocated in communities of the counterculture and new experiences pertaining to sexuality were welcomed and promoted. Equally a significant development alongside the sexual revolution was also the rejection of gender roles in society; doing away with what was expected of a person based solely on their gender came with the liberating doctrine of the sexual revolution that sought to shed the ways of the dominant structure completely. As Ralph W. Larkin has noted:

Perhaps the greatest impact of the counterculture was on sex roles. Beginning with hippies’ gender bending, the counterculture problematized gender roles, especially male gender roles expectations. The countercultural emphasis on subjectivity and feelings as new sensibilities, the rebellion of women against sexism, and the gay liberation movement undermined the patriarchy and paternalism that permeated the dominant culture. (75)

Delving into this changing normative culture around them, The Beatles too were ample contributors of the advocacy of a more promiscuous lifestyle. Looking at their *Rubber Soul* album, it can be speculated that the songs on the record echoes the spirit of the times that comprised experimentation and discovery in all fields of life. The appeal of the song “Norwegian Wood” can, thus, be coming from the overall theme of the song that speaks of a relationship between a man and a woman who are not in a marital relationship. As Lennon himself has stated that the song was inspired by the many affairs he had had while being a married man, it is clear to see that sexuality and promiscuous behaviour was being carried out and discussed more openly.

In the song “Norwegian Wood”, The Beatles sing:

She told me she worked in the morning and started to laugh.

I told her I didn’t and crawled off to sleep in the bath.

And when I awoke I was alone.

This bird had flown.

So I lit a fire,

Isn't it good,

Norwegian wood? (Rubber Soul lines 13- 20)

The lyrics, although it does not state so directly, clearly is speaking of a casual sexual encounter between two people who have only met each other recently. The lyrics of the song teases listeners with characteristics that are indicative of the young women of the time who had shed coyness and conservatism and who instead had embraced their sexuality and enigma in the spirit of rebellion and experimentation. It is significant to note that in 1965, musical acts such as The Rolling Stones, The Who, The Yardbards and The Beach Boys witnessed success in the musical charts because of their evident embracing of the changing times. As MacDonald writes, "If The Beatles didn't find a new road soon, they risked appearing passé" (163). Thus, the pressure to outdo their contemporaries was in part responsible for the production of 'Norwegian Wood'. It is true that The Beatles drew inspiration from stars like Bob Dylan and his portrayal of enigmatic women for the song. However, it would also be incorrect to state that 'Norwegian Wood' was not original. MacDonald writes, "the song holds the attention partly through its lyric obliqueness and partly through instrumental colour, provided by Harrison's doubling of the main descending line on sitar" (165).

It would be proper to claim that The Beatles were changing alongside the changing times; as seen from the other songs that were released in the *Rubber Soul* album in 1965, their music catered towards the emotions and feelings of disillusionment of the young masses. This is evident from the song called "Nowhere Man" composed by John Lennon and Paul McCartney. Kenneth Womack writes that "Nowhere Man" is:

...the band's first genuinely literary character. In doing so, the Beatles also acquaint us with Nowhere Land, their first explicitly literary setting. As a literary construct, Nowhere Land shares much in common with Sir Thomas More's concept of *Utopia* (1516), the Grecian title of which literally signifies as "in or at no place"... "Nowhere Man" situates its protagonist in similarly unforgiving environs. Being in Nowhere Land is like being in no place at all – it is, quite literally, the equivalency of being an "insignificant, unsatisfactory, or worthless person, thing [or] state. Sadly, Nowhere Man is clearly a long way from going anywhere significant or from experiencing meaningful human interaction. (118-119)

John Lennon has stated that the song "Nowhere Man" came about after days and hours of him struggling to write "clever lyrics" (*Anthology* 196). The song, in actuality, was written as a result of Lennon giving up on trying to write a meaningful song and initially saying that he was the 'nowhere man' who had no idea which direction he wanted to go. Thus, what started as a song about one man who struggled to find his inspiration became a song that listeners could identify with as the 'nowhere man' in the lyrics. His feelings and emotions can be applicable to the disillusionment that many people were feeling during those times of uncertainty within society. Looking at the words of the song that speaks of a man seemingly going nowhere, it is easily comprehensible as to why the song would resonate amongst the communities of resistance and counter-activities:

He's a real nowhere man,

Sitting in his nowhere land,

Making all his nowhere plans for nobody...

Doesn't have a point of view,

Knows not where he's going to,

Isn't he a bit like you and me? (Rubber Soul lines 1-6)

According to the countercultural perspective, the society in which the post war generation were born and grew up in, advocated that a person must abide by the laws of the state and contribute whatever is needed in order for the society to thrive. Anti-war sentiments were one of the many reasons as to why countercultural activism was felt across many communities. Many found that the war raged by the U.S government in Vietnam was unnecessary and brutal to say the least. Hence, it was established by the younger generation, especially students, that the ideals and principles that had been held by the previous generation that holds that one must serve their country and show support for the cause of progress was no longer applicable to their own sentiment and comprehension. The protests and resistance towards war carried out by the United States would continue up to the 1970s where it was in college campuses that activists would come together and spread their word of resistance towards the violence that was being carried out against innocent people. As reported by the Musical Educators Journal on the occasion of U.S President Nixon's announcement in 1970 about American troops entering Cambodia:

Young people were joined by adults, students by faculty and administration, and radicals by large numbers of moderates who were horrified by the killings. A national student strike was announced, and hundreds of colleges and universities suspended classes in an unprecedented action. On May 10, a quickly organized demonstration on the Ellipse in front of the White House brought an estimated 75,000 young people out to protest. (Musical Educators Journal)

By this notion that the general public did not find favour with the policies of the society and the government with regard to war and violence being carried out, there was indeed a disillusionment that occurred in the mindset of many individuals. Looking at The Beatles' *Rubber Soul* album, and songs like "Norwegian Wood" and "Nowhere Man", it is comprehensible that the album reflected the state of cynicism and doubts that was shared by many during those times; "Norwegian Wood", a song that had been based on sexual relationships about the marriage system, highlights that sexuality was becoming a more open subject, starting from the 1960s that saw the invention of the contraceptive pill. And the song "Nowhere Man", although

written initially from an artistic standpoint echoes the metaphorical disillusioned man whom many people could identify with. Hence, for the first time, the music of The Beatles became music with a message that was considered culturally significant in many aspects. On the album *Rubber Soul*, John Lennon has commented:

In the early days, we had to take what we were given; we had to make it in two hours, and one or three takes was enough and we didn't know how you could get more bass – we were learning the techniques. Then we got contemporary. I think *Rubber Soul* was about when it started happening.

Everything I, any of us, do is influenced, but it began to take its own form. *Rubber Soul* was a matter of having all experienced the recording studio, having grown musically as well, but [getting] the knowledge of the place, the studio. We were more precise about making the album, that's all, and we took over the cover and everything. (*Anthology* 193)

Another song on the *Rubber Soul* album that proves the musical maturity and cultural significance of the band is the track titled “The Word”. Ian MacDonald writes that “THE WORD was a late lucky strike in the *Rubber Soul* sessions” (178). In the song The Beatles sing:

Everywhere I go I heard it said

In the good and bad books that I have read.

Say the word and you'll be free

Say the word and be like me

Say the word I'm thinking of

Have you heard the word is love? (*Rubber Soul* lines 15-20)

On the origin of the song Lennon has stated:

The word is 'love'. 'In the good and the bad books that I have read,' whatever, wherever, the word is 'love'. It seems like the underlying theme to

the universe. Everything that was worthwhile got down to this love, love, love thing. And it is the struggle to love, be loved and express that (just *something* about love) that's fantastic. (*Anthology* 193)

Paul McCartney also comments, "The word is 'love' but it could be 'Jesus'. (*It isn't*, mind you, but it could be.)" (*Anthology* 193). The song, written during the same time when the band was exploring their horizon as musicians, is significant because it highlights the state in which the members of The Beatles were in culturally. The mid 1960s was a time when experimenting with drugs like LSD and marijuana was becoming popular and widespread. Acid trips and being hallucinated on narcotics was not merely a trend that young people used as a means of rebellion against their parents, rather, many users of drugs associated being high on drugs with spiritual and emotional significance. Being experimental with different types of hallucinogens, the creativity of The Beatles was also greatly impacted. Ian MacDonald writes on the composition of the song "The Word":

...it marks the climax of the group's marijuana period: a song predicting Love Militant as a social panacea and the accompanying rise of the 'counterculture'. In this, The Beatles were ahead of the game. In November 1965, the countercultural lifestyle was still the preserve of an LSD-using elite in California and London's Notting Hill. Even the word 'hippie' was yet to be coined, while the 'Summer of Love' was eighteen months away. To celebrate the birth of this song, Lennon and McCartney smoked a joint and wrote out the lyric in coloured crayons as 'a psychedelic illuminated manuscript. (179)

Here it can be stated that the members of The Beatles were in full comprehension of the times in which they were in; acknowledging that the message of love and peace were what society needed assurance on, they, through their song, took on the role of preachers and encouraged their listeners to always have love in their hearts in order for a peaceful co-existence. The lines where The Beatles sing, "Everywhere I go I hear it said / In the good and bad books that I have read" (Rubber Soul lines 15-16) is of significance to the message of the song as it can be said to have a religious undertone; being a time when the values of the Western civilization

were being questioned in every aspect of society, Christianity was also being questioned with regards to it being a crippling system of restraint. “The Word”, as Paul McCartney has stated “could have been a Salvation Army song” (*Anthology* 193) given that the song encourages people to trust in a divine system that is based on the notion of love. Calling forth all people to love one another, The Beatles composed the song “The Word” in such a way that it can be interpreted and analysed by listeners according to their understanding and their emotion towards the song. Calling for all human beings, irrespective of their religious, racial and cultural backgrounds to spread the word of love is very indicative of the activism surrounding the countercultural era. The Beatles were very much ahead of the times as they can be said to have been spreading the ideals of the counterculture resistance before it came to be fully recognized in other parts of the world.

It can be speculated, as many of their critics have done so, that The Beatles made their fame and fortune by means of swaying towards whatever was demanded as a result of the interest and mood of the public. This can be true for the earlier part of their career when The Beatles were just beginning to make a name for themselves. They brought to the public innocent and fun love songs like “Love Me and Do” (1963) and “Please Please Me” (1963) which led to their success worldwide, touring the world, selling out stadiums and being known internationally. Their image, during those earlier periods was clean cut and fully in accordance with the mainstream popular culture. Under a recording company and a manager, they were somewhat contained and tame, therefore, it can be agreed that they were not fully given a chance to entirely explore their creative consciousness.

The cause of the shift in style of the image and music of The Beatles can be attributed to different aspects; their exposure to drugs like marijuana and LSD, other musicians who came to be of great relevance because of their daring and meaningful sounds such as Bob Dylan whom Paul McCartney has stated to be their ‘hero’, and very importantly, the band’s own desire to make music on their own based on their own experiences, beliefs and ideals which may not always be associated or identifiable with the general public who would be purchasing their music. The 1965 *Rubber Soul* album was the result of their first venture as artists whose musical

creations were based solely on their own accord and not the outcome of an executive team who decides which song would sell the most. Their songs on the album, many of which were written in their hallucinated state, appealed immensely upon the crowd of rebels and self-proclaimed misfits who were searching for new experiences other than those that were being offered by the mainstream society. Their songs were conceived with a feel of newness and a slightly edgier tone to them which would be indicative of their being exposed to the new fad of living in the moment and the strive to fulfil one's immediate desires.

Although they were successful recording artists, what was felt amongst the masses regarding societal injustices and outdated conservative ideals were not foreign to the band members. Although their music was less direct and more ambiguous as compared to their previous releases, they were able to convey sentiments that members of the public could share emotionally and appreciate artistically. Ringo Starr has noted upon their change in direction and the freedom they had with regards to song writing and recording:

I felt we were progressing in leaps and bounds, musically. Some of the material on *Beatles For Sale* and the 1965 *Rubber Soul* album was just brilliant; what was happening elsewhere was nothing like it. It was getting to be really exciting in the studio. We did it all in there: rehearsing, recording and finishing songs... The ideas were there for the first verse, or a chorus, but it could be changed by the writers as we were doing it, or if anyone had a good idea. (*Anthology* 159)

Musical artists as public figures have always been influential in the creation of culture. Celebrity status give people a certain amount of power and authority that allows for them to sway, persuade or manipulate groups of people that follow their way of being, be it lifestyle or otherwise. As Mark Edward has written, "it was new emerging music artists which enabled the countercultural movement to spread, including iconic musicians of the 1960s such as the Beatles, Bob Dylan, Jimmy Hendrix, Janis Joplin and Pink Floyd, to name a few" (77). The Beatles, along with many other new musical artistes were known to have a significant amount of impact

on the different scenes that emerged in the culture resistance. Edward further states the following regarding the impact of music on the art of dance during the 1960s:

The era of rock 'n' roll had arrived, and a lot of the rolling involved the birth of dance crazes such as the Mashed Potato, the Frug and the Locomotion. Such high-spirited movements reflected the energy of this period. New music combined with emerging dance movements and new subcultural tribes were formed. Dance within this period did not serve solely as a recreational activity. The hippies who danced to Hendrix were engaging in countercultural practices which aligned themselves with the political insurrection against mainstream conservative ideas. They proclaimed peace and disavowed war and capitalism. Music and dance combined offered a critique against mainstream beliefs and values. (77-78)

The contribution of The Beatles in the cultural sphere is dynamic to say the least. Although The Beatles never claimed to influence a whole generation to break away from the dominant system of society, their fame, talent and lifestyles allowed for them to be leaders and indirect preachers amongst the youth. Ringo Starr has aptly noted:

I feel The Beatles were doing what they wanted to do, and a lot of it was that youthfulness of trying to change ideas. I think it allowed people to do things they wouldn't have done if we hadn't been out there. Because so many people have always said, 'Oh, it's OK for *you* to dress like that or to do that,' but it's OK for anyone, really. (*Anthology* 201)

Hence, inclusivity and acceptance of things that were different and unorthodox were a major aspect that The Beatles, as a band, were trying to convey through their musical careers. Their attitude toward sensitive subject matter in society such as sex and drugs allowed for more people to become more open about such topics and in knowing the influence that they had upon their listeners, The Beatles did not shy away from such topics in any way. Their fame and legacy as pioneering musicians can be understood in such a way that they were a band who catered to the needs and desires of the period in which they were moulded; they

understood the frustration that was felt by the otherwise oppressed classes of society and this was reflected through their persona in order to influence and inspire the growing protest culture of the 1960s.

An example of the progressive mindset of The Beatles can be seen in their song titled 'Day Tripper' which they recorded in the year 1965. Credited to the Lennon-McCartney song writing partnership, the song was claimed to be written forcibly "by the need for a new single" (MacDonald 167). Regardless, the song is, similarly, a great reflection of the time where drug use and sex were a means of expressing oneself. Ian MacDonald explains the composition of the song "Day Tripper":

Though Lennon had yet to launch himself into the full scale LSD period, he evidently felt sufficiently versed in the 'counterculture' associated with the drug to poke fun at those who took it without changing their outlook. The lyric of DAY TRIPPER, he later explained, was an attack on 'weekend hippies'- those who donned floral shirts and headbands to listen to 'acid rock' between 9-to-5 office-jobs. (167)

Members of The Beatles while recording the song were not yet fully exposed to the drug scene that was brought about by cultural uprising. However, the spirit of the underground community was steadily making its way into the forefront of society and it is apparent that The Beatles were familiar with this aspect of the society. Although initially a song written for the purpose of a mockery of sorts directed towards 'weekend hippies', the ambiguous lyrics and vague story-telling within the song suggests that the song is about drugs and the culture that it is associated with. The song speaks of a female character that is described as the 'day tripper'. The song narrates an encounter with this unknown woman:

Got a good reason

For taking the easy way out, now.

She was a day tripper,

One way ticket, yeah.

It took me so long to find out,

And I found out. (Rubber Soul lines 3-8)

The lyrics left many listeners with questions about what it meant. Clearly, the song is about drug use and ‘tripping’ off acid. Although written with no prior conviction it is significant in regard to what the songwriters, Lennon and McCartney, were trying to convey. Ian MacDonald explains, “While something of the sort may have been in Lennon’s mind in October 1965, it must be said that few outside a select circle in America had taken LSD by then, that the word ‘hippie’ was not coined until 1966, and that ‘acid rock’ arrived a full year later” (168). What is meant by this statement is that the movement of the counterculture undoubtedly attracted a lot of people, many of whom were drawn by the drug use and the sexual activities. Through this song The Beatles can be seen as trying to convey the message that there were people who were involved in the counterculture only for the sake of it and only because they saw it as a growing trend; without actually taking into consideration the ideals and beliefs of the subculture, ‘day trippers’ were those people who took part in the movement only as a fad and did not fully abandon their lifestyles of the dominant capitalist system. The song “Day Tripper” provides an indirect criticism of such individuals by whom The Beatles were clearly not entertained, as they sing:

Tried to please her,

She only played one night stands, now.

She was a day tripper,

Sunday driver, yeah.

It took me so long to find out,

And I found out. (Rubber Soul lines 17-24)

The lyrics to this song were regarded to be obscure and ambiguous by many of their listeners. When listening to this song for the first time, it may be difficult to

understand the story being told about this woman who is a 'day tripper'; she could be a drug user or a sex worker as the lyrics point toward that direction. However, as explained by Lennon, the song in actuality is in criticism and commentary on people who failed to recognize the counterculture as a legitimate cultural movement and only saw it as a means of socializing with peers. Therefore, the standpoint of The Beatles can be said to be made clear from the manner in which they were composing their music; for them, the countercultural movement was a movement that was justified in its cause of straying away from the narrative of the parent society which was seen as being incompatible with the ideals of the youth. Through a new kind of sound that was intriguing and fresh, members of The Beatles were able to deliver a distinct kind of genre of music that was a clear breakaway from the traditions of the earlier times. Therefore, their non-conformity to traditional sounds of folk music or rock 'n' roll was itself a statement that they were musicians for the changing times. Terene J. O'Grady has noted:

Most of the songs contained on the album are unified in their demonstration of a new approach to rock and roll – an approach that focuses on musical detail rather than on the massive, ear-catching sound gestures of their earlier pop-rock songs. This disregard for the traditional requirements of simplicity, massive effects and dance potential was manifest in some earlier compositions, but no previous album was so consistent in its denial of commercial conventions. This disregard may, paradoxically, have been made feasible only by the absolute guarantee of commercial success for any Beatle venture in 1965, and the relatively generous amount of studio recording time justified thereby. (93)

Unsurprisingly, the characteristics they were portraying, which was emulated by their many adoring fans worldwide, met with a great amount of scorn and criticism primarily from the older generation. The means of livelihood that was associated with the counterculture was radical, sudden and came about in such a way that the activities of the subcultures were intended to shock and awe the straight society to a certain degree. The socially acceptable narrative of the Western culture during the 1950s and 1960s was that a person's sexuality is a private matter and need

not be shared with other individuals. Hence, aspects such as homosexuality and promiscuity were not readily accepted or advocated. Therefore, it is no surprise that when new types of music were produced that dealt with daring ideas and brought with it themes of physical attraction, there were numerous amounts of people who did not advocate this type of entertainment. On this subject of their being criticized and also the whole subculture movement being disparaged as being sexually charged, John Lennon has commented:

People are just uptight because the kids are having fun. They didn't have the same freedom because they didn't take it, they just followed the live laid down by their parents. And they're jealous of the people that didn't do that. It's a simple sexual jealousy.

I don't know what age it was, the Twenties or the Thirties, [when] most of the pop music was about the sort of illusory romantic love that was basically nonexistent. The songs were always about love and a boy/girl relationship, but they just happened to miss out the most important thing, which was sex. I think now the kids sing and want to hear about reality, whether that's love or sex, or whatever it is. (*Anthology* 201)

The Beatles were aware of the amount of influence that they had on the masses, therefore, what they indicated in their art can be understood as an emulation of what they would want to change in their immediate society. Being sexually active and being open about sexuality for members of the counterculture was not only a means of being simply sexually charged or a means of perversion. Rather sexuality was a way of expressing their freedom and a way for them to declare that they refused to be confined by dominant forces in any shape or form. John Lennon further states:

I think the music reflects the state that the society is in. It doesn't *suggest* the state. I think the poets and musicians and artists are of the age- not only do they lead the age on, but they also reflect that age. And I think that's what the pop music is doing; it's reflecting. (*Anthology* 201)

What was immediately perceived by them was reflected in their music and lyrics and this became more and more prominent as they released their 1966 album *Revolver*. During this period, the countercultural movement was in full swing and the spirit of the youth's rebellion against society became even more meaningful. What was being witnessed was that the cultural uprising was not merely about satisfying one's desires. The song writing talent that The Beatles possessed was not, by any means, limited to just John Lennon and Paul McCartney. George Harrison, in the song called "Taxman" gives a very direct critique and commentary upon the tax system in Britain. The song, in a very direct manner, questions the system of government that taxes its people of their earnings.

George Harrison comments about his inspiration for writing "Taxman" that paying your taxes was "a heavy penalty to pay for making money" (*Anthology 206*). Walter Everett writes, "Outraged at their tax rate of 95 percent, Harrison composed the sarcastic "Taxman"...But this song does not urge tax revolt; it has more the sound of a helpless taxpayer in misery" (48).

The song speaks in the first-person narrative with the 'taxman' as the speaker:

Let me tell you how it will be:

There'd one for you, nineteen for me,

'Cause I'm the Taxman...

Yeah, I'm the Taxman.

Should five percent appear too small,

Be thankful I don't take it all. (*Revolver* lines 1-7)

Being very naive at business meetings, The Beatles were told by their accountants, who were explaining the tax system, that the more money they were making, the more they owe the government. This greatly impacted George Harrison who felt the tax system in Britain was "not very fair" (*Anthology 207*). The 'taxman'

in the song is portrayed as a very ruthless and inconsiderate person who is going after most of the earnings of common people. As the verses continue, it can be seen that the ‘taxman’ becomes even more and more forceful:

(If you drive a car, car,) I’ll tax the street,

(If you try to sit, sit,) I’ll tax your seat,

(If you get too cold, cold,) I’ll tax the heat,

(If you take a walk, walk,) I’ll tax your feet...

Taxman! (Revolver lines 9-12)

The song is a direct jab at the system which they felt was practically robbing people through tax money. As a way of ensuring that the message of the song came across to audiences, The Beatles, in the third verse of the song even included the words ‘Mister Wilson’ and ‘Mister Heath’, establishing who and what the song was intended for. As John Lennon has stated:

‘Taxman’ was an anti-Establishment tax song... At the time we weren’t aware of the whole tax scene. I’m still not really aware of what goes on with taxes. We believe that if you earn it, you may as well keep it, unless there’s a communal or Communist or real Christian society. But while we’re living in this, I protest against paying the Government what I have to pay them. (*Anthology* 207)

It was known by The Beatles themselves that music and entertainment were capable of confronting social and political issues. Hence, not only are the lyrics important to get the point across, the technical aspect of musical arrangement was also a priority for the band as the intent was to be distinguishable from the rest. In “Taxman”, MacDonald states that The Beatles had been drawing inspiration from black musicians such as James Brown and Lee Dorsey and that the song consists “mainly of a bass riff against fuzz-toned off-beat guitar chords” (200). Further he writes:

The mix accentuates this by keeping the right channel open for tambourine and the falling ‘coins’ of an echoed cowbell until the entry of McCartney’s startling guitar solo: a savage seven-bar affair that picks up the octave jump in the riff, adding a scintillating pseudo-Indian descending passage *en route*. (200-201)

Such deliverance of musical innovativeness ensured that The Beatles were cultural icons in the counterculture. The band would continue to display their daringness by publicly speaking out against issues like the Vietnam War which was one of the most heated topics of the era. In 1964, on their first American tour, they were told by Brian Epstein that they should not answer questions about the Vietnam War to which they replied, “We don’t go unless we answer what we feel about the war” (*Anthology* 145). John Lennon further states:

We were being asked about it all when artists weren’t meant to say anything about anything. We couldn’t carry it through, we couldn’t help ourselves; things would come out even though there was an unspoken policy not to say anything. We spoke our minds after that: We don’t like it, we don’t agree with it, we think it is wrong’...All our songs are anti - war. (*Anthology* 145)

The idea of war and anything to do with war was wrong in the opinion of the members of The Beatles. This sentiment was wholeheartedly shared and felt by people who identified themselves with the movement of resistance and protest. The involvement of the U.S government in the Vietnam War divided opinions amongst people and it caused a great deal of unrest in the societal framework as protest against the war occurred frequently. Michael Hoenisch writes:

The war divided the nation and produced competing perspectives on the problems looming in its wake. Images of the war and of the protests against it were available on American TV and movie screen, and they travelled around the world. American TV networks, generally mainstream, covered the events in Vietnam more and more as both the military involvement and the struggles about its justification intensified. The US government itself intervened in the

battle of image. As the conflict escalated, the Department of Defence produced documentaries that tried to legitimize the war. (175)

The fame of The Beatles, as well as other musicians, whose fame rose during the time of the 1960s counterculture impacted the youth in such a way that they were given a voice and this in turn, helped in bringing people together in the spirit of liberation and individual freedom. The cultural uprising and protests movements were deeply rooted in the need and call for social reform by the common people; it was felt that the system of administration under which the Western society was being governed had many flaws and also that forms of societal institutions were instruments of indoctrination that categorized and restricted individuals from freedom and liberation. Therefore, living their lives and not existing according to the norms of society was not just a way of rebelling against the system, it was also a means creating a community where people were allowed to explore their ideas, desires and finding their own identity which were not easily accepted by the mainstream society.

John Scott writes how in Marxist theoretical discussions, counteractions and protests against dominant forces are carried out. He writes that in Marxism:

proletariat revolution is seen as the collective action of a working class, and as expressing the shared interests that result from its structural location in class relations. Structured fields of relations and the distributions of resources that they generate set the conditions under which people act, and its class relations that Marxists see as the most important constraints on action. Patterns of class constraints, then, define the interests around which the members of the various classes will mobilise. (116)

Protests that occurred were formed under the premise of bringing forth equal rights and opportunities for all in different walks of society and the need for love and tolerance between people from all areas of life was stressed and made central. United by all that were seen as a constraint on ideas, livelihood and freedom of choice, liberalism became the face of the cultural uprising.

The capitalist system where materialism is a central aspect was rejected by the countercultural narrative as it was believed that society's concentration on monetary fulfilment was only leading to an individual's despair and desolation. The working class, in Marxist interpretation, are object to unfulfilling jobs and tasks repetitively and such tasks strip them of their personal freedom as it does not cater to their needs as human beings as they are only treated and made to work like mechanised organisms. Similarly, during the cultural uprising of the 1960s, the capitalist society that was seen as grouping and categorizing individuals according to their race, sex, work or religion was identified as too problematic for individual liberty. Marxism views history as a struggle between classes; to this Peter Barry explains that society is viewed as being “ ‘motored’ by the competition for economic, social, and political advantage” (151). Giving a definition of the views of Marxism on the working class, Barry writes that “workers are bereft of their full humanity and are thought of as ‘hand’ or ‘the labour force’, so that, for instance, the effects of industrial closures are calculated in purely economic terms. People, in a word, become things” (151).

The theory of class struggle in the theoretical context of Marxism found its characteristics as being reflected in the ideals of the 1960s counterculture; rejecting the idea that a person must abide by the rules of the government system as it was believed that all human beings were equal, and that class distinction and discrimination were unnecessary with civilization. The spirit of creativity, that was celebrated and embraced as the counterculture movement unfolded, can be said to be fully embraced by The Beatles; with their fame crossing over to other countries, they are prominent signifiers of the British Invasion. With a progressive attitude towards music and society as a whole, their rebellious persona and open-mindedness towards cultural changes were the driving force behind their success as musicians and public icons. Their choice of musical styling and the themes they explore in their music can be said to be a reflection of the ideals of the New Left, left-wing activism, that emerged during the 1960s. The principles of the New Left that had an immense amount to do with reformism, humanitarianism, libertarianism and tolerance can be

seen to be highlighted in many of the songs of The Beatles that were released from the year 1965 during which the countercultural movement was at its peak.

Whether they associated themselves with the organization of the New Left or not, active members of the counterculture held the view that were leaning significantly toward libertarianism and liberalism. Michel Foucault, in his series of lectures at the College De France, provides an explanation of liberalism and its implementation of a new art of government during the eighteenth century. He writes “government is basically no longer to be exercised over subjects and other things subjected through these subjects. Government is now to be exercised over what we could call the phenomenal republic of interest” (*Birth of Biopolitics* 46). He further states:

The fundamental question of liberalism is: What is the utility value of government and all actions of government in a society where exchange determines the true value of things...With this question liberalism posed the fundamental question of government, which is whether all the political, economic, and othe forms which have been contrasted with liberalism can really avoid this question and avoid formulating this question of utility of a government in a regime where exchange determines the value of things. (*Birth of Biopolitics* 46-47)

The songs that were released by The Beatles and their significance can be understood in terms of the notion that their lyrics contained in them the sentiments of the cultural changes and thus, they catered towards the ideals and characteristics of liberalism. The status quo that had so long been upheld by the system of governance and the parent generation were questioned directly or indirectly through the songs that were played by The Beatles. With the fame that they had established throughout the world, their celebrity status was not only that they were making money off their music, but they become influencers and mouthpieces for political and cultural topics.

Michel Foucault, in his lectures, also provides an explanation of the art of government where he states:

Raison d'état is precisely a practice, or rather the rationalization of a practice, which places itself between a state presented as given and a state presented as having to be constructed and built. The art of government must therefore fix its rules and rationalize its way of doing things by taking as its objective the bringing into being of what the state should be...To govern according to *raison d'état* is to arrange things so that the state becomes sturdy and permanent, so that it becomes wealthy, and so that it becomes strong in the face of everything that may destroy it. (*Birth of Biopolitics* 4)

The many significant developments of the movement of the counterculture such as the Civil Rights Movement, women's right movement, gay rights and the movements for racial equality can be grouped and understood under the stratum that they refused the status quo that was being laid out for them. The categorization of individuals under the art of government according to their race, gender, religion or sexual orientation was being rejected within the communities of the counterculture. According to Foucault, a government needs to arrange itself and its bodies of society in such a way that the state as a whole can become stronger and permanently fixed; in order for a government to implement its rules upon its citizens, a rationalization of rules and regulations occur in order that such rules are not questioned or challenged.

In explaining the forms of government and its functions, Foucault states, "first, the state must enrich itself through monetary accumulation; second, it must strengthen itself by increasing population; and third, it must exist and maintain itself in a state of permanent competition with foreign powers" (*Birth of Biopolitics* 5). According to Foucault, what is needed for the prosperity of an economy are, thus, programmes, rules and regulations that will engage all individuals in their respective roles in order that they may contribute to the progress of the society. This form of government does not always work in favour of all individuals as the ultimate function of 'raison d'état' is the overall opulence of the state and thus, the individual and his personal wants and needs can become neglected as those needs are not contributively in favour of the state as a whole. In this form of government, Foucault states that "government of the state no longer has to concern itself with the salvation of its subjects in the hereafter, at least not directly. It no longer has to extend its

paternal benevolence over its subjects or establish father-child relationships with them” (*Birth of Biopolitics* 4). Further, he also says that “The state is a specific and discontinuous reality” and that “the state exists only for itself and in relation to itself (*Birth of Biopolitics* 5).

Michel Foucault provides his explanation of what he sees as the specificity and plurality of the state:

for government according to *raison d'état* to organize and embody itself in a practice is internal management, that is to say, what at the time was called police, or the unlimited regulation of the country according to the model of a tight-knit urban organization. Finally...is the development of a permanent army along with a permanent diplomacy; the organization, if you like, of a permanent military-diplomatic apparatus with the objective of keeping the plurality of the states free from imperial absorption in such a way that an equilibrium can be established between them...(*Birth of Biopolitics* 5)

The government and the state, therefore, exists in the form of a regime within which there are doctrines, rules and regulations devised for the purpose of establishing a form of society that functions according to such conventions. Here, the question regarding what is reality and truth can be posed as it can be argued that under a regime that rules over all aspects of life, there could be a possibility that an individual is being confined and restricted from exploring a wide range of other possibilities that are not provided by the social construction under the art of government.

Subculture narrative refused to believe in basic western values such as the nuclear family, specific gender roles, the ideals of Christianity and the stance of the government regarding issues of war with other countries. The rebellion against the values of Western conservatism happened abruptly and it quickly escalated into a radical social movement. The cultural uprising can be characterized by its challenging of the norms and convention of the world they know as being nothing more than social constructions such as racial segregation, sexual identity and the notion that the western world is significantly above other cultures of the world.

Foucault has noted, “Politics and the economy are not things that exist, or errors, or illusions, or ideologies. They are things that do not exist and yet which are inscribed in reality and fall under a regime of truth dividing the true and the false” (*Birth of Biopolitics* 20). It is this idea of what constitutes truth and what constitutes false within the domain of societal setup that was being analysed and scrutinised in the form of the counterculture and its many protest activities. The counterculture movement, therefore, provided a new form of community that did away with ‘truth’ that had always been told in the dominant cultural realm; ‘truth’ regarding government, family, relationships and religion were re-imagined and instead, experimentation, exploration of other cultures and religions and tolerance towards the unorthodox and unusual was promoted and advocated. The need for instant gratification that was felt by many members of the protests culture stemmed from their need to find their own identity in a world where they had been indoctrinated and coerced into following a pre-determined set of rules.

Ian MacDonald states about the underground culture that was quickly gaining momentum by the 1960s:

Fast-moving and developed, the pop culture of the Sixties was intrinsically democratic. Its meaning grounded more in feeling than sense, it represented an upsurge of working-class expression into a medium till then mostly handed down to the common man by middle-class professionals with little empathy for street culture. (25)

In this scene of popular culture that was evolving as a result of the cultural changes was the music of The Beatles that was one of the many important aspects that helped in the spread of the narrative of the rebellion. MacDonald writes:

Leading this democratisation of a profession of trained specialists, The Beatles were amused, on entering Abbey Road in 1962, to discover it staffed by boffin-like technicians in white lab-coats. Attached to this curious scene was a ‘right’ way of doing things which initially thwarted the accommodation of their sound but which, after seven years of destruction-testing in a dozen Beatle albums, had completely changed. (A microcosm of the assault of

orthodoxy then going on across the cultural spectrum, The Beatles' revolutionising of the recording studio, prompted by the demands of Lennon's unruly imagination, was masterminded by the more methodically exploratory McCartney in tandem with George Martin and his talented engineers Geoff Emerick and Ken Scott.) (25)

The Beatles were one of the first musicians of the time who took charge in the production of their musical talent; having experienced the mainstream pop music atmosphere complete with songs written for them by other people, adoring fans, television appearances and world tours, The Beatles decided upon themselves that their music needed a change that would highlight and reflect the revolutionary attitude of the era and it was this change that they underwent that made all the difference for their cultural significance. The Beatles, through their music, not only showcased the spirit of the decade, but also helped bring people together in resisting the doctrine of conservatism.

Drawing influences from other cultures was also a major development that formed from the cultural revolution of the 1960s. Inspired and fascinated by Indian culture and the religion of the land, The Beatles further cemented their place in the uprising by showcasing their spirituality and open-mindedness towards other cultures that are not associated with the ideals of the Western world. These influences and adherence to other cultures and religions were rooted in the crumbling of faith in the Western ideals of conservatism and all its aspects. The notion that other cultures, races and ethnicities are inferior to that of the West was losing favour with the rebels of the cultural revolution who found that the system of their homeland was not all fulfilling and satisfying for every individual.

James L. Spates has written:

When sociologists characterize the dominant thrust of Western values, they generally point to a single theme and its variations – the “work hard, be a success, be progressive” ethic. Hence, Talcott Parsons characterizes the main thrust of Western society as one of the “instrumental activism,” with individuals and groups within the society as a whole expected to work

ascetically and unceasingly toward “the good life” and “the good society”.
(869)

Capitalism, which was the driving force behind the Western system of government was, in general, seen as the root of the problems in society. Instead, the counterculture movement steered towards a liberal ideal and opted for social reform, following the makings of a socialist or communist society. It was believed that the policies of the art of government was not thinking of the working class and that the state was only a means through which the higher classes of society would remain significantly wealthier than all the rest. It was believed by protesters that private ownership of capital did not benefit anyone except the owners of that capital and the selling of labour power by the labour classes was regarded exploitative and detrimental. The Western capitalist system, which was believed to be preoccupied with materialism, was seen to be constricting and oppressive of an individual's freedom; what was planned to be accomplished was thus, liberation of the individual and freeing the mind of socially constructed norms and beliefs.

Michel Foucault, in his lecture, provides his notion of two different type of freedom within the workings of a government:

On one side you have a juridical conception of freedom: every individual originally has in his possession a certain freedom, a part of which he will or will not cede. On the other side, freedom is not conceived as the exercise of some basic rights, but simply as the independence of the governed with regard to the government. We have therefore two absolutely heterogeneous conceptions of freedom, one based on the rights of man, and the other starting from the independence of the governed. (*Birth of Biopolitics* 41- 42)

In the context of the narrative of the countercultural movement, the latter form of freedom described by Foucault is a false notion that has been orchestrated by the governing power and it is only the illusion of freedom that is being held by the individual. Therefore, freedom that is already within the possession of the individual is what was yearned for within the domains of the underground.

This sense of freedom that Foucault has discussed is applicable to the cause of the countercultural movement, and it can be stated that The Beatles were iconic figures that allowed for many people to shed the characteristics of mainstream ideals that were products of urbanisation and industrialisation, rather than being products of artistic creativity and genuine emotions. Their change in musical direction prompted by their dissatisfaction with the pop culture scene and their drawing of influence from the societal uprisings can be stated to be an important feature that elevated The Beatles to their status as icons of a cultural revolution. Their former image and status as pop stars who had been singing about teenage romance and their later persona is in great contrast with the image that was formed later in their musical career; if one is to compare the songs 'Love Me Do' (1963) and 'Norwegian Wood' (1965), the differences are clearly noticeable as it can be seen that the former contained lyrics that are direct, simple and without hidden meanings. When The Beatles sing, "Love, love me do,/ You know I love you./ I'll always be true" it can be seen there is no deeper meaning in the song other than the singer's affection and love for the subject of the song. Although the appeal, musical attractiveness and brilliance of the song cannot be discredited in any way, the song "Love Me Do" is a fine example of how mainstream pop songs are known to be without depth and emotional quality. The repetitive and pop-oriented nature of the song suggests that there was little originality that went into the making of the song and that it was intended for a specific crowd of audience that were already accustomed to the usual soundings of pop music and who, therefore, were not expecting anything new.

Dominic Strinati has provided that the products of mass culture are noticeably different as compared to what is regarded as highbrow culture. He writes:

The standardised, formulaic and repetitive products of mass culture are the result of the manufacture of cultural commodities by means of routine, specialised, assembly-line types of production. Art, for example, cannot be produced in this way. The alleged aesthetic complexity, creativity, experiments and intellectual challenges of art cannot be achieved by the techniques or conditions which produce mass culture. (11)

By this discussion of what characterises the products of mass culture and its limitation in quality, it is easily comprehensible that The Beatles cannot be grouped under the domain of mass culture at the height of their career. Therefore, the existence of The Beatles in popular culture can be considered to be leaning towards being labelled as part of 'high culture' which lay in contrast to mass culture. This is due to the fact that The Beatles, during the course of their career, were known to write their music from the creative genius of their artistic mindset and without the influence of the commercial market. The genius of The Beatles, from mid 1960s onwards, was drawn from their own experiences and what they were witnessing in their surroundings. By trying to showcase what was happening to the youth culture, their roles as premier songwriters and leading figures of the cultural revolution was established.

It is, however, important to take notice of the fact that The Beatles did not care for the labels and categorization of their music into specific genres or classes. Therefore, although there may be those who consider the music of The Beatles as a part of the high culture of art and entertainment, this was never the intention of the band while they were in the process of producing their sound. What was important for them was not what the critics said about their work, but what was natural to them and what was meaningful to the cause of spreading a message. However, it was not as if The Beatles remained oblivious to the growing popularity of their progressive styles, as they were fully aware of how counterculture sentiments were gaining popularity. This growing popularity was not just a trend to them, instead, they were motivated and encouraged to make music that would be even more impactful on their audiences. With the success of the *Rubber Soul* (1965) album that marked their distinctive sound and unusual nature of highlighting relevant cultural topics, the albums that followed carried the same notions of progressivism and need for reform in a way that sounded somewhat similar to their earlier sounds but was still fresh, new and significantly different. As John Lennon has stated:

Like anything, people go in trends, and the trend now is to think that it [*Rubber Soul*] was the change. And the trend before was to think *Rubber Soul* was the change, and then the other trend was *Sgt. Pepper*. But the whole thing

was a gradual change. We were conscious that there was some formula or something - it was moving ahead. That was for sure, that we were on the road - not physically, I mean 'on the road' in the studio - and the weather was clear. (*Anthology* 212)

Their persona and aura that reflected the rebellious attitude of the era gave them the status of provocateurs that chose to break boundaries in society and question everything from the government and their policies to sexuality and individual identity.

Chris Baker has written:

The legal framework and common-sense thinking of capitalist societies declares that the worker is a free agent and the sale of labour a free and fair contract. However, Marx argues that this appearance covers over a fundamental exploitation at work. Capitalism aims to profit and does so by extracting surplus value from workers. That is, the value of the labour taken to produce a product, which becomes the property of the bourgeoisie, is less than the worker receives for it...

Capitalism is a dynamic system whose profit-drive mechanisms lead to the continual revolutionizing of the means of production and the forging of new markets. (12)

In the theory of Marxism, the capitalist system has in view the prosperity of the society, but this prosperity leaves the individual alienated from his work and labour and in doing so, disenchantment is established on the part of the masses. The protests against the ideals of the governmental establishment of the counterculture echo this notion of capitalism as being the cause of many societal disillusionments. As Baker further explains:

The surface appearance of goods sold in the marketplace obscures the origins of those commodities in an exploitative relationship, a process Marx calls commodity fetishism. Further, the fact that workers are faced with the products of their own labour now separated from them constitutes alienation.

Since the proletariat are alienated from the core of human activity, namely the labour process, so they are also alienated from themselves. (12)

The counteraction initiative undertaken by the 1960s cultural uprising rejected the notion that the production of commodities and the constant need for material consumption was hindering the growth of an individual's identity and humanitarian tendencies. Although freedom of the people was provided within the established system, this form of freedom was felt to be imposed by the demand of the market and hence, it is only a false form of freedom as Herbert Marcuse has stated, "Free choice among a wide variety of goods and services does not signify freedom if these goods and services sustain social controls over a life of toil and fear" (qtd. in Sutherland 1).

Although freedom was an aspect that was already present within the mainstream society, it was regarded that freedom was limited and constrictive as the organs of the government are still involved in all areas of a person's life. Foucault holds that in the art of government, it is the interests of the market that allows for the state to maintain control upon the masses. He states, "we can say that it is through interests that government can get a hold on everything that exists for it in the form of individuals, actions, words, wealth, resources, property, rights and so forth" (*Birth of Biopolitics* 45). Citing an example in monarch systems of governments from the past, Foucault writes that kings and rulers of the past were able to have control over the masses of people through their ownership of materials and lands. He writes:

The King was often, not always, considered to be the owner of the realm, and it was as such that he could intervene. Or at any rate he owned an estate. He could exercise a hold over the subjects since, as subjects, they had a personal relation to the sovereign that meant that whatever the rights of the subjects themselves he could exercise a hold over everything. In other words, there was a direct hold of power in the form of the sovereign, in the form of his ministers, a direct hold of government over things and people. (*Birth of Biopolitics* 45)

Hence, the ownership of capital or the means of production is what constitutes the power and influence of the art of government over its people. Although what the counterculture offered in place of the dominant capitalist system can be stated to be ambiguous and cannot be pinpointed exclusively, it can be agreed upon that the cultural uprising sought to awaken the masses from their indoctrination and the 'false freedom' that they had been given. Conforming to the rules meant that one came under the control of the system, therefore, monetary gains and material possessions were disregarded as unnecessary utilities, sexuality which was formerly repressed turned into a marker of identity, and segregation by means of race or gender was denounced as all and individuals were seen to be equal and significant in their own existence.

The music of The Beatles entertained this movement of cultural and political uprising as they reflect and highlight the sentiments of lack of freedom and disenchantment not just through their songs but also through their experiences and demeanour. Ian MacDonald has written that "The Beatles far outstripped their rivals in melodic and harmonic invention, baffling seasoned professionals with their surprising chord sequences" (10). The attitude of the rebellious youth culture that disregarded convention and advocated the act of doing things by yourself was very reflecting in the careers of The Beatles. Their musical composition was also strikingly different and marked their difference from their contemporaries. Their continued refusal to conform to the regulations of the industry and their discount of tradition allowed for them to create new sounds that would be applicable and culturally significant to the cause of the uprising. As MacDonald further narrates:

Writing, to begin with, mainly on guitars, they brought unpredictable twists to their tunes by shifting chord-positions in unusual and often random ways, and pushing their lines in unexpected directions by harmonising as they went along in fourths and fifths rather in conventional thirds. In short, they had no preconceptions about the next chord, an openness which they consciously exploited... Knowing that their music's lack of institutional structure was chiefly what made it so alive and authentic, they kept it from becoming stale by continually investigating new methods and concepts: beginning and

ending songs in the 'wrong' key, employing modal, pentatonic, and Indian scales, incorporating studio-effects and exotic instruments, and shuffling rhythms and idioms with unique versatility. Forever seeking new stimuli, they experimented with everything from tape-loops to drugs. And, as if this were not enough, all three songwriting Beatles had very different ways of composing which, together, lent their output an even greater richness and unpredictability. (10-11)

The counterculture becoming hugely popular, it can to a significant point be considered that the art, fashion and music associated with the movement was turned into a fad and a sort of formulaic system in its own terms. However, the beginnings of the movement that prompted the anti-establishment ideals and calls for reform were relevant for the reason that they were the starting point for many cultural and social developments that would later pave the way for the emergence of other events, trends and communities that remain significant in the analysis of popular culture.

The idea of freedom, it can be said, was ultimately the destination that was intended for the countercultural movement; freedom in the sense that a person may be able to shed the social constructions of the materialistic world and do away with the rules and regulations that came with being a part of the societal regime. Such ideals of the cultural revolution were, in all seriousness, a rapid urge on the Western government to ease its control and domination of the masses. With the narrative of the counterculture leaning toward a liberal form of functioning, what Michel Foucault has stated regarding the question posed by liberalism can be significant for the analysis and understanding of the protest culture. Foucault has asked the question:

What bases can be found for the law that will structure the exercise of power by public authorities when there is at least one region, but no doubt others too, where government non-intervention is absolutely necessary, not for legal, but for factual reasons, or rather, for reasons of truth? (*Birth of Biopolitics* 38)

The Beatles, in their musical achievements that will always hold a place of significance in popular society, can be said to have represented the phase in the

history of Western culture where this “government non-intervention” was deemed necessary for the exposition of the factual matters that was present in the society. It was through their characteristics of being independent of the pressures of mainstream demands and their daring venture into their artistic abilities and taking on topics of sensitive and controversial nature that earned them their place in the cultural revolution. By entertaining the sentiments of the disillusioned in society, their roles as icons and preachers of the counterculture gave many an outlet through which to express their identities and to voice their opinions.

CHAPTER 3

REBELLION AND PROTEST MUSIC NARRATIVE

The 1960s has always been identified alongside the concept of peace and the ideas of love and harmony. With sub-cultural narratives of peaceful communion and equal means of existence for all becoming more widespread and uplifted, the general public found various ways and means to showcase dissent upon existing norms. One such way of rebelling against the traditions of older times was music which became one of the defining instruments through which many of the social changes were reflected. Music came to be an instrument through which people could find unity and it also became a means of urging social and political changes. The revival of old musical styles and traditions during the mid-1960s and the varied amount of experimentation with different sounds became instrumental in the movement for social change. In the period of the counterculture, music thus came to be a means through which different ideas, emotions and feelings which shape the mentalities of the public came to be conveyed.

Beate Kutschke, who has contested that “urban environments are good cradle for protests”, has stated that protest songs like ‘Blowin’ in the Wind’ by Bob Dylan and ‘We Shall Overcome’ “were known by protestors around the world and provided musicscape for the expression of dissent during protest marches in numerous countries” (3). Furthermore, he writes, during the Civil Rights Movement of the era, “like political activists, New-Leftist, politically engaged musicians shuttled between cities in different countries and continents and exchanged knowledge of musical styles, aesthetics and socio-political issues” (3). Oded Heilbronner has also stated, “In the forefront of the protest, violence, civil unrest and every kind of radicalism were young people, whose *Resistance Through Rituals*, as Stuart Hall described the events mid 1960s through the 1970s, was fuelled by rock music” (689). The New-Left, characterised by student radicalism, social activism and anti-capitalist ideals came to be reflected in various forms of musical expression that aimed at meaningfulness and cultural relevance in the midst of the civil rights atmosphere. Heilbronner provides various understandings of what exactly constitutes protest music; he writes:

Eric Drott, in his study of the role music played in France in ‘the long 1968’ (1968-81) thinks of protest music as types of music that ‘performed, or conceptualized in different social context, engage politics in different ways.’ Deena Weinstein argues that protest song concerns issues related to unjust action by the authorities, ‘songs that concentrate their fury upon a single act of injustice’. Protest song can be described as such not only due to its content but also due to its impact years after it was written or sung. Weinstein, while touching briefly on the difficulty of defining exactly what a protest song is, claims that, despite popular opinion to the contrary, there has been remarkably little social protest music. (690)

Heilbronner also states the importance of folk music as a means of protest during the era of the Civil Rights activism. He writes that folk musicians “delivered their message in a more humorous and more up-to-date musical style” (690) that distinguished them and their protest songs. The Beatles, with their knowledge and experience in folk musical background, were instant figures in the counterculture sentiment with their songs touching upon topics of political and cultural relevance. Their style of music, although influenced and inspired by figures like Bob Dylan, was very much their own creation and born out of their imagination. With their 1965 album *Rubber Soul* (1965) followed by *Revolver* (1966), they had made their stance known amidst the cultural uprising as their music was quickly recognised to address issues which were closely related to the era.

What Heilbronner stated about folk musicians being more humorous in their form of protest can be identified from the songs of the albums mentioned; songs such as “Nowhere Man”, “Day Tripper” and “Taxman” provide a glimpse of what the general public and the song-writers themselves were feeling during such times of activism and cultural uprisings. While addressing real and important issues that impacted the average individual, The Beatles provided insightful analysis and interpretations towards their surroundings and they did so in such a way that although they did not directly address the issues concerned, they made it a point to make their audience see their intentions through their music and lyrics.

What made the musical theme of The Beatles discernible and relevant in the history of popular music was that the band was one of the first to address issues that were unpopular but were genuine aspects of everyday life. The song titled “Eleanor Rigby” from the *Revolver* (1966) album, credited to the Lennon-McCartney partnership, highlights the distinctiveness and memorable quality of The Beatles. In this song, the band explores the subject of death and mental-illness, subjects which were not so often portrayed or highlighted in the mainstream musical realm. The release of “Eleanor Rigby” is important for the reason that it is a continuation of The Beatles’ transformation musically from popular music conventions and into a more unorthodox and experimental band. With the many protests against the Vietnam War and the struggles resulting from the Civil Rights Movement, other artists had also come out with songs that reflect the devastating impact of the social and political climate; notable mentions may include “Handsome Johnny” by Richie Havens and “Silent Night/7 O’ Clock News” by Simon & Garfunkel. Such songs echo the devastating impact of war and how it takes a toll on the public. With “Eleanor Rigby”, The Beatles were able to expand on the aspect of the grim reality that people were being put under as an outcome of social unrest and the atmosphere of war.

“Eleanor Rigby” can be cited as an important Beatles’ song due to the subject matter of its lyrics; the song acts as a form of protest and contradicts the mainstream convention of what issues popular culture were supposed to address. As Ian MacDonald writes:

Death is a subject normally avoided in pop music. Where acknowledged, it is either sanitised with heavenly choirs or treated as a black joke. Consequently the downbeat demise of a lonely spinster in ELEANOR RIGBY- not to mention the brutal image of the priest ‘wiping the dirt from his hands as he walks from the grave’- came as quite a shock to pop listeners in 1966. Taken together with George Martin’s wintry string octet arrangement, the impact was transfixing. (203)

The lyrics of the song, noticeable for expressing an aura of loneliness and sadness is especially striking starting with the lines, “Ah, look at all the lonely

people/ Ah, look at all the lonely people” (Revolver lines 1-2). The, the lyrics speak of a character, an aged woman named Eleanor Rigby:

Picks up the rice in the church where a wedding has been,

Lives in a dream.

Waits at the window,

Wearing a face that she keeps in a jar by the door,

Who is it for? (Revolver lines 4-8)

The second verse continues to tell of another character ‘Father McKenzie’ who is described to be “Writing the words of a sermon that no-one will hear, / No-one comes near” (Revolver lines 12-13). This character embodies the same characteristic of sadness and loneliness and this becomes more apparent as he is described as “Darning his socks in the night when nobody’s there, / What does he care?” (Revolver lines 15-16) With the repetition of the chorus that sings “All the lonely people, where do they all come from? / All the lonely people, where do they all belong?” the song captures and provides an emotional image of old age and the mental isolation that can accompany a person who has reached such an age in life.

The ominous characteristic of the song becomes even more perceptible when the song reaches the third verse as the lyrics speak of the death of Eleanor Rigby:

Eleanor Rigby

Died in the church and was buried along with her name,

Nobody came.

Father McKenzie,

Wiping the dirt from his hand as he walks from the grave,

No-one was saved. (Revolver lines 21-26)

The song's depressive tone marks a break with earlier Beatles' music and also the song's portrayal of death and melancholy was one of the first of its kind for artists such as The Beatles who were previously considered mainstream stars.

Not only the sound of the music, but also the way in which the actions of the two 'lonely people' were narrated adds to the cynical theme of the song; not only was there a lack of emotion while narrating the lives of Eleanor Rigby and Father McKenzie, there was no sentimentality towards the sad lives of the individuals mentioned. The death of Eleanor is conveyed in such a manner that the narration of the song remains emotionally detached from what is being described to listeners. Eleanor dying in a church and being "buried along with her name" suggests that she will be forgotten, and no one will remember even her name, it was as though she never existed. The disheartening tone of the song is maintained till the end as Father McKenzie wipes "the dirt from his hand" suggesting that as one lonely person buries another, it all comes to an end and the dead person's entire existence is wiped away just like the dirt that is wiped from the priest's hands.

The song, which held the UK No.1 spot for four weeks (MacDonald 205), provides grave and haunting imagery that accentuates the melancholic and depressing tone of the song. As one hears the lyrics, the images of these lonesome characters become edged in the consciousness and adds to the memorable quality of the song and its uniqueness. MacDonald comments on the descriptions contained in the lyrics:

ELEANOR RIGBY is extraordinarily cogent and concentrated. The face that the heroine 'keeps in a jar by the door' (to mask the despair inadmissible by English middle-class etiquette) remains the single most memorable image in The Beatles' output. Yet the lyric's televisual vividness ('Look at him working') is never gratuitous, being consistently at the service of the song's relentless despondency. Eleanor Rigby dies alone because unable to tell anyone how she felt. McKenzie's sermon won't be heard – not that he cares very much about his parishioners - because religious faith has perished along with communal spirit ('No one was saved'). Often represented as purveyors

of escapist fantasy, The Beatles were, at their best, more poignantly realistic about their society than any other popular artists of their time. (204)

Although interpretation about the song's meaning and intention by many may vary and differ, the over-all theme of the song and its focus on death and the ultimate end of communal feelings in society remains a common aspect. Although the song does not directly address the issues of political unrest and public dissent, "Eleanor Rigby" can be regarded as a powerful song of protest against the culture that many people were reacting against; the theme of mental strain that is depicted in the song is reflective of how the events that led to the counterculture movement can take a toll on the mental stability of people that are forced to live through such times.

Another song from the *Revolver* album noteworthy for its uniqueness and inventiveness is the song titled "Tomorrow Never Knows" credited to the Lennon-McCartney song-writing partnership. McCartney comments on the inspiration of the song:

Round about this time people were starting to experiment with drugs, including LSD. John had got hold of Timothy Leary's adaption of *The Tibetan Book of the Dead*, which is a pretty interesting book. For the first time, we got the idea that, as with ancient Egyptian practice, when you die you lie in state for a few days, and then some of your handmaidens come and prepare you for a huge voyage...With LSD, this theme was all the more interesting. (*Anthology* 209)

Hence, the inspiration behind 'Tomorrow Never Knows' is the use and effects of the drug Lysergic acid diethylamide or LSD in which John Lennon, in particular, was very interested. The very first verse of the song is a clear indication of being under the influence of the drug and as the song continues to the following verses, it escalates not just into the effects of the drug, but the lyrics echo a shared sentiment of escapist ideals from the reality of being alive and being a part of human society. From the onset of the song, the lyrics speak of shutting off one's consciousness from reality:

Turn off your mind,

Relax and float downstream,

It is not dying, it is not dying.

Lay down all thought,

Surrender to the void,

It is shining, it is shining. (Revolver lines 1-6)

Pertaining strictly to the surrender of oneself to the hallucinogen and its surreal effect on the human mind, the song indicates that a person, when under the influence, must give himself to wherever that influence of LSD may take him. The song suggests that, when the drug takes its course on the individual who has taken the drug, it allows for the person to see and feel things that a normal person cannot; “That you may see, / The meaning of within, / It is being, it is being” (Revolver lines 7-9).

The drug LSD was one of the defining aspects of the cultural uprising during the 1960s. The relevance of the drug lies not only in the act of rebellion amongst the youth against the parent generation, but it had a deep significance in the spiritual awakening of the protest movements as well. As Ian MacDonald has noted, Timothy Leary, after whose philosophy The Beatles’ modelled their stance on the use of the drug, believed that “the drug would make mystical experience available to the masses and produce a ‘revival of religion which will be at the same time a revolution’” (185). MacDonald explains on this idea of Leary’s stating that he wished to give acid trip “a frame of reference comparable with the mystical system of Catholicism and Islam” and for this purpose chose *The Tibetan Book of the Dead* which is “an ancient tome designed to be whispered to the dying so as to steer them through the delusory states which, according to Tibetan Buddhism, hold sway between incarnations”. (186) This book was selected for the reason that Leary believed that LSD was an instrument through which spiritual revelation could be

achieved. The spiritual connotations associated with the use of LSD can be seen as being highlighted in the lyrics of “Tomorrow Never Knows”:

That love is all

And love is everyone,

It is knowing, it is knowing.

The ignorance and hate

May mourn the dead,

It is believing, it is believing. (Revolver lines 10- 15)

The lyrics, although at first listen may seem scattered and lacking definite meaning, can be interpreted in various ways that deal with the inner self and the need for intervention and awakening of the consciousness. The notion of dropping out from society was gaining more momentum amongst the youth of this era; this idea of distancing oneself from the rest of the civilization came not only in the physical form but also came in the form of mental mindset and spirituality. The urge to be rid of traditional, capitalist and conservative values and find an alternative reality can thus be identified within this need for hallucinogens. The effects of the use of LSD were not only for the sake of being intoxicated but the state of being ‘high’ on the drug and its impact on the consciousness of the individual was what was being stressed. Hence, taking the drug was not simply a self-centred act of a disgruntled person, rather it was taken as means through which selflessness could be attained and therefore, the message of peace and love maintained through the process. Other figures of the cultural uprising were known to take the drug while searching for establishing a new consciousness. Richard Brownell writes on the effect LSD had on writer and counterculture figure Ken Kesey and how he used it to alter his state of mind:

While at the hospital Kesey volunteered to be a subject for psychological drug experiments, which included LSD, a powerful synthetic that induces hallucinations and alters sensory perception. Kesey praised the drug and

invited a group of people to join him in taking LSD, popularly known as acid, and exploring new states of psychological consciousness. They collectively became known as the Merry Pranksters. (30)

The Beatles can be said to have fully embraced this psychedelic ideology as it can be seen in the song “Tomorrow Never Knows” where the awakening of the individual’s consciousness and perceptions from the realms of reality and human associations is indicated. George Harrison, who has made the statement that “The lyrics are the essence of Transcendentalism” has commented that the song is about meditation and that “the goal of meditation is to go beyond (that is, transcend) waking, sleeping and dreaming” (*Anthology* 210). Hence, the lines such as ‘Turn off your mind’, ‘Lay down all thought’ and ‘But listen to the colour of your dreams’ suggest a state of meditation that requires an individual to detach himself from the physical realm and to look within himself in order for a state of being enlightened.

The lyrics to “Tomorrow Never Knows” is intentionally riddled and accompanied with mystical sounds that were innovative and creatively different from the mainstream musical conventions. Like many other Beatles’ songs, “Tomorrow Never Knows” is open for interpretation and can be understood in different ways according to the perception of the listener. Therefore, it remains an important point that the song is not meant to be understood in its entirety and is akin to the state of the mind when it is under the influence of psychedelics. Harrison comments on the process of Lennon’s composition of the song:

I am not too sure if John actually fully understood what he was saying. He knew he was onto something when he saw those words and turned them into a song. But to have experienced what the lyrics in that song are actually about? I don’t know if he fully understood it. (*Anthology* 210)

Other than the lyrics of the song, what is noteworthy and significant about “Tomorrow Never Knows” is the musical arrangement which was very much a radical leap from the usual popular music of the time. Wanting to sound completely different and unusual, The Beatles experimented heavily with the sounds. Putting together loops of different sounds in the studio accompanied with a very distinctive

style of drumming by Ringo Starr, the end result was a track with a greatly ethereal sound that is avant-garde and innovative. George Martin has stated on the inventiveness of the band when putting together the track:

That was a weird track, because once we'd make it we could never reproduce it. All over the EMI studios were tape machines with loops on them, and people holding the loops at the right distance with a bit of pencil. The machines were going all the time, the loops being fed to different faders on our control panel, on which we could bring up the sound anytime, as on an organ. So the mix we did then was a random thing that could never be done again. Nobody else was doing records like that at the time – not as far as I knew. (*Anthology* 210)

Ringo Starr on the drums was also especially noteworthy on the song; Starr performed “mainly on a pair of slack-tuned tom-toms – damped, compressed, and recorded with massive echo” which “created the image of a cosmic table played by the Vedic deity riding in a storm – cloud” (190), according to Ian MacDonald. With Lennon stating that he wanted to sound like the Dalai Lama for the song, the experimental process along with the musical arrangement and the mystical and intriguing lyrics, “Tomorrow Never Knows” remains an exhilarating track that accurately reflected the shared sentiment of the time where people were seeking an alternate form of existence that was different from the one that they were born into.

The spirit of revolt and yearning for freedom from the constraints of conservative society is also seen in the later songs of The Beatles, one of which is the 1966 release of the track called “Rain”. As the youth continued to showcase their disinterest for societal values, they continued to question, critique and even ridicule the older generation. “Rain” provides the message of how the youth were adopting new perspectives on life that was noticeably distinct from the ways that the then society was functioning. The song which is credited to Lennon and McCartney also echoes the characteristics of experiencing the use of drugs. Through this song, The Beatles attempted “to convey the lustrous *weight* of the world as it can appear to those under the drug’s influence” (MacDonald 197). Similar to “Tomorrow Never

Knows”, the lyrics of the song “Rain” can appear to be difficult to decipher and understand. A closer analysis can reveal that the song speaks of two distinctive groups of individuals who seem to react to situations in completely different ways; such can be seen from the first verse of the song:

If the rain comes,

They run and hide their heads.

They might as well be dead,

If the rain comes, if the rain comes.

When the sun shines,

They slip into the shade,

And sip their lemonade,

When the sun shines, when the sun shines. (Hey Jude lines 1- 8)

The subjects referred to in this song as ‘they’ can be interpreted to be the conservative straight society against which the new generation of revolutionary minded youths were revolting. With the chorus line that sings “Rain, I don’t mind. / Shine, the weather’s fine” it is easy to notice that the song radiates the ideals of the younger generation who claimed to be more open-minded and less conservative unlike the parent generation whose ideals were identified to be constricting and stifling. An examination of the verses that follow allows a glimpse of the state of mind of those that take drugs and how it was believed to heighten the sense of understanding of the self and also the functioning of the physical realm around them:

I can show you

That when it starts to rain,

Everything’s the same,

I can show you, I can show you...

Can you hear me

That when it rains and shines,

It's just a state of mind? (Hey Jude lines 11-19)

Ian MacDonald provides an analysis of what type of meaning can be found behind these lyrics:

The song's 'rain' and 'sun' are physical phenomena experienced in a condition of heightened consciousness, the record portraying a state of mind in which one is peacefully at home in an integrated universe (as distinct from those who see only disparate elements to be manipulated or feared). As such, RAIN is the first pop song to draw an 'us and them' line between the children of Leary's psychedelic revolution and the supposedly unknowing materialism of the paternal culture. Here, the post-war 'generation gap' acquires a philosophical significance which would soon seize the imagination of the Western youth. (197)

It can, therefore, be understood that the song "Rain" continues to highlight and reflect the psychedelic ideology and how it is believed to enhance spiritual transcendence and ethereal knowledge that cannot be attained otherwise. The song is also significant as it was a purely artistic creation that was acknowledged alongside their avant-garde identity. As Kenneth Womack observes:

...the Beatles had mutated into a band that existed for the express purpose of recorded performance. Born in songwriterly isolation, their composition took flight in the spaces of the studio, the artificial environment in which the ability to reproduce their work in concert no longer mattered... "Rain" dispenses with the world of reality and embraces the realm of the imagination, where illusion and artifice coalesce in the mind. (133)

Drugs played an immense role in the youth while distancing themselves from the values of society. During this time, activists such as American psychologists Timothy Leary promoted the use of LSD and "believed that LSD could treat

alcoholism, reform convicted criminals, and expand a person's consciousness". (Brownell 45) Hence, their use was being continuously pushed amongst the youth. The cultural uprising of the counterculture which saw a need for reform in the ideals of Western society were thus acted out by means of the intake of drugs such as LSD and marijuana. By being under the influence of such drugs, the activists of the counterculture movement were able to provide for themselves an alternate realm which did away with the ideologies of the conservative, capitalist society which they saw as the root of worldly problems. Songs of The Beatles like "Tomorrow Never Knows" and "Rain", therefore, highlight the state of mind of the LSD-inspired youth of the counterculture where they yearn for a world of love, peace and understanding. Believing that societal constructs that govern the modern society are keeping the individual from realising the true meaning of life, the counterculture spread the message of transcendence and meditation which required isolating oneself from the rest of society physically and emotionally. Such messages of the sub-cultural community that advocates spiritual awakening in the light of drug use were thus, thoroughly and accurately depicted through the music and lyrics of The Beatles.

The Beatles spent the rest of the year 1966 touring different countries including the Philippines where they met with many complications and experienced mismanagement on their schedules. In the Philippines, their refusal to appear at the President's palace at the request of the then First Lady Imelda Marcos led to a public outrage and the band was exposed to police brutality and also grave criticism from the media. Following this unfortunate event was the infamous comment made by John Lennon to the press regarding their fame and his comparing their popularity to Christ. His comment saying "Christianity will go. It will vanish and shrink" and that they were "more popular than Jesus" (*Anthology* 223) caused anger among many people who condemned the band of blasphemy and indecency. Although Lennon's poor choice of words could have been attributed to the band's unfiltered sense of vocabulary, as evident from their interviews in the earlier part of their career, people were not so easily forgiving for Lennon's remarks about Christianity. The Beatles later explaining that they had nothing against the functions of the Church did little for the damage that had already been done. George Martin stated:

It got picked up in America, and reported on various radio stations and magnified, and a storm of protest hit The Beatles hard. 'Who do they think they are, comparing themselves to the Lord? Records were burned in public bonfires and banned by radio stations, and it reached such a pitch that Brian had to prevail upon John to make a statement and an apology. (*Anthology* 225)

The tour that followed in America was disastrous and hectic; the band was deemed a blasphemous entity by most of the public and their live performances suffered due to their continued intake of drugs. This period in their career in which the band was faced with a huge amount of bad reputation and doubts was thus, followed by a much-needed break. The year 1966 saw the emergence of many innovative styles in music; as artistry and creative abilities were becoming more appreciated, musicians had more freedom in terms of their artistic ability and hence, they were not strictly focused on marketable productions. Musical artistes were braver in terms of making music that defied convention. As such, when The Beatles started to record their next album in the month of November 1966 they were motivated by the emergence of many futuristic sounds and at the same time, they were competitive and wanted to make an album that would surpass the growing popularity of other progressive bands like The Beach Boys and Pink Floyd.

This period of rest from touring allowed for the band to reflect on their progress and direction as a band and the end result of this period was their 1967 albums *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band* and *Magical Mystery Tour*. From the *Sgt. Pepper* album, it can be seen that The Beatles delved into their experiences as folk musicians and thus, they were able to portray a very light-hearted and tongue-in-cheek sort of protest music that dealt with aspects highlighting issues of great cultural relevance. When the recordings for the *Sgt. Pepper* album started, The Beatles were more focused on being artists in their own light rather than a rock band that had to appeal to their audience at all times. Drawing inspiration from different aspects of life from different areas, the band could be said to have been at ease with their song-writing and it was beneficial that they had no particular pressure to release songs on demand. With McCartney being greatly interested in avant-garde artists

and Harrison delving into Indian music, ideas were coming together that allowed for them to mould new ideas and musical styles. Inspired by the Hippie movement and the emergence of new bands with uncommon and fanciful names, Paul McCartney invented the fictional character named 'Sgt. Pepper'. With the band trying to reinvent themselves as artists, they created the band 'Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band' which became the band's alter-ego. As McCartney explains:

We would be Sgt. Pepper's band, and for the whole of the album we'd pretend to be someone else. So, when John walked up to the microphone to sing, it wouldn't be the new John Lennon vocal, it would be whoever he was in this *new* group, his fantasy character. It liberated you - you could do anything when you got to the mike or on your guitar, because it wasn't *you*.
(*Anthology* 241)

Through their inventive technique of creating a new band and in turn, employing a new musical style, the album appealed not only to the younger generation but also to older audiences. This massive appeal of The Beatles' new album can thus be said to have bridged a gap between generations and therefore, it paved a way for them to spread a message of optimism and equality during the period of division between the establishment and the counterculture. The *Sgt. Pepper* album was meant to be in the form of a show with an introduction to the album where audiences would be formally welcomed. The lyrics contributed by the Lennon-McCartney duo did the act of introducing the imaginary play and set the mood for the other tracks on the album:

It was twenty years ago today,
Sergeant Pepper taught the band to play.
They've been going in and out of style,
But they're guaranteed to make you smile.
So may I introduce to you
The act you've known for all these years:

Sergeant Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band. (Sgt. Pepper lines 1-7)

Ian MacDonald comments on how the song and the album in general was once again an innovative venture by the band; he writes on the musical arrangement of the song, "Starr's kit sound, achieved by new techniques of damping and close-miking is remarkably three – dimensional for its time" (233-234). Further, he gives a review of what beatnik, Allen Ginsberg said about the concept of Sgt. Pepper stating:

Allen Ginsberg has pointed out that, with *Sgt. Pepper*, The Beatles offered an inclusive vision which, among other things, worked to defuse the tensions of the generation gap. Had they been created in America, where the clash between establishment and counterculture was already violent, Sgt. Pepper would have been a reactionary pig...The Beatles, their age – prejudice dissolved by LSD, were having none of this. Theirs was an optimistic, *holistic* view. *Sgt. Pepper* surpasses *Revolver* not in form but in spirit. (234)

Jonathan W. Bernard has stated that the album *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band* was "the album that definitively signalled the Beatles' withdrawal from the presumed immediacy and spontaneity of live performance and their desire to communicate with their audience thenceforth solely from the recording studio" (375). This 'withdrawal' of the band did not impact the popularity of The Beatles, in fact, the album contains songs that have become some of the most well known and loved in popular culture. Intended to be a concept album, the songs on the album can be described to be unifying in the spirit of the made-up band. Although not meant to be a collection of songs that would be performed in one of their concerts, the album, when taken as a whole, could account for a relevant piece of work that defined the times in which it was produced. Jonathan W. Bernard has also commented, "*Sgt. Pepper* has often been taken as the first pop album to warrant discussion as a single work, as opposed to a collection of independently composed songs" (376).

Described by Ringo Starr as their "greatest endeavour" (*Anthology* 241), the *Sgt. Pepper* includes songs that are acknowledged alongside the period of cultural uprising and counterculture. The song titled "Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds" remains to be a popular song that seem to always find mention when speaking of The

Beatles. Although the composition of the song is credited to both Lennon and McCartney, most of the lyrics was written by Lennon who was inspired by the drawing of his four-year old son. The title of the “Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds” unintentionally spelt ‘LSD’, and the band was genuinely surprised when it was pointed out to them. Lennon explains the imagery of the song and the story it told:

The images were from *Alice in Wonderland*. It was Alice in the boat. She is buying an egg and it turns into Humpty-Dumpty. The woman serving the shop turns into a sheep, and the next minute they’re rowing in a rowing boat somewhere – and I was visualising that. There was also the image of the female who would someday come save me – ‘a girl with kaleidoscope eyes’ who would come out of the sky. It’s *not* an acid song. (*Anthology* 242)

Even though the song was not meant to be specifically about drugs and being on an ‘acid trip’, “Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds” does have psychedelic elements within the lyrics that suggest that it is indeed a song that highlights the experience of being under the influence of LSD or any other drug popular during the time. The members of the band, during this period, were smoking marijuana and Lennon was also known to be taking LSD. Therefore, it is not surprising that the song would have suggestions of being on an acid trip that were portrayed consciously or unconsciously. Listening to the lyrics of the song, this element of psychedelia is noticeably indicated:

Follow her down to a bridge by a fountain,
 Where rocking horse people eat marshmallow pies.
 Everyone smiles as you drift past the flowers,
 That grow so incredibly high.
 Newspaper taxis appear on the shore,
 Waiting to take you away.
 Climb in the back with your head in the clouds,

And you're gone. (Sgt. Pepper lines 12 – 19)

Hence, the lyrics to “Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds”, although inspired by a fictional story is clearly suggestive of the state of mind of a person being induced with some type of hallucinogen. Not only are the lyrics of the song evoking the essence of drug use, the musical arrangement of the song and especially the repetition of the bridge “Lucy in the sky with diamonds” highlight the psychedelic feel. As MacDonald has explained:

A single part can fundamentally alter a piece of music and, in view of Lennon's passive and pliant frame of mind, it could be that he accepted McCartney's glittering countermelody...Certainly the most effective section of the recording is the lightest: the bridge, with its subtly harmonised D drone and featherweight base. (241)

The *Sgt. Pepper* album also showcased the song-writing talent and musical genius of George Harrison who had taken a lot of influence from India and its music. For the song entitled “Within You Without You” written by Harrison, Indian musical instruments like dilrubas, sitar and tabla were included and Harrison himself sang the song. Inspired by the time he spent in India and his learning about the culture, Harrison wrote this song that had a philosophical meditative tone to it. Besides the Indian musical orchestra, the lyrics of the song are noteworthy for there is present an insightful message about human existence and the material world. Highly critical of the material world and what human-beings value, Harrison wrote:

We were talking about the space between us all

And the people who hide themselves behind a wall of illusion

Never glimpse the truth

Then it's far too late

When they pass away.

We were talking about the love we could all share when we find it

To try our best to hold it there

With our love

With our love we could save the world

If only they knew. (Sgt. Pepper lines 1-10)

The lyrics of Harrison echo the desire of the generation that wished to establish a peaceful co-existence between nations worldwide. The lyrics indicate that the world has been nurtured into believing that material gains would bring complete happiness. The song also serves as a reminder that human-beings are a small fraction of the universe and that our existence is short lived and eventually, life continues without us. The generation of youngsters who were disillusioned with the means of existence they have been offered sought to bring about a change of mindset. The focus on the self was thus, a prominent aspect of the generation that cared little for societal regulations. “Within You Without You” serves as a reminder to listeners that peace and love is still the message that was being sent in the midst of the Civil Rights Movement that was often accompanied with violent outbursts and frustrations. Urging its listeners to look beyond their own existence and into a more dynamic world view, the song tells listeners that in their pursuit of worldly glory and riches, it is easy to lose oneself in the process. Therefore, the lyrics are understood as a reminder to stay grounded in self-realisation and the ultimate truth that humans are just a small factor that make up the universe. Looking at the lyrics, it is easily noticeable that Harrison, while writing this song, wants his listeners to see the world as he had; the song pushes for the act of self-realisation and a farther vision of existence that is beyond oneself. Thus, materialistic societies and their conventions are seen as getting in the way of people truly knowing the purpose of life. The final verse of the song makes this point come across even more clearly:

We were talking about the love that’s gone so cold,

And the people who gain the world and lose their soul.

They don’t know,

They can't see.

Are you one of them?

When you've seen beyond yourself

Then may you find peace of mind is waiting there

And the time will come when you see

We're all one and life flows on

Within you and without you. (Sgt. Pepper lines 17 – 26)

This theme of progressivism and spirituality has been adapted in other songs from the same album. "A Day in the Life" written primarily by Lennon and co-written by McCartney is another innovative track which greatly reflects the artistic innovation of the band. Kenneth Womack had written on the orchestral setting of the song:

...both composers had suggested the orchestral passages, with McCartney hoping for a "freak-out" and Lennon desiring a "tremendous build-up, from nothing up to something absolutely like the end of the world"...A forerunner of contemporary surround-sound, ambiophonics assisted (Geoff) Emerick in capturing the orchestra's powerful crescendo. With the work of the studio musicians complete, the Beatles turned to the conclusion of "A Day in the Life", a composition that demanded the appropriate punctuation mark for the most evocative rallying call to consciousness in the Lennon-McCartney songbook. (180)

The song was initially inspired by the front-page news of the *Daily Mail* concerning the fatal car crash of Tara Browne, a "young millionaire friend of The Beatles" (MacDonald 229). Taking snippets from the newspaper report about the accident and other news reports from the same newspaper, "A Day in the Life" was written giving a disconnected and generalised view of tragic events and happenings

in different places. From the first verse of the song, the narrator provides a description of the events without any emotion or compassionate attachment:

I read the newspaper today, oh boy

About a lucky man who made the grade.

And though the news was rather sad

Well, I just had to laugh

I saw the photograph.

He blew his mind out in a car,

He didn't notice that the lights had changed.

A crowd of people stood and stared,

They'd seen his face before

Nobody was really sure if he was from the House of the Lords. (Sgt. Pepper lines 1-10)

The song conveys the narrative of how stories and events are never really retold in the exact manner in which they happened. Hence, it can be interpreted as a song about The Beatles and their own depiction of the media; the song touches such notions of how people take in the daily news and tend to believe without ever truly knowing the exact manner in which events escalate.

After the uncompassionate recollection of death, the song continues to narrate other events in the same impassive manner:

I saw a film today, oh boy

The English Army had just won the war.

A crowd of people turned away

But I just had to look

Having read the book

I'd love to turn you on. (Sgt. Pepper lines 11-16)

MacDonald gives an analysis of the meaning behind the song stating that the song is “not of disillusionment with life itself but of disenchantment with the limits of mundane perception” and that it “depicts the ‘real’ world as an unenlightened construct that reduces, depresses, and ultimately destroys” (229). The description given in the second verse of a normal routine everyday life greatly contrasts the first verse where a rather morbid event had just been deliberated. “Woke up and fell out of bed / Dragged a comb across my head / Found my way downstairs and drank a cup” (Sgt. Pepper lines 17-19) further suggests that life continues in civilisation and people move on with their work and routinely duties without concerning over events that might have taken place because it does not impact their well-being personally. The upbeat tempo in which this verse was sung further adds to the effect of the verse that seeks to convey the message that people tend to not remember, or care for the events that may occur if such events do not impact their daily existence. Then, the song goes on to explain how there are “4,000 holes in Blackburn, Lancashire” that have been reported in the newspaper. These images projected towards the end of the song, compared with the events of fatal accidents and war depicted in the beginning are very much contrasted and brought up randomly. Therefore, it is not clear as to what the song is trying to convey as these images are varied and different from one another with no real connection between. However, one aspect of the song that remains a common theme is regarding as to how these occurrences are being conveyed to listeners through the narrative of the song; from the start to the end of the song, the recounting of the episodes come from a place of generalised perception and at no point in the song did the narration turn into one of concern nor does it evoke any type of emotional reaction. The insensitive narrative of the song indicates how civilization as a whole has numbed the emotional senses of people so much to the point where disastrous incidents barely evoke sympathy.

The line “I'd love to turn you on” stand out from the rest of the lyrics and it can be viewed as redeeming the tragic and emotionless narrative of the song.

According to Kenneth Womack, the line “insinuates a sense of salvation on a universal scale” (181). This particular line is symbolic of the idea that human beings can be woken up from the mundane routine of daily life; it suggests that civilisation has turned individuals into perceiving life as a scheduled practice – therefore, eventful occurrences, negative or positive, have little effect on the emotions of people since they cannot stray from their routinely duties. The line “I’d love to turn you on” does not imply anything sexual, rather, it is an indication that people must wake up from the droning consumption of civilised society and get back in touch with what it is to be human and what it is to live. The orchestral build up alongside the convincing lyrics were thus, highly effective and natural which resulted in the song being recognised as one of the most innovative artistic expressions of its time.

The album cover for *Sgt. Pepper* is another memorable outcome of the band’s creative genius. The Beatles wanted to get in character as their alter-ego, Sgt. Pepper’s Lonely Hearts Club Band, which resulted in them wearing military attire that were made of bright psychedelic colours upon which McCartney commented, “I think the plan was to have garnish uniforms that would actually go against the idea of uniform” (*Anthology* 248). During this time, many young men had taken part in the act of burning and destroying their draft cards as a means of refusal to take part in the Vietnam War and also as an act of protest. The Beatles’ donning such vibrant uniforms can also be seen as a reaction against the Vietnam War; the atmosphere surrounding the war was something that could not be ignored and hence, the band taking on the theme of military attire and making it something fun and artistic provided a way for many to cope with the turmoil and also it provided a stance against the act of war. The cover of the album featured images of a number of famous individuals ranging from actor Marlon Brando, Albert Einstein and Karl Marx, all of whom were chosen to get them into character, one that left an unforgettable impression on audiences. George Martin has commented:

Looking back on *Pepper*, you can see it was quite an icon. It was the record of that time, and it probably did change the face of recording, but we didn’t do it consciously...

I think *Pepper* did represent what the young people were on about, and it seemed to coincide with the revolution in young people's thinking. It was the epitome of the Swinging Sixties. It linked up with Mary Quant and miniskirts and all those things – the freedom of sex, freedom of soft drugs like marijuana and so on. (*Anthology* 253)

Through the *Sgt. Pepper* album, The Beatles made new rules for themselves in such a manner that they did not make music solely for performance but for the studio alone. Therefore, the whole album became an artistic creation that was meant for themselves and the reason that the album appealed to so many people can be attributed to the fact that The Beatles were very much a part of the cultural revolution in spirit and form. On this subject of the popularity of the album, McCartney has stated, “The idea wasn't to *do* anything to cater for that mood – we happened to be *in* that mood anyway” (*Anthology* 254).

The next album of The Beatles released in the same year continues with the theme of psychedelic imagery. The *Magical Mystery Tour* (1967) album comprises songs that served as soundtracks for a film of the same name that was made by The Beatles. As described by the band, the film was shot on a whim; there was no definite plot, planning in terms of production or even a proper script. Lennon explains the film as being “about a group of common garden people on a coach tour around everywhere, really, and things happen to them” (*Anthology* 272).

Although the film was not much appreciated, the soundtrack album was a commercial success. The film not being a hit was not a big issue with The Beatles since they had already established their place in popular music and culture. For them, the film was an artistic creation that kept their creativity working since they had given up going on tours. The characteristic of psychedelic escapism is conveyed in the theme song for the film of the same name even as the lines “The Magical Mystery Tour is coming to take you away” is repeated.

As The Beatles, at this point in time, had etched their names in music history, commercial accomplishment was not their priority and neither was meeting the expectations of their listeners. John Lennon has even commented:

I don't think we have any responsibility to the fans. You give them the choice of liking what you're doing, or not liking it. If they don't like it, they let you know – fast. If you allow anything to be dictated by fans, you're just running your life for other people. All we do is try to give fans a fair deal. (*Anthology* 274)

One of Lennon's favourite tracks from the album was the title "I am the Walrus" that he claimed was inspired by "The Walrus and the Carpenter" from *Alice in Wonderland* (*Anthology* 273) which was written as a protest against those he saw as administrative bodies such as his school teachers when he was a young student. Like many of their other songs during this period, it is not obvious what the lyrics meant; from the first verse, the lyrics are portrayed riddle like manner:

I am he as you are he

As you are me and we are all together.

See how they run like pigs from a gun,

See how they fly, I'm crying.

Sitting on a cornflake,

Waiting for a van to come.

Corporation T-shirt stupid bloody Tuesday,

Man, you been a naughty boy, you let your face go long. (*Magical Mystery* lines 1 – 8)

From these lines, it can be analysed that Lennon had in mind his school days and how he was struggling to keep up with other children and how he felt he was mistreated by his teachers. These verses are followed by the chorus "I am the eggman, they are the eggman, / I am the walrus, / Goo goo g'joob" the meaning of which cannot be made clear. However, as inspiration was drawn from Lewis Carroll's poem, which was meant as a commentary on capitalism, it can thus be argued that the capitalist system of west was being targeted as the main aspect. With the

following verses, the meaning of the song becomes even more difficult to comprehend with lines like “Yellow matter custard, / Dripping from a dead dog’s eye. / Crabalocker fishwife, pornographic priestess, / Boy, you been a naughty girl, you let your knickers down” (Magical Mystery lines 18 -21). Russel Reising and Jim Leblanc had written:

Although the hallucinogenic imagery of Lennon’s “I am the Walrus” doesn’t deal expressly with time, the musicality of the number’s treatment of time is dark and threatening. Madow and Sobul have remarked that the “slow, methodical...cello seeps like molasses into the right channel, miring us in a slow swirling ooze”. The surreal lyrics of “Walrus” give further evidence of the composer’s interest during this period both in nonsensical wordplay and in reflective questioning of one’s own identity (recalling “She Said She Said” and “Strawberry Fields Forever”), possibly a symptom of drug-induced paranoia, given the sinister colouring of this track. Extensive tape reduction to accommodate multiple dubs, along with Lennon’s distorted vocal, are among the sonic clues that gives this piece this psychedelic sound – not to mention the unusual melodic and harmonic progressions in the song. (131)

The song titled “Strawberry Fields Forever” is another hit from the band that has been identified with the era of psychedelic influences. Recorded during the sessions of *Sgt. Pepper’s Lonely Hearts Club Band* with the intention of being included in the album but later released as a double A side with “Penny Lane” and then later included in *Magical Mystery Tour*, the song is described by MacDonald as “another of Lennon’s hallucinogenic ventures into the mental interior” (216). Drawing inspiration from his childhood, McCartney comments that the song was about “the old Salvation Army home for kids he (Lennon) used to live next door to in Liverpool” and that the song is related to “youth, golden summers and fields of strawberry” (*Anthology* 237). The chorus of the song, hence, paints a picture of a rustic nature and fields of strawberries:

Let me take you down,

‘Cause I’m going to Strawberry Fields.

Nothing is real,

And nothing to get hung about.

Strawberry Fields Forever. (Magical Mystery lines 1 – 5)

“Strawberry Fields Forever” can be described as a psychedelic song in the sense that it is another representation of escapism which the drug is associated with; taking the concept of nostalgia for a childhood place and memory, the song emphasises on the innocence of a child’s perspective and how one wishes to escape to that place in time and away from the straight society. This sentiment of yearning for childhood innocence was not an unusual aspect in the countercultural scene of Britain as MacDonald explains, “the true subject of English psychedelia was neither love nor drugs, but nostalgia for the innocent vision of the child” (216).

The sense of disillusionment that comes with the notion of growing up and being an adult can be seen highlighted in the verses that follow:

Living is easy with eyes closed,

Misunderstanding all you see.

It’s getting hard to be someone,

But it all works out;

It doesn’t matter much to me. (Magical Mystery lines 6 – 10)

MacDonald has explained that “Strawberry Fields Forever” was the product of a period of intense self-doubt for its author” as his view on LSD had shifted and this had dented his confidence (217). In the process of writing the song, MacDonald further explains:

...he seems to have lost and rediscovered his artistic voice, passing through an interim phase of creative inarticulacy reflected in the halting, childlike quality of his lyric. The music, too, shows Lennon at his most somnambulist,

moving uncertainty through thoughts and tones like momentarily blinded men feeling for something familiar. (217)

The song “Penny Lane”, written by Lennon and McCartney is another noteworthy track from the album. Described by MacDonald as a song whose narrative is both “naive and knowing”, the track caters to the new generation of youths who were ever searching for the zest of life and desperate to do away with traditional customs.

The song paints a picture of a place called ‘Penny Lane’, describing the things that are present there and the everyday events that take place:

In Penny Lane there is a barber shop showing photographs

Of ev’ry head he’s had the pleasure to know,

And all the people that come and go,

Stop and say hello. (Magical Mystery lines 1-4)

Going back to their roots in Liverpool, the images in the song are based on real locations as McCartney has commented, “It’s part fact, part nostalgia for a great place – blue suburban skies, as we remember it, and it’s still there” (*Anthology* 237). As the song continues to describe scenes that are reminiscent of a familiar place known to The Beatles, the feeling of longing for simpler times and a desire to re-enact certain aspects of a particular place is conveyed. Lines such as “In Penny Lane there is a fireman with an hourglass, / And in his pocket is a portrait of the Queen”. (Magical Mystery lines 12-13) and “Behind the shelter in the middle of the roundabout / The pretty nurse is selling poppies from a tray” (Magical Mystery lines 19-20), it is conceivable that the band had a particular setting in mind.

Although “Penny Lane” may mainly be recognized as a song about nostalgia for their younger days in Liverpool, the song is another defining anthem by The Beatles that had deep rooted significance in the countercultural movement. The notion of returning to youthful innocence and love for life being a major

characteristic of the 'hippie movement', the song served as a reminder to audiences that there is something more to life besides the materialistic obsession of the capitalist environment.

Kenneth Womack writes that "Penny Lane":

...offers a dreamlike veneration of youth and the power of memory...the natural progression of humanity as we move from different states of living toward the death-drive itself. Having explored those vistas of meaning rather fully on the last two Beatles albums, John and Paul gazed inwardly and toward the past in..."Penny Lane" in order to resurrect childhood memories and establish a sense of connectedness and transcendence. In this sense, a nostalgic return seems rather appropriate at this juncture of their career. (165)

During the time of release of the album *Magical Mystery Tour* (1967), their status of notoriety in the music scene and their heavy indulgence in drugs like LSD and cannabis, The Beatles were rather complacent in their artistic creations. The results of their consistent drug use can be indicated from their song-writing and musical compositions; "Baby, You're a Rich Man" is one example of how the band's use of drugs impacted their artistry not just in a positive manner but also in a manner in which their talents as musicians were often considered substandard.

During the phase when "Baby, You're a Rich Man" was being composed by Lennon and McCartney, MacDonald remarks that "drugs were now leading their decisions" (*Anthology* 257). The track can be described as sensation enhancing music that adhered to the drug-taking youth's needs for having a good time. The term 'rich', as seen in the title of the song can be interpreted as towards the idea that it is a richness that cannot be gained in terms of materialism, rather, in the spirit of the counterculture, it is a richness of love, senses and emotion. The lyrics assure its listeners that they need not the riches of the world and that happiness can also come from elsewhere:

How does it feel to be one of the beautiful people?

Tuned to a natural E,

Happy to be that way.

Now that you've found another key,

What are you going to play? (Magical Mystery lines 20-24)

From the lyrics it is obvious to conceive that the song engages in elements of drug related influences; the song assures to its listeners that they are 'beautiful people' and after being exposed to the surreal enlightenment of hallucinogens, it encourages them to delve into the endless number of possibilities that awaits. Images of young counterculture members and self-proclaimed 'hippies' come to mind as the song is heard calling such youths "beautiful people". Although it was a song much appreciated by their audiences, music critic Ian MacDonald argues that The Beatles were lacking and their taking of drugs was the cause of it. He writes:

Drugs and overconfidence here fool The Beatles into accepting their initial inspiration as a creative 'found' object. Gone are the days when, as McCartney recalls, they sweated over every bar of a song. Even the didactic lyric, which Harrison insists was intended to show people that they were rich in themselves, mixes clarity with cloudiness. (258)

The last track from the *Magical Mystery Tour* album "All You Need Is Love" is another example of The Beatles being complacent in their musical creativity. Written for a television broadcast that linked twenty-four countries via satellite in 1967, the song's chorus that repeats "All you need is love" is reminiscent of "Baby, You're a Rich Man" which also had its repetitive chorus consisting of a single note. Although musically, the song may be considered below par with their previous hits, the message conveyed in the song has become a beloved anthem not just for the counterculture of the Sixties but also for other events that follow in popular culture. The lyrics of the song make it clear the message being conveyed is one of love and peaceful communion:

There's nothing you can do that can't be done,

Nothing you can sing that can't be sung,

Nothing you can say,

But you can learn how to play the game,

It's easy. (Magical Mystery lines 4-8)

The substandard quality of the song that critics saw did not impact its popularity as it went on to top the charts. With the 'hippie' movement flowering, the song made a perfect fit into the generational awakening of the masses that called for peaceful co-existence between different cultures. The inclusion of the audiences in the chorus of the song when played live added to the feeling of communion that was prevalent in the hippie communities.

Edna M. Edet has stated, "It is human to protest. Deprived of the right to protest, man sublimates his anger. Instead of protesting outwardly, man withdraws, turns inward, seethes, and finds other ways to express himself" (38). In the period of the counterculture of the Western world, protests in the name of equality, peace and justice were done in various ways and amongst them, the arts, especially that of music seemed to impact the masses on a very wide scale. Songs reflecting the plight of individuals in all walks of life can to be recognized as mediums through which people's voices could be heard and a means by which communities could become united.

Although it was a phenomenon that was started in opposition of the mainstream society and its values, the counterculture, especially in the field of entertainment, quickly made its way to the popular stratum. Notable movements of the 1960s such as the Civil Rights Movements, Anti-War demonstration and the new generation of youth who were desperate to do away with the traditions of old made it a possibility for new and unorthodox ideas to flourish. In a matter of years, it can be argued that the countercultural, that was supposedly started to oppose the mainstream narrative created narrative structures of its own that sought to maintain things in a certain way.

It is accurate to state that the capitalist society of the West was the main issue with which the counterculture of the sixties was based; capitalism as a whole was understood by advocates of the counterculture as a system through which only a portion of the population was being benefitted and that there were whole other groups of people who would not reap the profit of the system. In his book called *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* (1859), Karl Marx has written, “At first sight the wealth of society under the capitalist system presents itself as an immense accumulation of commodities, its unit being a single commodity. But every commodity has a twofold aspect, that of *use value* and *exchange value*” (19). In the preface of this book, Marx has also written:

In the social production which they carry on they enter into definite relations that are indispensable and independent of their will; these relations of production correspond to a definite stage of development of their material powers of production. The sum total of these relations of production constitutes the economic structure of society - the real foundation, on which rise legal and political superstructures and which correspond definite forms of social consciousness. The mode of production in material life determines their existence, but, on the contrary, their social existence determines their consciousness. (11-12)

The counterculture, in all its efforts and practices, is viewed as seeking to undermine the narrative of the dominant status-quo that is of the capitalist society. Music, film, art and fashion were all impacted by the cultural uprising resulting in an awakening of creative ideas and innovative undertakings. Therefore, it is accurate to describe the movement as a whole as an ‘anti-capitalist’ movement given that the counterculture rejected almost all forms of the capitalist society and the conventions associated with it. In their creative production, The Beatles, who were at the height of their career, were very much invested in this idea of counteracting what has been accepted as normal. Making the most of the spirit of the times, their releases during the mid-sixties catered to the mass of disillusioned groups that were frustrated with the ways in which their societies were heading. Therefore, the notion of existence being determined by the mode of production that Karl Marx had discussed

extensively was shared indirectly or directly by the cultural revolutionaries of the Sixties.

What was seen as stifling individuals from acknowledging their true selves was the phenomenon of materialism that occupied itself into the lives of people living in societies. Modernization, insistent on upgrading of technology, economic planning and expansion of industry all contributed to the rise of the counterculture. Within this domain of modern civilization, it was felt that there was established a false sense of freedom although the world was advancing in terms of economic, industrial and technological development. It was a shared notion that the society that was established as the convention and the norm was fabricated and manipulated by politics and institutions of power. Therefore, this would mean that the freedom of choice presented for each individual was a false concept as in reality, it would be the case that all decisions and ideas of the people had already been decided by the dominant society and that individuals were manipulated into forming those ideas through agents of the dominant societal organization.

Identifying itself as the opposite and contrary to this organization-based means of livelihood, the counterculture and its member chose to believe that there was more to human life than that of a quality life based on consumerism and lifestyle culture. The result of opposing the dominant culture and all its norms was thus a venture into the unpopular realms of culture; since Western culture and capitalism had been identified as the culprit for the constraints of human life that kept people from realizing their true identities, there was an immediate need and advocacy for anything that was uncommon, controversial, and unorthodox. Being constricted for too long by the rules of societal norms and dictions, the counterculture youth generation sought for themselves instant gratification and satisfaction that would somehow bring them in into a state of being that allowed them to be their complete selves without the facade of existence that was in accordance with societal standards.

From the singles and albums released during the height of the cultural changes, The Beatles took the world of music by storm by choosing to challenge the diction of popular music and art. By the mid-1960s, The Beatles were, without a

doubt, one of the most popular names in music with multiple hits and successes all over the world. Their ability to appeal to the sentiments and causes of the common man was one of their most redeeming qualities that led them to so much success during the course of their career. Although other artists like Bob Dylan and bands like The Rolling Stones were influential as musicians of protest, The Beatles, in their own light, opened doors for many aspiring artists with their experimental tendencies and their open-mindedness towards innovation.

Opposition to ‘the Establishment’ and its system was identified to be the driving force that powered the spirit of the music that arose out of the counterculture. However, with the popularity of the anti-capitalist, anti-establishment system, an argument can arise with regards to the fact that the counterculture – including subcultural communities, musicians, artists and influencers – while supposedly being opposed to mass culture and its capitalist ideals, came to organize itself and operate in such a way that it becomes modelled after that which it sought to interrupt. Be it political protests, demonstrations, rallies, and sit-ins or just a group of people who found common ground in sharing hallucinogens or art, music became an instrument that established a feeling of communion and unison against dominance by the straight society. Hence, it was not a surprise that The Beatles, with their endless experimentation were held as leading icons in the movement. Sharing the sentiments of the political and social justice movements that were being advanced, The Beatles fully invested themselves into this era of cultural awakening with their releases becoming instruments for bringing together people of different backgrounds.

William Deeds, regarding the success and legacy of The Beatles has stated, “The Beatles were an example of youthful free enterprise that should be welcomed and nurtured by business leader” (qtd. in Heilbrunner 88). Although the band was, and is continued to be, regarded with the utmost regard as leading icons and trailblazers of the counterculture, the level of their authenticity and legitimacy to the cause of social change is a topic that is often questioned and examined. Heilbrunner has written:

As a whole, the British Left was essentially ambivalent towards The Beatles, as it persisted in its old suspicious approach to popular youth culture. On the one hand, the Leftist organizations, both British and European, supported the working classes' youth culture and recognized it as an authentic expression of their distress with a potential for revolution against the ruling bourgeoisie, and an effecting means of expressing the young workers' protest in the face of their exploitation. Yet, on the other hand, this culture was also conceived as a tool in the hands of the bourgeoisie hegemony, used to promote its own agenda...The European Left initially perceived American Rock N' Roll as a potential tool of protest by white youths and oppressed African-Americans, and a connecting link between the working class and the students in their protest against bourgeois society. However, as this genre penetrated mainstream the left began to criticize rock music and especially the Pop music that stemmed from it. (89)

It is not to be argued that The Beatles were important contributors to the cultural uprising, but at the same time, it is also important to note that while initially opposing and standing against the capitalist hegemonic system, they were able to establish a hegemonic rule of their own through their massive influence. With their massive following, there was a point that The Beatles were able to sell and make profit from whatever type of music that they were putting out. This, of course, can be contributed to their talent and daring to be different but if looked at from a critical and professional point of view, it becomes arguable that the direction in which they decided to embark on came, to epitomize a structure of organization that orchestrated and systematized itself, similar to the very institutions that was initially targeted as being regressive. The Beatles and their legacy thus become a very important aspect in analysing the shifts that occur when a subculture enters into the realm of the dominant one and how that can create contradictions and arguments regarding what is to be considered counterculture and what is mainstream.

In *Prison Notebooks* (1929-35), Antonio Gramsci has written that there are two major superstructure "levels" which are the "civil society" and the "political

society”. He also writes that these levels correspond to the function of hegemony. Further he explains the concept of hegemony:

The “spontaneous” consent given by the great masses of the population to the general direction imposed on social life by the dominant fundamental group; this consent is “historically” caused by the prestige (and consequent confidence) which the dominant group enjoys because of its position and function in the world of population. (145)

Gramsci, in his extensive theory of hegemony, speaks of intellectuals and their roles in creating cultural systems. He writes, “The capitalist entrepreneur creates alongside himself the industrial technician, the specialist in political economy, the organizers of a new culture, of a new legal system, etc” (135). Hence, when speaking of his theory of hegemonic relations, Gramsci had in mind a capitalist society which he believed was responsible for the ways in which the whole of society and its people were functioning. Therefore, it is traditionally believed that in a society where there exists a system of hegemony, it is the dominant group that is successfully utilizing the structures of hegemony in order for them to undermine the existence of the working force in society. With the counterculture and its attributes gaining so much popularity, the manner in which that popularity was organized into a means of production and hence, measured from its value of production becomes a significant issue because it can be argued that it is accurate to a considerable degree.

By the mid-1960s, The Beatles had managed to place themselves at the very top of the musical scene and at this point of time, it has been acknowledged that their over-confidence as musicians and artists had rendered them complacent in their work. Whatever product The Beatles were selling, there was a point in their career that their loyal followers would invest their time and money irrespective of whether or not their music was truly worth it or not. John Lennon himself has stated:

There were times when your voice was so bad (through losing your voice) you virtually wouldn't be singing at all, and nobody would notice because there'd be so much noise going on. You could never hear what we were

doing. It would just become a sort of happening...You couldn't hear any music at all. (*Anthology* 227)

At this point in their career, it became increasingly clear that The Beatles had established adequate following of their own and their status had become accompanied with a sufficient amount of authority, and they were leading a whole generation of youth who modelled their consciousness after the messages that The Beatles were supposedly sending through their protest music.

Given their humble backgrounds, it is understandable that The Beatles identified with the working class and likewise, their audiences, many of whom comprised the general public who were in the lower rungs of the society, also related to the image and sound of the band. Even from their earlier success, the attraction surrounding the band was that they reflected the sentiments of the common people and therefore, they were considered relatable and easy to identify with. Naturally, the political New Left that emerged during the counterculture era recognized in them the voices of the lower classes who were often not represented enough in the society. As Heilbroner has stated:

The New Left did detect the voice of the rebellious working-class culture in the early Beatles songs. The song "Can't Buy Me Love" with its supposed anti-capitalist message, impressed the British Marxists. Terry Eagleton, who in 1964 was still a student at Oxford, claimed that the Beatles brought together England's youth across class differences in opposition to the adult world. Communist activists saw Beatlemania as an expression of the pride of the youth, and were pleased that the Beatles, who originated from the working class, had "made it". However, the Labour journal *The New Statesmen* severely criticized the band and the corrupt culture it represented. The newspaper's editor, Paul Johnson, who years later defected to the conservatives, condemned the Beatles and their songs for their Americanization and bad taste. (90)

The Beatles' entrance into the American music scene and their becoming a worldwide sensation symbolized, for many people, the hypocrisy in their musical

characteristics. The Beatles rose to fame under the premise of the cultural uprising and the message that their music was conveying was that of the counterculture; almost all of the songs that were released by them during the mid-1960s were in favour of the lifestyle and principles of the counterculture. For example, songs from the *Sgt. Pepper* (1967) album such as “Lucy In The Sky With Diamonds”, “Within You Without You” and “A Day In The Life” echo sentiments of the drug induced youth culture that opposed elements of the society that were conservative. Similarly, songs such as “Strawberry Fields Forever” and “Penny Lane” from the *Magical Mystery Tour* (1967) album reflected the desire of the counterculture world view that wanted to return to childlike innocence and rural life that was rid of the toils of capitalism and its organizational functions. Songs of communion such as “Baby You’re a Rich Man” and “All You Need Is Love” became full blown anthems of togetherness that united people and encouraged them to turn away from hate and unite in the name of love. The Beatles’ investing themselves and their talent into the profit turning industry of the American cultural scene was thus a very questionable move from the perspective of the political Left who, in their mind, had an agenda to do away with the system of exchange value and instead opted for a means through which there would be no distinction or discrimination between all those who lived in society. As Heilbroner had stated, “The debate, which was launched by the New Left...typified their conceptualization of popular culture in general, and of the Beatles in particular” (91).

Antonio Gramsci, in *Prison Notebooks* (1929-35), stresses upon the role of ‘intellectuals’ in society; he writes, “All men are intellectuals, one could therefore say: but not all men have in society the function of intellectuals” (140). These intellectuals, according to Gramsci, play a vital role in the functioning of society and it is through the roles they play that the system of hegemony could be established. He further elaborates on how new intellectuals are formed in order to capitalize on a system of regime where the willingness participation of individuals will be required:

The problem of creating a new stratum of intellectuals consists therefore in the critical elaboration of the intellectual activity that exists in everyone at a certain degree of development, modifying its relationship with the muscular-

nervous effort towards a new equilibrium, and ensuring that that the muscular-nervous effort itself, in so far as it is an element of a general practical activity, which is perpetually innovating the physical and social world, becomes the foundation of a new and integral conception of the world. (141)

Gramsci further writes:

One of the most important characteristics of any group that is developing towards dominance in its struggle to assimilate and to conquer “ideologically” the traditional intellectuals, but this assimilation and conquest is made quicker and more efficacious the more the group in question succeeds in simultaneously elaborating its own organic intellectuals. (142)

Hence, according to Gramsci, domination of a social group occurs through a systematic form of regime that is carried out through the functioning of a select set of intellectuals that understand, identify, and associate themselves with the group in question. The cultural uprising of the Sixties, in many ways, could be understood as a phenomenon that was utilized to spread specific propaganda and ideologies and organizing itself into a fad in which one had to invest his time, energy and money accordingly. The role of cultural icons such as The Beatles here becomes very important because of the fact that such figures in the realm of entertainment make their living from the investment of their audiences into their products; in the process of spreading the message of the counterculture, The Beatles gained fame and fortune, while turning their talent, their means of production for profit and hence, capitalizing on the situation and occurrences that were present in their immediate environment.

It has been acknowledged that one of the driving principles of the 1960s counterculture was that of anti-capitalism. However, significant questions can be raised when taking into account that the countercultural scene evolved into a means through which capital was accumulated. As Gramsci has also mentioned, it is an important detail to take into notice that when a new social group is formed and along with it, new ideas, such ideas held up by the new group falls into a system of

organization which is ultimately conquered and maintained by a set of intellectuals. Hence, leading figures need not appear from the already dominating class but from the lower rungs of society who self-identify as a part of that group.

Gramsci has also stated that “the elaboration of intellectual strata in concrete reality does not take place on the terrain of abstract democracy but in accordance with very concrete traditional historical processes” (144). This indicates that although new social and cultural groups may appear within existing societies, their mode of organization is similar to that of traditional modes and that the role of hegemony is present throughout. The radical antics of the counterculture and the changes that occurred was celebrated not just by the active members of the movement, but also by the industry of capitalism as new interests and needs are part and parcel of the capitalist means of accumulating wealth. Although initially beginning as a movement that sought to undermine and interrupt the system, it instead became a constituent of this very structure.

It may not be completely accurate to state that The Beatles exploited the rebellious generation, but it is a fact that the counterculture greatly boosted their popularity and fame all throughout the world. John Lennon has stated, “I reckon we could send out four waxwork dummies of ourselves and that would satisfy the crowds. Beatles concerts are nothing to do with music anymore. They’re just bloody tribal rites”. To this, George Harrison has also commented, “While everybody else was going mad, we were actually the sanest people in the whole thing” (*Anthology* 229). Many devoted fans of The Beatles, at this point of time, were completely devoted not just in the music of the band but also in their persona. The comments made by Lennon and Harrison thus indicate that their status and musical royalty was so deeply established that they could do no wrong in the eyes of their admirers. Thus, the very image of The Beatles could be turned into a regime through which an increase in capital could be maintained.

Gramsci explains in *Prison Notebooks* the case of those whom he calls “Rural-Type Intellectuals” and states that “Their function can be compared to that of

subaltern officers in the army” and that “the average urban intellectuals are very standardized” (148). Further he elaborates:

Intellectuals of the rural type are for the most part “traditional”, that is they are linked to the social mass of the country people and the town (particularly small-town) petite bourgeoisie, not as yet elaborated and set in motion by the capitalist system. This type of intellectual brings into contact the peasant masses with the local and state administration (lawyers, notaries, etc.) Because of this activity they have an important politico-social function, since professional mediation is difficult to separate from political. (148)

With The Beatles identifying themselves amongst the socially backward classes of society, their appeal was immense as they were giving a voice to the causes of those very people. However, with the theory of the ‘rural-type intellectuals’ that Gramsci has mentioned, it could be interpreted that the role of The Beatles is identical to the that of the intellectuals. The Beatles, after having established their notoriety in the musical scene were held as leaders of the rebellion amongst the youths and became an important point to note that they were responsible for leading a whole generation into a system of hegemony. The counterculture movement, in general, created new interests in every realm of everyday life that in turn, led to the creation of new markets and new systems of exchanges. In this new system of exchange that were formed out of the cultural uprising, The Beatles functioned as active participants who were responsible for ideologically influencing the masses and getting them invested into the new cultural creations in the name of love, peace, freedom, and spirituality.

Although The Beatles and their role as cultural icons can be interpreted in such ways that would label them as tools of the capital, it cannot be denied that their music was innovative and influential in many ways. The Beatles were responsible for bringing to the forefront new techniques and ideas that continue to be utilized in the popular music scene. It is also not to be doubted that The Beatles were greatly influenced by the counterculture and therefore, it was reflected in their lifestyle and mannerisms. From their unpredictable behaviour in interviews and daringness to

speak their minds on societal issues such as governmental laws, war and racism, it is clear that they did not care much for convention and traditional etiquettes. Their use of drugs was also an important factor that helped in forming the image that they were portraying for their audiences. After entering into the musical scenes of the United States and eventually touring the world, the upkeep of maintaining their status as innovative creators played a major role in their musical ventures. For instance, with the process of writing new songs, The Beatles were fully aware of their contemporaries during the heights of their career in the 1960s such as Bob Dylan, Led Zeppelin, The Beach Boys and The Rolling Stones. Therefore, while writing news song, the pressure to outdo the new sounds that were being made by other artists was present amongst them. Hence, although the message within the music was equality in all aspects of life, the necessity for musicians to maintain relevance by being at the top of the artistic spectrum was always present.

Ian MacDonald has written:

Faced with the evils of prejudice, war, poverty, and starvation, the underground was uncertain whether to attack these head-on with disruptions of the sort favoured by Situationists or by-pass them by invoking love and peace. Was it better to argue the toss with people supposedly too brainwashed to understand one's language or simply 'love-bomb' them with flowers and smiles? In truth, a movement ranging, as its extremes, from dogmatic Left-wingers to LSD-in-the-reservoirs anarchists had as many 'communication hang-ups' within its own ranks as with the 'straight' world outside. (226)

As capitalism has its way and means through which it creates new cultures and societal systems, so did the cultural movement of the Sixties that called for continued change and innovativeness. What was opted in the stead of the prevailing dominant system was not made clear, however, the prevalence of peace, love and equality was a common aspect that was witnessed in all activities of the counterculture. However, the progressiveness ideology of the Sixties was very much imbued in the use of drugs that it created an atmosphere of delirium that sometimes led to a point where the movement could become just another rebellious acting out of

young people against a system that they were not satisfied with. Therefore, for musicians such as The Beatles, it would definitely become a much easier task to sell records to this particular social group with the right ideology and politics contained within the brand that they were selling.

The distinction between a dominant culture and a relatively lower form of culture is thus, very difficult to access. This is due to the reason that by asking and hoping for a new regime of existence that would be desired as a replacement of the dominant capitalist system, a similar system of hegemonic regime is sustained and the cycle of production in terms of capital is perpetuated. Thus, it is arguable to a considerable degree that when The Beatles were releasing their songs and their films, they were aware of the type of novelty that their audiences were expecting from them; and in the name of staying relevant in the scene of the counterculture, they were led to create their art that have not been seen or heard before. And since the final products then reflect the narrative of the cultural uprising composed of resistance and rebellion against the dogma of capitalism, they were accepted by audiences because for them, it symbolized a new form of self-expression and existence that undermined and proposed an alternative to the prevailing system.

The Beatles' venture in film making in 1967 is a good example that highlight how the production of novelty to turn profits is an important aspect of the counterculture. The 'Magical Mystery Tour' film that was filmed and directed by The Beatles reflected the attitude that a lot of people within the subcultural movement were familiar with. The film was Paul McCartney's idea who had come up with the concept. McCartney comments, "we weren't doing a regular film – we were doing a crazy roly-poly Sixties film" (*Anthology* 271). The Beatles were aware of the preferences of their audience by now and the effort they put into the film was based around the idea that the Sixties was spontaneous and daring, acting on whims and trying new things. Therefore, although it was a concept that was created from the minds of The Beatles, the narrative of the film was formed based on what people would like to watch. No definite plan or procedure was involved in the making of this film, and many critics had, justifiably, disparaged the film for its lack of consistency and meaning. However, through the eyes of the movement that sought a

definite disruption of all sorts of conventions that prevailed, the film is an audacious enterprise that did away with the rules and regulations that would go into the making of any sort of movie. Therefore, since it was in the name of the counterculture and the resistance to traditional ethics, the film, just like Beatles albums that were released during those times, was held as an important undertaking that separated itself from the general establishment.

Within any civil society, hegemony therefore plays a greatly significant role as within any social group, there exist a select amount of people who must execute and carry out the principles and values of the said group. Hence, it is important to grasp the fact that although the counterculture presented itself as a better alternative for the western capitalist system, it was appropriated in many ways in order for the accumulation of capital that drives the economic system. The romantic ideology that is associated with the counterculture which advocated a system of existence reminiscent of a Marxist Utopia is therefore, not recognized as attainable in the context of the 1960s. At the same time, the role of protest music and musicians such as The Beatles is not to be understated as they were indeed responsible for bringing real issues into the forefront such as anti-war sentiments and mental illness that were impacting a lot of individuals. There has always existed a difficulty in defining the differences between what is mainstream culture and what is counterculture, and with the particular case of The Beatles and their role in pop culture, it becomes increasingly clear that when provided context, the narrative of protest present in their songs will remain relevant in analysing the systems of cultural hegemony.

CHAPTER 4

THE BEATLES AS ANTI-ESTABLISHMENT IN POPULAR CULTURE

The cultural uprising that evolved from the 1960s countercultural scene was greatly significant for the establishment of a narrative that would shape the understanding of popular culture. The social activism and student protests impacted many areas of society so much so that the era can be viewed as bringing about a reorganisation of modern culture that would leave its mark on the political and cultural sphere. What started as an act of countering norms which were widely accepted as the dominant form of popular culture, the era of mass rebellion in the 1960s brought about a revision of this very definition of in the concept of popular cultural ideals.

A basic understanding of the concept of popular culture is that it is “simply culture that is widely favoured or well liked by many people” (Storey 5). The conservative ideals and capitalist industry of post-World War society of the 1950s and 60s was acknowledged as the establishment and therefore, the popular culture. The post-war generation’s counter reaction against the principals of this establishment that took prominence in the mid-1960s in the form of civil rights movements, anti-war protests, student activism and drug use not only impacted the political spectrum but also influenced the concept of popular beliefs whereby liberal and progressive ideals of formerly foreign subcultures gradually came to be accepted as a part of popular society.

As public figures, popular musicians and entertainers have significant roles in shaping cultural movements and so did The Beatles during the course of the countercultural activities of Western culture during the 1960s and 1970s. With their innovative style of embracing the unusual and unconventional, The Beatles were one of the leading figures who could be considered responsible for the setting up of a cultural framework that sought to do away with the construct of the mainstream popular idea and introducing an innovative cultural mindset that would remain impactful in various societal spheres.

Towards the end of the 1960s, the popularity of The Beatles had not decreased which can largely be credited to their daring and experimental style of music. Similarly, music and entertainment had entered an era where it was possible

to portray and depict almost anything according to the artist's desire and vision without having to conform to any particular criteria. At the height of their musical creativity, The Beatles during the late 1960s were pioneers in the movement of the underground culture and this was showcased greatly in their musical production which was adored as well as criticized by many of their fans and critics.

In the year 1968, The Beatles released their album titled *The Beatles*, popularly known as *The White Album*. During the time in which this album was being prepared and released, the band had well been recognised as one of the most notable musicians in the industry. Due to their immense influence on their audience and the culture of the youth, it can be said that they had developed a state of mind in which they believed that whatever they put out on the market would be a huge success. With the level of assurance that the band had developed in their creative thinking, they were able to provide for their audience a series of musical ventures that dealt with their own personal beliefs and experiences much of which was witnessed and heard through the songs on the *White Album* and their other releases in the year 1968.

The Beatles were not oblivious to the cultural and political uprising that was happening around them, and although the band had stated their desire to remain apolitical their opinions regarding such issues were brought forward in the album. Three versions of the song "Revolution" which were all recorded during the sessions for the *White Album* greatly highlighted the stance of The Beatles in the midst of the cultural and political turmoil of the counterculture era. The songs "Revolution 1" and "Revolution 9" were released in the *White Album* while the song "Revolution" was released as a B-side of the "Hey Jude" single. During the time of composition for the song "Revolution", John Lennon has stated, "I wanted to put out what I felt about revolution. I thought it was about time we spoke about it, the same as I thought it was about time we stopped not answering about the Vietnamese war" (*Anthology* 298).

Inspired by the protests against the war in Vietnam in the United States, United Kingdom and other parts of the world, the song "Revolution" echoed the need for change and showcased the author's hope of peace that could count as divine

intervention. MacDonald details the events that led up to the composition of the “Revolution” songs:

The immediate inspiration for the REVOLUTION sequence was the May ’68 student uprising in Paris, which reached its crescendo with de Gaulle’s dissolution of the French National Assembly the very evening that REVOLUTION 1 was being laid down in London. Fanfared by the Tet Offensive, 1968 had burst violently into the floating utopian fantasy of the previous year, thrusting Vietnam to the top of the protest agenda and sparking a pitched battle between police and 100,000 anti-war marchers outside the US embassy in Grosvenor Square. As if to drive the point home, Martin Luther King’s assassination a few weeks later confirmed a brutal *Zeitgeist* shift from love and peace to politics and struggle. (283)

From the first verse of the single version of the song, the message of the song is clear which is the advocacy for change and the need for abandonment of violence:

You say you want a revolution,

Well, you know,

We all want to change the world.

You tell me that it’s evolution,

Well, you know,

We all want to change the world.

But when you talk about destruction,

Don’t you know you can count me out? (Hey Jude lines 1-8)

From these lyrics, it is not difficult to comprehend that the members of The Beatles did not advocate violence and the radical protests that did not seem to do any good for the cause which they were marching for. As the song continues into the

second verse, it reveals more of the opinions and questions that may be posed regarding the politics of war that the Western societies were facing:

You say you got a real solution,

Well, you know

We'd all love to see the plan.

You ask me for a contribution,

Well, you know,

We're all doing what we can.

But if you want money for people with minds that hate,

All I can tell you is, brother, you'll have to wait. (Hey Jude lines 11-18)

Such lines echo the sentiments of the masses who did not wish to fund nor support war in any way shape or form. While being relatively silent on political matters, The Beatles, through the lyrics of this song, made it clear to those listening that they did not wish to bring forth a revolution if it meant that it would only bring about death and suffering. Lennon explains his lyrics by which he firmly stood:

The statement in 'Revolution' was mine. The lyrics stand today. They're still my feelings about politics. I want to see the *plan*... As far as overthrowing something in the name of Marxism or Christianity, I want to know what you're going to do *after* you've knocked it down...If you want to change the system, change the system. It's no good shooting people. (*Anthology* 299)

Further he states his opinion on the concept of peace and how he feels that it cannot be attained through the act of violence:

If you want peace, you won't get it with violence. Please tell me one militant revolution that worked. Sure, a few of them took over, but what happened? Status quo. And if they smash it down, who do they think is going to build it up again? And then when they've built it up again, who do they think is going

to run it? And how are they going to run it? They don't look further than their noses. If someone showed me one that worked, then it might turn me a bit. I'd say 'All right, that's the way to do it,' then turn the place upside down. But there isn't one. (*Anthology* 299)

What can be taken away from this statement by John Lennon is that although The Beatles were greatly recognised alongside the movement of the counterculture, they were not radical in the sense that they did not support irrational behaviour when it came to the wellbeing of the greater part of society. Thus, even though certain songs of The Beatles have been interpreted as having political undertones which could have been, more or less, embraced by the political New Left, Lennon makes it a point that the band members did not affiliate themselves with any particular political ideology and that the whole purpose of their music was for the people and the people alone. The backlash received by the song was such that The Beatles were thought to have abandoned the movement for change by not embracing the violent anti-war protests that were occurring in different places during that period. By not renouncing the hope for peaceful reform while violent clashes were happening, the band was in a position of distancing a better part of their audience as the new era of student protests were calling for revolution through means of anarchy. MacDonald recounts the disappointment felt by the political left as he writes:

...the more politicised students scorned what they saw as Lennon's bland rich-man's assurance that everything was somehow going to be 'alright', resenting his wish to be counted out of any impending 'destruction'. The New Left press was likewise offended, especially in America, where REVOLUTION was branded 'a betrayal' and 'a lamentable petty bourgeois cry of fear'...Meanwhile, *Time* magazine devoted an article to the song, approving its 'exhilarating' criticism of radical activists, while American right-wingers argued on the contrary that The Beatles were merely middle-of-the-road subversives warning the Maoists not to 'blow' the revolution by pushing too hard. (284)

The line from the single version of “Revolution” which received much backlash “When you talk about destruction,/ Don’t you know you know you can count me out” was altered to “count me out, in” (“White Album” line 6) in “Revolution 1”. The ‘in/out’ dilemma of the song originated even while the song was being written by Lennon while in India and hence, the change in the two songs was not only due to pressure from the political student-based protests. The release of the “Revolution” series can be seen as highlighting the fact that The Beatles, even though they were important figures in the movement of the counterculture, did not identify with the progressive left-wing ideals in the sense that they did not invest themselves in whatever activity was being moved forward by the counterculture. In truth, Lennon and the rest of the band maintained their apoliticism and were committed to the idea and notion of peace and as such, political ideologies as a whole did not impact their song-writing directly.

“Revolution 1”, like the single version, was a statement about the band’s, or rather Lennon’s, stance in the political spectrum. His disavowing of anything that had to do with violence and the then current society’s preoccupation with anarchy and radicalism drove the author of the song towards a simpler form of expression and a change of musical scene which resulted in the blues version of the song. During this period in Britain, there was a new found appreciation for marginalised musicians and there was a general return to more simple and traditional styles. As MacDonald has written:

To the British, unworried about cultural identity, the popularity of blues represented little more than a change of style: a typical pendulum swing from the flowery cavalier vagaries of psychedelia to the gritty roundhead bluntness of twelve-bars about sex and booze...For the intensely individual Lennon, the shift towards simplicity registered in REVOLUTION 1 went far deeper, embodying a need for honesty forced on him by the pressure for personal reassessment created by the break-up of his marriage (285)

The change in “Revolution 1” that embraced the return to traditional and spiritual roots in the form of the blues had as much to do with personal experiences

as with cultural occurrences. While seeking reconciliation after a failed marriage and after being through a rough domestic dispute that undoubtedly filled him with desolation, Lennon was able to highlight the similar sentiments of many people who wished to do away with the radical antics of the revolutionary Left and a return to the more traditional roots. The reason for the backlash upon the song was the sense in which it was being delivered and the condemning tone that was being used. As Carlton J. Wilkinson has written:

The lyrics of “Revolution 1” appear to mock revolution and revolutionaries and imply a preference to work within the system, flawed as it is. The singer belittles through agreement - “we all want to change the world” – and implies that the movement is pursuing “destruction” for its own sake...The writer holds no hope that a new plan to fix the ills of the world will represent change for the better and retreats instead to the world he can control: his own attitude, his own head. Moreover, he charmingly, but arrogantly suggests we do the same. (191-192)

The third version of the ‘Revolution’ series titled “Revolution 9” is described by MacDonald as, “By far The Beatles’ most extreme venture into ‘random’. He further states that the track is “the world’s most widely distributed avant-garde artefact” (286). On the recording process of the sound collage, Lennon explains:

‘Revolution 9’ was an unconscious picture of what I actually think will happen when it happens, just like a drawing of revolution. It was just abstract, *musique concrete*, people screaming... I thought I was painting in sound a picture of revolution - but I made a mistake. The mistake was that it was *anti*-revolution. (*Anthology* 307)

As the track was not a song with lyrics but a collection of different sounds, it is probable that “Revolution 9” is not a favourite Beatle song of many listeners. However, the track received a numerous amount of exposure that encompassed expectations. Kenneth Womack explains the uniqueness of the track:

Alan W. Pollack rightly describes the recording as “random anti-narrative effect”, which indeed it is. Yet by accruing disruptive layer upon layer throughout the same antinarrative’s stultifying vision, the track succeeds in establishing one of popular music’s most disturbing listening experiences. With its intense sonic violence and sociocultural destruction, “Revolution 9” would seem, at least at face value, to be positively revolutionary. (237)

Womack further observes:

As a textual representation of a culture spiralling out of control and stumbling towards its irremediable doom, “Revolution 9” illustrates a desensitized world in which self-destruction has become inexorable, in which humanity has become vanquished. It’s a world in which Paul’s desperate appeal for a return to innocence – “Can you take me back?” – is nothing short of a resounding negative. (237)

This project that can only be identified under the avant-garde was influenced by Lennon’s conviction in the power of the universe and the use of drugs, particularly LSD. While to many listeners, “Revolution 9” may simply seem like a collection and drawing together of random words and sounds made by random objects and people, the sound collage, in reality, conveys the many sentiments of the time of the counterculture during this period of the late 1960s. MacDonald has stated, “The common factor is consciousness itself; if REVOLUTION 9 can be said to be about any one thing it would be the abiding concern of the Sixties counterculture: quality of awareness”. (289)

Carlton J. Wilkinson has written on the meaning behind the sound collage:

Much of what there is to understand about “Revolution 9” is already there in the title: A revolution implies upheaval, violence, masses moving against an established system – we expect promise and hope for renewal, destruction and death, and most importantly, confusion and violence, as laws and predictable patterns of behaviour are temporarily set aside and new ones are not yet in place. The “9” derives from a key element of the composition, the

loop of a voice calling “number nine”. As part of the title, it implies a cynicism about revolution in general: This Revolution is just one in a revolving door of revolutions, each replacing the other, again turning utopian dreams into bruised and imperfect reality. This echoes the mocking tone of the “Revolution 1”. (193-194)

At this point in time, Lennon had been much influenced by his relationship with Yoko Ono who had been involved in the recordings of the songs from the *White Album*. In fact, her voice was included in the “Revolution 9” which includes the well-known statement at the end “You become naked” (MacDonald 289). While the political left and their ideologies were becoming more radical in the late 1960s, Lennon, alongside Yoko Ono did not advocate any such form of radicalism. Hence, “Revolution 9” can be understood to be echoing the rising hostility of the period; the chaotic and seemingly senseless talking and echo of activities, thus, seek to reflect the period’s preoccupation with the idea of revolution and uprising.

The song titled “Hey Jude” released in 1968 written by McCartney and credited to the Lennon-McCartney partnership is another defining song of The Beatles. With this song, The Beatles kept everything simple and did not lay heavy emphasis on psychedelic elements like their previous releases. McCartney reportedly wrote the song as if it were sung to Lennon’s five-year-old son Julian who was going through his parents’ divorce. McCartney stated that he wrote the song while he was on his way to see Lennon and his family in an effort to comfort them while they were going through their separation. McCartney has stated, “It was optimistic, a hopeful song for Julian” (*Anthology* 297). However, a song intended for a five-year-old eventually turned into a song of communion as the track was taken in by their audience as a message of hope and peace that was applicable to the communal riots that were being witnessed. The optimistic and romantic tendencies of the song can be noticed from the first verse:

Hey Jude, don’t make it bad,

Take a sad song and make it better.

Remember to let her into your heart,

Then you can start to make it better. (Hey Jude lines 1- 4)

The song strikes a universal tone of optimistic assurance as Paul McCartney had intended for Lennon's young son. The recording process was accompanied by thirty-six classical musicians who, towards the end of the song, all sing and clap along with the group. The track was received and appreciated as one of the band's anthem-like songs that spread the spirit of positivity and communion. The verses continue to convey a message of encouragement and assurance as is seen in the second bridge of the song:

So let it out and let it in,

Hey Jude, begin,

You're waiting for someone to perform with.

And don't you know that it's just you,

Hey Jude, you'll do,

The movement you need is on your shoulder. (Hey Jude lines 20-26)

The universality of the message delivered in "Hey Jude" can be seen first from John Lennon who, despite the song being written about his child, has stated that the song was about him and his struggles with life. He has stated that subconsciously, Paul McCartney had conveyed through this song, his acceptance of Yoko Ono in Lennon's life and therefore, the 'Jude' in the song, according to Lennon, actually meant 'John' (*Anthology* 297). Apparently, Lennon was not alone in taking the song as a literal anthem for his life struggles as the song was received well by audiences as a song about communal hope and encouragement in times of unrest and uncertainty. The musical arrangement of the song also paved a way for the gathering of people in the name of peace and love. Candy Leonard has commented:

The simple instrumentation – including an exquisitely expressive tambourine – builds and builds, and does the talk of making things better, simultaneously

plodding and rocking, until “better, better, better” erupts into the first of many ecstatic screams and the “sing along” begins. The insistent *nah nah nah nah*’s reiterate the message of empowerment and unity with hypnotic urgency. (179)

The love received by “Hey Jude” from all types of audiences worldwide in popular culture may stem from the fact the track is not endowed with Lennon-like obscurity and word play that can mean something deeply relevant or nothing at all. The song is loved and appreciated by audiences simply because of its straightforwardness in its message while being positively ambiguous. The same cannot be said for the song entitled “Glass Onion” written by John Lennon which was included in the *White Album*. As the late Sixties saw a wild venture into creativity and innovativeness in popular culture, brought on by the use of mind-expanding drugs, like never before, it was inevitable that The Beatles and their fame were to be caught in the hysteria.

As creativity and artistic expression were being explored to their limits, it was only a matter of time that The Beatles were endowed with public theories about their songs and lyrics. An example of which can be the theory that Paul McCartney was dead and that he had been replaced by a look-a-like. The hysteria that led many people to over interpret the creative thinking of the group can be attributed to the group themselves; especially of Lennon who intentionally chose to be obscure and somewhat incomprehensible in his song-writing. The song “Glass Onion” can be said to reflect the author’s love for playing with words and it can also be speculated that the song was written specifically for a part of their audience who were always waiting to read too much into the meaning of their songs. Described by Lennon as a “throwaway song” (*Anthology* 306), the song makes references to several of their earlier hits:

I told you ‘bout Strawberry Fields,

You know the place where nothing is real.

Well, here’s another place you can go

Where everything flows.

Looking through the bent-back tulips

To see how the other half lives,

Looking through a glass onion. (White Album lines 1-7)

The song makes references to earlier tracks that include “I am the Walrus”, “Lady Madonna”, “Fool on the Hill” and “Fixing a Hole”. All these references can be seen as providing answers to the questions that were raised while the lyrics were being interpreted by listeners. Of course, it does not mean that these ‘answers’ were really the intention and meaning behind these songs mentioned, but it can be indicated that Lennon was making a mockery, albeit light-hearted, of all the over-enthusiastic listeners who were ever ready to look into their lyrics and would often make up conclusions about the meaning behind them. An instance of this can be seen from the second verse of the song where the lyrics speak of the walrus’ identity from the song “I am the Walrus”:

I told you ‘bout the Walrus and me, man,

You know that we’re as close as can be, man,

Well, here’s another clue for you all

The Walrus was Paul. (White Album lines 8-10)

In reality, saying that the walrus was Paul was Lennon’s way of saying thanks to McCartney for all that he had done for the group; he states, “The line was put in partly because I was feeling guilty because I was with Yoko and I was leaving Paul. It’s a very perverse way of saying to Paul: ‘Here, have this crumb, this illusion, this stroke - because I’m leaving’” (*Anthology* 306). Being aware of the fact that there would be listeners who would be trying to decode and decipher meaning out of every song being put out, Lennon therefore decided to put his love for word play into the song with the intent to draw confusion from overzealous listeners by whom the group, especially Lennon, was not entertained.

To the average listener, the choice of lyrics and the story being told through the song “Glass Onion” can be regarded as another whimsical and spontaneously boosted jumble of words. However, the song is in many ways highlighting the ever-growing tension between the establishment society and the countercultural structure that sought to dismantle the foundations of the dominant norms. While experimenting with new ideas and forms of expression, it was a possibility and also an inevitability that while trying to embody an ideology that sought to be ever progressive, such ideas can lead to a loss of structure in its execution and practice. As for the culture of the underground, in its efforts of trying to undermine and possibly overthrow the dominant society, the excessive use of drugs and the forms of expression that accompany the effects of the mind-altering drugs and the ideas that were being spread led to a dissociative environment that posed harm not just to the straight society but to their cause as well. Ian MacDonald provides an explanation of the dangers of such ideas and how it affected the image and well-being of The Beatles:

The essence of the confrontation between straight society and the counterculture was a clash between logical/literal and intuitive/lateral thinking. Central to the hippie thought was the idea of disarming straight certainties by means of ‘mind games’ which paralleled the disorienting effects of psychedelic drugs. Many of The Beatles’ records of 1966-70 embody such concepts, while most of those that don’t were nonetheless shaped by them. The common factor was chance-determination, or ‘random’, as the group referred to it...Listeners were left to generate their own connections and make their own sense of what they were hearing, thereby increasing the chances of dangerous misinterpretation...(313)

Further, MacDonald gives an insight into how such ‘dangerous misinterpretation’ can lead to harmful ideas upon reaching unstable minds and how such ideas ultimately led to the demise of the group:

...to treat chance-determined productions as identical with material intentionally vested with meaning is to meddle in a relativism that can only

escalate towards chaos – and chaos draws psychopaths...To the extent that they were invoked by the aleatory philosophy derangement associated with the Sixties counterculture, obsessions such as those which beset Charles Manson, and later Lennon's assassin Mark Chapman, were inevitable. (313)

While it may seem, at the moment, like a harmless play with words that was intended to be sarcastically playful, the song "Glass Onion" presents itself as a fine example of how countercultural ideologies coupled with excessive use of mind-altering drugs could have devastating outcomes. It is significant to recognise that the song embodies this period of supposed paranoia amongst people who dwelt too much into the narrative of 'revolutionary movement' and were thus misguided; Charles Manson and his cult who committed a mass murder in 1969 being a prime example. Manson, a psychotic Beatles fan, had interpreted the band's songs in an eccentric and gruesome manner and had cited them as inspiration for his dream of starting a race war. Candy Leonard writes on the issue of Charles Manson and his cult who displayed the risks of misinterpretation and reliance on chance perception that was associated with the counterculture:

Fans were saddened to see the Beatles appropriated by a delusional monster, and the murders seemed to implicate the Beatles in something bad. Manson was an aberration, but his hippie lifestyle, so much a part of the story, gave straight America another excuse to be both more fearful of and more hostile toward hippies and the counterculture. (208)

However, in reality The Beatles were simply taking full advantage of the changing times and the age of psychedelia. By doing so, they had become leading figures who continued to blur the lines between deep meaning artistic expression and just experimental activity for its own sake.

In the year 1969, the album titled *Abbey Road* was released containing the track entitled "Come Together" which Ian MacDonald describes as a 'sex-political' title. The song was initially written for a political campaign slogan for American psychologist Timothy Leary who was an advocate of the use of psychedelic drugs for therapeutic purposes. John Lennon was approached by Leary to write the song,

however, what came out as “Come Together” was not utilised for the campaign. Instead, what was perceived within the song was an address to the violent clashes that were happening between opposing sides of culture and politics.

With the musical introduction of the song accompanied by that repetition of the words “Shoot me”, the lyrics heard in “Come Together” describe a character, his looks and several of his vague words:

Here come the old flat top, he come grooving up slowly,

He got juju eyeball, he one holy roller,

He got hair down to his knee,

Got to be a joker, he just do what he please.

He wear no shoe shine, he got toe-jam football,

He got monkey finger, he shoot Coca-Cola,

He say, “I know you, you know me”.

One thing I can tell you is you got to be free. (Abbey Road lines 1-8)

Kenneth Womack gives an explanation to such lines saying:

“Come Together” offers a positively grotesque illustration of yet another one of the band’s patent outsiders. In contrast with Eleanor Rigby, the character’s unkempt, smarmy personality is the product of his self-isolating nature, his desire to choose his own exile and intentionally seek out the marginalizing power of loneliness. With his “joo-joo eyeball,” his “toe-jam football,” and the “disease” festering in his armchair, he is decidedly unashamed of what his alienation has wrought. In its vile depiction of humanity’s repugnance, “Come Together” offers a masterful reading of the corrosive effects of loneliness. (284)

Although written as a campaign slogan, the song undoubtedly highlights the group’s stance in the political spectrum which is that of being apolitical and not

investing into any particular ideology. Of course, The Beatles were associated with the narrative of the counterculture and they were indeed leading cultural icons. However, it is important to identify that members of The Beatles never personally shared any of the political ideologies that were coming from the New Left. In fact, with songs such as “Come Together”, it can even be contended that the group was highly critical of the left side of the political spectrum as they were of the right.

By verse three of “Come Together”, the character being previously described begin to resemble John Lennon himself with the mention of Yoko Ono:

He bag production, he got walrus gumboot,

He got Ono sideboard, he one spinal cracker,

He got feet down below his knee,

Hold you in his armchair, you can feel his disease. (Abbey Road lines 12-15)

MacDonald explains the persona and influence of this character as an amalgamation of counterculture attitude saying, “The archetype of countercultural anti-politics as presented in COME TOGETHER was the head-gaming hippie sage: a bewildering guru/shaman modelled on Timothy Leary, Ken Kesey, Carlos Castaneda’s Zen master of the Orient” (359). The song was well received by college students who were at the centre of political protests as the song came to symbolize the spirit of a generation who took it upon themselves to change the established education, wisdom, ethics and behaviour that had shaped the Western world. Steve Hamelman has stated that the lyrics “tease listeners with glimpses into the composer’s narcotic and erotic dysfunctionality. But the lyrics say nothing definite about either of these dysfunctions is one of the tune’s strengths”. He adds to the effectiveness of the song due to the musical set-up:

The Beatles’ resident revolutionary implies in this *tour de* poetry and groove that interpretation is the most democratic privilege of all. With John bouncing back from his springtime peevishness, Paul and Ringo respond by *laying it down* for his rock and roll word – gumbo. Ringo delivers dead on time

through the blend of hi/hat-snare triplets at the top of each verse with, everywhere else, a four-beat tom/snare tattoo anchored by a dry bass drum figure. Humming between high and low registers, Paul's bass coils around John's voice like a vine encircling a swaying limp in a steamy swamp. (160)

In the late 1960s, one of the driving forces in the artistic mentality of John Lennon was Yoko Ono whom he married after his first marriage ended. Many fans and critics alike have held Ono responsible for the break-up of The Beatles because of the influence she had on Lennon and his perspective of the world. Since their relationship started, even Lennon's band mates were aware of the changes that occurred in him and eventually it would lead to the end of their career as The Beatles. Paul McCartney had commented saying:

...we always knew that day had to come. When John hooked up with Yoko so intensely, it was obvious that there could be no looking back. In the intensity of his love affair, that was the way he had to treat it. It was exciting him so much that he didn't really have much time for us. We were the past and she was the future. We were in the middle of that and we had to try to understand it. (*Anthology* 332)

The song entitled "The Ballad of John and Yoko" was released in the year 1969 and it chronicles the events that were associated with their marriage ceremony which had taken place on March of that year. It was recorded in the absence of George Harrison who was out of the country and Ringo Starr who had other engagements (MacDonald 347). The song describes the marriage of Lennon and Ono to one another and their time during their very publicised honeymoon:

Standing in the dock at Southampton,

Trying to get to Holland or France,

The man in the mac said, "You've got to go back".

You know they didn't give us a chance. (Hey Jude lines 1-4)

Lennon himself was also aware of the distance between him and his band ever since his relationship with Yoko started. And by that time of their career, whatever The Beatles did was going to making headlines; the controversies that surrounded The Beatles throughout their career was not easily forgotten by the media and therefore, tabloids were ever ready to write about whatever random and crazy thing The Beatles were going to do next. However, with this song, other than the fact that it is a song about John Lennon and Yoko Ono's very private wedding ceremony, the chorus seem to be the only part that teases controversy as it makes a reference to Christ which is now a sensitive subject to touch upon due to Lennon earlier remarks in 1966. The chorus sings:

Christ! You know it ain't easy,

You know how hard it can be.

The way things are going,

They're gonna crucify me. (Hey Jude lines 9-12)

The chorus can be with reference to Lennon's very public lifestyle and his wanting to keep his marriage away from public scrutiny. It was acknowledged that even his band mates did not know about Lennon's marriage and therefore, the chorus especially can be indicative of Lennon reflecting his feelings regarding the expectations that other people had upon him. And although Yoko Ono was one of the reasons that The Beatles were drifting apart, the work they did in promoting peace and understanding greatly exemplifies the message of hope and love that the period is known for. Although, it is important to recognise that promoting peace over violence had always been a subject that had been very close to John Lennon. Lennon saw himself as a saviour amongst unenlightened folks who have yet to recognise perfect bliss. This self-assuredness can be said to have been further fuelled and encouraged by the presence of Yoko Ono in his life which hindered both of their works in more ways than one. As MacDonald had explained:

While exchanging comfort and confirmation, the pair brought out the worst in each other, he inadvertently diverting her from the sharp Oriental Dadaism of

her early work into a fatuous fugue of legs, bottoms, and bags, she encouraging him to believe that orderly meaning was a male hang-up and that the secret of peace was to be sought in pure sensation and guiltless sex. Since she was his intellectual superior, most of the intelligence ran from her to him; and, since he was her artistic superior, this influence streamed straight into the public domain through his music. Their activities accordingly became unguardedly naive... (346)

Such activities of Lennon and Ono mentioned include their nude photo shoot for their experimental album cover and of course, the events that followed their marriage where they decided to utilise their fame in order to promote peace. Hence, they orchestrated their 'Bed-In For Peace' in their hotel room in Amsterdam and Canada that would serve as a non-violent protest against wars and a means through which to promote open-mindedness and peaceful co-existence. Derek Taylor, on the success of the events, has commented:

Hundreds of people came to the bedside. The questions were dealt with joy by John and Yoko in the full spirit of Apple, because they made themselves completely available to anybody on earth who wanted to come into the bedroom – provided they were not obviously carrying a blood-stained axe. People could come in and ask them questions. Maybe they came in thousands, it felt like it. (*Anthology* 334)

The couple as well as the group were surrounded by the media and hence, these events were rather publicised. Lennon's creative thinking, inspired by his wife, became more and more avant-garde and eventually, his output became too specific to be contained within The Beatles' paradigm and it led him to form The Plastic Ono Band where he and Yoko Ono would be able to create their own sounds and projects. Although the 'Bed-Ins' were considered to be successful in its purpose and intentions, it was the contention of many that Lennon and his spouse were becoming too self-absorbed and their promoting the idea of peace and equality had led them to believe that they were the enlightened ones and none other could join their rank. The events that took place in the presence and influence of Yoko Ono unveiled a change

of direction in Lennon's musical aspirations as Ben Urish and Ken Bielen had observed:

Lennon's wish for documenting and explaining his activities had often been veiled in previous Beatles' songs. But the group's time in India, coupled with Ono's influence, helped Lennon to become more comfortable with seeing his life, ideas, thoughts, and activities as direct rather than indirect sources for his art. Communicating his current personal emotional and philosophical states became the prime aspect of his artistic agenda... "The Ballad of John and Yoko" is one of the most explicit examples of this exploration. (9)

This exploration as a result of Ono's presence in his life further provided a divide within the foundation of the band as Urish and Bielen further explains:

The Plastic Ono Band became the moniker for Lennon's musical efforts for almost the next three years and was basically the name for whomever he rounded up to create the group at that particular time... To counter Lennon's frustrations with The Beatles as a near magical entity, he simultaneously declared that the Plastic Ono Band was both a band with no members and a band where all who heard of it were the members; the band was "conceptual". (9)

It is recognised that Lennon's complete crossover into the avant-garde was possible through his relationship with Yoko Ono, and hence, it is reasonable and also justified to a considerable degree that many hold Ono accountable for the breakup of The Beatles. And it is also established that Lennon became politically active after his relationship with Ono started, as Heilbronner has written:

Under her influence Lennon became a radical political activist, and in 1969 began to get more and more involved in political events organised by the British radical left. Lennon befriended Tariq Ali and Robin Blackburn, who were part of the radical left's leadership and began, at least in his public expressions, to change his mind about his past as a Beatle, the class structure and the political scene in England. After leaving England and moving to New

York, he continued his association with radical left groups like “The Black Panthers”. (93)

Such participation on the part of John Lennon had further cemented in popular culture how public figures such as musicians and entertainers could have an impact on the outlook of society as a whole. As such, the allegedly noble gestures of Lennon had allowed for himself to be held as a figure of peace and nobility in mainstream music and popular society. The Beatles as a group were kept alive in the context of popular culture and their contributions to the counterculture narrative is one that is revived and relived every now and then in the realm of popular music and mainstream society.

The role of protest musicians in the cultural and political struggle against establishment norms is one of great interest and significance within the ambit of popular culture as a whole. The popularisation of underground music during the period of the 1960s counterculture serves as a prime example of the complex and rather ambiguous state of what defines popular culture and the avant-garde. It is often argued that although The Beatles were one of the leading figures who were identified alongside the movement of the counterculture, they were in reality, only making use of the cultural occurrences in order to further their career. Hence, according to this theory, it would mean that The Beatles’ changing their musical sound and overall image at the height of the counterculture in the mid-1960s was not done genuinely with the changing spirit of the time and the change was merely a means through which to turn profits. The Beatles, rising to fame in the early 1960s, were not strangers to the way in which the music industry was functioning; they realised that it was what the audience wanted that was most important and therefore, they were aware of the fact that musicians needed to be flexible in order for them to keep the interest of their audience. As Daniel Beller-Mckenna has noted:

One of the most important facets of the Beatles’ early commercial success in 1963 was their willingness and ability to transform their image from a raucous, leather clad rock ‘n’ roll dance band into a tame, marketable group of clean-cut (if long-haired) young men. All four Beatles were obliged to

create *alter* Beatle-egos that had little to do with their own personalities and that were actively cultivated for consumption by fans. (255)

It would be inaccurate to state that the contribution of The Beatles towards the causes of the counterculture movement was all commercially motivated, however, it is also important to take note of the fact that the cultural uprising of the 1960s gave the group the fame and recognition for which they are known today. Not only the popularity of The Beatles, many figures of the 1960s and 70s continue to be held in high esteem in popular society as figures of peace and social justice. Hence, the notion of free love, non-judgemental understanding and acceptance of racial, cultural and religious differences that were identified within the counterculture are continued to be romanticised in popular culture as a period of co-existence, one that is often thought to be worthy of revival for present and future societies.

As it has been established, the stance of The Beatles in the realm of politics and political ideologies had always been neutral although New Left ideologies were often identified within their songs and the messages behind them. Even though the four members of The Beatles did not identify with any particular ideology and voiced their disinterest in political relationships, there had always been speculations and arguments regarding their affiliation with political personalities and their part in the enforcement of cultural practices. Heilbrunner has written on such speculations regarding The Beatles which he stated began as early as the year 1964:

...the communist historian Eric Hobsbawm viewed them as “an agreeable bunch of kids, quite un sinister....with that charming combination of flamboyance a certain hip self-mockery taking”. Moreover, the then Marxist student and future philosopher and cultural studies researcher Terry Eagleton claimed that The Beatles acted as a bridge between the working youth and the middle class students, thus creating a united front against the disconnected adult world. However, Eagleton was single lonely voice, drowning in a sea of criticism regarding the social implications (unlike the musical ones) of the “Beatles culture”. The actor and singer Noel Coward, the editor of the leftist magazine *The New Statesman*, Paul Johnson (who only a few years later

defected to the Tories), the author Anthony Burgess and a number of members of parliament abhorred the Beatles and feared the deterioration of British youth in a cheap and popular consuming culture that would soon lead them to Marxism. (87)

Hence, it is an important point out about the legacy of The Beatles that while they were counterculture in almost all aspects of their career, they also formed a part of the movement that helped usher in the underground into the mainstream society and therefore being a part of the very culture that they were presumably resisting. The narrative of the counterculture period of the 60s with its noble causes of love, peace and equality along with new musical tastes and the vibrant forms of fashions that came along with it has been immortalised not just in the culture of that particular generation but also the generations that follow. Hence, it may be justified to state that the many features of the counterculture had been made to be a fad in popular society, one which has been made into a profitable market within the establishment of popular youth culture. Those aspects of the counterculture that were seemingly new, daring and innovative at the time have indeed become part and parcel of a bigger form of culture one that which was being opposed and resisted in the first place. It is also significant to note that capitalisation of countercultural ideals had always been arguably present alongside the counterculture movement; the success and fame of musicians such as The Beatles being a prime example. Therefore, the counterculture with all its values, ideas and forms can be said to have had a very significant impact on the grounds of popular culture in the sense that it blurred the lines between underground culture and the establishment; while it was acknowledged to be having opposing ideas, as seen from the accomplishments of countercultural icons such as The Beatles, it can be stated that the cultural uprising and the many protests of the 1960s embodied both features and characteristics of a movement that allows it to be identified both within the realms of counterculture and also establishment norms.

The late 1960s were significant years in the legacy of The Beatles as it was during this period of their career that the public witnessed them at their prime and what they did with their powerful status would define their future. During this time, the group had carved for themselves amongst audiences worldwide that allowed

them the freedom to do whatever they pleased with their writing. Since the band had now been revered amongst their many admirers as geniuses and masters in their field, their ego would have been enforced by this very knowledge that they could do no wrong. Hence, the many ventures of the band during the late 60s have been contended by many as being a drawback in the progressive narrative that The Beatles had supposedly been following. Heilbrunner had written about the fame status of the group during this period:

The Apple venture showed the British people a hidden side of the Beatles' activities. They were no longer family entertainment but belonged to the culture of freaks and lunatics, no longer cooperated with the "English Constitution" (Colls) but rather worked against it, were no longer four working-class youths who played the class game according to rules dictated to them by the upper-classes, but rather four bourgeois trying to be bohemian and break the rules of the game. Lennon's relationship with Yoko Ono at the time did not help the band, since the British media judged her by her Western-Colonial criteria. If the Beatles thought that their fiddling with "western communism" would help them score points with the vibrant and rebellious British left, the Beatles' political silence ...in the turbulent times of 1968 angered the leftist organizations, especially as the Beatles seemed to resemble any other capitalist organization that used social rhetoric to turn a profit. The conservatives were actually the ones who showed patience and forbearance towards the Beatles' economics and avant-garde ambitions; perhaps their centuries of experience taught them that the British working class, and especially their own Liverpool youth, could not pose a real threat to the capitalist system. (96)

One of the defining features that allowed The Beatles to be so popular and loved by their audiences was the fact that they emerged from the working-class society and their music was as such for the working-class society. Breaking away from the hegemonic structure of popular music at the time, The Beatles stood out as icons of the common man who, with their humble beginnings, made a name for themselves by persevering and beating the odds that were stacked against them.

Although this is the general back-story of The Beatles that admirers from around the globe would conjure, as has been established, the initial musical style and overall appearance for which the group first became famous was not a genuine form of production in the sense that they did not decide upon their genre because it was natural to them. Rather, the clean-cut image that was first presented by The Beatles was done so because it was thought to be marketable and consumer oriented. Even after claiming independence from the constraints of the entertainment industry's formulaic production of its artists, it is arguable that the change witnessed in The Beatles was only due to the changing of cultural preferences that were being witnessed amongst the revolutionary youth. As the change of sound and image of The Beatles led them to become one of the most culturally significant musical acts, their status as icons stands ambiguous when taken into account the notion that the culture of The Beatles had created a hegemony of their own in popular culture.

This hegemony established with the narrative and attitude of the counterculture can be said to have been applicable to both the audience and The Beatles themselves. As The Beatles had presented themselves to their audience as the embodiments of the rebellious counterculture, it was inevitable that their world-wide admirers would flock to whichever direction that the band was going culturally. All the drug-taking, the embracing of other cultures and religions, the long hair and unshaven faces that intended to differentiate the individual became a fashion trend and thus, a marketable form of consumption for the capitalist economy. Hence, when left-wing critics were of the opinion that The Beatles were contributing to the capitalist consumer-oriented society that would lead their youth into desolation, they were accurate in their judgement to a great degree as the underground culture began to resemble the consumerist culture which they were initially against.

Not just in the realm of popular culture, the ideologies that surround the countercultural narrative is one that embodies complex and often contradicting ideas. The ideologies of the New Left were in tangent with the ideologies of the 'freaks' who were against the straight society in terms of values and principles. Staughton Lynd explains the main objectives of the New Left and how the American society, where the movement was centralised, was viewed:

Despite differences in form, student movements of the 1960s in the United States, West Europe, and Japan share common concerns : rejection of both capitalism and bureaucratic communism, anti-imperialism and an activist orientation, violent or non-violent...The single most characteristic element of in the thought-world of the New Left is the existential commitment to action, in the knowledge that the consequence of action can never be fully predicted; this commitment has survived all changes in political fashion. More concretely, the members of the New Left condemn existing American society as “corporate liberalism,” and seek to replace it with “participatory democracy”. ...The New Left’s assessment of American reality was, in this sense, not too negative, but too hopeful. (64)

Standing up for the cause of civil and political rights, women’s and gay rights and the peace and equality of all living beings in general, the left was identified to be more tolerant and accepting of individuals that were not essentially considered normal based on the conventions of the dominant conservative society. This New Left activism that was, for the most part dominated and run by the youth and students was noble in its cause and it was hard to ignore in its actions. Whether in Europe or the United States, social activism of the 1960s sought to overthrow or reform governmental bodies in what they saw as a system that was discrediting their human rights. The activism and many protests that were witnessed were governed by Marxist and Socialist ideologies especially in the United States where such forms of activism were student-centred. Therefore, teeming with young individuals who were as passionate as they were energetic, the counterculture made a tremendous amount of impact in societies across the world.

Because of its overwhelming presence in popular society, the cultural changes that occurred were indeed very much publicised in the media and across cultures. As the movement came to be more and more highlighted in the eyes of the public, one can say that the movement was successful in its purpose of being heard by the majority of the population. However, this over-exposure and very eager nature of the counterculture to be seen and heard also meant that it was to be easily discredited by many people as well and hence, its faults and errors were often

brought out by many of its critics. Liberalism as a whole can be witnessed to have had its limitations and weaknesses in its ideas as Roger Kimball writes:

Critics of liberalism will note that liberalism's tendency to let tolerance and openness trump every other virtue renders it peculiarly impotent when faced with substantive moral dilemmas: absolutized "tolerance" and "openness" becomes indistinguishable from moral paralysis. What we know for a certainty is that the liberal capitulation of university administrators in the Sixties and Seventies helped enormously to establish – and to institutionalize – the radical ethos of the counterculture. (83)

Added to this conception that the whole narrative of the counterculture was only in theory, there is the speculation that the era was greatly romanticised in popular culture as a period of endless struggle on the part of the common man against a severe form of injustice while in actuality, as cultural changes were in fact happening, the radicalisation of activism was unnecessary and were self-promoting with narcissistic intentions. The fact that countercultural activities were promoting their culture through capitalist ideals can also be viewed as one of the causes that led to its downfall as Angela McRobbie had noted:

Great efforts were made to disguise the role which money played in a whole number of exchanges, including those involving drugs. Selling goods and commodities came too close to 'selling out' for those at the heart of the subculture to feel comfortable about it. This was a stance reinforced by the sociologists who saw consumerism within the counter-culture as a fall from grace, a lack of purity. They either ignored it, or else, employing the Marcusean notion of recuperation, attributed it to the intervention of external market forces. It was the unwelcome presence of media and other commercial interests, which, they claimed, laundered out the politics and reduced the alternative society to an endless rail of cheesecloth shirts. (377)

Jeremi Suri writes, "Unlike the third world nationalists or domestic radicals whom one could dismiss as extreme figures, the suburban housewives, corporate employees and college students who questioned basic social assumptions were core

political constituencies (49). Here, it is important to point out that the counterculture values that emerged from the Western societies had very much to do with the search for individuality amidst a very fast-paced modernisation of society. Compared to other countries of the world, the Western countries in which the counterculture activities were centralised were very prosperous societies who greatly benefitted from the post-war economic boom. The disillusionment on the part of the youth, therefore, stemmed from the search for morals and a place of one's own in the midst of industrial, technological, economic advancements and clashing of nations. In other words, the very fact that the youths of the 1960s cultural uprising were able to protest about what they saw as injustice shows how privileged and well-off they were compared to the parent generation and other youths from lesser prosperous countries. Suri has explained this matter as follows:

These were privileged men and women who had unprecedented access to consumer goods, education and leisure time. They also lived relatively secure lives, even in communist societies, generally free from the domestic terror of the Stalinist years in the Soviet Union and the deprivations of economic depression in the United States and Western Europe. This was a revolt, in many cases, of the privileged against the leaders who conferred privileges. Such a judgement should not detract from the seriousness or the meaning of the demonstrations. Privileged people can also be progressive actors. The deeper point is that young citizens in the 1960s could organise and protest, as their elders often could not, because their social conditions were so much more secure. (51)

Without a doubt, the counterculture and its activists mainly consisted of well-to-do individuals who were not content with their lives and how other people's lives were being consumed by the consumer based free market. It was not about being psychically deprived of immediate needs for survival, health and happiness. The counterculture was focused on the spirituality and humanity that was seen as being lost in the material and consumer driven world. Corporate success, monetary wealth, the nuclear family setting, expanding of nations and technological progression were being protested by the youth activists because according to their rhetoric, such forms

of achievement did not fulfil a person's purpose in life which they believed was for a more spiritual existence. The resentment felt by the youth of the counterculture towards conservatism, capitalism and its features stem from the experiences of the World War, the Cold War and the endless competition between nations with opposing ideologies. Hence, the counterculture laid its focus on the underlying mental and spiritual functions and demands of its citizens which have been shadowed by the atmosphere of economic developments, capitalist ventures and the Cold War. It was believed that this environment of competition between nations left little room for individuals to develop their distinctive emotional, spiritual and creative capacities.

The cultural uprising can, in many ways, be viewed as a place for freedom of expression. A better part of the movement consisted of college students and young adults who were brought up in economically stable societies and were not part of oppressed communities. Materialistically, the era was prosperous and the lives of citizens were comfortable for the most part. However, the new generation of rebels did not find contentment in a community that was built on the aftermath of war and violence and that which upheld the values from that generation. The counterculture thus rejected all embodiments of the older generations and their standards where it was considered utmost importance for a nation to conserve old values. To the rebellious youth, the previous generation is close-minded, uptight and believes in force in order for a community to prosper. This was in strong contrast to the new generation of men and women who wanted personal freedom to do what one pleases and to be rid of the inherited means of livelihood where one must impose upon oneself a level of restriction and discipline.

The counterculture, in this sense, was greatly ideological. The idea of living in a utopian society in total equality regardless of race, religion or sexuality was the goal set by activists of the uprising. The more student-based civil rights activists also shared this ideology in their demonstrations for peace and equal co-existence. The idea that it was possible to live without hate, prejudice and division was upheld in all forms of expressions and pushing the known limits of the conservative society and its values were thus the main objective. Everything that was culturally and artistically

new was thus embraced in an effort to bring about a new narrative that would put an end to the restrictions of the old ways and bring forth a form of living that embraced freedom and all forms of expressions and spirituality.

The uprising of the youth culture highly comprised of rhetoric and ideology. The language of the underground, in great opposition to that of the straight society, romanticised the idea of the revolution and spoke about issues that were not otherwise common topics in the conservative world. The activities, musical and business ventures of The Beatles during the period of the late 1960s reflect the very state of the protest culture with which they were directly or indirectly associated. Their experimentation with different sounds and musical stylings undoubtedly elevated the romanticized ideals and persona of the subcultural narrative. This rise of countercultural tendencies to embrace the unfamiliar brought about the amalgamation of cultural identifiers that come in the form of popular culture and high culture. As Roger Kimball had noted:

...the integrity of high culture itself has been severely compromised by the mindless elevation of pop culture. The academic enfranchisement of popular culture has meant not only that trash has been mistaken for great art, but also that great art has been treated as if it were trash. When Allen Ginsberg (for example) is upheld in the classroom as a “great poet” comparable to Shakespeare, the very idea of greatness is rendered unintelligible and high art ceases to function as an ideal. (16)

For The Beatles, their 1968 *White Album* was significant for the reason that they managed to highlight and embody the countercultural atmosphere that reached its peak in the same year. While not endorsing nor affiliating themselves with the political turmoil, they were able to bring forth an album that encapsulated the spirit of the era. The album had depth and meaning in its embracing of the cultural changes that occurred and also, the album and its expressions can be seen as The Beatles return to older conservative ways that they had previously abandoned. The protest culture of the late 60s had developed in such a manner that there were violent communal riots that had been initiated by angry protesters who wanted to witness

change from their respective rulers and law makers. The Beatles had always upheld the notion of peace and peaceful resistance while being identified within the ambit of the counterculture. When riots and civil disobedience were being witnessed within the activities of the movement, the group made it known that they did not wish to associate with revolution if it meant achieving their goals through violent means. The *White Album* can be understood as reflecting the sentiments of the era without being affiliated with no particular side. Heilbronner writes on the reception of the album as a whole by many social groups:

...the rebellious black or white American student would find a half-ironic sympathy for his feelings about the race relations in his country, the student riots and his lack of faith in leaders and institutions ...but would also understand that the Beatles could not afford to attack the institutions directly. The conservative, reserved English student would understand that the prominent rebellious streak would end in the warm comfort of the family-centred “Beatles Culture”... The diehard fans might at first be outraged by the confusion and lack of unity, but after listening to it a couple of times, would acknowledge that although the spirit of *Revolver* and *Sgt. Pepper* is missing, the album contains many moments of mystery and elevation...(100)

While representing elements from different groups in society, the album is also indicative of how The Beatles were returning to older traditions in the sense that they did not allow the narrative of the vibrant counterculture to dictate or direct their creative expressions. The cover of the album also suggested a stance which the group took in the midst of cultural changes and turmoil; the very simple and minimalist album cover can suggest the desire of The Beatles to take a step back from the influence of the drug-fuelled, hyper active dictates of the counterculture and towards the values of their pre-association with the world of psychedelia. Oded Heilbronner has commented:

With regards to the events of the period and the youth culture’s expectation of a certain message, the members of the band declared that they had nothing to offer except an ambiguous and ironic view of the situation, while the

emphasis shifted towards values like love, peace and a return to simple family life. (100)

The counterculture, in its wake was ideological, hopeful, optimistic and fun. However, upholding the narrative of the struggle for a utopian system of society became more and more difficult and complicated as the late 1960s had demonstrated. As the culture of protest, supposedly the underground and minority communities, came to embody the very elements of the system that it sought to overthrow, disillusionment in its organisation came to be evident. The effectiveness of the movement can also be questioned with regards to the type of changes and reform that were actually brought about which were direct results of the many protests and demonstrations. As Roger Kimball had written:

When tumbrels and firing squads are unavailable, the upheaval tends to be primarily cultural or moral. But the element of fanaticism remains: a despotic subtext beneath the progressive rhetoric. The legal scholar Alexander Bickel was undoubtedly correct when he wrote, in 1970, that “to be a revolutionary in a society like ours, is to be a totalitarian, or not to know what one is doing”. Or, he might have added, both. One of the most prominent features of the long march of America’s cultural revolution was the sudden appearance in the mid-Sixties of utopian agitation where prudent affirmation and common sense once reigned. (99)

Kimball further noted that even the war in Vietnam came to be a tool which the progressive movement utilized for meeting their own demands and as an instrument through which they could seek to alter the establishment society:

Vietnam became the banner under which the entire range of radical sentiment congregated...Vietnam provided a rallying point, a crusade large enough to submerge all manner of ideological differences. Susan Sontag spoke for many left-wing intellectuals when she noted that “Vietnam offered the key to a systematic criticism of America”. The Yippie leader Jerry Rubin put it even more bluntly: “If there had been no Vietnam war, we would have invented one. If the Vietnam war ends, we’ll find another one”. (99-100)

It is acknowledged that the late 1960s was a culmination of the movement of the counterculture and that it was an era in which the movement descended into mainstream culture. This period, with all its activism and demonstrations, highlight how the lack of organisation and stability led the counterculture into abandoning the causes that it had originally initiated. The Beatles, in their musical career greatly highlighted this aspect of the cultural uprising; with their fame and fortune having reached a height like never before, they were given the freedom to do whatever they felt like doing at a whim, their Apple venture in the late 1960s and its failure being a prime example as by 1968, "Apple was slowly rotting away, losing a reported £20,000 a week from gross mismanagement and employee pilfering" (Inglis 150). With their previous albums, movies and tours exploring all the areas of free expression and free love, they were drawn back to a time in their creative mindset when they were not under the influence of the narrative of the cultural changes.

The concept and function of hegemony continues to be an important and driving aspect throughout the cultural uprising of the 1960s and its predominant presence can be felt in the counterculture's culmination and ultimate termination. While trying to overthrow the hegemonic dominance of the capitalist society and its entailments, it is to be acknowledged that the underground first had to establish its own hegemony. Cultural icons such as The Beatles were also aware of this and therefore, although they were sentimental towards the cause of the counterculture, the shift in their musical styling can be stated as being capitally motivated. Their Apple venture can be considered a very good example of how their counterculture influences were intended to turn profits. By the time The Beatles went ahead with their Apple corporation, they had an ideological dependence on chance perception that they believed whatever they put out would become instant classics. Of course, this was influenced by the drug-fuelled, psychedelic attitude of the counterculture that was hopeful of the idea that anything was possible under the guidance of spiritualism and individuality. This narrative that had been planted in the belief-system of the protest culture and its youth had established itself as the dominant narrative in the cultural sphere thus blurring the very definition of what it meant to be the 'underground.'

The idea of being counterculture meant that one must be in opposition to the dictates of the dominant forms of society; rebelling and protesting against the foundations and policies of the Western world was embodied in the call for a revolution by the youth but in doing so, in order for them to get their message across, they first had to establish a position for themselves where they would be granted a certain level of power and hegemony. The very nature of the cultural uprising which promised freedom in every sense of the word was found to be deeply alluring to the new generation of baby boomers who were disenchanted with the lifestyles of the older generation which they saw as being filled with restrictions. The rhetoric of the underground scene offered a means of living that would be different from that of the dominant stratum in a manner that focus would not be laid on militarisation of communities which meant war was not a priority nor an option, and there would be no constraints upon the wants and desires of an individual. Thus, it was not shocking to witness that this narrative of cultural uprising soon dominated the youth culture of the era. Within this atmosphere of free-love and expressions, it was not difficult for influencers in the entertainment business to make the most of the situation and therefore, capitalise on the changing times and mindset of the youth. As Heilbonner has aptly highlighted:

...it is clear that the “Beatles culture” could not have existed without the “capitalist folklore world”, and that the Beatles operated within the heart of the capitalist-aristocratic-bourgeois hegemony as David Flower reminds us by quoting conservative cabinet member William Deed’s words of 1963: “the Beatles were an example of youthful free enterprise that should be welcomed and nurtured by business leaders. (101)

Thus, in order for the counterculture and its ideologies to flourish and be effective, it is first important to infiltrate the dominant culture and the mechanisms that keep that culture going. In other words, the dominant hegemony and its functions can only be replaced and overthrown by another functioning form of hegemony. Antonio Gramsci has written:

...the supremacy of a social group manifests itself in two ways, as “domination” and as “intellectual and moral leadership”. A social group dominates antagonistic groups, which it tends to “liquidate”, or to subjugate perhaps even by force; it leads kindred and allied groups. A social group can, and indeed must, already exercise “leadership” before winning governmental power (this indeed is one of the principal conditions for the winning of such power); it subsequently becomes dominant when it exercises power, but even if it holds it firmly in its grasp, it must continue to “lead” as well. (212-213)

After the activism of the counterculture descended into violent protests in the later part of the 1960s, the notion of peaceful demonstrations and reform through non-violent means was seemingly abandoned. Many of the activists had, knowingly or unknowingly, embraced militarisation which was an aspect of the dominant society that had been detested. However, the use of force and violent means was deemed necessary by members of the groups that were protesting and it was seen as justified because the reason behind their violence was understood as being just and morally right. Richard Brownell had commented on the shortcomings of the counterculture:

The rise and fall of the counterculture of the Sixties left a mixed legacy for the decade. This was due in large part to the various elements that made up the counterculture and the diverse agendas of university students, blacks, women, hippies, and radicals. Their goals sometimes overlapped, particularly with regard to their desire to end the Vietnam War and make lasting changes that would end what they perceived to be the Establishment’s stranglehold on the country. Even then, however, they differed on what tactics to employ to achieve those goals. (81-82)

In the narrative and rhetoric of the counterculture, it can be understood that a hegemonic system had been established at the time of protests during the war in Vietnam. The notion of peace and love was no longer being preached amongst the youth and college campuses as such events had been taken over by the use of force which was believed to be a necessity in order for the desired end to be achieved. It is

important to note that the use of violent forces was not employed at the start of the cultural uprising, in fact, any means of violence was condemned by the countercultural societies. The ideology of the subculture at the onset of their movement was that of tolerance, acceptance and equality to ideas that did not necessarily fit into societal norms and expectations. Such ideologies did not manifest themselves out of nothing, rather it was bred out of the established corporate nations, the industrial society, and the tensions between nations and atmospheres of war. Just like the dominant culture that has its machinery for executing its ideals upon its population, the underground culture accordingly has its ways and means for it to become a social group with its own set of function and ideologies that must be followed and maintained. Thus, when the countercultural activities turned to violence in order to reach their desired goals and aspirations, since a level of hegemony had already been planted within the community, its members were ready to render consent and were willing to use violence upon the opposing groups even though such means may have been against their moral conduct in the beginning.

Valeriano Ramos Jr has written on the concept of hegemony:

For Gramsci, the working class must, before actually exercising state power attain leadership - that is, “establish its claim to be a ruling class in the political, cultural and ethical fields”. But for it to establish its claims to be a ruling class, the proletariat must first have become class conscious in the context of struggle for political power...when it becomes conscious of itself and its existence as a social class, the proletariat can then proceed to forge or develop a comprehensive world-view and advance a political programme allowing for its manifestation as a constituted political party playing a truly progressive and historical role and seeking to absorb other leading sections of the other oppressed groups and classes. At this point, in other words, the proletariat begins to engage in the struggle for social hegemony. (8)

Having attained hegemonic power amongst the members and activists of the counterculture, the cultural uprising therefore advanced towards a more political agenda that prompted its member to act, think and retaliate in a certain manner, thus,

fulfilling the cause of a hegemonic system. In many cases, it can be contended that towards the end of the countercultural activities in the late 1960s, the concept of the avant-garde had been made to be a part of the establishment norms. This could be conceived as an explanation for the reasons as to why many advocates of the movement, including The Beatles, were noticeably absent from participating in such altercations. The music of The Beatles during this period greatly sums up the turmoil and occurrences of this period and also, it highlights the sentiments of the group members themselves in the midst of the uprising.

The backlash that was received at the release of The Beatles' *White Album* (1968) stems from critics who had claimed that the group had abandoned the cause of the counterculture and the politics of the New Left that sought to introduce a new system of hegemony in accordance with the needs of the people. However, what The Beatles had intended with the production of their songs such as the "Revolution" series was to showcase and bring to light the chaotic structure that the counterculture had evolved into. Having always upheld their choice to not participate in political affairs, they maintained their stance of being isolated amidst such political upheavals. Hence, their album can be seen as highlighting and, at the same time, parodying themselves and the narrative of the cultural uprising.

The message behind the lack of The Beatles' participation can be understood as going back to former conservative ideals and no longer finding gratification in the lifestyle and ideologies of the cultural left. Hence, although the group was much criticised for not carrying out the cause of the counterculture, in a way, The Beatles were staying and maintaining their counterculture status while the rest of the movement organised itself into becoming the dominant force of society. As John Platoff has noted upon the music of the *White Album*, "If there is a revolution going on, the music is clearly nowhere near it. On the contrary, Lennon is preaching to us about revolution from a place of calm and safety – perhaps even his retreat at Rishikesh" (252). Having achieved a state of mind in the isolation from the dictates of society and its entailments, John Lennon and the rest of the group could be understood as opting for a state of being where it was more effective to turn back to the previous system of existence, faulty as it may be, and focus on a more peaceful

and organised process of reform that did not have to do with the violent clashing of ideologies.

The notion of being an underground culture, in the context of the cultural uprising, is one that varies and has many dimensions in popular culture. In the modern circumstance, the Civil Rights Movement and the protests against war by the 1960s counterculture remain an era that was celebrated by many as a period of awakening. The era is recognised as a defining period of time that caused people to be aware of the system of the society that they were living in and confront the ideas that they have been taught to accept without question. However, the contradiction here lies in the fact that countering a dominant form of culture and challenging the norms requires a similar type of system of power to govern and unify the movement. Leaders and pioneers of an aspiring movement must employ tactics from the dominant form in order to organise itself and implement their ideas upon its people. In other words, the system of hegemony must be maintained. In order for a political party to advance its ideology, it must associate itself with a population of followers that share the sentiments of its goals and objectives; as much as a system of governance needs the support and consent of a given population, the citizens of that population require the guidance and leadership of that party.

Michele Foucault had stated regarding the presence and continued presence of power and its functions:

...power relations, as they function in a society like ours, are essentially anchored in a certain relationship of force that was established in and through war at a given historical moment that can be historically specified. And while it is true that political powers put an end to war and establishes or attempts to establish the reign of peace in civil society, it certainly does not do so in order to suspend the effects of power or to neutralize the equilibrium revealed by the last battle of the war. According to this hypothesis, the role of political power is perpetually to use a sort of silent war to reinscribe that relationship of force, and to reinscribe it in institutions, economic inequalities, language, and even the bodies of individuals. (*Society Must be Defended* 15-16)

In the domains of the structure of the counterculture, it is comprehensible that the idea of reform of society or means of revolution cannot stand alone and therefore must associate itself with the dominant mainstream force. The very purpose of being an underground culture is not only to maintain a close-knit community for its own sake, rather that community of minorities have their own message which they wish to communicate to the larger part of society. Hence, it becomes imperative that for a movement to promote itself as a legitimate force, it needs to have a structure and support system where the role of each societal and cultural group, irrespective of status, becomes crucial. Willing consent given on the part of the population is therefore critical even for a community of lesser-known groups if the same group is structured to advance a particular agenda. Thus, when one power structure becomes diminished, another forms itself and power resides only to a few as opposed to power being held equally by all individuals. As Foucault further explains:

Politics, in other words, sanctions and reproduces the disequilibrium of forces manifested in war. Inverting the proposition also means something else, namely that within this “civil peace”, these political struggles, these clashes over or with power, these modifications of relations of force – the shifting balance, the reversals – in a political system, all these things must be interpreted as a continuation of war. And they are interpreted as so many episodes, fragmentations, and displacement of the war itself. We are always writing the history of the same war, even when we are writing the history of peace and its institutions. (*Society Must be Defended* 16)

Although embodying elements of the same hegemonic system as seen within the dominant system of society, it would not be accurate to discredit the whole movement of the counterculture and its objectives. Of course, it can be considered hypocritical and contradicting for the movement to be embracing the hegemonic means of development, although it was what was required for the leaders of the counterculture to implement those same tactics for the cultural revolution to be advanced. In his explanation of the roles of intellectual leaders, Gramsci has written:

The traditional type of political “leader”, prepared only for formal-judicial activities, is becoming anachronistic and represents a danger for the life of the State: the leader must have that minimum of general technical culture which will permit him, if not to “create” autonomously the correct solution, at least to know how adjudicate between the solutions put forward by the experts, and hence to choose the correct one from the “synthetic” viewpoint of political technique. (168)

The appeal of the counterculture of the 1960s, therefore, lie in the fact that the system of political ideology that was put forth by the New Left and other subculture organisations had in mind the interest of the subaltern classes. The objectives offered by the rhetoric of the counterculture was alluring given that it was conceived as a cause for the common man and was presented as a movement that was advanced and brought to the fore front by the working-class proletariat.

Without a doubt, the counterculture did produce a variety of progressivism that led to a culture of enrichment in terms of art, education, social and civil rights. However, there were also elements that could have been considered regressive and harmful as well. The very lifestyle that was promoted which included the advocacy of conventional drug-taking, promiscuity and radical means of expression and performances were questionable in their end results. It is not shocking that some of these antics fell into obscurity and ridicule in the eras that follow, given the fact such aspects of the counterculture did not contribute much to the advancement of progressive ideals. Nonetheless, such forms of expressions and lifestyle continue to fall into the ambit of the aura that is the cultural uprising. It signified a rejection of old traditional values and conventions that were often seen as stifling an individual’s personal freedom to live as he pleases.

For the most part, the counterculture, although with its own set of faults, was successful in its implementation of an ideology that is continued to be celebrated and venerated in popular culture. The very idea of being against a system of regime for the sake of rebellion and disobedience continues to be romanticised even without the realisation that such form of admiration has very well been transformed as a part of

the mainstream culture. Music of the underground culture that came to prominence during the period has also been held with great esteem in popular society with many stating their preference for this type of music and sound and at the same time highlighting how new genres of music fail in comparison with such figures as The Beatles. This is, for the most part, due to the fact that musical acts such as The Beatles were pioneers in the realm of protest music; their songs focusing on the changes that they were witnessing and their daringness and experimentation with new genres has indeed allowed for them to maintain their status of cultural relevance.

Ian MacDonald has commented on the unique nature of the musical production of the 60s and the reasons as to why they have a deep significance to popular culture:

The differences between Sixties pop and what comes after it are epitomised by the loss of one vital element: the unexpected. From functional drum-and-base dance grooves to fulsome Heavy Metal ballads, the lack of melodic/harmonic surprise in Nineties music is numbing. Indeed, in term of form, pop has almost come to a halt, displaying few originalities in structure, metre, or melody over the last ten years. By contrast, when Sixties listeners heard a new Beatles song...they never knew from bar to bar what was coming next. Sometimes this was because these songwriters were musically aware enough to make unusual moves on purpose, but mostly it reflected the quintessential quality of the Sixties: self-determined openness. Just as social and sexual restraints then fell into abeyance, the idea that there were orthodox compositional rules which had to be respected did not last long during that decade. Originality in popular culture then became - for a while - uniquely prized, creative unexpectedness stemming almost as much from attitude as from talent. (388)

Hence, although critics of the narrative of the counterculture can make arguments about its authenticity in being exclusively anti-establishment, it does not take away from the fact that the music and creative ventures of The Beatles have defined a greater part of the era. The cultural uprising, the features and lifestyles of

the underground communities as well as the descent of the movement into a hegemonic regime can all be recalled and dissected from the music and lyrics presented by The Beatles who were witnesses, and at times participants of the cultural changes of the era.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

The cultural and political developments that were witnessed during the era of the counterculture had continued to occupy an important space in popular culture; the ideologies that were formed linked with progressivism, humanitarian issues and artistic representation continue to be popularised in various field of society. What began as a movement of the younger generation in an act of defiance against conservatism and industrialism spanned across countries and eventually morphed itself into a call for a cultural and political revolution. Hence, it was not surprising that the movement of the counterculture encompassed all realms of communities in the sense that the movement had as much to do with individual liberation as it did with communal and political reform.

The reign of 'Beatlemania' at the height of the counterculture movement has rightfully been acknowledged by fans and critics alike as embodying the spirit of the generation that brought about a new ideological outlook upon the world. As has been established in previous chapters, The Beatles as a band did not stand for a particular or specific political ideology but their musical influence over the political movements and cultural issues were instrumental in forming the atmosphere that allowed for communities to come together and raise awareness about important issues. The hegemonic influence of The Beatles, as public figures, is relevant for the reason that they were initial representations of the common man which may include the lower working class, the youth community and the more marginalised sections of society that were supposedly not being given the same benefits as the more well-off communities. Their appeal was, therefore, based on the fact that they started from humble beginnings and were able to achieve fame and success through their hard work and determination. They personified how anyone, irrespective of their background, can be successful and wealthy and hence, their appeal amongst people of all ages, genders and classes were understandably justified. Reflecting and taking inspiration from the many changes that were being witnessed, The Beatles and their cultural significance was realised in the mid-1960s which is known to coincide with the height of the counterculture movement. It is arguable whether or not The Beatles were ideologically altered due to the spirit of the time or whether they were simply capitalising on the movement as a means of gaining profit. However, it is rightfully

accepted that the musical shift adopted by the band cemented their legacy as one of the few musical acts that were also influential in bringing about a cultural experience that introduced new ideological views and outlook.

Towards the end of their career as a band, The Beatles continued to make musical history. Theirs was an act that was venerated and cherished during their time and even long after their disbandment. Their music continues to be an inspiration for other musicians and their appeal to audiences worldwide is still recognised. Their live performance at the rooftop of the Apple Corps headquarters in London on 30th January 1969 (*Anthology* 321) has become immortalised in popular culture as a historical moment in the legacy of The Beatles as it would be the last time that they would publicly perform together as a band. This event, like other activities that the band were engaging in, was greatly appreciated by audiences and their roles in culture as leaders and influencers have thus continued.

The impact of the music and style of The Beatles has often been regarded as popularizing the lifestyle of the rebellious youth culture of the 1960s; their relevance in the music and entertainment industry and in the formation of cultural identity remains an important topic for the study of the counterculture. Peter Braunstein has written on the impact of The Beatles that was instrumental for the propagation of rebellious youth culture:

The British Invasion, officially launched by the Beatles' takeover of the pop charts (and their subsequent U.S. tour) in January 1964, brought Mod culture to America...The spectacle of rapid Beatlemania naturally focused the media's attention on teenagers, and the writer Tom Wolfe made a name for himself chronicling how teens had become the driving force behind American culture, the demographic where future fads, fashion, and sensibilities incubated before being spread to the rest of America. Anticipating the hippies before the term was coined, Wolfe argued in 1965 that "now high styles come from low places, from marginal types who carve out worlds for themselves...in tainted undergrounds, "and come out of the netherworld of modern teenage life". (245)

The Beatles being public figures that helped in the ushering in of the culturally unorthodox youth generation of the 1960s, are looked upon as leaders and heroes of the counterculture. It cannot be argued as to whether or not The Beatles' popularity was doubtable during the height of their career starting from the mid-1960s to the earlier parts of the next decade. However, what will always spark a debate on the topic of The Beatles and the political ideology of the time was whether or not the band can be labelled as a group that stood solely for the causes of the counterculture. The Beatles were highly sceptical of the counterculture tendencies when it came to violent protests and calls for revolution in society. Of course, the music of the band was an innovative style of protest music, but it is important to note that it did not only cater to the ideals of the subculture environment. Therefore, it may be accurate to state that The Beatles as a band represented the spirit of the era of the counterculture that was made up of self-expression, open-mindedness and experimentation. Unlike a trend that becomes popular and then fades almost instantly in mainstream culture, the willingness and openness to change on the part of The Beatles was what allowed for them to remain relevant.

Many would debate that the cultural changes that occurred during the era of the counterculture were akin to a revolutionary movement that shaped the very foundations of popular society of the time and the years that follow. However, as has been analysed, the period of the many protests, sit-ins and the practice of free love was very much integrated into the mainstream and hence, becoming a part of the very culture that was being protested in the first place. The resistance towards the materialistic centred industrial society was a common associating theme that held up the ideals of the counterculture movement; it was not only teenage angst and tendency towards rebellion that was at the basis of the movement. Rather it was the feeling that capitalistic means of livelihood were gaining control over the lives of communities that sparked the movement that was very anti-capitalist in nature and which, therefore, opted for a more socialist form of living where it was believed that people would exist equally and distinction in terms of class would be diminished.

Western communities in this post-war era were greatly flourishing in terms of economic growth and industrial expansion. However, a humanistic and a more

spiritual alternative was being advocated by the subculture communities. For the most part, the movement of the counterculture could be viewed as being a huge success; political activism led to significant constitutional reforms and there was a general achievement in terms of being more open-minded towards unconventional means of livelihood in areas such as individual forms of expression and sexuality. In its formation, a counterculture is understood to be formed “when a group of people begins to reject the major values of its society and attempts to replace these with an alternative set of values” (Spates 869) which can generally be acknowledged to have been achieved during the cultural uprising of the 1960s.

In terms of its objective in bringing about a social reform or at least a significant amount of change, it is safe to say that the counterculture was successful in its cause. The ideal world that was sought to be established through the culture of resistance was a society that was free in all aspects; subculture communities such as the hippies and beatniks spread messages of free love that encouraged people to be loving and more accepting of others irrespective of differences. Many joined the counterculture for different purposes; as the movement contained aspects related to several issues such as politics, music, art, culture or religion, it can be stated that the reasons why so many people invested themselves into the spirit of the time varied greatly. With a variety of issues being tackled internationally by the counterculture movement, the notion of a change for the better was the common theme that was being upheld throughout this era of resistance. In this sense, the counterculture can be regarded as being successful as it brought about a form of cultural reorganisation that are still recognised and relevant to the modern era.

With the materialistic ideals of the consumer society in question, the international counterculture of this period is reputed in mainstream popular culture as a period in time where people were learning to not become mechanical puppets of the corporate world. The general message being preached through the lifestyle of the unconventional was that ultimate happiness was not based upon the monetary gains, possessions and labels of capitalist society. By forming themselves into groups and associations, the ascension of the counterculture into the political realm, in many ways, hindered the ultimate goal of the movement which was understood to be the

formation of a Utopian-like society. The association of the movement with concepts of love, kindness and understanding amongst members of the activism have been much romanticised in modern day society. Although ideals of humanitarian values are often associated with this culture of revolt, it is also of equal importance to take note of the factors that led people of the era to become so drawn to the idea of revolution and social reform which eventually led to the movement's dissent into violence.

Tor Egil Følrand has written that the decade of the counterculture, the 1960s, “subsumes only a small amount of what happened in Western Europe and the United States in the decade – and an even smaller segment of events in Eastern Europe and Asia” (126). Følrand is of the notion that the Sixties and its conceptualization as a period of cultural revolution has many factors that need be considered and analysed from different angles such as historical influences and economic transactions within society. Følrand highlights the influence of the ideologies of the New Left, that pertain to the writings of Marx, in the emergence of the urge for revolts and protests, he writes:

What distinguished the New Left of the 1960s from the Old Left were primarily two things. First, though not necessarily foremost, was an emphasis on some of Marx's early writings that had not received much attention before, namely his thoughts on alienation and on the (morally) corrupt effects of modern capitalism – which often seemed synonymous with modernity. Second was an agonizing appreciation that the idea of the industrial proletariat as a driving force of Socialist revolution increasingly was becoming an anachronism, since the workers simply were not revolutionary and in fact seemed rather complacent and satisfied with consumer capitalism. This led to a search for explanations of the failure of workers to acknowledge their own genuine interests (namely in socialism), as well as for alternative agents to play the role of revolutionary vanguard that the industrial proletariat seemed sadly uninterested in and unfit to fill. Herbert Marcuse's suggestion for the former in “repressive tolerance” appeared attractive to many New

Leftists, as did his identification of students and academics – as a sort of intellectual proletariat of late capitalism – as the latter. (131)

This fixation on the bourgeoisie – proletariat dichotomy can be attributed as one of the defining reasons as to why revolts and protests were taking place on an international scale; the belief that capitalist consumer system was keeping people from the realization of their true freedom was what was driving the values of revolutionary prone communities which included all sections of communities who now had the mentality of victimhood and the idea that they were being oppressed under the regimes of the larger system of capitalist society.

The previous generation was, therefore, believed to be associated and fixated on capitalist ideals and conservative tendencies which was felt to be completely outdated for this new generation of spiritually conscious rebels. Music, in the counterculture, being one of the defining aspects of the movement, underwent changes that were reflective of the generation's desire to shed aspects of the old. Førland recounts the popularisation of certain forms of music that have their roots in the search for new forms of expression and identification that are not already claimed by the parent generation:

Sixties music was never exclusively rock. Folk, jazz and blues were also associated with the Sixties, despite their roots deep in earlier decades. A common denominator for these forms and probably part of what made them so appealing to Sixties rebels, was their accessibility to people without training in “classical” music. You did not have to be taught by parents or teachers to enjoy listening – or playing. The latter may sound an affront to jazz, and indeed much jazz music required years of hard work whether as musician or listeners – which is probably one reason why jazz, and especially the most demanding forms of jazz, was left behind by the Sixties. Another reason might be that jazz was clearly seized by older generations, making it unavailable to baby boomers as an instrument for building a new identity to distinguish themselves from their elders. And of course, rock, like any other music form over the years developed its own intricate reasons of distinction,

evolving from rock 'n' roll to a form of music that was just as advanced and as demanding as jazz, and as much in need of tutoring to be fully appreciated. The Beatles were at the vanguard, and the fabulous four made their way from the clubs of Hamburg to the recording studio of George Martin. So the history of jazz repeated itself, as new generations refined rock and took to their own forms of "simple" music for their anthems and identifiers. (132-133)

Similar to political ideals, such as that of the New Left, that were starting to resonate with the likings of civilians, aspects of culture that were already present were given new contexts and new meaning in the new age of cultural awakening. Much like the issue with musical genres that has been analysed, factors that made up youth culture were redefined and given importance in accordance with the ideals that were gradually growing more and more popular. The Beatles, with their musical career starting to blossom, were right in the midst of these cultural shifts, hence, it is easily assumed that they were taking full advantage of the situation. They identified with the struggling classes of society who were presumably oppressed by the more privileged portions amongst the masses. Their humble appeal as struggling young musicians trying to make a name for themselves won over the admiration of many of their listeners. Their embracing of the narrative of the counterculture further cemented their roles as leading figures of the anti-capitalist, anti-authority movement.

The counterculture and all its components, including such occurrences as the Civil Rights Movement and the culture of the Hippies, have all been immortalised within the ambit of popular culture. The Bohemian lifestyle that the so called 'freaks' were displaying in an attempt to distance and differentiate themselves from the 'straight' society have all been turned into machines of the capital almost immediately after the decades of being engulfed in the revolts of counterculture. With this in mind, while the 'Sixties' movement was largely based on promoting and advancing a more socialist form of governance for civilised society, the fact remains that the many aspects that make up the cultural movement was, and is still, claimed

by the corporate hands of capitalism that utilises them for sources of income. As Marine Voskanyan has written:

Specialists in marketing have long developed the skill of exploiting not only the image of a classical bourgeois – expensive, elegant and spiffy but its “informal”, “youth style”, “ironical antithesis”. Globalized capitalism was not a bit shaken by the “countercultural insurrections” against consumer society reproduced since 1960s. Moreover, it has utilized the counterculture thinking as a lucrative source of income. (1)

The counterculture mindset being a profit turning machine can, to a significant scale, be applicable to the career of public figures and entertainers such as The Beatles. It is true that The Beatles achieved many things within the span of their career as musicians and their contributions to the cultural uprising and their talents as artistes cannot be discredited. What stands to be questioned remains the notion that despite being considered ideal role models for the counterculture and its rebellious ways, it is to be acknowledged that The Beatles were, in every sense of the term, capitalists. The very aim of the band, being entertainers and musicians, was to make money through their talent. Hence, their goal as musicians was primarily to capitalise on their talents and the listening preferences of their audience. Similar to this notion, it is also important to remember that not all individuals, who seemingly identified with the counterculture, were fully invested in the ideologies of the movement. Thus, the probability that, due to its immense popularity many young people were simply compelled to identify with the movement, needs to be considered.

Marine Voskanyan has noted that subcultures that revolted against the capitalist system all eventually became part of the very system that they were against and that “capitalism has just absorbed the counterculture, making it a part of itself and accepting as a version of mainstream culture” (2). Countercultural ideals have become overly romanticised and given notoriety in popular culture and hence, such aspects of the period are often capitalised, as people are often drawn towards the idea of rebellion and revolt in the name of free love and peace. The movement itself, at its peak in the mid-1960s, can be seen to have had a series of instances when it was

straying from its own path of countering the dominant culture and its oppressive tendencies. As Voskanyan has again reflected:

...the individualist negation of the world of corporate culture, as well as any forms of individual intellectual riot, does not actually contradict to the system. The rioter is actually transformed into a consumer of well trade symbols of liberation, or in case of special capabilities, even integrated into the most prestigious spheres of business and technologies. This crossbreed of creativity, self-actualization, and success is not the worst achievement of civilization – but still not the best. Improvement of the quality of life for everyone and not only for the new yuppies can be achieved not through attractive or often false individual non-conformism but through half-forgotten practice of social activity which an individual develops if he dedicates himself to a higher objective than individual success. (2)

The 1960s cultural uprising was not an uncommon phenomenon given the nature of revolts and calls for revolutions within societies. What made the counterculture unique in its path was the circumstance in which it had arisen; unlike previous movements of rebellion, the 1960s counterculture was exposed on a much wider scale on account of the availability of television and the media. The Vietnam War and the protests against the U.S government's involvement was one the most noticeable features of the counterculture movement and it serves as an ample indicator of how the technological advancements that were available at the time contributed towards its widespread protests. Of course, protesters were genuinely against unnecessary wars fought between nations that left many innocent lives dead, but the resistance to war, aside from other factors, were gaining widespread attention due to the availability of the media and its coverage. The availability of the images of war that reached households across the United States and the rest of the world indeed played an important part in the reaction against the Vietnam War. The influence and power of the media can thus be acknowledged from the worldwide anti-war protests that took place towards the end of the decade that were a result of the media coverage surrounding the Vietnam War.

Similar to the relevance of the media attention surrounding the movement was also an increase in the number of students who were politically and culturally influenced to overturn a system that they believed was wrongful in their execution of power. The composition of the societal status of the 1960s is, therefore, an aspect of the period that needed a great amount of analysis in an attempt to explain the occurrences of the cultural uprising. For Tor Egil Følrand, what made up the cultural rebellion of the 1960s was “a combination of demographic and economic factors, namely the baby boom of the immediate post-war years and the economic growth of the 1950s and 60s” (136). Følrand here stresses on the notion that the combined effects of all such aspects are key to the explanation and understanding of the 1960s. He writes:

If revolts occur not because there is ground for protest – the idea being that there always is – but because there are enough people around with the time, money, and means of communication to mobilize for some cause, we should seek explanations for the Sixties neither in the Vietnam War nor in domestic politics or authority structures but in the increase of people with protest opportunities. (136)

The opportunities for protest and revolt were thus aspects of the counterculture that are often overlooked while analysing the significance and impact of the period. Like no other era before, the post-war society of the Western world was economically sound. Jobs were made available and secure, people did not have to work as hard to attain a comfortable lifestyle and hence, certain opportunities in private and professional realms were made available for individuals. Taking into account the availability and advancement in terms of media and television, the baby boom and the increase in student enrolments into colleges and universities, the counterculture came to personify and project an image of the period that was fuelled with progressive ideals and innovativeness.

With opportunities being presented like never before, it can be justified to state that The Beatles were also provided with opportunities which they took willingly in order to advance in their careers. Although celebrated as faces of the

counterculture, a deeper look into their careers and the directions they were taking, it is undeniable that the counterculture and its many ideals helped advance the success of The Beatles. The relevance of The Beatles as cultural icons came at a time when it was becoming popular to have progressive and liberalistic ideals; therefore, to state that The Beatles were the only musicians to be innovative and taking risks in their creative thinking would be inaccurate as it was acknowledged that there were other public figures in music who were experimenting with new sounds and holding similar progressive ideals. As have been established, The Beatles themselves were greatly influenced by other musicians especially Bob Dylan who was a leading figure and paved the way for protest music. Through their music, The Beatles were indeed spreading the ideals of progressivism directly or indirectly, but it is important to recognise that the band themselves were not necessarily adhering to such ideals in all aspects of their lives.

When analysing the songs that were released by The Beatles from the mid-1960s onwards, it is recognised that the issues and themes focused upon counterculture sensibilities. Songs such as “Eleanor Rigby”, “Nowhere Man” and “The Word” reflect the disillusionment of the common masses at the time who were desperate for a change of scenery with respect to the then, political and societal relations. Songs such as “Day Tripper” and “Tomorrow Never Knows” are also known to highlight the youth’s preoccupation with recreational drugs and in a song like “Taxman”, The Beatles directly address the lawmakers of their nation for their supposed obsession with taking money from the population. These songs, as mentioned, marked The Beatles’ change of musical direction at a time when the counterculture had gained notoriety, hence, the opportunities that had been brought about by the many developments of the period can be said to have provided sources of capital for The Beatles as well.

These releases almost instantly became anthems for the counterculture, but a close analysis of their production will reveal that the themes dealt with in Beatle songs do not always go with the narrative of the progressive movement. Their very position as musicians can be recognised to have contradicting aspects as it was the case that, as musicians, the role of The Beatles in society was to become successful,

gain higher statuses and provide an income through their music. As it has been made clear, the counterculture and the activism associated with the movement were very much anti-capitalist in their beliefs and the ultimate goal for such activism was the dismantling of what was believed to be the capitalist exploitation of the masses. This idea of revolting against capitalism lays a contradiction in the position of The Beatles as leaders of the 'Swinging Sixties' as it places them in the league of the elites and the capitalist.

One example of The Beatles and their capitalist tendencies can be seen from the song titled "Taxman" from the 1966 *Revolver* album. This song is one of the instances where The Beatles were directly political in their music, even naming political leaders by name in the lyrics. This song is undoubtedly held by many as a song that holds a strong counterculture narrative as it criticises the system of taxation and how the government is always taking people's income. All of these contentions can be stated to be accurate as the song indeed criticises the workings of the government. However, it can also be argued that the message behind the song is capitalist in nature as the speaker of the song is preoccupied with the amount of money he has made and does not want any of it to be given away. This message of the song goes against the narrative of the cultural uprising that has been recognised as seeking to establish a Socialist utopian community. The song's preoccupation with money, hence, contradicts with the counterculture's notion of doing away with monetary gains and materialism. As it was recognised that the youth-based counterculture was seeking for an alternative to the endless competition of the capitalist free market, it can be seen that The Beatles, as a band, did not strictly adhere to this ideology but instead, they were capitalising on the cultural uprising like any other corporate industry would.

Made exemplary by the lifestyles of the bohemians and hippies, the concept of equality and living life with little means without the accompaniment of modern technological devices was advocated by members of the subculture. This notion of living that did away with modern necessities meant that individuals who chose to live this way did away with the competitive nature of corporate means that were seemingly only preoccupied with gaining more and more wealth and materials. The

Beatles, during the Swinging Sixties, in their music and overall image came to embody this persona of the unconventional; shedding their earlier clean-cut image and donning long hair, unshaven faces and loose-fitting attire that made them blend in to the community of misfits. While members of The Beatles might have been looking like average hippies, they were in actuality gaining fortunes from the sale of their music which furthers the argument that they were capitalists whose main income depended on the investment of their audience in their albums. For this reason, arguments can accurately be raised on the issue of The Beatles being cultural icons for the youth; the message behind their songs was such that people did not need monetary wealth and individuals were better off in communities where they were to live free from the restraints of the modern world. This message of free love and living against the dictates of the system, hence, directly contradicts the position of The Beatles who were making fortunes and competing with other musicians in their efforts to be relevant and different.

It is also noteworthy that the musicians during the era of the cultural uprising were not free from the dictates of the music industry. Songs of the counterculture had to do with individualism and non-conformity and music supposedly became a means of self-expression and therefore competing with other musicians over popularity did not appear to be the ultimate goal. In reality, musicians that were embracing the progressive ideals of the counterculture were desperate to mark themselves as being different from the rest, hence the endless experimentation with unconventional approaches to music. The music industry was not changed in the light of the counterculture meaning that competition amongst artistes was still in full swing and song-writers and record producers were constantly keeping in mind the cultural developments that were happening in order to produce music that would appeal most to the audience.

The Beatles too were not exempt from this competition amongst progressive musicians. They were aware of their competition and from monitoring the recent releases made by other musicians, The Beatles were persistently trying to showcase and establish their uniqueness from the rest. While writing their songs, The Beatles were conscious of the type of music that were gaining popularity which further

motivated the band to surpass the expectations of audiences which was not always a success. As MacDonald had mentioned regarding the writing process of the song called “Helter Skelter” in 1968:

Provoked by hearing that The Who had gone all out on their latest track to achieve the most overwhelming racket imaginable – it being about this time that an acid – inflated Pete Townsend all but ceased to write songs focused enough to produce hits – McCartney came up with this clumsy attempt to outdo them...the result was nonetheless ridiculous, McCartney shrieking weedily against a massively tape-echoed backdrop of out-of-tune thrashing. (298)

Rather than being motivated to produce music specifically for the causes of the counterculture, it can be seen from this account that the band was primarily motivated to gain more fame and more wealth. Hence, while their music promoted free love, individualism and living life according to ones’ will, The Beatles were not free from the pressures of the capitalist driven music industry as they often struggled to maintain their relevance in the midst of other progressive talents.

The very message behind progressive rock and protest music can be called into question when the careers of The Beatles are analysed. The songs of The Beatles deal with issues that were not common at that time. For example, songs such as “Eleanor Rigby”, “Tomorrow Never Knows” and “Within You Without You” address issues of the state of mind when under the influence of psychedelic drugs. With the influence of figures such as Timothy Leary, the psychologist who advocated and promoted his notion of the therapeutic potential of LSD, The Beatles were influencing the masses of their audience into taking the drug. Drug taking and sexual promiscuity were defining factors that marked the rebels from the rest of society; by taking hallucinogenic drugs, abandoning the practice of celibacy before marriage and dropping from the expectations of their society, counterculture activists believed themselves to be exploring various aspects of the human mind and body that can otherwise become lost in the context of societal relationships. To users of the drug, being on an acid trip meant that you could provide yourself an escape from the

rest of the world and its constraints. And forming themselves into a communion outside the ambit of societal doctrines allowed them to explore and discover their identities. Timothy Miller explains:

Nothing epitomizes the Sixties so clearly in the public mind as sex and drugs, and certainly both were present in the communes often enough. “If it feels good, then do it as long as you don’t hurt anybody else” was the watch-word of the new culture. Outright group sex and frequent, open rotating of sexual partners were rare, the stereotype notwithstanding, but certainly relationships other than conventional marital monogamy were wildly tolerated. Similarly, “good drugs” – marijuana, LSD, and the other psychedelics, as opposed to “bad” heroin, alcohol, and amphetamines – were often embraced eagerly or at least tolerated. More than a little marijuana was grown on the more remote portions of communal farmsteads, and a lot of rural communes eventually experienced drug raids. (346)

Taking drugs was a source of enlightenment and liberation so as to free the individual from any restraints or restrictions that may come from the outside world, hence, it is not surprising to see that many musicians and writers utilised its effects for their creative outlook. The products and influence of the drug in the creative process of The Beatles can undoubtedly be seen in the release of their songs such “Lucy in the Sky With Diamonds” which was a huge success. However, the advocacy of recreational drugs amongst impressionable youths is greatly questionable and as such intake of drugs would inevitably lead to harmful ends. The use and advocacy for drugs was an important moment for the counterculture, however, the long-term impact of drug taking has to be assessed and recognised. The advocacy of LSD by prominent figures of the counterculture is also greatly questionable given the fact that the intake and theories regarding the use of the drugs by Leary are often preposterous and absurd. Roger Kimball had commented on the shortcomings of Timothy Leary’s beliefs:

His advocacy of hallucinogens was, as Theodore Roszak put it, the advocacy of a “counterfeit infinity”...Leary’s assurance that “the LSD trip is a religious

pilgrimage” was a gross, physically maiming deception – of himself, possibly; certainly of the thousands upon thousands whom he seduced with his gospel of instant ecstasy. (148-149)

The use of LSD definitely took its toll on the members of The Beatles as well, especially John Lennon. Although he himself had claimed that LSD changed him in ways that was better, his reliance on the drug undoubtedly hindered his daily life and the effects of LSD impacted his physical as well as mental well-being. While during the release of their album *Revolver* in 1966, Ian MacDonald writes that Lennon “became psychologically addicted to LSD”. Further he states:

...taking it daily and living in one long, listless chemically altered state. Gradually fatigue and sensory overload conspired with Leary’ prescription for voluntary ego-death to dissolve his sense of self. For the next two years, by his own account, he had little grasp of his own identity. Living in a passive, impressionable condition dominated by LSD, he clung to the ideology of the psychedelic revolution despite an increasing incidence of the ‘bad trips’ which Leary had claimed were impossible after ego-death. By 1968 – at which point Leary was merrily hailing The Beatles as ‘Divine Messiahs, the wisest, holiest, most effective avatars the human race has yet produced, prototypes of a new race of laughing freemen’ – Lennon was a mental wreck struggling to stitch himself back together. Luckily, his constitution was robust enough to avert physical collapse, while the scepticism that balanced his questing gullibility warded off a permanent eclipse of his reason. Many others like him never came back. (192-193)

While the counterculture had many positive outcomes in terms of politics and artistic innovation, it is clear that the movement also brought about a degenerate means of lifestyle that was preoccupied with sexuality and hallucinogens. The Beatles, with their status as icons whom the worldwide audience was looking towards, greatly changed the outlook of the youth generation that had its fair share of demerits. Just like the intake of drugs did harm to Lennon, drug addiction during the movement led to overdose and deaths of many young people. Although the message

behind communes and their lifestyle was filled with ideas of peace and inclusivity, the reality was that protests tend to lead to violence, hatred and the use of force due to aspects such as radicalism, mob mentality and groupthink, thus abandoning the very cause of the cultural uprising. The Beatles, in all their works, art and activities, represented greatly a very accurate picture of the counterculture which not only include the progressive advancements made towards social change, but also of the fact that revolutionary movements that sought a reform on such a large scale often come with its own set of shortcomings and negative aspects.

The radicalisation of the counterculture movement greatly disparaged the cause of the rebellion. While trying to bring about social reform and peaceful means of existence, the movement came to develop a narrative of its own where those that live within the dictates of the 'straight society' were neither included nor tolerated. Therefore, while preaching the ideals of co-existence and individuals' and the right to choose for themselves, an agenda was created in the name of the cultural changes that established itself as an institutional form of power which became hegemonic in the popular culture of the Western world.

Many critics and detractors of the counterculture have many a times questioned the long-term accomplishments of the counterculture movement stating that as much as the movement brought about a change in societal perspectives, its rhetoric was lacking in terms of a concrete direction and hence it was therefore not sufficient to bring about a cultural revolution that was being called for. The cultural changes of the 1960s was characteristic not of the predominantly oppressed revolting against the powerful, rather it had its beginning with the privileged classes questioning their own privilege and power in society to which Jeremi Suri had written, "The international counterculture had an intensely self-critical quality that its proponents defined as 'authenticity; its detractors viewed it as suicide'" (47). Although the narrative of the era changed popular perspectives on culture and outlook, the very fact that it was a product of the dominant system of modern civilisation hinders its goal of being a legitimate force that was to bring about an international cultural revolution. Suri gives an account of why world-renowned revolutionary leaders never identified themselves with the counterculture movement:

Many citizens residing in colonial and postcolonial territories had long opposed the great power politics that, in their eyes, contributed to imperial domination in their societies. Nationalist leaders such as Jawaharlal Nehru in India, Kwame Nkrumah in Ghana, and Ho Chi Minh in Vietnam were not part of the counterculture because they never accepted the basic institutions that were connected to it – the Cold War universities, the corporate media and the international political allocations of power. The same could be said for many domestic actors within Western societies, particularly early civil rights activists. Although figures such as Dr. Martin Luther King. Jr., supported the basic tenets of liberal democracy, others – including Robert F. Williams in the United States and Frantz Fanon in Algeria – did not. They were not part of the counterculture because they advocated full-scale revolution. Social and political change was not enough for them; they wanted to destroy society and rebuild it from the ground up. That was much more than countercultural activists stood for in practice. (48-49)

It is thus seen that many revolutionaries were critical of the counterculture's attachment to the dominant power dynamics which is why many of its detractors have contended that the movement was simply a creation of the media and hence, its politics was lacking direction in its execution. There indeed was a 'spirit' that was associated with the period, a spirit of liberated people marching towards the cause of finding life that would be more beneficial and satisfactory to their beliefs. However, such causes were engulfed by the radicalisation of ideals and practices that came with the changes that ultimately saw the movement die down. The conservative culture of the previous age definitely was changed, and people were starting to think, dress and live differently. However, the politics of the counterculture was short-lived and many continue to believe that it was because of the notion that it evolved and became part of the system and hence, turned into a corporate entity abandoning its ideals of separating itself from the clutches of the mainstream.

Whether in the Soviet Union or in the regime of Western liberated capitalism, the counterculture gained momentum as people questioned policies of their government and how they were being implemented. By the year 1968, public dissent

had escalated to such a degree that protests were violent, and it led to many casualties. It is important to note here that even in communist countries, people who revolted against their respective government were living relatively secure and comfortable lives; compared to revolts of previous centuries, activists of the counterculture had all the resources at their disposal. This meant that that the movement comprised not only of poor working-class communities but of privilege classes who were questioning their own privileges and status amongst others in society. The difference of the counterculture compared to previous movements of rebellion remains that in the Sixties, people were able to organise themselves and revolt against their governments and policy makers while in previous movements, people were not granted that privilege.

Despite public outbursts and demonstrations turning into violent protests, no government in power was ultimately diminished by the actions of the countercultural dissent. Rather, governments in different areas of the world were encouraged to form new laws in the wake of such occurrences. Critics of the movement have laid stress on the activists of the counterculture whom they regarded as being a selfish, spoilt generation for whom nothing was ever worthy or enough and hence, all they did was demand more from their leaders. It is true that the Western world, after World War II, was flourishing in terms of economic wealth. This very instance of the cultural uprising being born from one of the most privileged parts of the world gives rise to questions regarding its validity as a true struggle for freedom and liberation. As Jeremi Suri had also written:

Privileged citizens benefitting from improved material lives, had rising social and cultural expectations. Relative stability and prosperity encouraged increasing demands. The political moderation that supported stability and prosperity came under attack for its very moderation. This is precisely what Alexis de Tocqueville meant a century earlier when he pointed to the perils of reform after decades of war and deprivation. The promise of a better life encouraged growing demands among an educated generation of men and women that gradual social improvement could not sustain. Suburban wives had so much time than their mothers, but it was not enough. West German

students had more secure lives than their parents, but it was not enough. Soviet labourers had better working conditions than their predecessors, but it was not enough. Citizens blamed their leaders, not their unrealistic expectations, for the limits in their lives. (53)

While seeking freedom and liberation from capitalist regimes, the counterculture came to nurture dissident tendencies amongst its advocates. Similar to how college students of the counterculture led the charge of protests that revolted against their own policy-makers, the platform of freedom provided by the rhetoric of the counterculture led to a community of radicalised protesters whose demands kept increasing, despite governments' continued reforms and improved implementations of policies. By the mid-1960s, although there was still unrest related to racism and the war in Vietnam, the international system had significantly improved given the fact that the world was less prone to a nuclear outbreak and there had been laws established that would protect marginalised minorities. Attitudes in general had also been changed with regards to tolerance toward unconventional ideals and a majority of the people were projecting more openness toward disenfranchised groups or communities. The counterculture had also penetrated into universities, literature and other social settings that allowed for people to showcase their creativity and individualism.

Towards the end of the decade, the counterculture movement had become a movement that stood not for social reform and the betterment of marginalised minority groups, instead it called for a total resentment and revolt against figures of authority. Hence, violence against corporate administrations and governments were being advocated as it was deemed necessary to bring about a revolution. The counterculture established a narrative where advocates of its ideals had to employ means that were necessary, in order for them to achieve their principles and such means often included violence and the use of force. What remains an important aspect is that the counterculture at this point of time had achieved significant outcomes that had led to a better society in general, however, this was still not sufficient in the eyes of activists as more demands were made and expectations continued to grow.

With the release of their *White Album*, The Beatles' and their relevance in the context of the counterculture continued to remain. At this point, The Beatles were looked upon as leaders of the youth-based revolution. However, through this album, The Beatles made clear that they did not wish to take part in the destruction and violence that had now occupied the activism of the counterculture. The public, towards the end of the 1960s had recognisably become distant from the movement which had taken upon itself to dismantle the core of civilisation and build it up again. The return of The Beatles to simplicity and the toning down of their music can be considered as symbolic of the society's desire to return to a more conservative and traditional way of life.

The counterculture's embracing of violence was one of the main reasons as to why its narrative was being rejected by many, including The Beatles. Drawing inspiration from guerrilla fighters from movements like the Chinese Cultural Revolution and from third world countries, countercultural leaders began calling for violent revolts. There were also different issues within the organizations of the counterculture that hindered their proper functioning and well-being all together. Richard Brownell had stated that prominent militant groups and organizations such as the Black Panther Party and the Students for Democratic Society in the United States, during the height of the counterculture in the mid-1960s, "were being torn apart by internal political squabbles over the direction and tactics of their respective groups". Further he writes:

These arguments were often about minute details, and they were comparatively minor in the greater context of the movement, but they grew out of proportion for two reasons. The stubborn non-negotiable attitude that emboldened leftists when applied to the Establishment became a debating tactic that they frequently applied within their own organizations. No one was willing to back down, because everyone claimed to be right. Second, paranoia had set and affected the judgement of group leaders. This paranoia was encapsulated in an article by draft resister Lenny Heller. "If you want to be a revolutionary, you have to be awake, you can't have one minute's peace,

you're alive every single moment...It is intense, and there are distortions that take place under that intensity". (70-72)

Many young people who took part in the rebellion against the 'Cold War culture' can be stated to be simply living in the 'spirit' of the movement meaning that young activists were drawn to the idea of rebelling against authority figures even if such figures were not clearly named or defined. By this time, the movement had become highly emotive and sensitive towards issues that went against the rhetoric of the counterculture. As the narrative had reached such a point where other opposing opinions and policies were not entertained nor accepted, it is not surprising that advocates of the New Left ideologies were quick to criticise The Beatles for the statements which they had made in their songs with the release of their album in the year 1968. Although The Beatles had been criticised for supposedly making profit off the movement and taking advantage of their audiences' ideological belief, their straying from the path in which the counterculture was heading, again marked their independence from the narrative of the movement's spirit. Completely disavowing the violence that was being called for, The Beatles were labelled by those of the radical left as betrayers of the principles of the movement. To this radicalised version of the movement John Lennon has stated:

If you think of the Establishment or whoever 'they' are, the Blue Meanies, you've got to remember that they're the sick ones. And if you've got a sick child in the family you don't kick it out of the door – you've got to try and look after it or extend a hand to it. So somewhere along the line we've got to make a meeting point with whoever 'they' are, because even amongst them there are some human beings. In fact they're all human, but there's some that even look like it and respond like it. So it's up to us, if we're the aware generation, to extend a hand to the retarded child, and not just kick its teeth in because it happens to be a very big child. (*Anthology* 299)

It can be seen from this statement that the band, particularly Lennon, did not advocate the call for a violent revolution and the complete overthrow of figures of authority. The notion of peaceful coexistence that the counterculture formerly stood

for was thus still promoted by The Beatles. They advocated for comprehensive understanding between policy makers and the public of disenfranchised protestors in order for a reform and progressive development to take place. This position of The Beatles greatly contrasted with that of the counterculture who now had called for a complete overthrow of governmental figures. As the counterculture was becoming more hostile towards opposing opinions and ideologies, it is not surprising that The Beatles' song "Revolution" faced such a great backlash, because according to political leftist ideologies that were now directing the cultural uprising, it had appeared as if the band had abandoned the cause of the counterculture.

The Beatles, with the release of the *White Album* in 1968, were also accused of turning their backs on the movement which much of their career was built around and by stating that they wanted to be 'counted out' of the destruction that were being advocated. They were basically labelled as outsiders who did not fully understand the struggles of the common man and the injustices of the system, whatever that may be. The band was subject to condemnation from the New Left after the release of highly politicised "Revolution" which the New Left magazine *Ramparts* expressed as:

'Revolution' is a narcissistic little song...that, in these troubled times, preaches counter-revolution...The chorus of this song is, 'And you know it's gonna be all right'. Well, it isn't. You *know* it's *not* gonna be all right; the song, in fact, is one of the few Beatles songs that, even artistically, lacks conviction. (qtd. in Platoff 248-249)

Ellen Willis from *The New Yorker* also conveyed her dissatisfaction with The Beatles' song writing:

"Revolution"...reminds me of the man who refuses a panhandler and then can't resist lecturing him on the error of his ways. It takes a lot of chutzpah for a multimillionaire to assure the rest of us, "You know it's gonna be all right". And Lennon's "Change your head" line is just an up-to-date version of "Let them eat cake". (qtd. in Platoff 249)

It was considered hypocritical of The Beatles to not go along with the narrative of the liberal minded New Left ideologies to which Lennon has commented:

These left-wing people talk about giving the power to the people. That's nonsense – the people have the power. All we're trying to do is make people aware that they have the power themselves, and the violent way of revolution doesn't justify the ends.

All we're trying to say to people is to expose politicians and expose the people themselves who are hypocritical...People have to organise. Students have to organise voting. (*Anthology* 299)

By the year 1968, the rhetoric of the counterculture had successfully ushered in a new cultural demographic where there was an amalgamation of previously recognised popular culture and underground sensibilities. The narrative of the counterculture and its principles had thus become hegemonic in culture. As the movement had been massively associated with the media and its outlets, the popularisation of its dictates was spread on an enormous scale. As seen from the reviews of big media outlets regarding the statements made in the song "Revolution", it is clear to see that the cultural uprising had the media and publicity on their side, meaning that they had been more closely associated with the mainstream media as compared to earlier periods. It has been established that the foundations of the Sixties counterculture stemmed from the corporate set-up of the Cold War competition, and towards the end of the decade, mainstream dialogue had taken full advantage and control over the narrative and lifestyle of the movement and it became so in order that other independent ideas were not to be tolerated.

A hegemonic rule was thus established towards the end of the 1960s in favour of the ideals of the counterculture. As the counterculture and its narrative had attained legitimacy through universities and advocacy from public figures, thinkers and philosophers, its ideals and principles came to be piloted into the mechanism of consumerism and capitalism itself. The demand for progressive rock and protest

music is an efficient example of how the counterculture established itself and became a very huge part of the dominant establishment. As John Storey had noted, “The more Jefferson Airplane sang ‘All your private property/ Is target for your enemy/ And your enemy/ Is We’, the more money RCA Records made (85). Storey further explains:

The proliferation of Jefferson Airplane’s anti-capitalist politics increased the profit of the capitalist record company. Again, this is an example of the process of articulation: the way in which dominant groups in society attempt to ‘negotiate’ oppositional voices on to a terrain which secures for the dominant groups a continued position of leadership. The music of the counterculture was not denied expression (and there can be little doubt that this music produced particular cultural and political effects), but what is also true is that the music was articulated in the economic interest of the war-supporting capitalist music industry. (85)

The narrative and rhetoric of the counterculture had reached and infiltrated a better part of popular and mainstream culture towards the end of the 1960s. With the movement being continuously broadcasted and sensationalised by the media, the cultural uprising had established a hegemonic foundation of governance over the population. With aspects of counterculture becoming largely accepted and demanded in the mainstream, the ideals of the counterculture gradually became an instrument through which capitalist tendencies continued to be exercised. Hagai Katz, on the ideology of Gramscian hegemony, has written that hegemony “results from a combination of coercion and consent, the latter achieved through the hegemonic cooption of groups in civil society, resulting in ‘coercive orthodoxy’” (335). Further, Katz writes:

Elements of civil society are co-opted by the state and used to secure acquiescence of the dominated classes and identification with the world hegemonic world-order. In this state of affairs civil society becomes part of an extended state, utilized by the ruling class to form and maintain its hegemony by *transformismo*, or cooptation, through which the ruling class

assimilates ideas it sees as potentially dangerous, and thus creates cultural and political consensus. It becomes an instrument of *passive revolution*, through which hegemonic forces allow limited (and to an extent, false) freedom of self-expression for the dominated groups, thereby maintaining the continued consent to the current relations of force. (335)

The premise of Gramsci's theory of hegemony lies in the notion that people can be ruled by ideas as well and not only through means of force. Hegemony, throughout the event of the counterculture, remains a central aspect on both sides of the cultural and political spectrum. The hegemony of the conservative culture, the Cold War society and post-World War modernity led to the creation of the culture that sought to counter these ideals. However, it is arguable to a significant degree that this hegemonic rule was never overturned by the efforts and progressive ideals of the cultural uprising. With forces of Western liberated capitalism making significant progress in fields of technology and education, it is important to take note of the fact that the movement of the sub-cultures that emerged in the 1960s were indeed created and nurtured by the civilised society itself. While such aspects of capitalist society maybe utilised in an act of counter-reaction, the end result remains that the counterculture came to be merged with the dominant dictates of society where the essence and aesthetics of the counter movement were being capitalised.

In terms of civil rights, equality of genders, and promotion of acceptance for marginalised societies, the counterculture was successful as it brought about a cultural shift where man's perspective was changed for the better. The changes were undoubtedly significant and people started to think differently, they dressed different, and they were able to express themselves more openly. The fall of the movement, however, can be identified from the radicalisation of the ideals which were given status of legitimacy through corporate outlets such as the media and universities. In the guise of progress and liberation, the counterculture's embracing of ideals that would lead to complete destruction of civilised modern society can be understood as the main cause of its downfall and failure. It is the dissent towards violence at the end of the 1960s that ultimately led to the hegemonic rule of conservative ideals in

the decade that followed which ironically was the one that was being revolted against at the start of the counterculture movement.

Drawing on the studies and ideologies of organizations such as the Frankfurt School, leaders of the counterculture such as Herbert Marcuse glorified and prioritised the use of violence and causing riots in order to achieve certain goals in the late 1960s and the following decade. This aggressive turn of the movement meant that the cultural uprising was increasingly intolerant towards opposing ideas and opinions. Although governments were, on an international scale, working towards social reforms in favour of the narrative of the cultural unrests, the counterculture's desire for a complete overthrow of authority figures hindered its own possibilities for more progressive results. Suri recounts the turmoil that ensued society after violence and destruction was adopted:

Counterculture disorder created a perceived “emergency” that justified violent, often undemocratic reactions. Police forces entered university campuses, business offices and private homes to search for evidence of brewing conspiracy. Domestic intelligence agencies – most notoriously the FBI in the United States – increased their surveillance of suspected individuals. Washington, D.C., West Berlin, Paris, and Mexico came under virtual martial law during periods of heightened unrest, as regular army soldiers walked the streets to ensure order. The violent backlash against the counterculture militarized daily life in the Cold War. (62)

It is often contended that the counterculture met its end when the government intervened. However, it is worth noting that radical ideals of the movement that sought to destroy Western civilisation was greatly responsible for the counterculture's early end. The generation that protested against the culture of the older generation were provided with commodities that were never available to their parents; failing to see that progress could take place through peaceful alliance with ‘the system’, the counterculture and its activists were preoccupied and fascinated with all things that were new and innovative in order to distance themselves from their parents' Cold War culture. In order to bring about a cultural shift on a massive

global scale, values of men everywhere had to be altered and new values introduced in such a manner that was acceptable for the masses. The counterculture and its rampant adoption of radical and violent ideals failed to change the value systems of people's perspective and hence, the movement was regarded by many as a selfish, self-indulgent creation of the media. Scenes in hippie communities such as Haight Ashbury and the Summer of Love in 1969 were greatly fascinating and attractive for young people who were looking for an alternative lifestyle. However, in the long term, such acts of self-indulgence in drugs and sexual behaviour brought neither progress nor development for society as a whole.

T.J Jackson Lears had written on the implementation of hegemony propounded by Antonio Gramsci:

The keys to success are ideological and hegemonic: to achieve cultural hegemony, the leaders of a historical bloc must develop a world view that appeals to a wide range of other groups within the society, and they must be able to claim with at least with some plausibility that their particular interests are those of society at large. This claim may require selective accommodation to the desires of subordinate groups. (571)

The enactment of ideological hegemony can be witnessed largely within the 1960s cultural uprising. Amongst the factors that contribute to the hegemonic narrative of the counterculture is the role played the media and entertainment industry. The Beatles with the production of their music can be regarded as playing such roles of bringing about a change of values in order "to assimilate and to conquer 'ideologically' the traditional intellectuals" (Gramsci 142). By developing a view that was appealing and sympathetic to the narrative of the cultural uprising, the counterculture thus established a hegemonic relation which established a cultural shift and a change of dynamics within the concept of mainstream and counterculture. Hagai Katz explains the function of Gramsci's theory of hegemony:

The intellectuals succeed in creating hegemony to the extent that they extend the world view of the rulers to the ruled, and thereby secure the free

“consent” of the masses to the law and order of the land. To the extent that the intellectuals fail to create hegemony, the ruling class falls back on the state’s coercive apparatus which disciplines those who do not “consent”, and which is “constructed for all society in anticipation of moments of crisis of command...when spontaneous consensus declines”. (353)

Since the counterculture and the student-based protests of the late 60s had established a hegemonic rule of their own, the theory of hegemony that Gramsci put forth is applicable to their cause. While the cultural shifts brought about by the movement was hugely popular, the presence of opposing ideas brought about a violent outcome which can be understood as the “coercive apparatus” that is designed to discipline the detractors of hegemony. Michel Foucault has also spoken about the biopower where a new regime ensures “regularization” of the masses. He states:

Unlike disciplines, they no longer train individuals by working at the level of the body itself. There is absolutely no question relating to an individual body, in the way that discipline does. It is therefore not a matter of taking the individual at the level of individuality but, on the contrary, of using overall mechanisms and acting in such a way as to achieve overall states of equilibrium or regularity; it is, in a word, a matter of taking control of life and the biological processes of man-as-species and of ensuring that they are not disciplined, but regularized. (*Society Must be Defended* 246-247)

Thus, while the sentiments and tactics of the protest narrative sought to dismantle the authoritative force of post-war Western society, it is understood that it brought about a new regime of governance that was designed to regularize and establish a state of symmetry that ensures that citizens are under a system of control. As Foucault further states:

...we now have the emergence, with this technology of biopower, of this technology of power over “the” population as such, over men insofar as they are living beings. It is continuous, scientific, and the power to make live.

Sovereignty took life and let live. And now we have the emergence of a power that I would call the power of regularization, and it, in contrast, consists in making live and letting die. (*Society Must be Defended* 247)

The spirit of the counterculture continues to live on in popular culture. The music, literature, art, fashion and ideologies of the period continue to be upheld with veneration and praise in mainstream culture and academia. Struggles between authority and the common man continues to occupy society and hence, protest in all its forms continue to exist. Culture as a whole has been largely redefined as a result of the countercultural activities that brought the less popular and less appreciated practices to the limelight. Similar to how the 60s and its counterculture aesthetic were utilised as a means of production by the capitalist industry, the spirit and visuals of the period have become a commercially successful entity for the mainstream culture of the 21st century. And similar to how the cultural uprising became a powerful tool for political persuasion, countercultural lifestyles in the contemporary setting identify with liberal ideals of the western political left. What remains consistent in these acts of rebellion against conservative and traditional values is that there is a tendency, on the part of protestors, to be increasingly intolerant towards opposing ideas and values. Ben Shapiro had accurately written about the mindset of the political Left that had evolved in the midst of the counterculture in the United States:

The Left properly pointed out the widespread problems of racism and sexism in the American society in the 1950s – and their diagnosis was to destroy the system utterly. The diagnosis was self-serving – since Marx, the Left had seen Western civilisation as the problem, a hierarchy of property-owners seeking to suppress their supposed inferiors...And young Americans living through the turbulent social change of the 1960s, resonated to that message. In the 1960s and 1970s, the counterculture, which saw America as a place replete with evil and suffering, became the dominant culture in academia and the media. (133)

With the 1960s counterculture movement and the very notion of counterculture implementing its own rule of law in popular society, the role of The Beatles in the midst of this cultural upheaval continues to remain a significant development. The industry of entertainment and media culture was highly instrumental in the counterculture's gaining momentum and ultimately being hegemonic in popular culture. Although the counterculture and its student-based protests were unsuccessful in their attempt to establish a socialist Utopian society, the political narrative continues to be upheld in various fields of academia and mainstream media. Although capitalism in the West has not been dismantled, the ideas of rebellion against established norms continue to thrive in areas of music and entertainment, the media as well as the academic circles. The prevalence of counterculture narrative largely started from the 1960s and with the amount of coverage it had received, its spirit and rhetoric thus continues to be emulated by mainstream culture as well as capitalist industry worldwide. Although the state of the counterculture has ultimately betrayed the initial goal of distancing society from the capitalist establishment, the values held by the 1960s counterculture had allowed for an appropriation and acceptance of practices that had largely broadened and benefitted cultural identifications. Thus, what comes to be evident from the cultural uprising of the 1960s is that the presence of hegemony in any given culture is probable for society to advance. The counterculture failed in terms of its goal in trying to establish an alternate socialist Utopia. However, it was successful in integrating much of its beliefs and ideals into the public eye and the mainstream and therefore, it became successful in creating a new consciousness. Hence, the result and impact of the cultural uprising and the culture of student protests remains such that there has been established a cultural compromise and negotiation between ideologies and values of different cultural identities. Such ideas of cultural rebellion and appeal of protests remain largely hegemonic in popular culture, media and academic environment. However, the prevalence of protest narratives is hegemonic in mass culture only to the extent that the capital industry allows. The narrative and rhetoric of counterculture and cultural rebellion have become hugely political in the West meaning that they have become an efficient tool in the spreading of propaganda. Although political influence was a huge part of the 1960s

counterculture, its legacy has been highly appropriated and compromised for both commercial and political gains. Hence, the authenticity of counterculture in the contemporary setting is often questioned and dismissed by its detractors.

Progressive and protest music of the counterculture era allowed for various musical acts to become producers, distributors and interpreters of the political narrative that was prevalent. Although it is true that the hegemony attained by this narrative was implemented within the mainstream, the initial purpose of artistes like The Beatles in bringing forth a new outlook and consciousness in regard to cultural experiences continue to be of great relevance. It is a known fact that the band made fortunes from the period of the counterculture, however, it is not to be forgotten that The Beatles stayed true to their stance on their values of peace and anti-violent ideals that was also initially upheld by the counterculture. Seeing the direction in which the counterculture was heading, The Beatles took a stand against the hegemonic rule of the violent protestors despite a massive amount of criticism. With the release of their 1968 *White Album*, The Beatles were greatly symbolic about the general public's return to a more conservative lifestyle and their rejection of the violent dissent coming from the political left. Refusing to integrate themselves with the call for violence, The Beatles were bold enough to stand with their own set of beliefs instead of bowing down to the dictates of a larger and more impactful group. Thus, this alone would hold The Beatles as true figures of the counterculture who never truly abandoned their stance on the ideals that they believed in. Through their music and lifestyles, they impacted not only Western societies but youth culture on a global scale, one that introduced the world to a new age of values and identity.

The image of The Beatles itself is significant in understanding the counterculture movement in all its faults and merits. The rebellious youth the 1960s were indeed, very much privileged than the generation that came earlier. The Beatles' individual and personal experience indicate a parallel with the culture of protest that the youth were engaging in. Being granted the opportunity by Western liberated capitalism to open a window of possibilities for self-expression through music, fashion and sexuality, The Beatles' capitalising on their talent, their rise to

fame, the many faults and criticisms they received, and their ultimate disbandment have become testaments to the range of cultural and political shifts that had occurred in the 'Swinging Sixties.' The legacy of The Beatles at the height of their career is also indicative of the self-destructive tendencies of radical ideals. For example, the use of recreational drugs was attributed to the creative process of song – writing, but in the long run, it came to be that the addiction to LSD nearly ruined Lennon physically and mentally. The 60s era was a period of innovative means of expressions, but the career of The Beatles also communicates that reliance towards chance perception does not always lead to progressivism. The lives of The Beatles members, especially that of Lennon's, showcases the importance of finding a balance between opposing ideals, so as not to lose sight of one's goals. Lennon's relationship with Yoko Ono and their embracing of the avant-garde to the full extent indicates how many could have been so much invested in the 'spirit' of the counterculture that they failed to grasp those real issues that were being faced.

As denoted at the onset, the research has aimed to explore and examine the narrative surrounding the cultural uprising through the music and lyrics of The Beatles at the height of the counterculture movement. Attempt has also been made to trace and signify the impact and stance of protest music and countercultural narrative in popular culture of the contemporary era. This research, after ample review and analysis of selected songs by The Beatles, has established that power and hegemonic relations within democratic nations is in a constant state of negotiation, burrowing and compromise. Ideological institutions may be challenged and questioned by counter-forces with innovative beliefs and ideas which can bring about a great amount of change for society. As has been made evident from the many protests and activism of the 1960s, the research has established that counter-narratives aimed against establishment norms have great potential to overthrow existing order and create new consciousness. It has also established that such movements are in positions to be compromised and expropriated by organized systems of production in cultures where public figures such as The Beatles are often main influencers. The career of The Beatles showcases how it is a possibility to be contributing knowingly, or unknowingly, towards a system of power and dominance that is capable of

authoritative influence. It is also evident that while there are power relations that govern given societies, there is always the possibility of individuals and citizens to not give their consent and that they have the right to question the rule that governs their livelihood.

Even with all their shortcomings, the legacy of The Beatles is a defining aspect for the period of the counterculture that brought about impactful culture changes. With corporate capitalist markets turning subculture lifestyles into fashion statements and counter-political narratives into new forms of regime designed for coercion, The Beatles illustrated how challenging the dominant rhetoric, from whichever cultural or political stance, is a powerful tool in bringing about ideological discourse. The legacy left behind by The Beatles and their role in the counterculture era continue to demonstrate that despite pressures and threats from dominant forces of society, the freedom of an individual to think for oneself remains vital for any means of advancement to take place.

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ABSTRACT

**CULTURAL REBELLION AND PROTEST NARRATIVES IN
SELECT SONGS BY THE BEATLES**

**A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
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Cultural Rebellion and Protest Narratives in Select Songs by The Beatles

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Submitted

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The contributions of the British musical rock band, The Beatles, to cultural and political narrative has been greatly significant since the formation of the group in the year 1960. The musical journey of The Beatles provides a relevant commentary on the social and political changes that engulfed the Western world in the cultural uprising of the 1960s. The evolution of The Beatles under the era of the 1960s counterculture as one of the most influential and culturally impactful musical acts is significantly related to understanding how cultural entities can become leading figures in bringing about social and political changes. As a movement that was “critical of the fast pace and competitive nature of the outside world” (Gillieron 7), the 1960s cultural uprising sought for a new cultural experience which did away with conservative values and societal obligation towards the structure of Western capitalism. Such aspirations were captured in numerous musical ventures that were born alongside this uprising, among which The Beatles were one of the most successful. The songs released by the band during the height of the counterculture in the 1960s, thus, give insight into the narrative of the protest culture that was becoming greatly rampant and popular among the youths. This study lays focus on the role of The Beatles in bringing about cultural and political shifts through their songs and their contribution towards the narrative of rebellion and protest. For this purpose, the study employs a total of twenty-four songs released by The Beatles, *Revolution in the Head: The Beatles’ Records and the Sixties* (2005) by Ian MacDonald and *The Beatles Anthology* (2000).

The 1960s is remembered as one of the most discordant and tumultuous decades in world history as it was marked by events such as the Civil Rights Movement, sexual revolution, anti-war protests, and the emergent youth-based dissent across nations. Collectively known as the counterculture movement, the era brought about a cultural uprising that was based on the denunciation of conservative ideals and restrictive systems of power and the search for alternative lifestyles based on liberation and freedom of the individual. Music came to be a source through which the spirit of the era came to be highlighted and popularised. Among the many musical acts that emerged during the turbulent period of the 1960s counterculture, the music of The Beatles has become one of the most relevant and impactful. Having

been commercially successful even before the cultural uprising gained its momentum, The Beatles' musical talent and their ability to adapt to the changing times enabled them to transform into a group that embodied the model of change and resistance.

The movement of the counterculture was fuelled by the notion that technological advances and scientific attitudes towards human relations were becoming a threat to the imagination and freedom of the individual. Many artistes of the era showcased this sentiment in their musical production and hence, music came to be a significant instrument in the spread of counterculture ideals. Ian MacDonald has written:

...the loss of a transcendent moral index prompted artists to probe the frontiers of personal ethics, rolling back the limits of acceptable behaviour and stressing the authenticity of individual experience over dogma handed down from the past or the ruling class. Received wisdom, traditional values and structures, everything that had once given life form and stability – all were challenged. (6-7)

By the mid-1960s, The Beatles had asserted their role as the acknowledged leaders and icons of the counterculture; they had created a collective sense of consciousness amongst their audience where alternative mindsets and unorthodox lifestyles were welcomed and deeply appreciated. Their influence spread to cultural and political rhetoric as many of their protest songs voice the opinions and concerns of the common man. The appeal of The Beatles can be attributed to their Liverpoolian origins, their talent for story-telling through song-writing, their willingness to experiment with drugs and also their capability to adapt and change alongside their environment. Hence, at the height of the cultural uprising that was taking place during the mid-1960s, the band had become embodiments of change and cultural transformation that had resonated with the new generation of youth.

Many factors contribute to the formation and popularisation of the international counterculture such as the rejection of war, disenchantment due to consumerism and the objection of conservative values. Western societies were

largely thought to be guided under the conception that conformity and monetary prosperity will bring ultimate contentment. However, there was an increase in the sense of disillusionment which could not be remedied under the flourishing economic wealth. Jeremi Suri has stated, “Existential angst was not unique to the period, but it became pervasive in a context of heightened promises about a better life and strong fears about the political implications of social deviance” (46). The generational gap that existed in Western society prompted the younger generation to search for some deeper meaning in their daily lives and to look beyond material factors. When the counterculture grew to such a massive scale and brought about new social, political and cultural outlooks that many people resonated with, it was not surprising that the movement was appropriated and co-opted into mainstream culture on a very large scale by the very consumerist establishment that was being challenged. The position of The Beatles as cultural icons is significant to a large degree as theirs was a career that flourished under the spirit of the counterculture while also profiting commercially from it. Not only did The Beatles become personifications of this youth uprising and cultural divergence, their music and image also came to symbolise rebellion not just in advocacy of the counterculture, but also rebellion against any system of power and authoritative influence.

CHAPTER 1: LOCATING THE RISE OF PROTEST CULTURE AND ITS IMPACT

The decade of the 1960s is regarded to be one of the most divisive periods in world history due to the many cultural and political developments that occurred worldwide. There was an outward projection of wealth and gratification after the United States had emerged victorious in World War II. With the burden of military responsibility and the threat of war left behind, the economic affluence and cornucopia were all the more cherished. There was an ensuing increase in the development of suburban middle-class homes with a significant increase in birth rate, also known as the baby boom.

After the end of World War II, as Andy Bennett writes, “increasing affluence and technological breakthroughs in mass production resulted in consumption becoming an accepted part of life for the working classes too” (9). There was a massive increase in the production and demand for consumer goods which ranged from household items to automobiles. This prosperous consumerist society held together with its conservative ideals and devotion to its nation were some of the main factors that gave birth to the youth uprising and its culture of protest. James L. Spates defines the counterculture as being based on “a total repudiation of the technological/scientific world-view long dominant in the West and an adherence to a mystical/humanistic alternative” (868). Young people, disillusioned with their society’s preoccupation with scientific analogy and consumerism, thus, rejected the traditional norms and conservative ideals of their parent generation and instead, they distanced themselves from the established norms and experimented with drugs, sex and explored their creativity.

The counterculture was not only limited to the youth as evident from the many social and political movements and groups that were formed during the era proving that the cultural changes impacted all areas of the society. One such movement was the emergence of the second wave of the feminist movement which brought to light the issues of mental illness in women, sexuality and reproductive rights. The 1960s was also overwhelmed in political movements among which the Civil Right Movement is the most well-known and it sought to end racial segregation and discrimination of African-American and to achieve equal recognition by law. The emergence of political activist groups such as the Black Panther Party and the formation of bohemian communities like the Hippies were crucial aspects of the decade. The protests against the U.S government’s involvement in the Vietnam war is perhaps the most distinctive factor of the counterculture era. Protest against the war in Vietnam was heightened in the mid-1960s when student-based rallies started to appear. The protest culture that was established as a result of the many aspects of activism was attributive to the formation of new political ideologies such as the New Left that:

...offered an alternative route; a neo-socialist moral rearmament crusade aimed at discrediting the System – the ‘power elite’ perceived as directing the somnambulistic progress of a media-drugged ‘Amerika’ – and more specifically, it’s supposed creation of the Vietnam war. (MacDonald 15)

Hence, the overall culture of protest was marked by an intense distaste for the capitalist system of power upon which Western society was built. It was felt that the dominant capitalist system had nothing else to offer as it was believed that “Humans had become harnessed to an increasing frenetic system of production, distribution and consumption of commodities that they had to be convinced they needed” (Larkin 74).

What was understood to be the hegemonic influence of the established capitalist society was, thus, challenged with a goal to break away from the conditioning of the dominant conventions. The image of The Beatles, with their working-class backgrounds, soon came to be identified as icons for the subcultural movement. The band re-invented their sound and music in the midst of the cultural changes and gradually became leading figures of the rebellion. Their music spoke of issues such as the experience of being under the influence of drugs, mysticism, political conceptions and mental illness which were topics that were still uncommon for popular musicians of the time. What was once unorthodox and unconventional were brought to the limelight and music, such as that of The Beatles, came to be important features through which social issues were highlighted. As a result, a countercultural narrative was established where the desires of protesting parties were becoming the dominant rhetoric. As Em Ayson writes:

Rather than diluting or perverting their anti-hegemonic style and stances the amalgamation with mainstream cultures has given them a louder voice and a wider audience. Thus, the voices of these groups are no longer restricted by a lack of exposure and the change or challenge they call for may actually be realised when enough people learn about their wants and desires. (256)

Although the counterculture is acknowledged to have died down in the following decade, the many political, cultural and social occurrences of the 1960s,

therefore, led to the establishment of a new system of regime that is still very evident in the contemporary context. As John Storey writes, “Youth culture... always move from originality and opposition to commercial incorporation and ideological diffusion as the culture industries eventually succeed in marketing subcultural resistance for general consumption and profit” (81-82). Thus, while the protest music of The Beatles, as well as the spirit of the counterculture, are the defining aspects of the revolutionary era of the 1960s, their commercialisation has ensured their legacy in culture. While such a legacy may imbue a sense of social justice and individual freedom, it has also instilled a regime of hegemonic influence which is based on the popular rhetorical principles of the 1960s protest culture.

CHAPTER 2: THE BEATLES AND THE IDEALS OF THE UNDERGROUND

The term ‘underground’ was first used by Norman Newman in the year 1957 when he described the ‘hipster’ as “an ‘American existentialist’ who rejects all forms of conformity as the enemy of real culture” (Lindner 14). The term came to be closely identified with the 1960s cultural uprising as it came to designate a certain way of behaviour and collective consciousness that rejects, challenges and seeks to redefine what had been perceived as ordinary. What existed before as an outsider community, therefore, came to be embraced by the new generation of baby boomers in all fields of art, philosophy, and politics. The aesthetic appeal of underground and subculture lifestyle was such that it represented an array of meanings that ultimately had no limits; it had the appeal of a communion of individuals who did not necessarily have to conform to a given system, hence, it was a type of communal utopia.

Even though The Beatles were one of the most influential countercultural icons of the era, they had their initial beginnings as a purely crafted pop band that was aimed at being commercially successful. John Lennon is credited for the origin of the band when he met Paul McCartney in the late 1950s as a teenager in Liverpool, England. The Beatles was formed as a five-member band in 1960 and they began experiencing life as musicians with their gigs at Hamburg, West Germany

from 1960-1962. After securing their fame, they went on to become a success as their overall image was greatly marketable. During this time, The Beatles were not essentially identified with the counterculture, however, in the earlier days of their career they had carried themselves in the style and mannerisms of so called 'Teddy boys' and 'Teddy girls' who were leading the culture of the youth with distinctive characteristics. The band's original type of music, termed as skiffle, was recognised to be a form of self-identification and distinction of the younger generation from the established norm. This original sound was abandoned when they released their first album in 1963 called *Please Please Me*.

During this time, the band presented themselves as a more pop-oriented musical act and sang mostly about the love relationships between men and women. A change in the musical style and overall image can be witnessed in The Beatles with the release of their album *Rubber Soul* in 1965 where they distanced themselves from traditional love songs and experimented with lyrics and music that had deeper meaning. Songs on the album were noticeably more progressive and ambiguous which was undoubtedly influenced by the cultural and political changes in their environment. John Lennon had commented that the counterculture was "not just concentrating in small pockets or classes, but a revolution in a whole way of thinking...The Beatles were part of the revolution, which is really an evolution, and is continuing" (*Anthology* 201). indicating that embracing of underground values was a process to create a new consciousness in which they were deeply invested.

The song "Norwegian Wood" from the *Rubber Soul* album is a prime example of how The Beatles altered their musical identity. Written by Lennon, the song is about an extra-marital affair he had had, and it brings to light one of the defining aspects of the era which was sexual promiscuity. Not only were people becoming more promiscuous, the issue of sex and the gender role attached to it was becoming more openly discussed. The song speaks of an encounter between a man and a woman who had presumably had sexual relations while not knowing each other that well:

She told me she worked in the morning and started to laugh.

I told her I didn't and crawled off to sleep in the bath.

And when I awoke I was alone.

The bird had flown. (Rubber Soul lines 13-20)

The underground mindset of the counterculture movement rejected the notion of shame that was associated with the act of sexual intercourse, and hence, promiscuity and sexual liberation became one of the major tools in undermining the norm of the dominant culture. Such aspects can be seen reflected in “Norwegian Wood”.

The song “Nowhere Man” continues to highlight the disillusionment that was felt by many during those times. The song speaks of a ‘nowhere man’ “Sitting in his nowhere land, / Making all his nowhere plans for nobody...” (Rubber Soul lines 2-3) reflecting the futility and uncertainty of life. The song entitled “The Word” strongly echoed the essence of the counterculture that was in search of a more spiritual and deeper consciousness. Lennon has commented that “the word is ‘love’” (*Anthology* 193) indicating the youth’s desperate want for peace and free love during such time when young people were unwillingly called to war.

With underground rebellious ideologies gaining traction, it is easy to assume that The Beatles were changing their musical style in an attempt to remain popular. However, the band was not oblivious to the causes of the counterculture and were critical of those that were not sincere in the cause. The lyrics to the song “Day Tripper” was “an attack on ‘weekend hippies’ – those who donned floral shirts and headbands to listen to ‘acid rock’ between 9-5 office jobs” (MacDonald 167). This was a period when the cultural revolution was starting to gain momentum and the song gives a significant insight into the sincerity of the band as cultural icons. The Beatles continued to embody the image of outsiders and underground champions by continuing to question the system that governs them; in the song “Taxman” written by George Harrison, they question the tax system in Britain. Walter Everett writes, “this song does not urge tax revolt, it has more the sound of a helpless taxpayer” (48). Hence, with the release of *Rubber Soul* in 1965, The Beatles had identified with

the underground narrative where they were the outsiders and whose lifestyles and mind-sets were not compatible with the establishment.

The ideology behind the underground and subcultural communities was the notion that they were individuals who lived outside the system, and by the mid-1960s, young people gradually came to understand and identify with such ideologies that did away with the norm. The capitalist system, where materialism and consumerism are central aspects, was rejected by the countercultural narrative. Hence, with the rise of left-wing liberal activism spearheaded by the New Left of the 1960s, the movement of the underground became politicised. Michel Foucault poses the question of liberalism as: “What is the utility value of government and all actions of government in a society where exchange determines the true value of things...” (*Birth of Biopolitics* 46). By adopting the ideals of underground subculture lifestyle, The Beatles were thus challenging the utility and dominance of government bodies that upheld their societal existence.

Foucault has also noted, “Politics and the economy are not things that exist, or errors, or illusions, or ideologies. They are things that do not exist and yet which are inscribed in reality and fall under a regime of truth dividing the true and the false” (*Birth of Biopolitics* 20). The emergence and widespread popularity of the underground subcultural lifestyle was such that political regimes and dictates that had been presented as truth were challenged and rejected altogether. As such, the counterculture was “grounded more in feeling than sense, it represented an upsurge of working-class expression into a medium till then mostly handed down to the common man by middle-class professional with little empathy for street culture” (MacDonald 25). By showcasing their understanding for the values of the uprising of underground cultures, the cultural relevance of The Beatles was thus established by the release of their album *Rubber Soul* during the height of the movement in 1965.

CHAPTER 3: REBELLION AND PROTEST MUSIC NARRATIVE

With the counterculture and its advocacy of peaceful communion becoming more widespread during the mid-1960s, the general public found various ways to

showcase their rejection of establishment norms among which music was becoming a dominant form of expression. As Beate Kutschke has written, protest music by singers such as Bob Dylan “were known by protestors around the world and provided musicscape for the expression of dissent during protest marches in numerous countries” (3). Protest music engaged listeners with the relevant social contexts of the time and addressed issues that broadened across politics and societal concerns. With the release of their album *Revolver* in 1966, The Beatles continued to bring important subjects that were greatly telling of the changing times.

The song entitled “Eleanor Rigby” has an overall tone of loneliness and sadness with lines like “Ah, look at all the lonely people” (*Revolver* line 1) as the song can be understood as dealing with the aspect of death that greatly contradicted the subject matter of popular songs of the time. The song provides a grave and haunting imagery that accentuates the melancholic and depressing tone as Ian MacDonald has described:

The face that the heroine ‘keeps in a jar by the door’ (to mask the despair inadmissible by English middle-class etiquette) remains the single most memorable image in The Beatles’ output...Mckenzie’s sermon won’t be heard – not that he cares very much about his parishioners – because religious faith has perished along with communal spirit (‘No one was saved’). Often represented as purveyors of escapist fantasy, The Beatles were, at their best, more poignantly realistic about their society than any other popular artists of their time. (204)

“Eleanor Rigby” remains a powerful song of protest for the counterculture with its emphasis on the issue of death and the ultimate end of communal feelings in society. The song entitled “Tomorrow Never Knows” is another song that is noteworthy for its unique showcasing of the effects of drugs during the counterculture. The song, written by Lennon and McCartney, was inspired by Timothy Leary’s book *The Tibetan Book of the Dead* (1964) which strongly advocates the medical and transcendent use of psychedelic drugs which The Beatles were also using during the time. The lyrics clearly indicates the experience of being

under the influence of drugs as seen from lines such as “Lay down all thought, / Surrender to the void, / It is shining, it is shining” (Revolver lines 4-6). The hallucinogenic drug Lysergic acid diethylamide, also known as LSD, was one of the defining aspects of the cultural changes not only as a means of rebellion but also for the sense of spiritual awakening that it entailed. The notion of dropping out from the constraints of conservatism was the idea behind the use of drugs which was highlighted in “Tomorrow Never Knows”. The lyrics were not meant to be understood in its entirety but instead, it is understood to present the state of the mind when one is under the influence of psychedelics.

The use of drugs was a means to distance themselves from the parent society and such a generation gap was further showcased in the song “Rain”. The song is again difficult to decipher in its entirety, however, it can be seen that it described two distinctive groups of people who react to situations differently. Lines such as “If the rain comes, / They run and hide their heads” (Hey Jude lines 1-2) is indicative of the establishment culture who refused to have open minds about the cultural changes, while lines such as “Can you hear me / That when it rains and shines, / It’s just a state of mind” (Hey Jude lines 17-19) refers to the new generation that is more welcoming of change. Hence, the song addresses “an ‘us and them’ line between the children of Leary’s psychedelic revolution and the supposedly unknowing materialism of the paternal culture” (MacDonald 197).

After deciding to stop touring altogether, The Beatles released *Sgt. Pepper’s Lonely Hearts Club Band* in 1967 where they invented an alter-ego band of the same name. By creating their alter-ego, the band provided for themselves an escape from reality and a “withdrawal from the presumed immediacy and spontaneity of live performance and their desire to communicate with their audience thenceforth solely from the recording studio” (Bernard 375). Songs from the album such “Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds” and “Without You Without You” echo the spirit of the drug-induced counterculture generation that were desperate for social change worldwide. Addition of musical instruments such as the sitar and tabla was also a significant development that set the meditative tone of their music. Such sombre, philosophical tone was continued to be showcased in the song “A Day in the Life” that took

snippets from actual newspaper reports and giving a disconnected and generalised view of tragic events and happenings.

By the time *Magical Mystery Tour* was released in 1967, The Beatles had etched their names in music history and were no longer troubled with the fear of not releasing a successful song. As Lennon stated, “If you allow anything to be dictated by fans, you’re just running your life for other people” (*Anthology* 274). This attitude can be seen reflected in purposely obscure songs such as “I am the Walrus” that was written by Lennon as a protest against those he saw as administrative bodies. The songs “Strawberry Fields Forever” and “Penny Lane” offer a nostalgic view of simpler rural settings. Both songs represented a platform of escapism offered by the taking of mind-altering drugs that allowed users to revert back to “the nostalgia for the innocent vision of the child” (MacDonald 216).

“Baby, You’re a Rich Man” and “All You Need is Love” from the same album are songs of protest against the preoccupation of people with material wealth. “Baby, You’re a Rich Man” can be understood as a sensation enhancing song that adhered to the drug-taking youth’s need for instant gratification. The term ‘rich’ can be interpreted as the idea that true riches cannot be attained through materialism. “All You Need is Love” is quite similar in its theme of rejecting material wealth in favour of embracing the counterculture’s notion of free love. Although, the songs were considered to be substandard as compared to their other hits, the popularity and influence of The Beatles amongst the flowering ‘Hippie’ movement did not suffer as their music continued to uphold the spirit of peaceful rebellion.

The continued influence, fame and complacency of The Beatles is indicative of how dominant the culture of protest had evolved during the mid-1960s. As seen in the protest songs of The Beatles, the capitalist system and its conventional society was at the centre of the counterculture. The use of drugs, sexual promiscuity and the embracing of the unorthodox became tools through which they could break away from the mindset of the capitalist establishment. However, as the counterculture was in-turn becoming appropriated as a means of commercialisation, the hegemonic rule of protest culture and rebellion was also established. Antonio Gramsci has written,

“The capitalist entrepreneur creates alongside himself the industrial technician, the specialist in political economy, the organizers of a new culture, of a new legal system, etc.” (135). Therefore, the notoriety of counterculture figures such as The Beatles can be argued to have influenced their listeners in the same way that capitalist hegemony had operated.

Gramsci had also stated that “the elaboration of intellectual strata in concrete reality does not take place on the terrain of abstract democracy but in accordance with very concrete traditional historical processes” (144). This indicated that although new social and cultural groups may appear, their mode of organisation is similar to that of traditional modes and that the role of hegemony is present throughout. While the counterculture presented itself as a better alternative to the existing establishment, the romantic narrative of a utopia-like existence promoted in the protest music of The Beatles was not attained. While protest music was instrumental in bringing forth important issues to the public, its roles in the establishment of a regime of hegemonic consciousness cannot be dismissed.

CHAPTER 4: THE BEATLES AS ANTI-ESTABLISHMENT IN POPULAR CULTURE

The cultural changes that emerged from the 1960s counterculture is greatly significant for the establishment of a narrative that would shape the understanding of popular culture. A basic understanding of the concept of popular culture is that it is “simply culture that is widely favoured or well liked by many people” (Storey 5). Before the coming of the era of the counterculture, the conservative post-war capitalist society was understood to be the popular culture of the Western world. The counter-reaction of this system marked by social activism and subculture ideals of the 1960s altered the perception of the concept of popular and mainstream culture as liberal and progressive ideals came to be accepted as part of popular society.

The popularity of The Beatles had not decreased towards the end of the 1960s. The band released their album entitled *The Beatles*, popularly known as *The White Album* in 1968 which contained two versions of the song “Revolution” while

another version was released as a B-side to the single “Hey Jude”. The song was written as a reaction to the many occurrences that were happening, these included violent student protests, the Vietnam war and the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr. The line in the song “When you talk about destruction, / Don’t you know you can count me out” (White Album lines 6) garnered a great amount of controversy from the political left as The Beatles were accused of abandoning the cause of the counterculture. In “Revolution 1”, the line was altered to “count me out, in” however, the songs were criticised nonetheless as it was felt that The Beatles were no longer supporting the movement which had turned to the advocacy of the violent overthrow of government.

The band was accused of being disconnected from the reality of the cultural revolution by singing to their audience that everything was going to be alright. However, the release of the song marked the stance of The Beatles who did not agree with the violent direction in which the counterculture was heading. As Lennon has commented, “If you want peace, you won’t get it with violence” (*Anthology* 299). Carlton J. Wilkinson writes:

The lyrics of “Revolution 1” appears to mock revolution and the revolutionaries and imply a preference to work within the system, flawed as it is. The singer belittles through agreement – “we all want to change the world” – and implies that the movement is pursuing “destruction” for its own sake. (191-192)

The track “Revolution 9” was also a commentary on the cultural changes. Lennon describes the sound collage as “an unconscious picture of what I actually think will happen when it happens, just like a drawing of revolution” (*Anthology* 307). The track reflects the violent clashes that had been carried out in the protests against the war in Vietnam as Kenneth Womack had written, “As a textual representation of a culture spiralling out of control and stumbling towards its irremediable doom, ‘Revolution 9’ illustrates a desensitized world in which self-destruction has become inexorable, in which humanity has become vanquished” (124).

The song “Hey Jude” which was released in 1968 was another defining Beatles song that spread the message of optimism in the midst of violent clashes. The song, written by McCartney for Lennon’s five-year-old son, carries a relatable tone of assurance that was accompanied by thirty-six classical musicians. Although the song was intended to be based on personal experiences, it struck a universal note with lines such as “So let it out and let it in, / Hey Jude, begin. / The movement you need is on your shoulder” (Hey Jude lines 20-22). Unlike “Hey Jude”, the song “Glass Onion” does not carry the same sense of encouragement and optimism. Instead, the song can be understood as addressing the ever-growing hysteria that surrounded the counterculture. With ambiguous lines such as “You know the place where nothing is real. / Well, here’s another place you can go / Where everything flows” (White Album lines 2-4) the song presented itself as a fine example of how countercultural ideologies coupled with the use of drugs could have devastating outcomes. By compelling listeners to make up their minds about the meaning of the song, The Beatles promoted the idea of thinking for oneself and not be influenced by outside forces.

From their 1969 album entitled *Abbey Road*, the song “Come Together” presented an “archetype of counterculture anti-politics” (MacDonald 359) that was modelled after counterculture figures like Timothy Leary and Ken Kesey. The song highlights the group’s stance in the political spectrum which is that of being apolitical and not investing into any particular ideology. The line “One thing I can tell you is you got to be free” (Abbey Road lines 8) echoes the stance of The Beatles that invokes freedom from “*all* forms and *all* norm, including left-wing ones...a call to unchain the imagination and, by setting language free, loosen the rigidities of political and emotional entrenchment” (MacDonald 359).

The song called “The Ballad of John and Yoko” released in 1969 tells of the events that surrounded the wedding of John Lennon and Yoko Ono who was one of the driving forces in the artistry of Lennon. The song reflects the avant-garde nature of their high-profile relationship which marked Lennon’s distancing himself from the rest of the band. On the influence of Yoko Ono, Oded Heilbronner has written that “Lennon became a radical political activist, and in 1969 began to get more and more

involved in political events organized by the British political left” (93). Hence, towards the end of the decade, John Lennon, and The Beatles as a group, were not only revered as musical icons but also as cultural and political leaders who yielded much power.

The powerful presence of the counterculture in mainstream society had ushered in an enormous amount of influence by the end of the 1960s. The over-exposure and very eager nature of the counterculture meant that there were bound to be mishaps as evident from the many violent student-based protests. The counterculture had many limitations as Jeremi Suri writes:

The international counterculture was, in fact, complicit in many of the elements of society it criticised. It was not a call for revolution, despite its rhetoric, as much as it was a movement for rapid and personal reform within existing social and political structures...this “liberating” moment endures as the counterculture became part of mainstream youth and adult culture. (48)

To a significant extent, the counterculture, as well as its leading figures such as The Beatles, had established themselves as the dominant culture by the year 1968. With the anti-war protest becoming “the banner under which the entire range of radical sentiment congregated”, there was established a crusade that was “large enough to submerge all manner of ideological differences” (Kimball 99). Hence, the hegemonic influence similar to that of the capitalist establishment was felt throughout the counterculture’s culmination. Michel Foucault had stated regarding the presence and continued presence of a dominant form of power:

...while it is true that political powers put an end to war and establishes or attempts to establish the reign of peace in civil society, it certainly does not do so in order to suspend the effects of power or to neutralize the equilibrium revealed by the last battle of the war. According to this hypothesis, the role of political power is perpetually to use a sort of silent war to reinscribe that relationship of force, and to reinscribe it in institutions, economic inequalities, language, and even the bodies of individuals. (*Society Must be Defended* 15-16)

As the culture of protest had become the dominant force in popular society, the musical releases of The Beatles during this time were greatly significant as it challenged the dictates of a dominant body. Before Lennon's active investment into political affairs, it would be justified to state that The Beatles upheld the spirit of rebellion and peaceful coexistence, while the counterculture was questioned regarding its authenticity to the notion of anti-establishment. The ideology behind the counterculture was the advocacy of free-thinking and non-conformity which were upheld with the release of their songs such as "Revolution" and "Come Together". Although The Beatles had never identified with any particular side of the political spectrum, they had always been recognised alongside left-wing ideologies. However, as their releases in the late-1960s had denoted, they were unafraid to question or criticise what they saw as an authoritative abuse of power, proving that, unlike the cultural uprising, they were authentically anti-establishment.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

The reign of "Beatlemania" at the height of the 1960s counterculture is accurately remembered as the embodiment of the spirit of the generation that brought about a new ideological outlook. Their appeal was largely based on the fact that they started from humble beginnings and were able to achieve fame and success through their hard work and determination, and hence, they represented the common man.

The musical changes adopted by the band in the mid-1960s is deeply significant in the analysis and criticism of the cultural uprising and the questions that may arise on the subject of cultural indoctrination. The rapid fame of The Beatles helped usher in various subcultural ideologies and due to the constant media attention, cultural shifts in the name of progressivism were adopted into the mainstream. The counterculture and all its components, including such movements as The Civil Rights movements and the culture of the Hippies, have all been immortalised within the ambit of popular culture. The bohemian lifestyle that so called 'freaks' were displaying in an attempt to break away from the 'straight' society have all been turned into machines of the capital almost immediately after the

decade of being engulfed in the revolts of the counterculture. Thus, while the cultural uprising as a whole was largely based on promoting and advancing a more socialist form of governance, the fact remains that the many aspects that made up the movement was claimed by the corporate hands of capitalism because of its highly marketable nature.

Marine Voskanyan has written, “Globalized capitalism was not a bit shaken by the ‘countercultural insurrections’ against consumer society reproduced since the 1960s. Moreover, it has utilized the counterculture thinking as a lucrative source of income” (1). The same can be said for the career of The Beatles as it was due to the counterculture that their legacy had been etched into popular culture and their primary goals as musicians was to capitalise on their talents. It is also important to acknowledge that not all individuals who seemingly identified with the counterculture were fully invested in the ideologies behind the movement. This can be attributed to the fact that the movement had become commercialised and turned into a new form of hip and fashionable youth culture.

The notion of revolt and cultural rebellion is not unique in civil society, however, what made the 1960s counterculture an uncommon phenomenon was the circumstances in which it had risen. The counterculture was exposed on a very vast scale due the availability of media and television which meant that events such as the Vietnam war were broadcasted publicly, and it became a dominant aspect of the era. For Tor Egil Følrand, what made up the cultural rebellion of the 1960s was “a combination of demographic and economic factors, namely the baby boom of the immediate post-war years and the economic growth of the 1950s and 60s” (136). Følrand here stresses on the notion that the combined effects of all such aspects are key to the explanation and understanding of the 1960s. He writes:

If revolts occur not because there is ground for protest – the idea being that there always is – but because there are enough people around with the time, money, and means of communication to mobilize for some cause, we should seek explanations for the Sixties neither in the Vietnam War nor in domestic

politics or authority structures but in the increase of people with protest opportunities. (136)

The opportunities for protest and revolt are aspects of the counterculture that are often overlooked while analysing the developments of the period. The same is also needed to be considered with the legacy of The Beatles as it was the counterculture that provided them the platform to gain their fame. While helping to establishing a new form of cultural identity, protest music had also helped in the hegemonic formation of leftist ideological thinking and also the violent culmination of the counterculture towards the end of the decade. As John Storey had noted, “The music of the counterculture was not denied expression (and there can be little doubt that this music produced particular cultural and political effects), but what is also true is that the music was articulated in the economic interest of the war-supporting capitalist music industry” (85).

Hagai Katz has written that hegemony “results from a combination of coercion and consent, the later achieved through the hegemonic cooption of groups in civil society” (335). The same can be applied to the protest culture of the 1960s that turned increasingly intolerant of opposing ideas and opinions towards the end of the decade which prompted many to disavow and criticise the movement. Thus, the hegemony of the conservative culture, the Cold War society and post-World War modernity led to the creation of a new regime of power relations where progressive ideals are held at the centre of mainstream Western society. Ben Shapiro had stated regarding the mindset of the political Left that had evolved in the midst of the counterculture in the United States:

The Left properly pointed out the widespread problems of racism and sexism in the American society in the 1950s – and their diagnosis was to destroy the system utterly. The diagnosis was self-serving – since Marx, the Left had seen Western civilisation as the problem, a hierarchy of property-owners seeking to suppress their supposed inferiors...And young Americans living through the turbulent social change of the 1960s, resonated to that message. In the 1960s and 1970s, the counterculture, which saw America as a place

replete with evil and suffering, became the dominant culture in academia and the media. (133)

The image of The Beatles itself is significant in understanding the counterculture movement in all its faults and merits. The rebellious youth of the 1960s were indeed, very much privileged than the generation that came earlier. Being granted the opportunities offered by Western capitalism, The Beatles capitalised on their talent and offered the same opportunities of self-expression to their many adoring fans. Hence, while the counterculture brought to light many important issues of Western society, it ultimately failed in its primary goal of trying to dismantle capitalist establishment.

The role played by The Beatles during this time was significant due to their refusal to align themselves with the politicised radical protest culture. The band was aware of the political issues that were happening, and they addressed them in their songs accordingly. Similarly, they were also not pressurised by public criticism when they chose to question the very culture that gave rise to their fame. Hence, the cultural relevance of The Beatles remains that they represented a form of rebellion and anti-establishment ideals that could stand against dictates that have emerged from any political spectrum or authoritative power. With capital markets turning subcultural lifestyles into fashion statements and counter-political narratives into new forms of regime designed for coercion, The Beatles thus continue to illustrate that despite pressures and threats from dominant societal agencies, the freedom of an individual to think for oneself remains vital for attempts at cultural advancement and progressivism.

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