

"WHO WANTS TRADITION IN THE BEATLE GENERATION?"
RAVI SHANKAR, THE INDIAN PRESS, AND THE CULTURAL POLITICS OF
RECEPTION, 1966-68

by

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A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR
THE DEGREE OF

MASTER OF ARTS

in

The Faculty of Graduate Studies

(History)

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

(Vancouver)

April, 2013

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Abstract

During the 1960s, the new exposure of Hindustani classical music in Europe and America, and the increasing popularity of Ravi Shankar's music within the Western counter-culture was primarily inspired by the Indian sitarist's friendship with Beatles guitarist George Harrison. Aside from resulting in a much larger audience for Hindustani classical music in the West, this interaction also provoked criticism and scrutiny in Shankar's native India. In early 1968, the English-language newspaper coverage in India spanning the Beatles visit, and Ravi Shankar's return to his home country offered a valuable portrait of India in a moment of spiritual and cultural flux. Upon his return to India in 1968 following an extended stay in Europe and America, Ravi Shankar found himself at the centre of a debate concerning the rightful place of "tradition" in Hindustani classical music, and Indian culture more generally, with cultural critics engaged in a debate around the influence of the West in a rapidly modernizing nation. The self-appointed guardians of "tradition" associated with Hindustani classical music expressed a desire to keep the art form "pure" in the context of the Beatles and the Western counter-culture's new appreciation for, and consumption of the music as promoted by Ravi Shankar. At the same time, Indian intellectuals critical of the traditionalist viewpoint celebrated the Western counter-culture's embrace of Ravi Shankar as an artistically productive outcome of the globalization of Indian culture. This controversy demonstrates that in a nation in which colonialism was a fresh memory, some felt it essential to protect what was imagined as a purely indigenous tradition against the threat of new Western influence. Indians engaged in this debate were forced to negotiate new trends in global information flows with the ripple effects of the 1960s socio-cultural revolution in the West, along with ancient customs and venerated traditions that supported the narratives upon which the nation was founded.

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Acknowledgements

I owe special thanks to my supervisor Dr. Joy Dixon for her guidance, patience and unyielding support throughout the writing process. This paper has immensely benefitted from her interest and dedication. I would also like to thank Dr. John Roosa for his support and humour.

Thank-you to Dr. Bodhisattva Kar, Dr. Partha Chatterjee, and the rest of the faculty and staff at the Center for Studies in Social Sciences in Kolkata, India for their hospitality, and inspiration.

I offer my enduring gratitude to all of my colleagues, and professors in the Department of History at UBC for their support and encouragement, and for further inspiring me to study history as a lifelong venture.

Introduction

Between February and April of 1968, four of the most influential cultural figures in the Western world were meditating in the Himalayas, and, for a moment, something approaching "Beatlemania" swept the North Indian press. The Beatles' trip to Rishikesh for a meditation intensive with the Maharishi Mahesh Yogi was a major story in English-language Indian newspapers, with certain papers featuring reports on a daily basis detailing the activities of the band and their "guru." A related story in Indian newspapers during the same period was the return of sitar virtuoso Ravi Shankar to the country after an extended stay in Europe and America. The new exposure of Hindustani classical music in Europe and America, and the increasing popularity of Shankar's music within the Western counter-culture, was at least initially inspired by Shankar's friendship and collaboration with Beatles guitarist George Harrison.¹ Although Ravi Shankar was somewhat popular in Europe and America before Harrison's endorsement, the sitarist's connection to the Beatles resulted in a much larger audience for his music within the Western counter-culture, as well as intensifying scrutiny in his native India.²

¹ I will use the term "Hindustani classical music" throughout this study to refer to what is also referred to as "North Indian classical music." These terms distinguish the music of the North from the South Indian, or "Karnatic" schools of Indian classical music, although I would be remiss not to emphasize the extraordinary diversity of musical genres and practices on the Indian subcontinent. For more on the distinctions between music in the "North" and "South" of India, as well as a general discussion concerning the cultural politics of classifying Indian music(s), see Amanda Weidman, *Singing the Classical, Voicing the Modern* (London: Duke University Press, 2006), 5.

² I do not mean to imply that the Beatles were the only figures in pop culture responsible for Shankar's heightened exposure in the West. Other influential figures demonstrated interest in Hindustani classical music during the 1960s, and were vocal about their passion for the genre. To cite one example, American jazz saxophonist John Coltrane was instrumental in promoting Shankar's music in the United States, even going so far as to name his first son "Ravi" after his favourite sitarist. See Franya J. Berman, "Appropriating Universality: The Coltranes and 1960s Spirituality," *American Studies*, Vol. 48, No. 1 (Spring, 2007): 44. Please also note that I use the term "counter-culture" as a general reference to political and cultural groups in the West associated with revolutionary, New Left, and/or anti-establishment

The press coverage surrounding Ravi Shankar's return to India in 1968 reveals the ambivalence with which the musician was received in India after becoming a major star in Europe and America and attracting the admiration of the Western counter-culture. When we examine related coverage surrounding the Beatles' meditation retreat, the arrival of the "hippies," the "moral decay" of the West, and the place of "tradition" in the "modern" world, we can situate this reception more broadly within the tumultuous cultural terrain of 1960s India.

This study will demonstrate that in 1968 Ravi Shankar was at the centre of a debate concerning the place of "tradition" in Indian culture, with Indian cultural critics engaged in a contentious debate concerning the influence of the Western counter-culture on Hindustani classical music, and Indian society more generally. The self-appointed guardians of "tradition" associated with Hindustani classical music expressed a desire to keep the art form "pure" in the context of the new counter-cultural appreciation for, and consumption of the music as promoted by Ravi Shankar.³ At the same time, Indian intellectuals critical of the traditionalists celebrated the Beatles' and the Western counter-culture's embrace of Ravi Shankar as an artistically productive outcome of the globalization of Indian culture. This study will examine English-language Indian newspapers' coverage of the controversy surrounding Ravi Shankar's return to India, and the Beatles' meditation retreat in an effort to demonstrate that these

politics in the 1960s, including the Beatles, the "hippies," the "beatniks" and others. I am aware of the hyper-generalized nature of the term; I use it as part of an effort to highlight the generalized manner in which many Indians perceived Western youth during this period.

³ I will use the term "traditionalists" throughout this study to refer to critics who voiced concerns regarding Shankar's deviation from "traditions" associated with Hindustani classical music. In the overwhelming majority of articles from Indian newspapers that mentioned "traditionalists," the actual critics in question remain nameless. I have inferred that, in these instances, "traditionalists" refer to anyone with an interest in Hindustani classical music critical of Ravi Shankar, and the influence of the Western counter-culture, referring to journalists, cultural critics, fans, fellow musicians, etc.

concurrent events provided the Indian intelligentsia with an ideal opportunity to critically consider the influence of the Western counter-culture, and the implications for Hindustani classical music and Indian society. The coverage surrounding Ravi Shankar's connection to the Beatles and the Western counter-culture offers a valuable portrait of India in a moment of artistic and spiritual flux. The controversy surrounding the Western counter-culture in 1960s India was a product of national anxiety concerning the preservation of invented Indian traditions in a period of profound social and cultural transformation.

The controversy surrounding Ravi Shankar in 1968 illustrated the paradox of "traditionalism" in 1960s India: or rather, the fact that Indian "traditionalists" relied on modern trends in culture and technology to define themselves, convey their message, and gain support. Cultural critics associated with the "tradition" of Hindustani classical music in 1960s India were forced to grapple with a hitherto undreamed of phenomenon: a sudden explosion of interest and influence from young Westerners half a world away. In a nation that venerated classical music as an indigenous tradition associated with its very founding, the "traditionalists'" concerns were understandable due to a number of factors: the post-colonial sensitivity of a newly independent nation facing rising Western (and British) influence; the interaction between a "traditional" artistic community that encouraged audiences to be sober (both figuratively and literally) and a rising demographic of new fans who were decidedly not; and modern trends in artist promotion, marketing, distribution, and touring that threatened to render the community-based oral tradition of Hindustani classical music antiquated and obsolete. In short, the 1960s was the decade in which Hindustani classical music "went global,"

and it should be no surprise that the "traditionalists" were, in certain moments, uncomfortable with, and critical of this process.

This study owes a great debt to Eric Hobsbawm, and the rest of the contributors to *The Invention of Tradition*, with their crucial insights into the ideologically constructed nature of modern traditions. In *The Invention of Tradition*, Hobsbawm defined an "invented tradition" as a "set of practices" that is promoted, defined, or presented in an attempt to "establish continuity with a suitable historical past."⁴ For the purposes of this study, no distinction between "tradition" and "invented tradition" is necessary, and I am not interested in ascribing authenticity to any "tradition." Rather, I am interested in the fact that each of the "traditions" I refer to were, in a real sense, inventions of cultural critics, and served their purpose of establishing continuity with a "suitable historical past." The invention of tradition in 1960s India was very much a response to the needs of the present; specifically, to the need for an ideological buffer against growing Western influence, and against the political uncertainty and revolutionary social and cultural change that permeated that particular moment in India's history.

This study has also been informed by Arjun Appadurai's investigations into the role of media and migration in the 20th century, and "their joint effect on the work of the imagination as a constitutive feature of modern subjectivity."⁵ The subjectivities of the "traditionalists" in 1960s India were predominantly inspired and shaped by evolving

⁴ Eric Hobsbawm, "Introduction," in Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (ed.), *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 1.

⁵ Arjun Appadurai, *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996), 3.

trends in media and migration. Both media (in the form of increasing print media coverage of various trends in the West during the 1960s, and new spaces for dissent and debate) and migration (the growing presence of Western hippie travellers in the Indian subcontinent throughout the decade) played a critical role in supporting an increasing public interest in discussions around Indian tradition, and the perceived need to preserve and venerate cultural practices associated with an ancient Indian past.

The "traditionalists" in 1960s India relied on modern trends in order to be persuasive and affecting. As Dipesh Chakrabarty reminds us, no invention of tradition is "effective without a simultaneous invocation of affect, of sentiments, emotions, and other embodied practices."⁶ The media was essential to the traditionalists' goal of evoking affect, and compelling the general public to pay attention; similarly, the traditionalists' sensibilities, and eventual crusade against the Western counter-culture, were originally affected and inspired by new trends in global information flows, and an evolving Indian print media market. To borrow an idea from Stephen Vlastos' work on Japan, in 1960s India the invention of tradition was "embedded in larger social structures that [were] continuously reshaped by the very forces of change endemic in capitalist modernity" that the traditionalists aimed to critique.⁷

The debate concerning Ravi Shankar and the Western counter-culture was not simply a clash between traditionalism and modernity, as "traditionalist" cultural critics relied on modern trends in media, the dissemination of information, and the Western

⁶ Dipesh Chakrabarty, "Afterword," in Stephen Vlastos (ed.) *Mirrors of Modernity: Invented Traditions of Modern Japan* (London: University of California Press, 1998), 294.

⁷ Stephen Vlastos (ed.), *Mirror of Modernity: Invented Traditions of Modern Japan* (London: University of California Press, 1998), 4.

counter-culture more generally to define, promote, and defend themselves. The invention of tradition in 1960s India rested on a false construction of alterity; the "traditionalists'" narratives were all deeply indebted to the "modern" forces they purported to oppose.

To a considerable extent, scholars have overlooked the press coverage surrounding Ravi Shankar's association with the Beatles as a prism through which to examine various ideas surrounding tradition, and the influence of the Western counter-culture in 1960s India. Musicologists have examined the Beatles' expanding of "the language of rock music" through the band's experimentation with Hindustani classical music, the impact of which was felt in India's embryonic rock music scene during the 1960s and 1970's.⁸ Other commentators have described the Beatles' impact in terms of expanding public awareness of Indian classical music in Europe, America, and even India during the 1960s.⁹ Scholars have argued that Ravi Shankar acted as a "bridge" between "traditional" and "modern" expressions of Hindustani classical music; Stephen Slawek has contended that some Indians have perceived Shankar as "nontraditional... because of his success in creating new [musical] contexts for his tradition."¹⁰ However, Slawek's discussion is lacking a crucial element: it seems to be Shankar's connections to the Beatles and the Western counter-culture that was unsettling to traditionalists among

⁸ I borrow this phrase from Jonathan Bellman, "Indian Resonances in the British Invasion, 1965-1968," *The Journal of Musicology*, Vol. 15, No. 1 (Winter, 1997): 116. See also David R. Reck, "Beatles Orientalis: Influences from Asia in a Popular Song Tradition," *Asian Music*, Vol. 16, No. 1 (1985): 83-149; and Sharmadip Basu, "Between rock and a hard place: Cultural politics of 1970s rock music in Calcutta," *South Asian Popular Culture*, Vol. 10 No. 3 (October, 2012): 285-294.

⁹ For a detailed account, see Gerry Farrell, *Indian Music and the West* (London: Clarendon, 1999). See also Philip Goldberg, *American Veda* (New York: Harmony, 2011), and Peter Lavezzoli, *The Dawn of Indian Music in the West* (London: Continuum Publishers, 2007).

¹⁰ Stephen M. Slawek, "Ravi Shankar as Mediator between a Traditional Music and Modernity" in Blum et. al (ed.) *Ethnomusicology and Modern Music History*, (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1991): 167.

the Indian intelligentsia, rather than the evolution of Shankar's artistry, or the simple fact of his Western success.

It was not simply that Ravi Shankar attracted scepticism in India because he was rapidly acquiring Western fans; it was the perceived anti-establishment politics and social practices of these new fans that seem to have been among the primary causes of concern for Shankar's traditionalist critics. Upon Ravi Shankar's return to India in March of 1968, defenders of tradition voiced concerns regarding Shankar's declining artistic proficiency and integrity, coming as a result of his attempt to appeal to "inferior foreign audiences" and the subsequent "foreign contamination" of India's classical music tradition.¹¹ During the 1960s, "traditionalists" in Indian newspapers promoted a "pure" vision of Indian classical music as a cultural safeguard against Western influence, of which Shankar's close associates the Beatles were prime ambassadors. The controversy surrounding Ravi Shankar in the late 1960s demonstrates that in a nation in which colonialism was a fresh memory, some felt it essential to protect what was imagined as a purely indigenous tradition against Western influence as represented by Shankar, the Beatles, and their associates in the Western counter-culture. During this period, the channel through which these appeals for the maintenance of tradition could appeal to the largest audience was the newspaper.¹²

¹¹ "Pandit Ravi Shankar," *The Statesman*, April 16, 1968, 6.

¹² India still lacked television in the 1960s, and the primary medium through which public debates were conducted was the newspaper. For the remainder of this study, I will refer primarily to articles from English-language newspapers with offices in North India, and with a wide circulation and aimed at a general readership. I do this for a simple reason: these publications featured the most coverage of Ravi Shankar and the Beatles compared to newspapers from South India, as well as those in Hindi and other regional languages. In particular, preliminary examinations of newspapers in Hindi from this period revealed scant coverage of the issues with which I am concerned in this study. Further study is required

Compared to their Western counterparts, Indian newspapers suffered from a number of "built-in handicaps" during the 1960s.¹³ Budgetary constraints meant that even major newspapers such as the *Times of India* could afford only a handful of foreign correspondents.¹⁴ As a result, most of the reports detailing news occurring outside of India came from foreign news agencies; although Indian journalists and correspondents routinely commented on world affairs, their perception of the affairs they were commenting on was often derived solely from reports in *The New York Times*, or the *Times of London*. Reports from overseas publications were obtained by the Press Trust of India, and then routinely printed verbatim in Indian newspapers. This led to a tendency among Indian journalists to "echo Western interpretations" of world events.¹⁵ This situation helps to explain why the English-language Indian press devoted so much coverage to issues surrounding the Beatles and their influence in India during the band's stay at Rishikesh: aside from the fact that the Beatles' visit was a major international story, it was the first time Indian newspapers had the resources to independently analyze and critique the Beatles phenomenon without a Western filter. The Beatles were present in the country, and Indian journalists were thus able to acquaint themselves with the band and their associates directly. It also seems likely that the Beatles' visit largely inspired the volume of coverage concerning Ravi Shankar's return to India: it would have been the prime opportunity for "traditionalists" to voice their concerns

regarding the reception and influence of the Western counter-culture in the South Indian and Hindi press, and these curious silences.

¹³ Chanayaka Sen, "Chou En-Lai's African Journey as Viewed by the Indian Press," *Asian Survey*, Vol. 4, No. 6 (June, 1964): 888.

¹⁴ Chanayaka Sen, "Chou En-Lai's African Journey as Viewed by the Indian Press," *Asian Survey*, Vol. 4, No. 6 (June, 1964): 888.

¹⁵ Chanayaka Sen, "Chou En-Lai's African Journey as Viewed by the Indian Press," *Asian Survey*, Vol. 4, No. 6 (June, 1964): 888.

regarding Shankar's connection to the Western counter-culture, given the excitement already surrounding the Beatles in India at the time.

Furthermore, this expansive coverage reflected an evolving Indian reading public. While in 1952 one commentator could argue that Indian newspaper editors were "preoccupied" with politics, with little inclination to cover arts and culture, this appears to have drastically changed by 1968. As is evidenced by the sheer volume of coverage, a significant portion of the public was eager to read about and engage in cultural events and debates, and Indian newspapers responded accordingly.¹⁶ As the 1960s progressed there was a growing concentration of ownership of Indian newspapers in the hands of "a few big business houses." Concurrently, many editors' emphases shifted from informing the public to entertainment.¹⁷ The reading public of these newspapers came to be primarily composed of what has been referred to as the "urban, educated middle class:" members of the middle and upper classes with access to an English education, disposable income and leisure time, and who had at least some interest in arts and culture.¹⁸

¹⁶ A. D. Mani, "The Indian Press Today," *Far Eastern Survey*, Vol. 21, No. 11 (July 2, 1952): 109.

¹⁷ Concerns regarding the same were raised as early as 1954 during independent India's First Press Commission. See Sumanta Banerjee, "Crisis of Indian Press: Irrelevance of Press Commission," *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. 17, No. 23 (June 5, 1982): 931.

¹⁸ Sumanta Banerjee, "Crisis of Indian Press: Irrelevance of Press Commission," *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. 17, No. 23 (June 5, 1982): 931.

Chapter One: "Who wants tradition..?"

Of particular interest to the "urban, educated middle class" in 1960s India were debates surrounding the arrival of the Western counter-culture in India, the radicalization of European and American youth, and the need to protect what were perceived as Indian traditions from the moral vacuity and cultural unrest associated with the modern Western world. Various advertisements appearing in English-language Indian newspapers during the late-1960s illustrate the extent to which Indian marketing firms had varying opinions on public sentiment regarding the influence of the Western counter-culture in India. In unambiguous terms, one major advertisement suggested that the Western counter-culture was incongruous with Indian "tradition," however vaguely defined. In March of 1968, an advertisement for a pharmaceutical company appearing in the *Times of India* bore the question: "who wants tradition in the Beatle generation?" The advertisers went on to explain that the reputable people at Hoescht Medicine do, as "tradition sets a standard for the future. A standard of excellence."¹⁹ Another advertisement appearing in the same newspaper the following month proclaimed "most towels at Rishikesh are from Bombay Dyeing... Created with concentration, comfort and care to hug you dry before you can say George Harrison!"²⁰ Taken in sum, these advertisements offer a glimpse of the ambivalent impression of the Western counter-culture in India in 1968. Self-described traditionalists portrayed the Beatles and their influence as somehow opposed to or in conflict with "traditional" Indian values, while those critical of the traditionalists seemed to embrace the Beatles'

¹⁹ Hoescht Medicines advertisement, *The Times of India* (Bombay ed.), March 1, 1968, 14.

²⁰ Bombay Dyeing advertisement, *The Times of India* (Bombay ed.), April 7, 1968, 15. George Harrison was the Beatle who consistently demonstrated the most pronounced interest in Indian culture.

and the reinvigorated Western interest for things Indian, and (at least implicitly) celebrate Ravi Shankar as a successful and innovative cultural ambassador. In order to locate the controversy surrounding Ravi Shankar's connection to the Western counter-culture within the wider cultural context, it is necessary to examine related stories surrounding the arrival of the "hippies," Hindustani classical music, and the place of "tradition" in the "modern world," circulating in English-language Indian newspapers throughout the 1960s.

Self-described traditionalists who participate in social and cultural debates frequently emphasize the antiquity and unbroken inter-generational transmission of certain practices in an attempt to legitimize and celebrate these practices. In post-colonial India, these efforts can often be seen in the propagation of selective micro-histories of social and cultural practices that are portrayed as "pure," and/or void of British colonial influence, emphasizing these practices' sustained continuity with an ancient Indian past. To cite one example, the Indian Crafts Museum in New Delhi showcases objects and artwork bearing evidence of "*continuity*" and "*survival* within India's material tradition, rather than innovation."²¹ Processes and practices linked to India's pre-colonial past occupy the "inner domain" of the nationalist psyche: a realm of society, spirituality, and culture belonging to the colonized subject that is imagined as having resisted, or was otherwise relatively unaffected by the colonial project, and which

²¹ Emphasis in original. Paul Greenough, "Nation, Economy, and Tradition Displayed" in Breckenridge (ed.), *Consuming Modernity* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1995), 223.

remain a part of the culture today.²² This "inner domain" serves as a basis for national pride, and sustained ideological resistance to what is perceived as "outside" influence.

For many Indians, Indian classical music is a key component of this inner domain.²³ A century ago, music was an essential ingredient in the ideological construction of the nascent Indian nation. In the midst of India's fight for independence from British rule, the national "image of classical music shifted from sensual entertainment for the nobility to a classical, high art music that springs from an ancient tradition and constitutes... national culture."²⁴ Influential figures associated with Hindustani classical music and the early architects of Indian nationalism assigned "spirituality, authenticity, and profundity" to the genre, describing it as a "spiritual inheritance of the past."²⁵ Although Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, President of India from 1962-1967, once asserted that it was "essential that so far as music is concerned, it should know no politics," the subsequent development of regional political movements in the wake of India's independence illustrated the fact that politics is inescapable once an art

²² Garrett Field, "From Threatened by Modernity to Reinvented by Modernity: The History of the History of Indian Classical Music, 1980-2006," *The Pacific Review of Ethnomusicology*, Volume 15 (2010). Accessed November 7, 2012. <http://ethnomusicologyreview.ucla.edu/journal/volume/15/piece/482>.

²³ Partha Chatterjee, *The Nation and its Fragments* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), 26. Janakha Bhaktle has argued that Indian classical music was perhaps the "one and only untouched art form during colonialism." Whether or not this statement is "true" is not my concern. Similarly, the actual artistic and/or philosophical adherence of Ravi Shankar to various tenets associated with the "traditions" of Hindustani classical music is of little relevance here: what matters instead is that many Indians contended that Shankar deviated from imagined traditions. See Bhaktle, *Two Men and Music: Nationalism in the Making of an Indian Classical Tradition* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 3.

²⁴ Eriko Kobayashi, "Hindustani Classical Reform Movement and the Writing of History, 1900's to 1940's" (PhD diss. University of Texas at Austin, 2003), 8.

²⁵ See Eriko Kobayashi, "Hindustani Classical Reform Movement and the Writing of History, 1900's to 1940's" (PhD diss. University of Texas at Austin, 2003), 108, and S. K. Chaubey, *Indian Music To-Day* (Allahabad: Varshney Press, 1945), i.

form becomes identified as a "pure" or organic product of national and/or regional traditions.²⁶

Music becomes cultural "property" when it becomes associated with the cultural fabric of the nation, and thus criticism of and/or attacks on "outside influence" on the art form are likely to follow.²⁷ During the 1940's, Karnatic vocal music in Tamil Nadu became a key component in Tamil nationalism, and the fight for the preservation of the Tamil language. Similarly, during the 1960s, Hindustani classical music was portrayed as a crucial aspect of Indian nationalism as a part of the fight against the influence of morally vacuous and corrupt Western art and culture.²⁸ In the 1960s, Indian intellectuals continued to emphasize the unbroken tradition of Hindustani classical music as a critical aspect of the nation's artistic history, celebrating the fact that India's classical music tradition had been relatively unaffected by the centuries-long British presence in the country.²⁹ In postcolonial India, survival of national cultural traditions became a "potent political slogan."³⁰

²⁶ Amanda Weidman, *Singing the Classical, Voicing the Modern* (London: Duke University Press, 2006), 150.

²⁷ I do not mean to suggest or imply that Hindustani classical music is or was understood as purely "Indian:" this roots of this music culture extend across the northern Indian subcontinent, from Afghanistan to Bangladesh. Rather, I mean to suggest that during the 1960s it was understood as intrinsically opposed to Western traditions and influence; perhaps it is more fruitful to suggest that it was understood as a "pure" product of South Asian traditions, rather than simply "Indian." Regardless, it seems to have been widely perceived as constituting part of India's "national culture," though not in opposition to its inclusion in the national cultures of India's regional neighbours.

²⁸ Amanda Weidman, *Singing the Classical, Voicing the Modern* (London: Duke University Press, 2006), 151.

²⁹ Writing in 1945, philosopher and theologian S. K. Chaubey conceded that at various moments in its history the art form had been susceptible to "change," however "it has also resisted it in a heroic manner." He continues: "From its earliest infancy up to the present time it has been an intimate part of our spiritual and emotional life, and has functioned vitally in building up [India's] aesthetic self." As will be demonstrated, this method of venerating Indian classical music was not unique to Chaubey. See Chaubey, *Indian Music To-Day* (Allahabad: Varshney Press, 1945), i + 1.

³⁰ Ashis Nandy, "Cultural Frames for Social Transformation: A Credo" in Fred Dallmayr and GN Devy (eds) *Between Tradition and Modernity*, (New Delhi: Altamira Press, 1998), 251.

During the 1960s in India, the debate around "tradition" was a hot topic in the popular as well as the academic press. In November of 1961, the Indian Committee for Cultural Freedom organized a conference titled "Modernity and Tradition in India," at which many of the nation's top philosophers and social scientists convened to discuss themes such as the "meaning" of, and the "problem of interaction between tradition and modernity."³¹ The conference proceedings, published in 1965, illustrate the fact that in their various attempts to define tradition there was little agreement, though some participants posited that tradition was simply a "social heritage," as well as a system of social values.³² At the very least, most participants seemed to agree that the interaction of "tradition" and "modernity" was a "problem," and one ripe for serious consideration, and, insofar as possible, some type of resolution.³³ That these eminent scholars could only explain "tradition" in vague terms should not be surprising; what is relevant for our purposes is that tradition was presented in opposition to various processes associated with Western modernity seen to be encroaching on India in the midst of the country's industrialization; the conference reveals that debates surrounding the supposed conflict between "modernity" and "tradition" were assuming a new urgency in 1960s India, in the academy and beyond.

The themes explored at "Modernity and Tradition in India" were consistent with related discussions in English-language Indian newspapers during the same period; it may not have been clear what was understood as Indian "tradition," but the "modern,

³¹ Rajendra K. Sharma, *Indian Society, Institutions and Change* (New Delhi: Atlantic Publishers, 2004), 324.

³² Rajendra K. Sharma, *Indian Society, Institutions and Change* (New Delhi: Atlantic Publishers, 2004), 324.

³³ See Yogendra Singh, A.B. Shah, and C.R.M. Rao (ed.), *Tradition and Modernity in India*, (Bombay: Manaktalas, 1965).

Western world" -- and its various ambassadors -- was seen by many as a definite threat. In their attempts to "solve" or at least better understand the interaction of "tradition" and "modernity," certain Indian intellectuals were interested in preserving "continuity with a suitable historical past": in this case, a long history of resistance to Western influence, suitable as it served to embolden national pride during uncertain times.³⁴ Furthermore, in many of these discussions, the mutually-reinforcing relationship of "modernity" and "tradition" went mostly unexplored; instead, "tradition" was posited as a vague system in perpetual conflict with the forces of "modernity," without recognizing the fact that their "tradition" would cease to exist without the threat of the encroachment of "modern" trends and practices.

Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru's efforts at industrializing or "modernizing" India, and essentially rebuilding the Indian economy from scratch, brought profound changes to the economic, political, social, and cultural domains of Indian life. Nehru's efforts at importing economic models and industrial modes of production from the West drew more Indians into the city than ever before. This helped to expand the "urban, educated middle class" with an interest in cultural matters, and helped to fuel the debate around the preservation of Indian "tradition" in the midst of mass urbanization, and the increasing abandonment of village life. Also fuelling this debate, in part, was the influx of Westerners into the country as a partial result of the Indian government's initiatives at expanding tourism. Each of the Indian government's "Five-Year Plans" aimed at wide-ranging economic expansion included some provisions for the development of the

³⁴ Eric Hobsbawm, "Introduction," in Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (ed.), *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 1.

Indian tourism industry.³⁵ The tourism initiatives included in Nehru's initial Five-Year Plan, taking place between 1951 and 1956, were mostly aimed at increasing cultural diplomacy around the world, opening overseas tourism offices, and cooperating with international travel agencies to promote India. However, the second and third plans, beginning in 1956 and 1961 respectively, included substantial tourism stimulus funds, and major investments in the country's promotion of tourism overseas, and in the domestic tourism industry. In 1957, there were approximately 92,000 foreign visitors to India. By 1970, that number had risen to 2.9 million.³⁶ This drastic increase in foreign tourism was reflective of an upward trend in international tourism around the world. There can be little doubt, however, that the Indian government's expanding efforts at developing the country's tourism industry was a major factor in its meteoric rise.

It is also important to note that the most significant years of growth in foreign tourism to India coincided with the Western counter-culture's embrace of Indian art and culture. From the mid-1960s on, there was a marked increase in the number of Western tourist arrivals in India. Excluding India's immediate neighbours West and East Pakistan, the majority of visitors to India came from the United States and United Kingdom.³⁷ By 1970, foreigners aged between 17 and 30 accounted for 31.9 percent of all visitors to India. Many factors, such as a burgeoning Western economy and increasing youth autonomy in Europe and America, contributed to this increase, however, it seems clear that the increasing promotion of Indian culture and tourism in the West, led by

³⁵ Bhatia, A.K. *Tourism in India*, (New Delhi: Sterling Publishers, 1978), 69.

³⁶ Gupta, S.P. et al. *Cultural Tourism in India*, (New Delhi: Indaprasta Museum of Art and Technology, 2002) 37.

³⁷ Gupta, S.P. et al. *Cultural Tourism in India*, (New Delhi: Indaprasta Museum of Art and Technology, 2002) 37.

counter-cultural icons such as the Beatles and Ravi Shankar, was enormously important in compelling young Westerners to visit India in the 1960s. The increasing numbers of foreign tourists, coming as a result of the growing popularity of Indian culture in the West as well as the Indian government's economic initiatives, resulted in increasing Western influence in India from the mid-1960s on. All of this was linked to the discussion around the sanctity and preservation of Indian traditions in English-language newspapers occurring throughout the 1960s. The growing presence of foreigners in India, in a nation still struggling to come to terms with its colonial legacy and disentangle from its British past, represented an existential threat to Indian traditionalists. The traditionalists' criticism of the Western counter-culture's influence on Ravi Shankar served as the most obvious illustration of this phenomenon.

A 2007 headline in the Indian periodical *India Today* described the 1960s as India's "changing phase," with the country in this period portrayed as a "land of scarcity," famine, cultural unrest, and constant war. "For a while," wrote Mihir Bose, "it seemed the very idea of India would not work."³⁸ The philosophical and spiritual leaders of the Indian independence movement were dead, and the "Post-Independence Nehruvian Golden Age" was over.³⁹ Indian social scientists bemoaned the fact that, as a result of a void in leadership and numerous economic and political challenges from within and without, India no longer commanded "attention or respect from the rest of

³⁸ Mihir Bose, "1960s: India's Changing Phase," *India Today*. Last updated July 2, 2007. <http://http://indiatoday.intoday.in/story/indian-decade-of-dos-and-donts-1960s/1/155688.html>

³⁹ I borrow this phrase from Rachel Dwyer, "1960s: A million hopeful coloured dreams," *The Hindustan Times*. Last updated July 27, 2012. <http://www.hindustantimes.com/Brunch/Brunch-Stories/1960-s-A-million-hopeful-coloured-dreams/Article1-902798.aspx>

the world."⁴⁰ Sustaining a "Nehruvian vein" of political and social philosophy in the national conversation, political commentators disparaged Indian "indiscipline" and the violence and disorder associated with modern public life.⁴¹ While one can certainly challenge these intellectuals' pessimistic depictions of India in the 1960s, they nevertheless capture several thematic elements crucial to this study: specifically, that during this period India was in a state of political, social, and cultural upheaval, and thus vulnerable to nationalistic appeals to "tradition" which might provide reassurance, and inspire public confidence in Indian resilience. Similarly, we can speculate that various depictions of a sordid and chaotic modern Western world were formulated in the pursuit of similar ends.

Throughout the 1960s, Indian intellectuals voiced concerns about the decay of morality in "modern" society, and feared the potential repercussions of growing Western influence in India. Social and cultural trends associated with Western "modernity" were widely condemned in English-language Indian newspapers during the 1960s. The term "modernity" was often used synonymously with "the West," societal decay, moral apathy, and even "the degradation of human character itself."⁴² In 1967, an article in *Sunday Searchlight Magazine* compelled its Indian readers to "stop the craze" for being overly "modern" in their life philosophies and social practices. The author sanctimoniously described "the problem in the US or the West" as "the whole social and cultural set-up... their sneering attitude to the purity and sublimity of human character,

⁴⁰ M. S. Rajan, "India and World Politics in the Post-Nehru Era," *International Journal*, Vol. 24, No. 1 (Winter 1968/69): 138.

⁴¹ Dipesh Chakrabarty, "In the Name of Politics: Democracy and the Problem of the Multitude in India," *Public Culture*, Vol. 19 No. 1 (2007): 39.

⁴² Bharati Malu, "Stop the craze for being too much 'modern,'" *The Sunday Searchlight Magazine*, March 17, 1967, III.

and the absence of a rigorous faith in a moral base for human society."⁴³ The author went on to argue that various social and psychological disorders, rampant crime, and the disintegration of personal morality were "too big a price to pay for industrialization," clearly acknowledging the danger represented by Nehru's second Five-Year Plan. She went on to ask "Can't we, with our religious background and cultural heritage, avoid the pitfalls?"⁴⁴ This seems to be a challenge taken up by a group of Indian intellectuals who were described in the newspapers as simply "traditionalists"; members of the Indian intelligentsia eager to promote and defend "tradition" in the wake of the arrival of the "hippies" in their country, and the Western counter-culture's wholehearted embrace of India's most precious and sanctified artistic legacy.

All of this is to suggest that, in the wake of Nehru's industrialization initiative and increasing Western influence, Indian intellectuals grappled with the steady imposition of various norms and practices associated with the modern world, and feared the transformation and disintegration of the cultural heritage promoted by the intellectual architects of Indian nationalism. During the 1960s, the "purity" of Hindustani classical music as well as various other "traditions" associated with Indian culture served as a basis for national pride, reassurance, and ideological resistance to Western cultural encroachment. Indian cultural critics perceived Ravi Shankar's association with the Beatles and the Western counter-culture as threatening to a tradition of resistance against Western influence. For many members of the Indian intelligentsia, the "purity" of Hindustani classical music justified its cultural value. If "for the former colony,

⁴³ Bharati Malu, "Stop the craze for being too much 'modern,'" *The Sunday Searchlight Magazine*, March 17, 1967, III.

⁴⁴ Bharati Malu, "Stop the craze for being too much 'modern,'" *The Sunday Searchlight Magazine*, March 17, 1967, III.

decolonization is a dialogue with the colonial past," we may interpret resistance to Western influence in Hindustani classical music as a reassertion of the need for "purity" and resilience of the art form in the face of reinvigorated interest and influence stemming from the former colonizer; that is to say, if Hindustani classical music resisted British corruption over several centuries of colonial rule, it could and must resist the influence of the "hippies," "micro-boppers," and Britain's most famous cultural exports of the moment, the Beatles.⁴⁵

⁴⁵ Arjun Appadurai, *Modernity at Large* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000), 89.

Chapter Two: Beatles, Hippies, and Micro-boppers

It is crucial to emphasize that it was anti-establishment, counter-cultural groups, often portrayed as disreputable and dangerous in the Indian press, who were primarily responsible for the critical and commercial success of Ravi Shankar, and the new market for Hindustani classical music in Europe and America. This appears to be one of the principle explaining factors behind the ire and suspicion of the traditionalist critics: in order to keep the tradition of Hindustani classical music "pure," it was necessary to resist the toxic influence of the hippies, the Beatles, and other movements and trends associated with the morally vacuous Western world. Damning accounts of the so-called "Beatle generation," and "the West" more generally, were part of an effort to promote values and practices associated with Indian "tradition" as spiritual bulwarks against the social and political tumult emanating from Europe and America throughout the 1960s, and the cultural revolution the Beatles were leading.

Owing to the unprecedented commercial and critical success of their music, their immense charisma, and their all-pervasive exposure in newspaper, film, television, and radio, the Beatles maintained a position as the cultural ambassadors of Western youth throughout the 1960s. As the decade progressed the Beatles evolved from apolitical "moptops" into the true "heroes of the youth culture," directly engaging in the major political and social debates of the era, and gaining an unprecedentedly diverse following among young people spanning several continents.⁴⁶ A key component in any understanding of European and American youth during the 1960s is their political

⁴⁶ Jonathan Bellman, "Indian Resonances in the British Invasion, 1965-1968," *Journal of Musicology*, Vol. 15, No. 1 (Winter, 1997), 117 and 121.

animation, and we cannot dissociate this animation from the new opportunities for association and rebellion that the Beatles phenomenon helped to inspire.

The Beatles helped to instigate a "revolution in the head," to borrow Ian MacDonald's memorable phrase. The idea of unquestioning deference to religious authority, the state, or any other hierarchical organization was challenged by 1960s youth culture; the Beatles generation ushered in a new and radical politics of materialistic individualism with an emphasis on personal freedom, threatening to traditional social and political orders the world over.⁴⁷ The band did much to "establish the pop song as a political medium," and was among the first generation of pop artists to discuss their views on politics and society openly.⁴⁸ Affinity with the Beatles, and eventually the hippie movement, was often expressed on one's person: long hair and pseudo-androgynous and psychedelic fashion emphasized visual distinctions between members of the politically progressive youth, and the conservative establishment; a rejection of "traditional" appearances, gender distinctions, and rebellion against the elder generation is implicit in the youth fashion of the 1960s that the Beatles did so much to influence. Following the controversy surrounding John Lennon's comments on Christianity in 1966, and the band's increasingly explicit stance regarding sex, drug use, and British and international politics throughout 1967, "Beatlemania" was no longer described as innocuous fun for young people by the time of the band's visit to Rishikesh in February of 1968. Indeed, the pop world was now labelled "strange" with "freakish

⁴⁷ See Ian MacDonald, *Revolution in the Head*, (London: HarperCollins, 1997).

⁴⁸ Marcus Collins, "The Beatles' Politics," *The British Journal of Politics and International Affairs*, pre-publication, 2012: 14.

laws" (pertaining to promiscuity and drug abuse) by which all followers must abide.⁴⁹ All of these ideas, suggestions, and imagery were circulating in English-language Indian newspapers throughout the 1960s, and help to explain the concerns of Indian "traditionalists" regarding the band's influence.

In a similar fashion to their British and American counterparts, English-language Indian newspapers portrayed the Beatles as ambassadors of various trends and movements associated with the "modern" and/or "Western" world, and the breakdown of traditional orders and conventions intended to preserve social and political stability. In 1966, an article in the *Times of India* linked the hysteria surrounding the Beatles in Europe and America to teenage promiscuity, psychological disorders, and a society-wide breakdown of parental authority. The author concluded that "Beatlemania" inspired young women to act on their darkest impulses, the girls' behaviour representing a "cry for guidance and control -- in every sense a cry for help."⁵⁰

The disintegration of "traditional" society and radical politics were frequently associated with Western youth in English-language Indian newspapers throughout the 1960s. In an article in the *Tribune* titled "Younger Generation Now up in Arms," "modern [British] students" were described as "wild" and "violent" in their opposition to the state; in the *Times of India*, so-called "micro-boppers" (pre-teens associated with anti-establishment politics) in the United States were reported to "look upon their elders with... contempt," with some engaged in drug abuse and sexual

⁴⁹ Stephen Jessel, "The World of Pop and its Freakish Laws," *The Times of London*, September 11, 1967, page 8.

⁵⁰ Joyce Brothers, "Beatlemania," *The Times of India* (Bombay ed.), September 25, 1966, p. 6.

experimentation.⁵¹ Discussions concerning the influence of the Beatles and the corruption of Western youth were occurring at the same time that Hindustani classical music was attracting a new audience in the West due primarily to the efforts of Beatles guitarist George Harrison, and his new friend and mentor, Ravi Shankar.

George Harrison was never reticent with the media regarding his role as "student," both of the sitar under Ravi Shankar, and of Hindu philosophy. During his visit to Bombay to study with Shankar in September of 1966, Harrison announced to the *Times of India* that he came to India "not as a Beatle," but as an Indian classical music enthusiast.⁵² Despite Harrison's apparent reverence for Shankar, and Indian culture and spirituality more generally, the sincerity of his interest and intentions were questioned in the English-language Indian press. One writer to the editor of the *Times of India* during Harrison's 1966 visit implied that the Beatle was superficial in his attempt to engage with Indian culture and society.⁵³ Harrison was seated in a chair in a yogic position, to which the writer responded "how many Indians adopt this technique of using chairs?... This contrived homage seems rather pointless if it is intended to please Indians." The writer suggested that Harrison's "contrived gestures" during his sojourn in Bombay were perhaps intended for the amusement of the "fans back home... with their concept of the strange Orient."⁵⁴ A more noteworthy dissident was an opposition Indian parliamentarian who, during the Beatles' retreat at Rishikesh in March of 1968, claimed before parliament that the Maharishi's ashram had become a centre of

⁵¹ "Younger generation now up in arms," *The Tribune*, April 6, 1968, 4. H. R. Vohra, "The Micro Boppers of USA," *The Times of India* (Bombay ed.), March 12, 1968, p. 8.

⁵² "Beatles fans storm hotel as George meets press," *The Times of India*, September 20, 1966, p. 3.

⁵³ "Letters to the Editor: Theatrical Beatle," *The Times of India*, September 23, 1966, p. 8.

⁵⁴ "Letters to the Editor: Theatrical Beatle," *The Times of India*, September 23, 1966, p. 8.

international espionage, and went on to demand an official government inquiry, clearly feeding on public suspicion and unease regarding the influence of the Beatles in the country.⁵⁵ (“Do you think England is coming back to India and we are here to spy for it?” a sardonic Paul McCartney was quoted as saying in response to the allegation.)⁵⁶ The Beatles' and the Western counter-culture's connection to the Maharishi Mahesh Yogi and the Transcendental Meditation movement inspired scepticism among Indian traditionalists, and helps to further explain the suspicion surrounding Shankar.

The Maharishi and the Beatles were closely linked in the Indian press. The Maharishi's questionable credentials as an adherent to "traditional" Hindu spiritual practices impacted Indian impressions of the Beatles' engagement with Indian spirituality; due to the Maharishi's association with the band, this may have impacted Ravi Shankar's own credibility as a devout and "serious" adherent to Indian traditions. Although few Indian journalists derided him outright, several remarked on the Maharishi's scant credibility among "Hindu traditionalists," several of whom criticized his approach to Hindu philosophy as "hypocritical."⁵⁷ An article in the *Times of India* from January of 1968 described the Maharishi's movement as "easy to dismiss" as "poppycock... The show business techniques surrounding his activities are distasteful to many serious-minded people."⁵⁸ Many of the articles that dealt with the Maharishi's new Beatle-sponsored fame emphasized the yogi's skyrocketing bank balance as a result of his new pupils in the Western counter-culture. Some writers blamed "the West," and by

⁵⁵ “Rishikesh a spy center, alleges MP,” *The Hindusthan Times*, March 14, 1968, p. 6.

⁵⁶ “Beatles leader denies spying,” *The Indian Express*, March 19, 1968, p. 2.

⁵⁷ “A Yogi doubts Maharishi’s religious formula,” *The Hindusthan Standard*, February 26, 1968, p. 2.

⁵⁸ “Current Topics: Uses of Meditation,” *The Times of India*, January 29, 1968, p. 8.

implication, the Beatles and the counter-culture, for corrupting Transcendental Meditation, and encouraging Indian spiritual figures to abandon their spiritual principles and prioritize financial gain. A feature piece in the *Hindusthan Standard* declared the Maharishi "the man of the hour" within the "booming... guru business."⁵⁹ *The Times of India* contended that "a comfortable bank balance notwithstanding, Mahesh Yogi's gimmick has become a mighty serious thing," while going on to claim that "the West, accustomed to vulgarity and high-voltage advertising, has converted transcendental meditation into a fad."⁶⁰ One could argue that the success of the Beatles in "converting transcendental meditation into a fad" could be measured, in part, by the growing number of hippie tourists that had begun to descend on India from the mid-1960s on.⁶¹ As spiritual and/or hippie tourists began to increase in numbers and become more visible on Indian streets, Indian intellectuals made repeated references to the group's lack of moral direction, tendencies toward social deviance, allegiance to Ravi Shankar, and close resemblance to the Beatles.

Indian intellectuals were both puzzled and troubled by the arrival of the hippies in their country. An article in the *Times of India* from February of 1968 described the "Hippies" as a "new breed of bohemians in bizarre dress" who "are frequently seen on [Indian] streets these days."⁶² In January of 1968, the *Sunday Tribune* suspected that

⁵⁹ "Gurus on the boom," *The Sunday Hindusthan Standard*, March 10, 1968, p. 8.

⁶⁰ The article goes on to imply that both the Maharishi and "the West" deserve equal blame; the Maharishi's distortion of Hinduism can be explained by his efforts at attracting followers in "the West," and the spiritual corruption the West encourages. See "Registered TM," *The Times of India*, March 26, 1968, p. 8.

⁶¹ It should be noted that it was only after the Beatles' meeting and approval of the Maharishi in 1967 that the yogi began to attract other high-profile followers such as American actor Mia Farrow, Scottish folk singer Donovan, as well as Mike Love of the Beach Boys, all of whom attended the 1968 retreat in Rishikesh with the Beatles.

⁶² "Miscellanea," *The Times of India*, February 11, 1968, p. 6.

"the availability of drugs on the cheap" was the "main reason for the invasion of India by the Hippies."⁶³ In March, the *Free Press Journal* called for the Bombay police to "arrest" the hippies who "infested" the city's public spaces.⁶⁴ An article in the *Times of India* commented approvingly on the Nepalese government's decision to deny visa extensions to a group of hippies intent on establishing a "hippyland" in the country (with which India shares a porous border) "where they could propagate their cult."⁶⁵ In the 1960s, a constant theme in many articles that dealt with the "hippie" phenomenon in India was the group's "otherness," portrayed in opposition to Indian social norms, and traditional gender roles. Introduced to the readers of the *Sunday Hindusthan Standard* as a "strange" group of "she-boys and he-girls" who "roam aimlessly" throughout New Delhi, the hippies are described in one article as "rebels" who bear a close resemblance to the Beatles.⁶⁶ At the same time as being portrayed as immoral and engaged in all manner of sexual experimentation and drug abuse, young people in Europe and America -- the primary audience supporting Ravi Shankar in the West -- were also portrayed as naive and ill-informed about Indian society and culture.

The Beatles' innovation in expanding the traditional Western pop music palette to include Indian instruments inspired many Western youth to appreciate Indian classical music not as a departure from traditional Western conceptions of music, but as high art in its own right.⁶⁷ Still, many Indian intellectuals discounted the sincerity and value of Western youth's interest in Indian art and culture. One letter writer to *The*

⁶³ "Within You, Without You," *The Sunday Tribune*, January 28, 1968, 4.

⁶⁴ "Arrest hippies?" *The Free Press Journal*, March 7, 1968, 4.

⁶⁵ "Nepal's no to hippie plea," *The Times of India*, February 18, 1968, p. 9.

⁶⁶ K. C. Khanna, "The beatniks and I," *The Sunday Hindusthan Standard*, February 25, 1968, IV.

⁶⁷ Indeed, some young Indians living in Britain during the 1960s only discovered, and came to appreciate Indian classical music *after* the Beatles promoted it. See Zerbanoo Gifford, *The Golden Thread: Asian Experiences of Post-Raj Britain*, (London: Pandora, 1990), 15.

Searchlight lambasted "uninformed" American students who displayed "colossal ignorance about Indians" (and the "highly civilized" Indian nation): "they behave in crude and unnatural way [sic], holding outlandish views about the people of the world. It is utterly unthinkable that [Indian] boys and girls would betray their ignorance in such [an] unashamed way as is often done by the youths of America."⁶⁸ It is apparent that many members of the Indian intelligentsia did not see diversity or substantial differences among members of the "Beatle generation" associated with Ravi Shankar's newfound Western fame.

All of this helps to explain why Indian traditionalists devalued the response of "foreign audiences" to Ravi Shankar's music: perceived as ignorant and/or uninterested in the "real" India, it seems that Shankar's foreign fans were perceived as incapable of appreciating the tradition of Hindustani classical music due to their inability and/or unwillingness to understand the history behind it.⁶⁹ Furthermore, given the "spirituality" and "profundity" assigned to Hindustani classical music by its "traditionalist" defenders, perhaps we can infer that young foreign audiences, perceived as both ignorant of Indian culture and morally bankrupt, were seen as not only incapable, but also unworthy of appreciating this tradition.⁷⁰ Articles concerning the Maharishi's questionable credibility as a Hindu "traditionalist," the ascendance of meditation as a "fad" in Europe and America, and the growing presence and increasing visibility of Western hippie tourists all contributed to a negative impression of the

⁶⁸ "Uninformed Americans," *The Searchlight*, February 20, 1968, 4.

⁶⁹ "Pandit Ravi Shankar," *The Statesman*, April 16, 1968, 6.

⁷⁰ Eriko Kobayashi, "Hindustani Classical Reform Movement and the Writing of History, 1900's to 1940's" (PhD diss. University of Texas at Austin, 2003), 108.

Western counter-culture, and resulted in heightening concern regarding the corruption of Ravi Shankar due to his association with these new trends.

It is important to emphasize, however, that a negative impression of the Western counter-culture was not universally shared in 1960s India. While many Indians questioned the sincerity of, and the intentions behind the Western counter-culture's embrace of Indian art and culture during the 1960s, other cultural critics celebrated it. One article from the *Times of India* from February of 1968 claimed that George Harrison's presence in India for meditation and yoga "nudges even anti-traditionalists into believing there may be something in those things after all."⁷¹ We can infer that in this article "anti-traditionalists" refers simply to Indians unenthusiastic about yoga and meditation, thus reaffirming the traditionalist position regarding the cultural value of yoga and meditation, while at the same time manipulating this thesis to accommodate and celebrate "outside" influence. Another writer asserted that George Harrison had "captured the Indian heart with his unabashed love for things Indian."⁷² All of this is not entirely surprising from a newspaper that once described Harrison (then, and ever-afterward, the Beatle with the most significant personal and public connection to India) as "the most knowledgeable of the fabulous foursome, and bubbling with initiative and drive."⁷³ Aside from revealing a progressive outlook on the potential social and cultural benefits of the Beatles' engagement with Indian art and culture, these glowing endorsements of the Beatles guitarist may have also represented a tacit

⁷¹ "Headline Series: People in the News," *The Times of India*, February 25, 1968, p. 8.

⁷² "Headline Series: People in the News," *The Times of India*, February 25, 1968, p. 8.

⁷³ "Miscellanea," *The Times of India*, January 14, 1968, p. 13.

acknowledgement of the economic impact of the Western counter-culture's burgeoning interest in Indian art and culture.

As the *Hindustan Times* noted in 1968, the Beatles' Rishikesh retreat "provided perhaps the widest free tourist publicity that India [has ever] had in the British press..."⁷⁴ The Beatles engagement with Indian art and culture, and tireless promotion of it in the West, was a serious boon for the Indian tourism industry. Similarly, some commentators promoted a charitable view of the Maharishi's efforts at gaining Western followers, and subsequently, increasing the number of foreign tourists to India. Those who praised transcendental meditation spoke of the need to treat the Maharishi with "patience" for his enthusiasm at attracting foreign disciples.⁷⁵ Another writer to the editor of the *Hindustan Times* likened the Maharishi to past yogis over the centuries who travelled abroad to gain disciples, and thus felt the Maharishi should be absolved from "blame" for his initiative, in an obvious attempt to respond to the traditionalists' criticism.⁷⁶ At the outset of the Beatles' meditation program in Rishikesh, a journalist at the *Hindusthan Standard* proclaimed that "the Maharishi has scored a symbolic victory for India by bringing [the Beatles] to the fold."⁷⁷ The "fold," according to this writer, is related to certain lifestyle choices: aside from their meditation program, the journalist described the band's new vegetarian diet, their abstinence from alcohol, and daily "purifying dips in the Ganges," suggesting the *Standard's* ideological adherence to basic tenets of Hinduism, as well as implying that this "pure" lifestyle was (or at least should be) synonymous with "India." These passages are revealing for our purposes as they

⁷⁴ V.R. Bhatt, "UK Publicity on Beatle meditation," *The Hindustan Times*, February 20, 1968, p. 9.

⁷⁵ "Serenity the Transcendental Meditation Way," *The Hindustan Times*, February 4, 1968, p. 8.

⁷⁶ "Letters to the Editor: Yogis and society," *The Hindustan Times*, February 4, 1968, p. 9.

⁷⁷ "Jet Age Yogi," *The Hindusthan Standard*, February 28, 1968, p. 4.

imply that a certain segment of the Indian intelligentsia thought that some "outsiders," such as Beatles and hippies, were indeed compatible with a "pure" (or, perhaps "traditional") Indian lifestyle. They also raise the question as to whether or not some commentators believed that the economic benefits of Beatle and hippie tourism outweighed the spiritual or social "cost" of their influence in India. Meanwhile, as we have seen, traditionalist critics seemed to reject the Western counter-culture outright, regardless of any potential benefits to India occurring as a result of their interest.

Various narratives concerning the social and cultural disorder of Western youth in the 1960s help to reveal the source and explain the intensity of the criticism surrounding Ravi Shankar upon his return to India in 1968: traditionalists seem to have been preying on growing public concern surrounding the perceived moral ineptitude, and socio-spiritual crisis of the Western world, and implying that Shankar, and the tradition of Hindustani classical music, could become corrupt as a result of Shankar's association with that world. At the same time, more moderate voices in the English-language Indian press saw the Beatles' and the Western counter-culture's interest in Indian art and culture as a result of a genuine curiosity and spiritual affinity, while at the same time acknowledging the positive economic impact of that interest. It was inevitable, however, that in the midst of the social and political unrest of 1960s India, any perceived foreign or foreign-inspired threat to the "purity" and/or sanctity of Indian cultural traditions would be met with scepticism and resistance in certain quarters. It is thus unsurprising that many among the Indian intelligentsia felt compelled to defend tradition in the context of the return of the hippies' latest hero, sitarist Ravi Shankar.

Chapter Three: Ravi Shankar's return

Ravi Shankar was first exposed to Europe and America as a small child in the 1930's, touring as a dancer in his family's musical troupe. Later, as a professional sitarist in the 1950s, he made contact with American violinist Yehudi Menuhin, an early admirer of Shankar's, and among his most ardent Western supporters. Partly as a result of Menuhin's encouragement, Shankar began touring Europe and America in 1956, abandoning his post as music director at All India Radio to focus on cultivating an international audience. This initial departure may have, in part, inspired the backlash against Shankar in India in the 1960s. What is clear, however, is that Shankar's connection to the Beatles and the Western counter-culture was the primary justification for the traditionalists' criticism -- no indications suggest that Shankar experienced similar criticism before his involvement with the Beatles.

As George Harrison began sitar lessons with Shankar in 1966, and began promoting Shankar's music in earnest, Shankar became the most famous and celebrated Indian musician in the world. Shankar's audience expanded enormously; before Harrison's endorsement, Shankar concerts were mainly confined to tiny concert halls in the West, and by decade's end, he was playing to half a million people at music festivals such as Monterey Pop in 1967 and Woodstock in 1969. For most of the 1960s, Shankar's extensive travels and tour schedule in the West kept him from India for extended periods of time; it seems likely that the simple fact of his prolonged absence also provoked the ire of the defenders of "tradition," as many "traditionalists" seemed to imply that the only audience with truly discerning taste -- the only audience that mattered -- was in India.

Upon returning to India for a series of performances in March of 1968 following a long absence, Ravi Shankar faced a barrage of questions and criticism from defenders of tradition associated with Hindustani classical music, focusing on his association with the Beatles and the Western counter-culture. "Back in India," wrote the music critics for the *Hindustan Times*, "Shankar has been asked the inevitable questions [regarding his adherence to "tradition" and association with the Western counter-culture]. The Beatles are in everybody's mind."⁷⁸ In an obvious attempt to comment on the new Shankar-sponsored exposure of Hindustani classical music in the West, Bollywood music director V. R. Naushad told the *Times of India* that "that the purity of Hindustani music, which was inspired by spiritualism and godliness, should be maintained at any cost."⁷⁹ Discussions concerning the "purity" of Hindustani classical music -- and Shankar's purported efforts at keeping the genre "uncontaminated" by "foreign contact" -- were frequent in English language Indian newspapers during this period, and indicate the centrality of Shankar in the debate around tradition in India during the 1960s.⁸⁰

Numerous concert reviews published in English-language Indian newspapers around Shankar's return demonstrate the extent to which the "urban, educated middle class" was interested in the controversy surrounding the sitarist. In response to a performance in Calcutta, one Indian music fan wrote that Shankar could now be considered "lost for India," as he appealed "mainly to inferior foreign audiences with hardly any knowledge of classical Indian music... Our music lovers are not as easily

⁷⁸ "Ravi Shankar not settling in U.S.," *The Hindustan Times Weekly*, March 31, 1968, 4.

⁷⁹ "Western influence in music deplored," *The Times of India* (Bombay ed.), March 13, 1968, p. 7.

⁸⁰ "Ravi Shankar felicitated," *Free Press Journal*, March 25, 1968, 7.

impressed as those in Europe and America."⁸¹ Following Shankar's first poorly-received performance in Bombay following his absence, a commentator for the *Times of India* wrote as follows:

Living abroad for long spells has its disadvantages for an Indian artist: he is cut off from informed criticism and he is equally starved of truly Indian inspiration... If the critics in Bombay decided they were not getting [Shankar's] best, [Shankar] has only himself to blame.⁸²

While some contended that Shankar's performances were being attacked by traditionalists as a result of the sitarist "taking liberties with the form and presentation of classical music," several indications suggest that the concerns of the traditionalists were less artistic than ideological.⁸³

In the decades following his initial association with the Beatles and the hippie movement, Ravi Shankar never considered himself to be a part of the Western popular music world, and continually displayed efforts to appeal to his Indian critics and establish himself as a staunch traditionalist. However, the sitarist frequently confessed that he felt personally "responsible for the correct understanding of Indian music in the West" after the "big sitar explosion" in Western pop that followed the Beatles' experimentation with the instrument, and his subsequent connection to the Western counter-culture.⁸⁴ Shankar's self-appointed "responsibility" for the "understanding of

⁸¹ "Pandit Ravi Shankar," *The Statesman*, April 16, 1968, 6.

⁸² "Headline Series: People in the News," *The Times of India* (Bombay ed.), March 31, 1968, 8.

⁸³ "Headline Series: People in the News," *The Times of India* (Bombay ed.), March 31, 1968, 8.

⁸⁴ "Sitarist denies departure from tradition," *The Times of India* (Bombay ed.), March 31, 1968, 15. See also V. Patanjali, "Ravi Shankar speaks," *The Times of India* (Bombay ed.), April 21, 1968, 7. In 1965, George Harrison employed a sitar on the Beatles song "Norwegian Wood," widely acknowledged as the first instance of a musician incorporating the instrument into Western pop music. For more information on the "big sitar explosion" in Western popular music, see Frederick Harrison's "West Meets

Indian classical music in the West" helps to explain the degree of scrutiny he received from his Indian critics more fully.

During his return to India in 1968, Ravi Shankar became increasingly accustomed to defending himself and his craft or, as one journalist put it, "at pains to establish his identity as a traditionalist."⁸⁵ In a review of a high-profile Shankar concert at the National Centre for Performing Arts in Bombay, a correspondent for the *Free Press Journal* reported:

Before taking up [his] sitar to play, [Shankar] said that his acceptance of George Harrison had confronted him with two formidable problems. First, the teenagers in the West were to be convinced that Indian music was more serious than guitar play... second was that the critics at home, who feared that his music had [become] contaminated by foreign contact, had to be convinced it was not so.⁸⁶

In an interview from the *Free Press Journal*, it was reported that the sitarist "did not conceal his love for the hippies" while at the same time "condemned their habits of drug addiction and lack of *sadhana* [referring to their lack of work ethic in spiritual practices]," and also "deplored their habit of associating drugs with Indian music."⁸⁷ An interview from April of 1968 featured Shankar describing his lessons with Beatles guitarist George Harrison and praising Harrison's resolve to learn the instrument, followed by a claim that Shankar himself had "nothing to do with [the hippies]."⁸⁸ Although Shankar would acknowledge his most famous pupil as a "wonderful" and "sincere" student of the sitar, another article described Shankar as "incensed at the

East: Or how the sitar came to be heard in Western pop music," *Soundscapes*, Vol. 4 (2001). Accessed November 10, 2012. http://www.icce.rug.nl/~soundscapes/VOLUME04/West_meets_east.shtml.

⁸⁵ "Magnificent obsession," *The Hindustan Times*, April 7, 1968, 5.

⁸⁶ "Ravi Shankar felicitated," *Free Press Journal*, March 25, 1968, 7.

⁸⁷ "Ravi Shankar denies ties with Beatles," *Free Press Journal*, March 23, 1968, 3.

⁸⁸ V. Patanjali, "Ravi Shankar Speaks," *The Times of India*, April 21, 1968, 7.

constant linking of his role as teacher with Beatledom. George Harrison, he told a reporter, is only *one* among 600 of his students."⁸⁹ In reference to the current craze among Western pop musicians to experiment with his instrument, "the purist" in Shankar was reported to abhor any potential "vulgarization of the sitar," claiming that he could not "imagine... that there can ever be any marriage of the Indian classical styles with Western pop art," in apparent agreement with his traditionalist critics.⁹⁰ A separate interview with the *Indian Express* featured Shankar claiming that the Beatles' music occupied a "sphere" totally distinct from that of Hindustani classical music, and had "nothing to do" with his own.⁹¹

Shankar's ambivalence regarding the hippies compelled members of the Indian intelligentsia to question the authenticity of Shankar's claims to be a devout adherent of the Hindustani classical music tradition, and imply that Shankar was a disingenuous opportunist. An editorial in the *Free Press Journal* contended that Shankar only distinguished his own art and philosophy from that of the Beatles when he was "on [South] Asian soil. While he was in the West, he did seem to have a good deal to do with the Beatles, and didn't mind it either." The editors at the *Free Press Journal* went on to ask: "Could it be that Ravi Shankar is finding it difficult to keep one foot in pop culture and the other in the traditional classical art?"⁹²

⁸⁹ "Headline Series: People in the News," *The Times of India* (Bombay ed.), March 31, 1968, 8.

⁹⁰ K. C. Khanna, "Beatniks hail master of the sitar," *The Times of India* (Bombay ed.), July 10, 1966, 8.

⁹¹ "Ravi Shankar pulls up Beatles," *The Indian Express*, March 14, 1968, 6. In 1962, Indian music scholar T. V. Subha Rao wrote: "That 'East is East and West is West and never the twain shall meet' is perhaps most applicable to music." Rao seems to be among the "traditionalists" Shankar was attempting to appeal to. See Rao, *Studies in Indian Music* (Bombay: Asia Publishing House, 1962), 7.

⁹² "Why disown?" *The Free Press Journal*, March 22, 1968, 4.

While travelling in the West, Ravi Shankar experimented with different musicians, and musical motifs outside of what was considered the "tradition" of Hindustani classical music. However, it is unlikely that Shankar deviated from musical practices and techniques associated with the "tradition" of Hindustani classical music when performing in his homeland in 1968. Shankar consistently denied the "traditionalists'" allegations.⁹³ The sitarist felt their criticism intensely, and it seems quite likely that Shankar was less adventurous musically while performing at home, as compared to his performances in the West. Regarding Shankar's performances in India, some of the "traditionalist" critics insisted that Shankar's ragas were "too short," although, as Shankar contended, "it's not the length of time that is important," and numerous Indian musicians before him had experimented with ragas of varying durations.⁹⁴ It seems probable that the negative concert reviews of 1968 came as a result of "traditionalist" critics hearing what they wanted to hear, and perhaps even discounting Shankar's playing regardless of his actual performance. Reporting that Shankar's musical skills had been corrupted supported their arguments, and solidified their standing as the defenders of the Hindustani classical music tradition. It is interesting to note that both Shankar and his critics relied on a popular understanding of the chasm that separated the popular and classical music worlds in justifying their actions and positions.

⁹³ He discusses them at length in his 1997 autobiography. See Ravi Shankar, *Raga Mala* (New York: Welcome Rain, 1997).

⁹⁴ A raga is a melodic mode associated with Indian classical music, relying primarily on five or more notes upon which a melody is constructed. This melody forms the backbone of the piece, although the highlight of any raga is an extended improvisation deviating from this mode. Ragas are primarily about conveying mood, rather than technical dexterity or adherence to any given formula. Indian classical music is an oral tradition, and is no standard or "traditional" piece is written down, as in the Western classical tradition. See Ravi Shankar, *Raga Mala* (New York: Welcome Rain, 1997), 208.

In 1941, Theodor Adorno described popular music as “generally characterized by its difference from serious music,” drawing a distinction between the “classical arts” and those consumed by the masses.⁹⁵ The line between “serious” and “popular” music began to disintegrate in the West during the 1960s, as the Beatles and other influential pop artists opened Western pop up to an entirely new range of influences, motifs, and expressions. It is no oversimplification to suggest that, before the Beatles, Adorno’s opinion was widely shared in Western society. Following the band’s innovative 1966 album *Revolver* and 1967’s groundbreaking *Sgt. Pepper’s Lonely Hearts Club Band*, this ambiguous and seemingly arbitrary distinction would appear increasingly antiquated in Western culture. Regardless, in the late-1960s Indian traditionalists appeared to rely on the public’s understanding of the distinction between “popular” and “serious” music in order to justify their criticism of Ravi Shankar, and Shankar too relied on the same distinction between “pop” and “serious” music in his attempt to define and defend himself. This seems to illustrate the fact that criticism and suspicion surrounding the Beatles were motivated primarily by the band’s controversial politics and lifestyle choices, rather than any serious concerns regarding the value of their art and their proximity to Shankar.

Following his production of a film soundtrack inspired by Indian classical music, George Harrison described his intentions as follows: “I thought ‘I’ll give them an Indian music anthology, and who knows, maybe a few hippies will get turned on to Indian

⁹⁵ Theodor Adorno, “On Popular Music,” *Studies in Philosophy and Social Science*, Vol. 9 (1941), 17.

music."⁹⁶ The fact that a band of strange-looking, dope-smoking, counter-cultural Western pop icons were trying to "turn hippies on" to Hindustani classical music made Indian traditionalists uncomfortable; that the most renowned and widely-recognized ambassador of Hindustani classical music was supporting and collaborating with the Beatles in their efforts was simply too much for the traditionalists to bear, or so it seems. It is important to note, however, that these traditionalist voices were criticized, and even mocked, by Indian critics excited by the creative potential of Shankar's collaboration with Western musicians, and extensive travels abroad.

Those Indian music critics who opposed the self-styled "traditionalists" argued that Ravi Shankar's popularity in the West was a positive outcome of cultural globalization, and that Shankar represented no deviation from the great tradition of Hindustani classical music. One even went so far as to describe the "traditionalist" argument for upholding the "purity" of Hindustani classical music in terms of pending irrelevance: a commentator for the *Hindusthan Standard* asserted that "traditionalists may have frowned upon [the new popularity of Indian classical music in the West]... but frankly, their dislikes will be more ignored than respected."⁹⁷ Others simply contended that Shankar demonstrated consistent pride in his craft and heritage as an Indian classical musician, and that the concerns of the "traditionalists" were baseless. A staff reporter at the *Free Press Journal* wrote that during the course of a Shankar performance in Bombay, the sitarist, "who has been criticized for associating himself with... [Western] pop singers" had "proven" that his "long stay abroad in a foreign

⁹⁶ George Harrison, John Lennon, Paul McCartney, and Ringo Starr, *The Beatles Anthology*, (San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 2000), 280.

⁹⁷ Sourin Banerji, "Music goes the Pop way," *The Hindusthan Standard*, March 3, 1968, p. IV.

cultural atmosphere had not affected a bit of his music," in an apparent attempt to counter the "traditionalists'" claims.⁹⁸ Critics at the *Hindustan Times* asserted that there was "no reason at all for Ravi Shankar to be apologetic about his Beatle following."⁹⁹ An article from the *Times of India* from July of 1966 favourably described the Beatles as Ravi Shankar's "allies," and commented approvingly that the band will help Shankar make "faster progress in England [in terms of expanding his fanbase there]."¹⁰⁰ Indian support of Shankar was not limited to members of the press corps; several letters to the editor reveal a reading public that was equally eager to defend the sitarist. One angry writer to *The Statesman* attacked the "philistine approach" of the newspaper's music critic, in response to a disparaging Shankar concert review.¹⁰¹

Other Indian music writers went further, claiming that Shankar's attempted adherence to "tradition" upon his return to India had hindered his creative expression. Some Indian cultural critics decried the "traditionalists'" success at encouraging Shankar to stay within the "traditional" musical framework of the genre, and welcomed the creative potential embedded within Shankar's success among a foreign audience, and collaboration with Western musicians. The music critics at the *Hindustan Times* were particularly vehement in their defence of the sitarist's "pioneering efforts" in the West, arguing that "Indian melody is finding a place in the Western [musical] system" due to Shankar.¹⁰² In a review of a Shankar concert in New Delhi, the critics charged that the sitarist's attempts to allay the fears of his "traditionalist" critics had negatively

⁹⁸ "Ravi Shankar felicitated," *Free Press Journal*, March 25, 1968, p. 7. See also "Pleasant routine fare by Ravi Shankar," *The Times of India* (Bombay ed.), March 24, 1968, p. 3.

⁹⁹ "Ravi Shankar not settling in U.S.," *The Hindustan Times Weekly*, March 31, 1968, p. 4.

¹⁰⁰ K.C. Khanna, "Beatniks Hail Master of the Sitar," *The Times of India*, July 10, 1966, p. 8.

¹⁰¹ "In defence of Ravi Shankar," *The Statesman*, April 6, 1968, p. 6.

¹⁰² "Ravi Shankar not settling in U.S.," *The Hindustan Times Weekly*, March 31, 1968, p. 4.

impacted his performance. The reviewer described Shankar as an "unfortunate victim" of an "obsession" with adherence to "tradition: curbing his natural creative urge and brushing aside the natural sense of adventure in him, he laboured... in a labyrinthine manner... Here was a giant in fetters fighting his own self."¹⁰³ The critics at the *Hindustan Times* suggested that Western audiences were more apt to indulge Shankar's inclination toward experimentation, and that pressure from Indian "traditionalists" had resulted in the sitarist offering a "methodical" and "guarded" performance.¹⁰⁴ It is interesting to note that the performance in question took place at New Delhi's Press Club, since 1958 a popular social organization for the Indian capital's journalists and literati. Preceding this performance, the President of the Press Club dismissed the "traditionalist" attacks on Shankar as "a lot of biased criticism by stick-in-the-mud types," indicating further the divisive nature of the controversy in the Indian press community.¹⁰⁵ If we are to accept the criticism from the writers at the *Hindustan Times* as any indication, it seems that in the moment Shankar's "traditionalist" critics won out over moderate voices: at least while performing in their presence, Shankar attempted to conform to the "traditionalist" definition of what Hindustani classical music should be.

¹⁰³ "Magnificent Obsession," *The Hindustan Times* (Sunday supplement), April 7, 1968, p. 5.

¹⁰⁴ "Magnificent Obsession," *The Hindustan Times* (Sunday supplement), April 7, 1968, p. 5.

¹⁰⁵ "Sitarist denies departure from tradition," *The Times of India*, March 31, 1968, 15.

Conclusion

Widely recognized as the premier ambassador of Hindustani classical music abroad, and coupled with his association with revolutionary figures such as the Beatles and the hippies, Ravi Shankar was both the easiest as well as the most obvious target for critics of a conservative or "traditionalist" bent. In Indian newspapers during the 1960s, the figures of "Ravi Shankar" and "the Beatles" served as widely understood signifiers for Western modernity and the globalization of culture, and thus references to the threat to tradition that these figures posed could have the maximal impact amongst the widest possible readership. Furthermore, Shankar's "traditionalist" critics may have been trying to send a message to Indian musicians hoping to follow in Shankar's footsteps and attain success abroad to prioritize catering to the Indian, rather than a foreign, audience.

Naturally, we cannot know for certain what the traditionalists actually *believed* with regard to the changing nature of Hindustani classical music during the 1960s, and the evolution of Ravi Shankar's artistry. What is revealing is that they at least purported to have concerns, which seems to indicate that political and social capital could be gained in 1960s India through appeals to the maintenance of "tradition," and the resistance to -- or at least, criticism of -- various social and cultural processes and practices associated with Western modernity. In the midst of the social and political turbulence of 1960s India, we can locate the concerns of the "traditionalists" regarding Ravi Shankar's deviation from his artistic heritage, and the influence of the Beatles and the Western counter-culture, in a highly charged and contentious cultural climate. Whether or not the "traditionalist" concerns were genuine, they were indicative of a

wider cultural debate in Indian newspapers concerning the spiritual corruption of the West, the globalization of Indian culture, and the preservation and promotion of Indian culture abroad.

It is interesting to note that discussions around the preservation of tradition were not unique to India during the 1960s; there were similar debates in many societies facing growing Western influence, most notably Japan.¹⁰⁶ This seems to indicate a trend, in nations grappling with increasing Western influence, of negotiating new trends in global information flows with the ripple effects of the 1960s socio-cultural revolution in the West, along with ancient customs and traditions that upheld the nation's founding myth. In the case of India, this involved promoting a vision of Hindustani classical music that was completely incongruous with trends associated with Western popular music, and the social corruption associated with the counter-cultural scene. The "traditionalists" in 1960s India were forced to grapple with the increasing interest of young Westerners associated with counter-cultural politics, as Hindustani classical music gained exposure around the world. Although one may posit that the traditionalists' struggle was based around a "conflict" between tradition and modernity, this relationship was above all based on mutual support: the negotiation and promotion of the traditionalist narratives relied on forces and processes closely associated with modernity -- including change in global information flows, and new trends in tourism and migration -- in order to be effective and affecting. The traditionalists needed media and migration in order to define, promote, and defend themselves, and were thus

¹⁰⁶ Stephen Vlastos, *Mirror of Modernity* (London: University of California Press, 1998), 1.

products of modernity as much as they claimed to be unwavering adherents to "tradition."

In the decades following his initial association with the Beatles and the Western counter-culture, Ravi Shankar would be recognized as the first example of what has become a paradoxical phenomenon within Indian culture concerning the "foreign returned" artist. Daniel Neuman's phrase refers to an artist who acquires a wider platform and more fans at home only *after* performing abroad and gaining the approval of foreign audiences and critics.¹⁰⁷ Neuman has argued that India has long put a "high cultural premium" on "foreign things:" "if an artist has been accepted abroad, the argument perhaps runs, then he must be good, and good enough to be patronized [in India.]"¹⁰⁸ However, that Shankar was "good" had already been well established by 1968. Shankar had been performing for large Indian audiences since he was a small child; since the early 1950s he had stood as a "role model for numerous Hindustani musicians of the younger generation."¹⁰⁹ In 1968, the principle outcome of Shankar's newfound foreign acceptance seems not to have been increasing numbers of admirers at home, but rather intensifying criticism. Condemnation from the "traditionalists" perhaps contributed to Shankar's decision, from the late-1960s onward, to spend increasing amounts of time living and working outside of India. Traditionalists

¹⁰⁷ Daniel Neuman, *The Life of Music in North India* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1980), 190. I write that Shankar came to be an example of this phenomenon because he seems to have eventually reaped rewards in India as a result of his connection to the Beatles in terms of greater exposure among the younger generation. Indian author Amit Chaudhuri has written that "like many of [his] age and background" in 1970's Bombay, he "eventually came to Indian classical music via the Beatles," and through the Beatles' endorsement, Ravi Shankar. See Amit Chaudhuri, "Indian classical music, the Beatles and the blues," *The Guardian*. Last updated September 21, 2012, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/music/2012/sep/21/indian-classical-music-darbar-festival>.

¹⁰⁸ Neuman, *The Life of Music in North India* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1980), 191.

¹⁰⁹ Stephen M. Slawek, "Ravi Shankar as Mediator between a Traditional Music and Modernity" in Blum et. al (ed.) *Ethnomusicology and Modern Music History*, 163.

associated with Hindustani classical music pressured Shankar to conform to a strict vision of the ideological and musical parameters of the genre; in so doing, they may have succeeded in alienating their most famous son.

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