

GENRE AND PARODY IN THE MUSIC OF THE BEATLES

by

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Abstract

From the earliest outbreak of “Beatlemania” in 1963 to the announcement of their breakup in 1970, The Beatles fulfilled, exceeded, and reformed our conceptions of popular music. They have enjoyed an enduring popularity with critics and audiences and have cemented their position as one of the most celebrated acts in popular culture. Although it would be difficult to attribute their success to a single factor, it could be argued that their eclectic sound ensured their mass appeal. As their careers progressed, The Beatles effortlessly combined and moved between different genres. Many of these genres were atypical for popular music of the 1960s and can be regarded as parody. This thesis approaches parody as an important stylistic trait of The Beatles’ music.

Parody is a broad concept that can be found in a number of forms of art and entertainment. By drawing from literary criticism and musicological discourse, this study develops a broader understanding of parody in which popular musicians evoke the music of another genre through borrowing and create a critical distance between their work and the preexisting one. Further investigation reveals how The Beatles applied parody to their music and how it was used by the band to connect with their listeners. In such songs as “Back In The U.S.S.R.” and “Happiness Is A Warm Gun,” The Beatles parody different musical genres in order to evoke social commentary. Genre parody is not exclusive to individual songs. It is one of the unifying threads in *Sgt. Pepper’s Lonely Hearts Club Band*, in which The Beatles parody the English music hall and use genre to connect themes on the album. Despite these instances, parody remains an underexplored practice in their music. Many scholars of the band will acknowledge the musical and critical elements associated with parody; however, they do not use the term, nor identify parody as a recurring practice in The Beatles’ music. This thesis hopes to shed light on this topic and add to our understanding of the rich legacy of The Beatles.

Preface

This thesis is unpublished, original, and independent work by the author, Michael Connolly.

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To Mom, Dad, and Matthew

Chapter 1: Introduction

The widespread popular conception of parody is one associated with lampoons of other works, styles, or people. In recent years, parody has provided the basis for many famous (or infamous) movie franchises, including *Austin Powers* or *Scary Movie*. It has also been an integral part of television sitcoms and late night programs such as *Saturday Night Live*, *MADtv*, and *The Tonight Show*, all of which include sketch-based jabs at the expense of current political and entertainment affairs. Although not used as regularly as in film or television, parody can be found in popular music through the ways in which musicians reference another song or evoke different artists or genres. Weird Al Yankovic is, perhaps, popular music's best-known parodists, as he frequently adds new and humorous lyrics to well-known pop songs. Parody, however, can also be found in the music of artists who might not immediately be associated with the device. The Beatles, for example, use parody quite frequently in their songwriting.

Parody provides the band with a means to critically reflect on past artists and genres and makes an integral contribution to their eclectic sound. Chapter 1 presents a review of relevant literature review and, by drawing from ideas of literary theorists and musicologists, proposes an understanding of parody for the entire thesis. This understanding of parody describes a broad critical process in which artists and musicians borrow conventions from other artists or genres in order create a critical commentary. Chapter 2 discusses parody as a broad recurring practice in The Beatles' music that distinguished the band from their contemporaries and satisfied their penchant to imitate other artists and genres. Chapter 3 begins a more detailed analysis of the music by exploring the prominence of parody throughout the 1968 album *The Beatles* (also known as *The White Album*). Chapter 4 examines parody as a large-scale device that aids in the construction of a narrative on *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band* (1967). A brief conclusion follows and reflects on the wider themes of parody in The Beatles' music.

1.1 Parody in Academic Literature

In order to fully appreciate the role of parody in popular music, a broader understanding of the term is needed. This can be gained by turning to the writings of literary theorists and musicologists. These scholars use the term “parody” in much broader and critical ways that are not limited to humour and give us much to consider when approaching popular music.

G rard Genette addressed the function and meaning of parody in *Palimpsestes: Literature in the Second Degree* (1982). He discusses the many devices and means of intertextuality, including parody, in order to better understand the ways in which authors draw from other works. Intertextuality, according to Genette, is the “relationship of copresence between two texts or among several texts: that is to say, eidetically and typically as the actual presence of one text within another.”¹ He distinguishes between the “hypotext,” the original source, and “hypertext,” the product of intertextuality. Parody, along with pastiche, travesty, caricature, transposition, and forgery, are the main practices of intertextuality analyzed by Genette. He argues that the word “parody” is misunderstood in mass culture, as it is called upon too frequently as a catchall term for humorous imitation. He takes a nuanced approach by establishing a set of criteria in order to label and differentiate between the individual forms of intertextuality. Parody, according to him, is the “distortion of a text by means of a minimal transformation,” as the subject of the hypotext is modified while the style is kept intact.² In other words, parody transforms a pre-existing text by altering its inherent meaning while adhering to its style and model. Genette uses the relationship between Homer’s *Odyssey* and Joyce’s *Ulysses* to discuss parody: a direct transformation is occurring as Joyce transposes the action of the *Odyssey* to twentieth-century Dublin. The relationship between the *Odyssey* and Virgil’s *Aeneid*, on the other hand, would not be considered parody. It does not transform the *Odyssey*; rather, it tells a completely different story in the style of Homer.

Genette lays a strong foundation for understanding parody as a distinct stylistic device among the other modes of intertextuality; however, as illuminating Genette’s

¹ G rard Genette, *Palimpsestes: Literature in the Second Degree*, translated by Channa Newman and Claude Doubinsky (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1997), 2.

² *Ibid.*, 24–6.

conception of parody may be, it does have limitations when applied to popular music. His definition proves to be too rigid for popular music; much of what popular culture calls “parody” is considered to be “satirical pastiche” by Genette. Satirical pastiche may initially seem like an appropriate label for *Austin Powers* or several Beatles songs; however, it ignores many of the associations that have already been established between these works and popular culture’s notion of parody. He goes on to describe the notion of “parody of genre” – which is abundant in popular culture and music – as “pure chimera,” and argues that generic parodies are a result of imitation and not direct transformation.³ Placing such tight restrictions upon parody denies it any sense of flexibility in the hands of artists and in the minds of audiences. In the case of popular music, parody should be thought of as a more generalized process in which musicians evoke pre-existing songs or genres, rather than as a method that functions in precise and circumscribed ways. Genette perceives parody as a trans-historic device, which allows him to reconcile the notion of *parodia* from Ancient Greece with ideas of parody in more recent times. However, this precise conception opposes the idea of parody as a flexible process that evolves and changes within different historical and cultural parameters, and limits Genette’s definition from extending to popular music.

While Genette defines parody as an exact referential process, Linda Hutcheon understands parody as a diverse effect that is created from placing a pre-existing work in new contexts. For her, parody is not the direct transformation of an individual text, but rather the evocation of another work or style from a critical distance. Critical distance is a crucial element to her conception of parody, as artists, authors, and musicians are said to separate themselves from the works or styles that they evoke in order to provide a critique of the referenced material. Hutcheon argues that the effects of parody can range from the playful to the ridiculous, and that parody can be anything from a light-hearted homage to a complete mockery. Hutcheon, however, states that the hypotext (recalling Genette’s term) is not necessarily the focus of the critical commentary that is elicited by the parody. Although the audience may consider humour to be the focal point of parody, she believes that the ironic “trans-contextualization” of the hypotext is the centrepiece of the parody’s critical intentions. Trans-contextualization, as she defines it, is “the form of

³ Ibid., 84–5.

literal incorporation of reproductions into the new work [...] or of a reworking of the formal elements,” and helps distinguish parody from allusion, quotation, or pastiche.⁴

Impressions of irony play an important part in Hutcheon’s conception of parody. She largely refers to irony in the general sense of the term: a role reversal in which elements of the hypotext are used in new and seemingly incorrect settings and, in the process, are bestowed with new meanings. *Ulysses* can be considered a parody of the *Odyssey* based on the ironic ways in which Joyce distorts the characters and events of the hypotext. An example would be Joyce’s treatment of Molly/Penelope, who is anything but chaste as she waits for the return of her husband.⁵ Genette, on the other hand, views irony as a stylistic “mood” in which the hypotext can be represented.⁶ He primarily describes the mood of parody as “playful” and establishes “irony” as a mood that lies somewhere in between “playful” and “satirical.” While pastiche, for example, attempts to draw functional or stylistic comparisons between a hypotext and hypertext, parody produces irony by accentuating ways in which the hypotext has been distorted, altered, and removed from its original state. Irony also helps distinguish parody from travesty, as the latter is said to involve “biting insult” that is lacking in the former.⁷

Hutcheon’s understanding of parody offers much to consider for popular music studies, as greater emphasis is placed on parody as a broader referential process. Although she provides examples from different historical eras, she produces an understanding of parody that is tailored towards the twentieth century and opposes a trans-historical definition.⁸ She briefly discusses twentieth-century music, and notes that parody has two different yet co-existing meanings: to evoke another work or style from a critical distance, for which she cites the neo-classical works of Stravinsky and Prokofiev; and a second broader meaning dealing with evoking pre-existing music for the sake of

⁴ Linda Hutcheon, *A Theory of Parody: The Teachings of Twentieth-Century Art Forms* (New York: Methuen Inc, 1985), 8–10.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 5

⁶ See Genette, *Palimpsestes*, 28, in which he places these different “manners” along side the different modes of intertextuality (i.e parody, pastiche, etc.). In this context, irony is used as a rather rigid barrier that is exclusive to works of parody that tread along the lines of travesty.

⁷ Hutcheon, *A Theory of Parody*, 41.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 10.

humour.⁹ The resulting humour is not necessarily targeted towards the hypotext and can simply be a byproduct of the situation.

Similar to Hutcheon, Simon Dentith proposes that parody functions as a broad practice. Contrary to Genette's trans-historical conception, he believes parody to be an evolving process with different meanings attributed to different historical authors and audiences. Dentith advocates a broad definition that "includes any cultural practice which provides a relatively polemical allusive imitation of another cultural production or practice."¹⁰ He interprets parody as a generalized imitative process but emphasizes the idea of critical intent from the perspective of the author. Genette's circumscribed conception of parody is too rigid for Dentith, as he believes that parody can go beyond the evocation of a precise hypotext and include larger cultural practices. Parody should be thought of "not as a single and tightly defined practice but rather as a range of cultural practices that are all more or less parodic."¹¹ Parody of genre, for example, can then be considered reasonable. Dentith also expands his definition by hypothesizing different kinds of parody. For example, he describes "specific parody" as that aimed at a particular precursor text, and "general parody" as that aimed at a whole body of texts or kind of discourse.¹² He further distinguishes between "fully developed formal parody," a work that exists for the sole reason to parody a hypotext, and "glancing parodic allusions," which are small phrases or fragments of parody in a larger work.¹³ Joyce's *Ulysses* would be considered an example of both specific parody and fully developed formal parody, as its entire structure is devoted to the parody of a precise hypotext. On the other hand, a pun used within a piece of literature would exemplify specific parody and glancing parodic allusion, as it borrows from a precise and, assumingly, well-known phrase, but does not provide the basis for an entire work.

Dentith uses the term "polemical allusion" to refer to the ways in which parody represents and interacts with the hypotext. He agrees with Hutcheon that any critical commentary need not be directed at a single hypotext, but he remains adamant that parody does have an intended target. He believes that the twentieth century was a time in

⁹ Ibid., 67.

¹⁰ Simon Dentith, *Parody* (London & New York: Routledge, 2000), 9.

¹¹ Ibid., 19.

¹² Ibid., 7.

¹³ Ibid., 7.

which artists and authors began to redirect critical commentary away from a hypotext and towards more abstract ideas, such as society, culture, or humanity. Therefore, parody began to function as a means to aim critical ideas towards, what Dentith calls, “another outlet,” by which he means an indirect target of the parody. In past centuries, these indirect outlets were often byproducts of parody; however, now, according to Dentith, parody functions as a means to critically address larger cultural topics without necessarily borrowing from them directly.¹⁴ Dentith also describes how parody involves “double-coding” through the ways in which a cultural entity (i.e. a genre of popular music) is given a new meaning, in addition to its pre-existing associations. Parody allows artists and audiences to connect and recontextualize elements of both the past and present. Like many popular musicians, The Beatles often use parody to engage with past musicians, styles, or time frames. The result is a double-coding in which elements of the past are given new meanings in the present.

1.2 Parody in Popular Music

By drawing from the ideas of Genette, Hutcheon, and Dentith, I wish to suggest a definition of parody that will enhance our understanding of The Beatles.¹⁵ Parody is a broad concept that involves the referencing of another artist, genre, or style, from a critical distance. Critical distance is created when an artist transforms or recontextualizes the pre-existing material. By transforming the reference from its familiar state into its parodied state, the artist creates critical commentary and suggests a target: whether the original source or another cultural idea. Critical distance also guides the listener’s interpretation of parody through two main ways: 1) it distinguishes the reference to another work or style from the artist’s typical output; and 2) it combines the reference with a critique so as to avoid confusion with a sincere expression on behalf of the artist. That is to say, the listener must be able to identify the work as parody and not interpret

¹⁴ Ibid., 18.

¹⁵ It should be noted that the following definition of parody is separate from the meaning of the word in the Renaissance Mass tradition. Although Renaissance composers will borrow material, often secular, and place it in the new context of a sacred mass, for which it serves the foundation, the parody Mass is a part of its own tradition that is not connected to parody in popular music. Furthermore, recent musicological scholarship has shifted away from the “parody Mass” label and embraced the term “imitation Mass” in its place.

the material at face value. Although humour is often prompted by parody, parody is not limited to humorous expression. There are many different outcomes and effects that parody can have, including playfulness, admiration, satire, and irony. Ultimately, parody engages the audience in a critical commentary and challenges our understandings and associations with other works or ideas.

Parody is one of many ways in which a musician can connect their music with other pieces or broader cultural ideas. Scholars have frequently discussed the different ways in which two works can be related through referencing. Hutcheon referred to such connections as trans-contextualization, while Genette and Dentith refer to the more commonly used term intertextuality. Dentith defines intertextuality as “the myriad conscious ways in which texts are alluded to or cited in other texts: the dense network of quotation, glancing reference, imitation, polemical refutation.”¹⁶ The term, however, has not been fully integrated into musicological discourse. J. Peter Burkholder has written extensively on the numerous methods in which composers refer to other works and styles, and favours using simpler terms, particularly “musical borrowing,” or “the uses of existing music.” Through his study of borrowing in the music of Charles Ives, Burkholder concludes that the concept of intertextuality is too broad, as it tries to encompass all of the ways one piece is like another, whether it be general similarities in aesthetics, style, procedure, or direct ties. According to Burkholder, intertextuality evades important questions of priority and deviation, as it does not specify whether two works joined by intertextual means are connected because one is based on the other or because both were based on a common source.¹⁷ He proposes musical borrowing as a rubric and defines it as taking elements from an existing piece of music and using them in a new piece. He argues that musical borrowing is broad enough to include everything from direct quotation to the use of an older work as a model without overt reference, and, in doing so, establishes many different possible methods.¹⁸ He creates a typology of methods that, although primarily identified in Ives’ music, describe trans-historical borrowing methods.¹⁹ However in doing so, Burkholder, perhaps inadvertently, creates

¹⁶ Dentith, *Parody*, 5.

¹⁷ J. Peter Burkholder, “The Uses of Existing Music: Musical Borrowing as a Field,” *Notes* 50 (1994): 862.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 863.

¹⁹ Burkholder, in *ibid.*, 854, recreates the list from a previous article on Charles Ives.

several categories of borrowing that become quite rigid and inapplicable to popular music. For example, he defines a “quodlibet” as “combing two or more existing tunes or fragments of tunes in counterpoint or in quick succession, most often as a joke or a technical tour de force.”²⁰ A quodlibet may be a relevant method of borrowing in Ives’ music; however, one would be hard pressed to find it in popular music.

Burkholder believes that borrowing is not applicable to works that reference general styles. According to him, it involves a new work drawing upon a pre-existing piece, and not from a pre-existing style.²¹ His approach to borrowing unfolds similarly to Genette, who argued that parody in literature should not include references to styles or genres. Nonetheless, Burkholder includes “stylistic allusion” among his initial typology of the uses of existing music in the works of Charles Ives. He defines stylistic allusion as “alluding not to a specific work but to a general style or type of music [...] without actual borrowing.”²² He later specifies that stylistic allusion is useful for understanding Ives’ music, as the composer referred to stylistic archetypes to evoke meaning in his works, but that allusion to other styles or repertoires are too indefinite to be considered musical borrowing, and deserve their own separate, but related, field of study.²³

Alfred Schnittke offers a different perspective on borrowing. He argues that quotation and allusion have been integral in the development of Western art music. Both practices are the central components of “polystylism” – his term for the ways in which twentieth-century composers consciously blend styles. However, Schnittke’s understanding of what he calls the “principles of quotation” and the “principles of allusion” prove to be quite ambiguous and contradictory when compared to Burkholder’s ideas. Schnittke defines quotation as “a whole series of devices, ranging from the quoting of stereotypical micro-elements of an alien style, belonging to another age or another national tradition (characteristic melodic intonations, harmonic sequences, cadential formulae), to exact or reworked quotations or pseudo-quotations.”²⁴ Schnittke perceives quotation as a broad practice that encompasses anything from a direct citation of another

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid., 863.

²² Ibid., 854.

²³ Ibid., 863.

²⁴ Alfred Schnittke, “Polystylistic Tendencies in Modern Music,” in Alexander Ivashkin, ed., *A Schnittke Reader*, trans. John Goodliffe (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1971), 87.

work to a glancing reference to a larger style. Equally broad is his definition of allusion, which he describes as “subtle hints and unfulfilled promises that hover on the brink of quotation but do not actually cross it.”²⁵ Schnittke’s concepts offer a unique glimpse from the perspective of a twentieth-century composer who borrowed extensively from pre-existing works and styles; however, more detailed boundaries are needed to distinguish between the different degrees and methods of quotation and allusion.²⁶ The broad scope of his ideas also makes his definitions difficult to apply to popular music and, in particular, to the music of The Beatles.

Quotation in popular music is restricted to cases in which a musician directly includes pre-existing music or text into their own work or performance. Sampling in hip-hop is one of the clearest examples. It involves musicians drawing upon, and often reworking, recorded snippets of other songs. An example of this can be found in Eminem’s 2000 hit “Stan”, in which the rapper constructs a chorus from a sample of the song “Thank You” by pop singer Dido. Quotation in music of The Beatles is not very common; however, it can be found in some songs. For example, “All You Need Is Love” includes a number of brief quotations in the brass section, including the French national anthem “La Marseillaise”, Glenn Miller’s “In The Mood”, J.S. Bach’s “Two-Part Invention in F major”, and the English folk song “Greensleeves.”²⁷ John Lennon and Paul McCartney also begin singing short snippets from the choruses of their own hits “Yesterday” and “She Loves You.” Allusion, on the other hand, involves a freer evocation to another work, artist, style, or genre. It can take many different forms, including the use of a similar style, a play on words from another work, or the borrowing of characteristic musical devices of another artist, style, genre, or culture (i.e. chord progressions, melodies, instrumentation, arrangement, performance style, etc.). Allusion is much more prominent in the music of The Beatles. One of the best examples is “When I’m Sixty-Four” from *Sgt. Pepper’s Lonely Hearts Club Band*, in which The Beatles evoke the music hall of their parents’ generation through characteristic instrumentation

²⁵ Ibid., 88

²⁶ To be fair to Schnittke, he provides many examples to further explain the *principle of quotation* and the *principle of quotation*; however, these examples are often quite different from one another. The end result is a case-by-case situation.

²⁷ George Martin and Jeremy Hornsby, *All You Need Is Ears* (New York: St. Martin’s, 1979), 192. An analysis of these quotations and their blending in “All You Need Is Love” can be found in Mark Spicer, “Strategic Intertextuality in Three of John Lennon’s Late Beatles Songs,” *Gamut* 2/1 (2009): 347 – 75.

(including two clarinets, jazz brushes on the drum set, jazz guitar), arrangement, harmony, and melody.

Both quotation and allusion involve, to some degree, the transformation of borrowed material. In popular music, transformation refers to the ways in which musicians alter the musical properties of the borrowed material, and, in turn, change how the audience perceives that music. The alterations typically entail exaggeration and/or recontextualization. A work or genre of music can be exaggerated by an artist, during which the artist uses distinct traits, sometimes even clichés, of the original material to a much greater effect than would usually be expected. This can include the excessive repetitions of characteristic rhythms or harmonic progressions. The borrowing and transformation processes often result in a recontextualization of the quotation or allusion. Recontextualization occurs when borrowed material is placed in a new context where many of the cultural associations, attributed to the work by the audience, are challenged and contested. Drawing from the previous example of hip-hop, rappers can transform and recontextualize other songs by sampling their chords, melodies, or beats, and altering their pre-existing meaning. Recalling Eminem's "Stan", we can see how the rapper uses the chords, melody, bassline, vocal sample, and text from the first verse of Dido's "Thank You" to construct a chorus. However, he transforms the original by placing it against a hip-hop beat, increasing the prominence of the bassline in the mix, and using a sparser accompaniment. The recontextualization of the sample is apparent through genre and meaning. Eminem borrows a Top 40 pop song in order to construct a groove for his hop-hop song, while changing the original's mood and affect; the romantic gratitude of "Thank You" is replaced with the psychological instability of an obsessive admirer in "Stan."

Although The Beatles may not use sampling, they do use exaggeration and recontextualization in order to transform parodied material. An example of this can be found in "Happiness Is A Warm Gun" from their 1968 LP *The Beatles* (also known as *The White Album*). "Happiness Is A Warm Gun" is constructed from several distinct sections, the last of which contains an allusion to the doo-wop genre. This example will be discussed in greater detail in a later chapter; however, for the purpose of the current discussion, it should be noted that The Beatles transform many of the genre's

conventions. They also recontextualize doo-wop by placing it directly after heavier rock and blues sections, and use it to depict lyrics that are highly uncharacteristic of the genre. While doo-wop lyrics typically dealt with forms of idealized women and romantic cliché, the text of “Happiness Is A Warm Gun” infuses overt sexual imagery with gun advocacy, and subtle hints to drug culture. Doo-wop is given new attributes and placed in a new context where much of its pre-existing meanings and associations are contested. The Beatles use recontextualization to create critical distance between doo-wop in its familiar form and its depiction in “Happiness Is A Warm Gun.” This engages listeners in a critical dialogue in which they reflect on its new meaning.

1.3 Parody and Irony

The Beatles’ use of parody often imbues the pre-existing music with rich streaks of irony. Irony is often evoked through a role-reversal, in which borrowed materials are given contrary meanings not present in their original form. Literary critic D.C. Muecke, however, argues that the concept of role-reversal alone is insufficient in defining irony, and irony should, instead, be thought of as a contrast between an appearance and reality.²⁸ Each genre and style of music has its own language and conventions, and evoking aspects of those languages or conventions transfers certain meanings to a new work. He argues that musical irony is created from tensions between the “surface area,” which materializes in concrete musical gestures (i.e. the presentation of melody, harmony, instrumentation, etc.), and the “in-depth layers,” which are the assumed meanings or contexts of the concrete musical gestures held by the audience.²⁹ Hutcheon also recognizes the role of the audience in constructing irony. In her book *Irony’s Edge: The Theory and Politics of Irony*, she develops her previous conceptions of irony. She

²⁸ D.C. Muecke, *Irony* (Great Britain: Methuen & Co., 1970), 10. Muecke refers to an anecdote about a pickpocket who has his own wallet stolen as he is busy at work. Muecke makes the argument that this anecdote is ironic, yet there is no “role-reversal” involved. Although one could argue that the role-reversal is quite obviously present in the fact that the pickpocket fell victim to his own game, Muecke’s idea of appearance versus reality is a less specified and more encompassing view of irony.

²⁹ On page 7, Muecke refers to Tchaikovsky’s *1812 Overture*, which includes a reference to the first few measures of *La Marseillaise*. Muecke believes irony is created between the out-of-tune and fragmented ways in which Tchaikovsky presents the melody, and the Napoleonic associations, which the audience would have had with the French National anthem.

concludes that irony is not simply present in the text but that it requires an interpreter. While the artist may intend to set up an ironic relation between the said and the unsaid, the onus is on the audience to perceive this intention. Hutcheon believes that irony, for the interpreter, is an intentional and interpretive process; it is “the making or inferring of meaning in addition to and different from what is stated, together with an attitude toward both the said and the unsaid.”³⁰ From the perspective of an artist or musician, irony is an “intentional transmission of both information and evaluative attitude other than what is explicitly presented.”³¹ In *Irony's Edge*, Hutcheon approaches irony as a phenomenon exclusive from parody and, in doing so, offers much to consider regarding the relationship between irony and parody. Irony should be thought of as an effect on the audience resulting from the parody, instead of a direct attribute of parody itself. Similar to Genette's conception, irony functions as a mood in which the musician presents the borrowed material. Perhaps, irony is best thought of as an herb or spice in the cuisine of borrowing – it is added by the musician and experienced by the listener, yet remains an independent entity from the dish. The Beatles commonly present borrowed material ironically in order to enrich the effect of the parody; however, parody and irony are not exclusive with one another.

The use of doo-wop in “Happiness Is A Warm Gun” is ironic because The Beatles evoke an older and innocent genre to deal with contemporary and provocative lyrics. The combination of contemporary issues with a blast-from-the-past is a highly effective way in which The Beatles stimulate critical reflection. The audience is able to detect this irony and understand that doo-wop is used intentionally and not as an arbitrary reference. Irony also helps distance The Beatles typical pop/rock core sound from many of the different styles and genres they parody. It would be a far stretch to claim that The Beatles are a doo-wop band or that doo-wop is even an important stylistic trait of their core sound. Doo-wop, then, should not be thought of as an extension of the band's core style, but rather as a style or genre from which they draw for the sake of parody. As discussed in Chapter 2, I believe that we should interpret their use of parody as an emerging trait of their songwriting as well as an important motivator behind their musical diversity.

³⁰ Linda Hutcheon, *Irony's Edge: The Theory and Politics of Irony* (London & New York: Routledge, 1994), 11.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 11.

Irony in popular music goes beyond individual songs and can run throughout entire albums. In the case of an album, it is often produced through the juxtaposition of styles or themes. The Beatles played an important role in changing the audiences' perception of an album as a single artistic work in which songs come together to create a unified expression. This idea snowballed in later years to become the "concept album" – a pop album filled with songs that are bound together by common themes, lyrics, or recurring musical gestures. The album, then, provides the listener with another set of contextual boundaries from which they can interpret irony and parody. Elements of irony and parody may rely on the specific placement of musical materials (genres, style, content) in relation to other songs. An example of this can be found in "When I'm Sixty-Four." Released on *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Heart's Club Band*, the song is so immersed in the English music hall that, upon first listening, it seems to lack many of the qualities of parody. However, when contextualized against the rest of the album, the song quickly attains an ironic quality through the way it portrays the naiveté and innocence of the past. By adopting this new ironic context from the album, the audience becomes absorbed in a compelling commentary on the relationship between past and present.

1.4 Use of "Parody" in Beatles Scholarship

Many critics and scholars, however, fail to identify parody as a rhetorical device or underlying theme in the music of The Beatles. Scholars such as Charles Gower Price, Ed Whitley, and Jeffrey Roessner acknowledge obvious elements of parody in select songs, but do little to elucidate the critical meaning behind the parody, nor its larger function in the band's eclectic sound. In his research on the American influences on The Beatles, Price recognizes parody within the band's catalogue. For example, he believes that The Beatles reserved specific genres, such as Country and Western, for "a kind of parody."³² He does not, however, specify examples of parody in songs nor how The Beatles transform the conventions of the genre in order to construct the parody. Critical commentary is left entirely to be pondered by the reader. Price states that *The White*

³² Charles Gower Price, "Sources of American Styles in the Music of the Beatles," *American Music* 15 (1997): 215.

Album is “packed with direct and indirect American references,” and discusses parody as a way in which the band references other artists.³³ His analysis, however, focuses on the reference to other artists’ styles in specific songs, while ignoring the musical borrowing and critical elements of parody.

Scholars often restrict the discussion of parody in the music of The Beatles to *The White Album*. Jeffrey Roessner discusses the function of parody on the album in relation to its critical reception. While the New Left criticized the album as evading important political issues of the day, Roessner argues that the band employs parody as a means of a political commentary. He states: “the Beatles turn to parody serves not as an escape from but as a specific response to key cultural tensions: the self-reflexivity and ironic appropriation of various styles on the White Album allowed the Beatles to contest the commodification of rock music even as they helped redefine the relationship between artistic style and political relevance.”³⁴ He provides a detailed historical account of the reception history of the album as well as a description of the artistic and political landscape during its release. Although he does attribute a specific political function to parody, there is little discussion about the music and its relation with other artists or styles. Furthermore, there is no mention of parody as a recurring practice outside of *The White Album*. Roessner does, however, introduce postmodern concepts to the music of The Beatles. Engaging with such scholars as Jon Landau, Walter Benjamin, and Umberto Eco, Roessner argues that “the appropriation of various styles does not suggest exhaustion or escape; rather it signals their knowledge of and implication in musical past.”³⁵

Postmodern concepts prove to be a recurring aesthetical framework in which scholars appraise the musical diversity of The Beatles. In his analysis of *The White Album*, Ed Whitely uses Jean-François Lyotard’s notion of “bricolage” to describe fragmentation and reference to past culture. Lyotard defines a bricolage as an “artistic expression that uses multiple quotations of elements from earlier styles or periods, with

³³ Ibid., 227.

³⁴ Jeffrey Roessner, “We All Want To Change The World: Postmodern Politics and The Beatles’ White Album,” in *Reading The Beatles: Cultural Studies, Literary Criticism, and the Fab Four*, ed. Kenneth Womack and Todd F Davis (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2006), 148.

³⁵ Ibid., 156.

disregard for their environments.”³⁶ Lyotard’s notion of bricolage can be extended to other albums of The Beatles, in which disparate genres and references to past music are removed from their original contexts and juxtaposed against each other in order to create a sense of fragmentation. Whitely suggests that the ordering of songs on *The White Album* is similar to the contradiction of “expected narratives in motion” found in postmodern works. Accompanied with the references to past music, the disrupted narratives could lead some listeners to interpret the album as a “parody album,” as the overall effect can be quite comical.³⁷ Although Whitely introduces parody as a major element in *The White Album* and contextualizes it within postmodern concepts, he largely uses the term “parody” in the comical sense and not as a broader critical device discussed above. His musical analysis is also insufficient as he attributes the label “parody” to particular songs without discussing borrowing or critical meaning.³⁸

That is not to say, however, that scholars have not scrutinized The Beatles’ interaction with pre-existing music. Mark Spicer has written about issues of intertextuality in popular music and the music of The Beatles. In particular, he discusses three songs that include reference to other works: “All You Need Is Love,” “Glass Onion,” and “Because.”³⁹ Although Spicer’s analysis enriches our understanding of pre-existing music in those respective songs, he limits the discussion to works of quotation. In order to understand the function of parody in The Beatles, we must also include generic and stylistic allusions. Spicer believes that although The Beatles were not the only pop and rock composers in the latter half of the 1960s to adopt postmodern ideals, they were the first to employ bricolage as a consistent feature of their compositional practice.⁴⁰

The understanding of parody put forth here is both specific, yet non-restrictive, and is tailored towards popular music. While emphasizing the different methods and embodiments of parody, it also acknowledges many of the complex layers, such as irony,

³⁶ Jean-François Lyotard, *The Postmodern Explained* (Minneapolis: University of Minneapolis Press, 1992), 15.

³⁷ Ed Whitely, “The Postmodern White Album,” in *The Beatles, Popular Music and Society: A Thousand Voices*, ed. Ian Inglis (Houndmills: MacMillan Press Ltd, 2000), 116.

³⁸ Although Whitely does provide a detailed discussion of “Back In The USSR” – on The Beatles’ most obvious examples of parody. “Back In The USSR” will be discussed in greater detail in later chapters.

³⁹ Spicer, “Strategic Intertextuality in Three of John Lennon’s Late Beatles Songs,” 347 – 75.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 351.

that work together to form parody. As will be discussed in the following chapters, parody is used as a recurring gesture to enrich their songwriting on an LP (i.e. *The Beatles*) or as a broader and more abstract device that provides the premise for an entire album (i.e. *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band*). The next chapter will concentrate more on the use of different styles and the role of imitation in The Beatles' music. From this discussion, we will see how the band began to increasingly incorporate parody as their careers progressed. The use of parody also correlates with the band's growing palette of musical genres and suggests another dimension to their eclectic sound.

Chapter 2: Parody as Imitation

2.1 Genre in the Music of The Beatles

Since the first outbreaks of “Beatlemania” in 1963, The Beatles have captivated audiences. Despite a relatively short career of eight years, they topped *Billboard’s* Hot 100 chart twenty times and have sold more number-one albums and more singles in the UK than any other artist.⁴¹ According to the Recording Industry Association of America, The Beatles are the highest-selling musical act in the United States, while the BBC estimates they have sold 600 million records worldwide.⁴² Their success, however, is not exclusively commercial. They enjoy an enduring popularity with critics and have cemented their position as one of the most celebrated acts in popular music. While it would be difficult to attribute their success to a single factor, much of the band’s wide appeal could be explained by the variety of their music. The Beatles developed an eclectic sound by combining different genres. Many listeners of albums such as *Revolver* and *Sgt. Pepper’s Lonely Hearts Club Band* will note the seamless ways through which the band shifts genres. For The Beatles, it seemed as if almost any genre was fair game.

Their musical variety can be attributed to the structure of the band. The Beatles fostered one of the most successful songwriting partnerships in the history of popular music: John Lennon and Paul McCartney. In many famous songwriting partnerships of the 1960s, one person composes the music while the other writes the words (i.e. Burt Bacharach/Hal David, Jerry Leiber/Mike Stoller, Gerry Goffin/Carole King). The Beatles, however, took a different approach. While Lennon and McCartney would occasionally compose together; more often than not, one would independently devise a

⁴¹ “Hot 100 55th Anniversary by The Numbers: Top 100 Artists, Most No. 1’s, Biggest No. 2s & More,” *Billboard Magazine*, August 2, 2013, accessed January 24, 2015, <http://www.billboard.com/articles/columns/chart-beat/5557800/hot-100-55th-anniversary-by-the-numbers-top-100-artists-most-no.html>.

⁴² “Top Selling Artists,” *RIAA.com*, accessed January 24, 2015, http://www.riaa.com/goldandplatinum.php?content_selector=top-selling-artists.html. Russell Hotten, “The Beatles at 50: From Fab Four to fabulously wealthy,” *BBC*, October 4, 2012, accessed January 24, 2015, <http://www.bbc.com/news/business-19800654.html>.

song and later receive feedback or help from the other. Despite retaining the Lennon-McCartney credit throughout their tenure with The Beatles, both songwriters became more autonomous over time, and their styles grew further apart.⁴³ As well, George Harrison emerged as a third songwriter among the band and would contribute more material in later albums. By the end, The Beatles had three individual songwriters, each with their own distinct compositional voice as well as their own set of musical influences and outlooks on life and society. Lennon is often perceived as the introspective rocker, whose socially-conscious reflections resonated with the counterculture; McCartney was the whimsical pop-melodist, who had an interest in pop conventions that sparked exploration of different styles and sounds of the past and present; and Harrison was the introspective guru, whose newfound spirituality guided him towards music of enlightenment. The result was a potpourri of contrasting musical styles and artistic perspectives.

As the years progressed, their music also became more experimental and broke away from the formulas and conventions that characterized the industry. Beginning with 1965's *Rubber Soul*, John, Paul, George, and Ringo began to shake off their "teen-pop" personas and adopted the roles of serious artists striving to advance popular music. They embraced the radical cultural changes of the 1960s and offered a soundtrack to the decade. While exploring innovations in recording technology of the day, they also expanded their horizons and attempted to connect popular music with Western art music and different musical traditions from around the world. They maintained their roots in rock 'n' roll and pop, but also began exploring other genres of music such as folk, blues, country, psychedelia, gospel, Baroque pop, and Hindustani ragas, just to name a few. They were also influenced by art music and avant-garde composers of the day, such as Karlheinz Stockhausen, whose electronic works inspired The Beatles to experiment with tape music in such songs as "Tomorrow Never Knows" and "Revolution no. 9."⁴⁴ As a result, one would have great difficulty in choosing a single song to capture the music of The Beatles, or even a song that would represent an LP from the latter half of their career.

⁴³ More detail regarding the nature of the Lennon-McCartney songwriting partnership can be found in Todd Compton, "McCartney or Lennon?: Beatle Myths and the Composition of the Lennon-McCartney Songs," *Journal of Popular Culture* 22/2 (1988): 99 – 131.

⁴⁴ David Pritchard and Alan Lysaght, eds. *The Beatles: An Oral History* (New York: Hyperion, 1998), 209.

Their eclectic sound is an important distinction between The Beatles and their contemporaries. The Rolling Stones and The Kinks are two groups that often evoked other genres, although to a lesser extent. In his 1967 review of *Sgt. Pepper's*, critic William Mann singled out The Rolling Stones as a group on par with The Beatles in respect to genre and musical variety, stating: “most groups are content to put over something enthusiastic and with a big, noisy sound, though the Beatles, the Rolling Stones and others have shown that beat music can be as diverse as any other.”⁴⁵ Mann is correct in making this connection, but a look at the careers of both The Beatles and The Rolling Stones reveals that the latter was not as diverse or experimental as the former. While The Rolling Stones did experiment with other genres and references to past music in such songs as “Lady Jane,” “Paint It Black,” “You Can’t Always Get What You Want” and “Ruby Tuesday,” these tendencies can largely be attributed to multi-instrumentalist Brian Jones. Although not a prolific songwriter, Jones played a significant role in introducing new styles to the group as well as instruments from outside the typical rock ensemble, such as sitar, dulcimer, and recorder. After Jones’ dismissal in 1969, this experimental aspect of their music left with him, and, for the most part, The Rolling Stones returned to their roots in rock ‘n’ roll and blues. Other musicians such as The Beach Boys and Bob Dylan had a major impact on The Beatles, but did not possess the same degree of musical variety encountered in the music of The Beatles. For example, Dylan’s *Highway 61 Revisited* (1965) and The Beach Boys’ *Pet Sounds* (1966) were among the most significant albums of the 1960s, but were regarded for their compositional craftsmanship instead of generic complexity. Frank Zappa and The Mothers of Invention, however, are one of the few artists with whom The Beatles can be compared in this respect. From his early days, Zappa was continuously experimenting with pre-existing genres such as R&B, rock, jazz, and the avant-garde. Although his music developed a strong cult following, the harmonic, rhythmic, and formal complexity of his music prevented Zappa from enjoying the widespread appeal of The Beatles.

⁴⁵ William Mann, “Those semi, demi, quasi, Beatle- Bachs,” *The Globe and Mail*, June 17, 1967, A10 – 11.

2.2 “Imitation” in the Music of The Beatles

While the individual styles of each songwriter and a collective desire to experiment are certainly key elements to The Beatles’ musical diversity, the use of imitation is an important, yet underappreciated, factor. It is important to distinguish the meaning of the word “imitation” in this context. For this discussion, imitation is employed in the general sense, that is the simulation or copying of something else. It does not refer to the polyphonic device. Although there could be a number of terms describing how The Beatles draw from other artists, imitation works best for popular music. For example, Burkholder defines modeling as “a work or section on an existing piece, assuming its structure, incorporating part of its melodic material, imitating its form or procedures, or using it as a model in some other way.”⁴⁶ As discussed in the previous chapter, Burkholder’s borrowing typology is primarily based on the music of Charles Ives and has limited application to popular music. More specifically, his idea of modeling describes the relationship between two specific pieces and not how a song borrows from a stylistic element of another genre. Imitation, in this discussion, describes a broader reproduction and borrowing of conventions from another song or style. Inevitably, imitation is an element found, to some degree, in every musician’s work. Composers and popular musicians, especially those who are early in their careers, are constantly building upon conventions and devices from other musicians in order to contribute to a style or genre. Very few burst on to the musical scene with a sound completely removed from other sounds and styles. The Beatles, however, emphasized imitation to the extent that it becomes a fundamental quality of their music. They frequently emulated other artists and styles throughout their career in order to enrich and diversify their songwriting styles and reflect on past traditions.

The roots of The Beatles’ penchant for imitation can be traced back to their hometown of Liverpool. As a port city on the Western coast of England, Liverpool was often the first stop for freighters bringing North American goods, including the latest American rock ‘n’ roll and R&B records. The city gave Lennon, McCartney, Harrison, and Starr an early glance at the next big thing in American music as well as the

⁴⁶ Burkholder, “The Uses of Existing Music,” 854.

opportunity to hear the records of more obscure artists brought over by sailors. The Beatles took advantage of this and would integrate these different styles with the Merseybeat sound. Merseybeat (or Beat music) was a genre of rock popular throughout Liverpool and other cities along the River Mersey in the early – mid 1960s. It was music for English dancehalls that combined the guitar-driven sound of rock ‘n’ roll, prominent electric bass and drums, and elements of 1950s English Skiffle music (such as a harmonica). The Beatles’ second single “Please Please Me” (1963) draws upon the Beat sound through its pounding bass and drum section and catchy harmonica/guitar lick. Notable examples of other Beat music groups include Gerry and the Pacemakers and Herman’s Hermits.

One of the most significant influences for The Beatles was, of course, rock ‘n’ roll. They were drawn to the genre’s vibrant bluesy vocals, as displayed by Elvis Presley, as well as to the loud and repetitive instrumental accompaniment of such artists as Chuck Berry and Jerry Lee Lewis. Lennon later recounted: “It was the only thing to get through to me [...] when I was fifteen. Rock and roll was real, everything else was unreal [...] something in it [...] is true.”⁴⁷ Lennon also later admitted to basing his early stage antics on those of Gene Vincent.⁴⁸ By age 15, Paul McCartney had perfected his Little Richard routine and was able to impress his friends and later his audiences with a powerful rock voice. McCartney’s father, James, later said: “I used to think it was awful, absolutely terrible. I couldn’t believe anybody was really like that. It wasn’t until years later, when I saw Little Richard on the same bill as The Beatles, that I realized how good Paul’s impersonation was.”⁴⁹ George Harrison, too, drew heavily from American rockabilly musicians, most notably Chet Atkins and Carl Perkins, from whom he adopted a Rockabilly guitar style. He even based his early stage name “Carl Harrison” on the latter.⁵⁰

Buddy Holly and the Crickets were an early influence on the songwriting of Lennon and McCartney. According to Holly’s widow Maria, “Paul told me that Buddy

⁴⁷ Jan Wenner, *Lennon Remembers: The Rolling Stone Interviews* (New York: Popular Library, 1971), 101.

⁴⁸ Charles Gower Price, “Sources of American Styles in the Music of the Beatles,” *American Music* 15 (1997): 212.

⁴⁹ Hunter Davies, *The Beatles: The Only Authorized Biography*, 2nd rev. ed. (London: Arrow Books, Ltd., 1985), 34.

⁵⁰ Bill Harry, *Ultimate Beatles Encyclopedia* (New York: Hyperion, 1992), 517.

had more influence on his early songwriting than any other singer.”⁵¹ The Beatles admired the group for both their playing as well as their unique songwriting style, which would shift between rock ‘n’ roll and pop. The Beatles’ first LP *Please Please Me* (1963), similarly alternates between harder rock sounds and sentimental pop tunes. Lennon later admitted that “The Beatles” was a pun based on Buddy Holly and the Crickets as well as the Merseybeat scene: “The idea of beetles came into my head. I decided to spell it B-E-A-T-L-E-S to make it look like beat music, just as a joke.”⁵²

Besides imitating different artists’ styles, The Beatles also recorded songs by many American rock ‘n’ roll acts, including: Little Richard’s “Long Tall Sally” and “Kansas City/Hey-Hey-Hey”, Chuck Berry’s “Roll Over Beethoven” and “Rock ‘n’ Roll Music”, Carl Perkins’ “Matchbox” “Everybody’s Trying to Be My Baby” and “Honey, Don’t”, and Buddy Holly’s “Words Of Love.” Many of these versions were taken from the band’s early stage act and reflect their first experiences with rock ‘n’ roll; however, an important distinction must be made between these versions (or covers) and imitation as a broader device. Although cover versions may provide an ideal outlet for The Beatles to replicate their favourite artists, imitation is restricted to original compositions in which the band borrows conventions or sounds from other musicians or genres. This distinction does not, however, diminish the influence of these cover versions on the band. Discussing the inception of the band’s early sound, George Harrison remarked: “we didn’t believe our sound was different enough as a sound. As far as we were concerned, we began performing American rock ‘n’ roll and rhythm & blues, and our own songs incorporated those elements.”⁵³ By performing these songs, The Beatles developed their rock-driven vocal delivery, energetic rhythms, and loud bass sounds that they would include in their own songs, while picking up elements of the blues and country that they would explore later in their career.⁵⁴

⁵¹ Ibid., 313.

⁵² Davies, *The Beatles*, 71 – 72.

⁵³ As quoted in Paul Gleed, “‘The Rest Of You, If You’ll Just Rattle Your Jewelry’ The Beatles and Questions of Mass and High Culture,” in *Reading The Beatles: Cultural Studies, Literary Criticism, and the Fab Four*, ed. Kenneth Womack and Todd F. Davis (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2006), 165.

⁵⁴ Although the blues is less common in the music of The Beatles, albums such as *Beatles For Sale* (1964) and *Rubber Soul* (1965) exhibit influences of country and rockabilly.

R&B, Soul, and Motown musicians were also a powerful influence on The Beatles in the early stages of their career. In particular, they were fascinated by music that resonated with African-American audiences. Paul McCartney recalls: “If The Beatles ever wanted a sound it was R&B. That’s what we listened to, what we used to like and what we wanted to be like. Black, that was basically it. Arthur Alexander ... whenever we were asked who our favourite people were we’d say ‘Black, R&B, Motown’.”⁵⁵ The band released several versions of R&B hits, including Smokey Robinson and The Miracles’ “You Really Got A Hold On Me,” and Barrett Strong’s “Money (That’s All I Want).” From R&B and Motown musicians, The Beatles learned to write songs beyond the basic 12-bar blues progression of rock ‘n’ roll and adopted a more soulful vocal style. Charlie Gillett observes that “the group’s vocal style was a derivative of two American styles ... the hard rock ‘n’ roll style of singers like Little Richard and Larry Williams and the soft gospel call-and-response style of the Shirelles, the Drifters, and the rest of the singers produced by Leiber and Stoller, Luther Dixon, and Berry Gordy.”⁵⁶

Call-and-response vocals were an important element of The Beatles’ early sound and established a connection between the band and American Girl Groups of the late 1950s and early 1960s. In addition to imitating vocal styles, The Beatles sang about several themes and perspectives commonly found in Girl Group music. According to Sheila Whiteley, the sharing of knowledge (or gossip) and the act of taking a friend aside to pass on such gossip are two fundamental themes in Girl Group music.⁵⁷ Such friendly interaction plays out in The Beatles’ “She Loves You,” in which the narrator confronts a friend to assure him of his partner’s devotion while encouraging reconciliation between the two. The Beatles also recorded versions of songs by Girl Groups, including “Baby, It’s You” by The Shirelles, and “Please Mr. Postman” by The Marvelettes.⁵⁸ Whiteley argues that by adopting the Girl Group sound The Beatles were able to present

⁵⁵ Mark Lewison, *The Beatles: Recording Sessions* (New York: Harmony Books, 1988), 7.

⁵⁶ Charlie Gillett, *Sound of the City: The Rise of Rock ‘n’ Roll*, 2nd ed. (New York: Da Capo Press, 1996), 263.

⁵⁷ Sheila Whiteley, “‘Love, love love’: Representations of Gender and Sexuality in Selected Songs by the Beatles,” in *Reading the Beatles: Cultural Studies, Literary Criticism, and the Fab Four*, ed. Kenneth Womack and Todd F. Davis (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2006), 61 – 62.

⁵⁸ Other covers include: “Chains” by The Cookies, “Boys” by the Shirelles, and “Devil In His Heart” by the Donays.

themselves as relatable to the many teenage girls of their fan base.⁵⁹ Furthermore, Barbara Ehrenreich, Elizabeth Hess, and Gloria Jacobs believe that the band's adaptation of the Girl Group style, along with their high-pitched voices and "mop-top" hairstyles, was a part of a larger androgynous image that disrupted the rigid gender norms of America and helped ignite Beatlemania.⁶⁰

Even after constructing their early Beat rock sound, The Beatles continued to adapt other artists and genres either to experiment or to add variety to their songwriting. Paul McCartney greatly admired many pop and jazz tunes of the previous generation and would include them into The Beatles' repertoire. Early versions of "Til There Was You" (a hit from the 1957 musical *The Music Man*) and Lenny Welch's "A Taste Of Honey" display McCartney's pop/jazz vocal style and, according to Price, were forerunners for such songs as "And I Love Her", "Yesterday", and "Michelle."⁶¹ By the beginning of 1965, Lennon was a great admirer of Bob Dylan and began adapting his intellectual lyrical style and folk sound to several Beatles songs. In particular, Lennon borrows Dylan's singing/songwriting style in "I'm A Loser", "You've Got To Hide Your Love Away", and "Norwegian Wood (This Bird Has Flown)," the latter of which provoked a response from Dylan in his own "4th Time Around" from *Blonde on Blonde* (1966).⁶² George Harrison played an integral role in introducing the sitar and ragas of Hindustani music into popular music. He would also include additional elements of Hindustani music in pop and rock genres by using drone, static harmonies, non-Western rhythms, and modality as heard in "Here Comes The Sun", "Blue Jay Way", and "Love You To." With all these different influences running throughout their music, it should not be surprising that The Beatles' initial beat sound was all but eclipsed by the 1966 LP *Revolver*. Imitation, however, continued to permeate into their evolving core sound. For example, McCartney, by the time of *Revolver*, developed a more melodic and contrapuntal bass style after listening to Motown and soul records (in particular the bass

⁵⁹ Whiteley, "Love, love love," 57.

⁶⁰ Barbara Ehrenreich, Elizabeth Hess, and Gloria Jacobs, "Beatlemania: Girls just want to have fun," in *The Adoring Audience: Fan Culture and Popular Media*, ed. Lisa A. Lewis (London: Routledge, 1992), 101.

⁶¹ Price, "Sources of American Styles," 221.

⁶² In "4th Time Around," Dylan crafts a very similar melody as that of "Norwegian Wood" and places his narrator in a similar situation as Lennon's narrator. "4th Time Around" concludes with the line: "I never asked for much, I never asked for your crutch, now don't ask for mine." Lennon interpreted this as a warning from Dylan about imitating his style.

playing of session legends James Jamerson and The Wrecking Crew bassist Carol Kaye). The Beatles also strived to produce more complex vocal harmonies after being exposed to the records of The Beach Boys (*Pet Sounds*, in particular) and The Byrds. Notable examples include “Here, There, And Everywhere”, “Because”, and “If I Needed Someone.”

Although the elaborate vocal harmonies of “If I Needed Someone” exhibit evolution in The Beatles’ sound, the song also displays distinct qualities of another artist. Appearing on 1965’s *Rubber Soul*, “If I Needed Someone” is a Harrison composition that draws from the 12-string electric guitar riffs and vocal harmonies of The Byrds. According to Roger McGuinn, lead singer and guitarist of The Byrds, Harrison is said to have based the opening guitar riff on their “The Bells of Rhymney.”⁶³ Both tracks are built around a syncopated 12-string electric guitar riff that arpeggiates a single major chord with added 2nd and 4th suspensions. Harrison first began using the Rickenbacker 360/12 guitar on the 1964 LP *A Hard Day’s Night*, where it helped the band create the famous opening chord heard in the title track. Harrison popularized the Rickenbacker 360/12 by introducing it to such acts as The Byrds, who would then integrate the instrument into their own signature folk-rock sound.⁶⁴ “If I Needed Someone” also features prominent three-part vocal harmonies sung by Harrison, Lennon, and McCartney in very similar style to such Byrds’ songs as “Turn! Turn! Turn!”, “Mr. Tambourine Man”, and “I Knew I’d Want You.”

2.3 Parody as Imitation

As shown in the examples above, The Beatles approached imitation like students honing their craft. They used it primarily as a way to learn new styles and diversify their songwriting. However as their careers progressed, the focus of imitation changed. The Beatles would increasingly imitate an artist or genre with the intent of adding a distinct flair to a particular song instead of contributing to a more generalized sound. Imitation provided the band with an outlet to reflect on different musical styles and expand the

⁶³ Johnny Rogan, *The Byrds: Timeless Flight Revisited: The Sequel* (Rogan House, 1997), 223.

⁶⁴ Simon Leng, *While My Guitar Gently Weeps: The Music of George Harrison* (Milwaukee: Hal Leonard Corporation, 2003), 14

boundaries of contemporary genres. They also began using imitation in order to evoke certain kinds of music and create new meanings from it. Elements of pastiche and parody can be found in many of their later songs. Parody can be thought of as another layer of imitation; however, this time with the purpose of engaging the audience in a critical commentary with the music. Dependent on a reference to other works, parody will always be performed through imitation. Much like their approach to imitation, The Beatles will often parody artists or styles that they admire, but not always with satirical intent. Parody transforms the pre-existing associations of a piece or genre of music by placing it in a new context. It is often used as a way to reflect on nostalgia or produce a commentary about music and society and the changes that have occurred in both over a period of time. Sometimes, however, it will simply be used as a humorous device. The Beatles were aware of this new direction in their music, and even used the word parody to describe it. As Lennon recounted: “We all were a bit self-conscious and The Beatles were super self-conscious people about parody of Americans which we do and have done. I know we developed our style, but we still in a way parody American music.”⁶⁵

One of the earliest examples in which The Beatles evoke critical commentary from pre-existing music is their version of “Act Naturally.” The original was a number one hit on the U.S. *Billboard* Hot Country chart for Buck Owens and the Buckaroos in 1963. The song depicts a narrator telling his lover about his expected new fame as a movie star and his role as the fool, while stating coyly “all I gotta do is act naturally.” When comparing the two recordings, it is evident that The Beatles closely adhere to the original. They recreate the shuffle rhythms and bright hi-gain guitar twang of the country genre, and Ringo adds a slight country flavour to his voice. Their version enters the realm of parody, however, when we consider its context. “Act Naturally” was the B-side to their hit “Yesterday” and appeared on their 1965 *Help!* LP – the soundtrack to the band’s second feature film. In *Help!*, Ringo, like the rest of the band, portrays a fictionalized version of himself and is placed in scenarios that deal with fanatical audiences. In particular, The Beatles must escape from a crazed cult wanting to sacrifice Ringo because he wears their sacrificial ring. The song’s narrator sings of his forthcoming fame at the expense of his pride with “Might win an Oscar you can never tell/The movie’s gonna

⁶⁵ Wenner, *Lennon Remembers*, 34.

make me a big star/Cause I can play the part so well,” and “I hope you’ll come and see me in the movies/Then I know that you will plainly see/The biggest fool that ever hit the big time/And all I gotta do is act naturally.” Given the situation of The Beatles, “Act Naturally” quickly adopts an ironic quality. The Beatles, in reality, were already household names struggling with fame before their film debuts. “Act Naturally” also draws attention to the band’s portrayal of themselves on film, as they play roles in which they need only to act naturally, and provides a (perhaps tongue-in-cheek) reflection on their appearances in film. Throughout their careers, The Beatles would star in movies about themselves, including: *A Hard Day’s Night* (1964), *Help!* (1965), *Magical Mystery Tour* (1967), and *Let It Be* (1970). Some of these appearances, including the one in *Help!*, were met with reluctance and skepticism by members of the band. Lennon recounted: “The movie was out of control. With *A Hard Day’s Night*, we had a lot of input, and it was semi-realistic. But with *Help!*, Dick Lester didn’t tell us what it was all about.”⁶⁶

As a cover version, “Act Naturally” is worthy of mention in this discussion, despite not exemplifying imitation. It is arguably the first time in which The Beatles borrow pre-existing material in order to transform its original meaning and impart a new message. From this cover version, The Beatles seemed to have realized the critical potential of pre-existing music, as they would soon begin turning towards parody in their own compositions as a way to impart meaning. Attached in the appendix is a table that illustrates the prevalence of parody on albums of The Beatles. It is clear that the band employed parody increasingly over time, with the 1968 LP *The Beatles* representing the height of the use of the approach.

While other musicians of the 1960s may draw from other artists or styles for similar reasons as discussed above, the effect and prevalence of parody further distinguishes The Beatles from their contemporaries. British pop/rock bands of the 1960s, such as The Rolling Stones or The Kinks, may engage with other genres of the past, but they do not typically present them in ironic or humorous ways or as a means to make social commentary. Even further removed are American acts such as The Beach Boys, who focused entirely on building upon their own signature sound, instead of referencing

⁶⁶ John Borack, *John Lennon – Life Is What Happens: Music, Memories, and Memorabilia* (Iola: Krause Publications, 2010), 60. Dick Lester directed both *A Hard Day’s Night* and *Help!*.

others. Although Bob Dylan was frequently reinventing himself as an artist by borrowing from pre-existing American styles throughout the 1960s, he did not often engage in musical parody. Frank Zappa and The Mothers of Invention would frequently evoke pre-existing music in works of satire. Albums such as *Cruising with Ruben & the Jets* (1968) create a spoof of doo-wop, while *We're Only In It For The Money* (1968) satirizes The Beatles' *Sgt. Pepper's*, which Zappa felt expressed insincerity on the part of The Beatles, as well as the selling out of youth culture.⁶⁷ While references to pre-existing music and genres in Zappa's music deserve attention, especially considering their use as a reflection on The Beatles, it should be noted that he often takes a satirical approach in his music. Often, he will reference another artist or style with the intent of ridiculing or mocking that reference, and not in the same vein as the definition of parody proposed in the previous chapter. As discussed earlier, parody transforms the meaning of the hypotext, whereas Zappa's use of pre-existing material is more akin to travesty or burlesque, which primarily function as a way of ridiculing the hypotext. The Beatles, on the other hand, rarely parody another work or genre with the intent of ridiculing it.

Having discussed the broader role of parody in The Beatles' music, we can now concentrate on particular examples in their catalogue. The following chapters will discuss how The Beatles evoke certain artists or styles, what meaning can be derived, and how each parody functions in relation to other material on an album. The album proves to be an important contextual framework for how The Beatles use parody. In *The White Album*, for example, parody interacts with issues of postmodernism that have been discussed by other scholars, such as bricolage and fragmentation. These elements enrich the effects of parody for the listener and create a rich interplay of musical diversity and critical meaning.

⁶⁷ David Fricke, *Lumpy Money* (linear notes), Frank Zappa, Zappa Records, 2008.

Chapter 3: Parody on The White Album

“We felt it was a time to step back because that is what we wanted to do. You can still make good music without going forward.”⁶⁸
– Paul McCartney

3.1 Historical Background

1968 proved to be a year of great turbulence and anxiety for the Western world. Firm shifts in policy from both the Left and the Right created shockwaves in the political landscapes of the United States and the United Kingdom. Following the Tet Offensive launched by the Viet Cong, the United States would escalate their military offense in Vietnam to even greater heights. Radical new political entities, such as the Black Panther Party and the New Left, lashed out in response to the Vietnam War, increased police brutality against protestors, and the civil rights leaders Martin Luther King and Senator Robert Kennedy were assassinated. By the end of the year, the “silent majority” of the United States had lost faith in President Lyndon B. Johnson and sought new leadership from Republican Richard Nixon. Tremors of unrest also rippled throughout Europe. The United Kingdom struggled to cope with the increasing number of protests and demonstrations from Left-leaning youth groups. Conservative MP Enoch Powell gave his infamous “Rivers of Blood” speech, in which he openly criticized the rise of immigration across the Commonwealth and the British Parliament’s new anti-discrimination legislation. The Summer of Love was over. The winter had begun.

It was only the year before, in 1967, that The Beatles released *Sgt. Pepper’s Lonely Hearts Club Band*, an album that defined the ambition and optimism of the growing counterculture for many listeners. Listeners once again turned to the decade’s most emblematic musical act in search of direction and rejuvenation. The band’s response, *The Beatles* (1968), is their only double LP and is immediately recognizable for its distinct blank canvas cover art; a cover that led to fans quickly bestowing the

⁶⁸ As quoted in Nicholas Schaffner, *The Beatles Forever* (New York: McGraw Hill, 1977), 111.

nickname of *The White Album*. The album is most noted for its musical diversity, as the 30 tracks shift between disparate genres and function similarly to vignettes of popular music rather than contributions to a single theme or narrative. The album displays a continued exploration of music of the past and a significant departure from the psychedelic sound of the band's previous material. Nicholas Schaffner claims: "*The White Album* includes pastiches of so many different styles of music, it virtually amounts to an irreverent encyclopedia of pop."⁶⁹ Milton Okun similarly praised the album's structure, calling it a "helter-skelter of cross-references, and a Monty Python's Flying Circus of bizarre inventiveness."⁷⁰

The interaction with past music and overall fragmented structure of *The White Album* did not meet universal acclaim. Although The Beatles had appeared on 1967's *Our World*, the first ever live international television broadcast, to proclaim that "All You Need Is Love" to audiences around the world, critics felt that the band's most recent eclectic mix of songs sidled around important political issues. The New Left, a radical body of Marxist academics and college students, advocated works that protested the racial, social, and economic inequalities of the United States.⁷¹ Demanding a response from The Beatles to the unrest of 1968, the New Left vigorously attacked *The White Album* for its "allegedly frivolous style and its disregard of serious political issues."⁷² John Landau, critic for the *London Daily Times*, argued: "The Beatles have used parody on this album precisely because they were afraid of confronting reality. It becomes a mask behind which they can hide from the urgencies of the moment."⁷³ Landau employs the term parody in its more general comedic sense and insists that it evaded critical commentary rather than providing it. Criticism of the album was not restricted to The Beatles' apparent lack of political commentary. Chris Salewicz considers the album to be

⁶⁹ Ibid., 113.

⁷⁰ Milton Okun, "To (Be)atles Or Not To (Be)eatle," in *The Beatles Book* (Chicago: Omnibus Press, 1986), 142 – 3.

⁷¹ Wini Breines, "'Of This Generation': The New Left and the Student Movement," in *Long Time Gone: Sixties American Then and Now*, ed. Alexander Bloom (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 25.

⁷² Jeffrey Roessner, "We All Want To Change The World: Postmodern Politics and the Beatles' White Album," in *Reading The Beatles: Cultural Studies, Literary Criticism, and the Fab Four*, ed. Kenneth Womack and Todd F. Davis (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2006), 149.

⁷³ As quoted in Jon Wiener, *Come Together: John Lennon in His Time* (London: Faber and Faber, 1995), 65.

“something of a failure [...] it consisted of rough sketches or songs.”⁷⁴ Philip Norman agrees and argues that the album was plagued with “songs or song fragments [that] reeked of the argument and self-indulgence that had gone into their making.”⁷⁵

3.2 The Beatles in 1968

1968 proved to be a turbulent year for The Beatles, just as it was for the world around them. On 27 August 1967, The Beatles’ manager Brian Epstein was found dead in his home after an overdose of Carbitral, a barbiturate used by Epstein as a sleep aid. He had worked closely with The Beatles from their early days and played an integral role in developing the band’s image and stage persona. Regarding the significance of Epstein to the group, McCartney noted: “If anyone was the Fifth Beatle, it was Brian.”⁷⁶ Lennon acknowledged the band’s inability to function without him, stating: “After Brian died we collapsed [...] I knew that were in trouble then. I didn’t really have any misconceptions about our ability to do anything other than play music and I was scared. I thought, ‘We’ve fuckin’ had it.’”⁷⁷ McCartney adopted the role of manager, which was greeted with some animosity from Lennon, Harrison, and Starr, until The Beatles appointed Allen Klein to become their new manager. The choice of Klein created tensions between McCartney and the rest of The Beatles, as he favoured Lee Eastman, McCartney’s future father-in-law, for the job. The loss of Epstein proved to be one from which The Beatles would never fully recover.

Following the release and critical panning of their 1967 film *Magical Mystery Tour*, The Beatles visited Rishikesh, India to study Transcendental Meditation at the ashram of Maharishi Mahesh Yogi in February 1968. The Maharishi became a prominent figure of Eastern spirituality in the West and also mentored British folk singer Donovan, Mike Love of The Beach Boys, actress Mia Farrow, and jazz flautist Paul Horn. The Beatles initially became interested in the meditation practices of the Maharishi after attending a seminar in Bangor, Wales in August 1967; however, they were forced to

⁷⁴ Chris Salewicz, *McCartney: The Biography* (London: Queen Anne Press, 1986), 202.

⁷⁵ Philip Norman, *Shout! The True Story of the Beatles* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1981), 340.

⁷⁶ As quoted in Deborah Geller, *The Brian Epstein Story* (London: Faber and Faber Ltd., 2000), 49.

⁷⁷ As quoted in Wenner, *Lennon Remembers*, 40.

postpone their studies due to Epstein's death. Their time in India was one of their most prolific, as the band penned many of the songs for *The White Album* along with material that would be included on subsequent albums. As Lennon recounted, "The entire *White Album* was written in India. We got our mantra, we sat in the mountains eating lousy vegetarian food, and writing all these songs. We wrote tons of songs in India."⁷⁸ However, Rishikesh was not the blissful retreat that the band had hoped for. Starr and his wife left after only ten days, citing unsettling cuisine, while Lennon and Harrison, who stayed for six weeks, grew disillusioned with the Maharishi after rumours emerged of his supposed sexual advances on female practitioners. Lennon would later express his anger about the incident on *The White Album* in "Sexy Sadie," which was originally a pointed attack on the guru entitled "Maharishi" before a change in title and lyrics at the request of Harrison.⁷⁹ When questioned about his change of heart by one of the Maharishi's followers, Lennon replied: "If you want to know why, ask your fuckin' precious guru."⁸⁰ McCartney, on the other hand, felt a sense of artistic rejuvenation and departed for home with the farewell: "Maharishi, you will never fathom what these days have meant to us. To have the unbroken peace and quiet and all your loving attention – only a Beatle could know the value of this."⁸¹ Although The Beatles arrived in Rishikesh together, they returned home individually.

Apple Corporation was an immediate challenge that awaited them upon returning to London. Originally devised as a strategy for dodging taxes, Apple had evolved into a multimedia business enterprise by 1968. The Beatles hoped to attain autonomy over their own record production and branch out into different areas of the industry, including A&R, publishing, electronics, and clothing.⁸² It also served as a means for the band to regain control over their business affairs after financial and legal instabilities following Epstein's death.⁸³ Apple, however, was rife with problems from the very beginning and was now hemorrhaging money at an alarming rate. The financial troubles of Apple were

⁷⁸ As quoted in Keith Badman, *The Beatles Off the Record: Outrageous Opinions and Unrehearsed Interviews* (London: Omnibus, 2001), 388.

⁷⁹ Bruce Spizer, *The Beatles on Apple Records* (New Orleans: 498 Productions, 2003), 112.

⁸⁰ As quoted in Nancy Cooke de Herrera, *All You Need Is Love: An Eyewitness Account of When Spirituality Spread from the East to The West* (San Diego: Jordere, 2003), 224.

⁸¹ As quoted in *Ibid.*, 237

⁸² Bob Spitz, *The Beatles: Biography* (Boston: Little Brown, 2005), 727 - 28

⁸³ Kenneth Womack. *Long and Winding Roads: The Evolving Artistry of The Beatles*. (New York: Continuum International Publishing Group Inc., 2007), 217.

an important motivation behind the hiring of Klein as well as an unneeded source of anxiety for The Beatles.

3.3 The Making of The White Album

The accumulated tension from these events plagued the studio sessions and is reflected in the music. Whereas studio time was usually an environment for collaboration and experimentation, the sessions for *The White Album* involved The Beatles working independently on their own material and recording in isolation. Harrison recalled: “There was also a lot more individual stuff and, for the first time, people were accepting that it was individual. I remember having three studios operating at the same time: Paul was doing some overdubs in one, John was in another, and I was recording some horns or something in a third [...] There was a lot of ego in the band, and there were a lot of songs that maybe should have been elbowed.”⁸⁴ *The White Album* proved to be Lennon, McCartney, Harrison, and Starr’s first assertions of individuality, as each artist sought autonomy from the rest of the group through their music. Lennon stated: “We made the double album, the set. It’s like if you took each track off it and made it all mine and all George’s [...] it was just me and a backing group, Paul and a backing group.”⁸⁵ Ian Inglis argues that *The White Album* does not function as an album by The Beatles but rather a collection of thirty separate songs by four performers who happened, for the time being, to be members of the same group, but who showed little willingness to cooperate with one another.⁸⁶

Evidently, this unwillingness to cooperate resulted in many confrontations between the band and the production staff. Ringo Starr briefly quit The Beatles after a particularly tense recording session, during which he struggled to provide a solid drumbeat. As a result, he is absent on the two opening tracks, “Back In The USSR” and “Dear Prudence,” in which we hear McCartney on the drums. Producer George Martin took an extended vacation in August and September 1968 after frequent quarreling with

⁸⁴ As quoted in The Beatles, *The Beatles Anthology* (San Francisco: Chronicle, 2000), 305.

⁸⁵ Wenner, *Lennon Remembers*, 51.

⁸⁶ Ian Inglis, “Revolution,” in *The Cambridge Companion To The Beatles*, ed. Kenneth Womack (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 118.

the band. Particularly tense situations involved Martin shouting at McCartney for his vocals on “Ob-La-Di, Ob-La-Da,” and Harrison asking the producer to leave a later session for being “too negative.”⁸⁷ Chris Thomas, Martin’s protégé, grabbed the reigns of the project and produced the remaining sessions. The Beatles also lost their longtime sound engineer, Geoff Emerick, who quit in July 1968 due to the tensions in the studio as well as the promotion of Thomas, whom he felt exuded an unwarranted sense of entitlement.⁸⁸ The overall atmosphere resulted in an album in which fragmentation and the individuality of each artistic voice become essential traits to the audience’s experience of the music.

3.4 The Music of The White Album

Despite the dysfunction of the recording sessions, *The White Album* has won the accolades of many critics due to its musical variety and irregularity. Kenneth Womack writes: “In contrast with its predecessors, *The White Album* eschews the micro-narratives of individual songs in favour of a long-playing song cycle in which the record’s discrete elements come together, as with an impressionistic painting, in order to form a magisterial, seamless whole.”⁸⁹ The comparisons between *The White Album* and the Romantic song-cycle or Impressionist art diminishes the prevalence of fragmentation and discontinuity in order to promote the idea of a “seamless whole.” Song cycles of the nineteenth century typically include a narrative or common theme and, at the very least, maintain a consistent musical style. *The White Album*, in contrast, is composed of discrete genres, themes, and moods by four different composers.

This lack of cohesion has inspired some scholars to apply concepts of postmodernism in order to enrich both our appreciation of the album and its connection to 1960s society. Ed Whitely, for example, argues that *The White Album* creates “a zone where meaning can be opened and where readers can participate in the discussion of what

⁸⁷ Kenneth Womack, *Long and Winding Roads: The Evolving Artistry of The Beatles* (New York: Continuum International Publishing Group Inc., 2007), 224.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 224. Emerick would later return to work on *Abbey Road* in 1969.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 220.

this album does in contemporary society.”⁹⁰ As discussed in Chapter 1, Whitely applies Jean-François Lyotard’s notion of bricolage to connect the diverse allusions to the past, or “out-of-place, non-rock songs,” with the album’s apparent “severance from the traditional reader-text contract.”⁹¹ After *Revolver* and *Sgt. Pepper’s*, listeners of The Beatles would likely have anticipated an LP that mixed different genres yet still maintained a consistent musical or lyrical theme. Whitely believes that, by engaging with disparate music, The Beatles force the listener to “stop to reconsider the question of what does, and does not constitute rock and roll,” while removing them from passive consumption and into an active discussion of function and the role of art.⁹² The bricolage aesthetic also provides The Beatles with a model to use musical fragmentation as a representation of contemporary society. As political bodies of the Right and Left each took further steps in their respective directions, reactions by the people, such as the emergence of the New Left and the election of President Richard Nixon, displayed the polarization and disconnect that existed within society of the late 1960s. Through the juxtaposition of disparate genres of the bricolage, The Beatles accentuate the differences between conventions and cultural contexts of each genre in order to create a reflection of society’s fragmentation.

In his conception of postmodernism, Umberto Eco identifies the past as a challenge for artists and believes that it “cannot really be destroyed, [...] [it] must be revisited: but with irony, not innocently.”⁹³ Throughout *The White Album*, references to past music are treated through a variety of ways, some ironic and some with a touch of innocence, in order to impart critical meaning and avoid a simplistic reproduction of the past. Inglis identifies elements of parody (in the comical sense), pastiche, reflexivity, plurality, irony, exaggeration, anti-representation, and meta-art throughout *The White Album*. Although this is not the first time in which The Beatles employ these devices, he argues that the integration of these traits on *The White Album* creates a “contemporary text whose music(s) described the present, recalled the past, and anticipated the future.”⁹⁴

⁹⁰ Whitely, “The Postmodern White Album,” 105.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 110.

⁹² *Ibid.*, 110.

⁹³ Umberto Eco, “Postmodernism, Irony, the Enjoyable,” Postscript to *The Name of the Rose* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1984), 67.

⁹⁴ Inglis, “Revolution,” 121.

John Landau, to recall, interpreted The Beatles most recent indulging of past music as escapism for contemporary issues. On the other hand, Jeffrey Roessner interprets these references as acknowledgements of history and the cultural meaning bound to past music.⁹⁵ The use of past music on *The White Album* goes beyond a simple recognition of history and evokes commentary through the juxtaposition of past genres.

The Beatles transform music of the past and have it interact with other genres as a means of inciting reflection on the contextual boundaries that separate different forms of music. This interaction is the product of the placement of songs on the album. For example, placing two songs of two contrasting genres or time periods next to each other accentuates each genre's distinguishing elements, be it musical properties or social connotations, while evoking a commentary from the ways in which the artist undermines those distinguishing elements in a large-scale work. Juxtaposition allows the artist to dismantle the historical boundaries that separate different genres and provide a composition in which the listener is able to experience a variety of different music not bound to historicity. As will be shown, the ordering of songs on *The White Album* greatly shapes the listener's perception of the music.

3.5 Parody on The White Album

While postmodern concepts create a framework in which we can appreciate the references to past music and fragmentation displayed on *The White Album*, they do not fully explain the ways in which The Beatles employ parody. The Beatles unremittingly use parody throughout *The White Album*, and parody, along with more generalized references to the past, is integral in creating the musical eclecticism of the album. As discussed in Chapter 2, parody provides the band with a means of creating a cultural critique of borrowed material while embracing their abilities to imitate other acts and genres. While the prevalence of parody on *The White Album* undoubtedly compliments a postmodern reading, the use of parody should primarily be regarded as a product of the band's compositional style and the circumstances in which the album was made. The events leading to the recording of the album as well as the studio atmosphere profoundly

⁹⁵ Roessner, "We All Want To Change The World," 156.

affected each individual member. With The Beatles distressed and forced to work independently for the first time, it was natural for their inclinations toward imitation and parody, which by this point had been firmly ingrained in their personal songwriting styles, to emerge as dominant features in the music. It should not be surprising, then, that Lennon, McCartney, Harrison, and Starr would use parody and imitation as compositional support beams during times of artistic isolation and conflict.

In addition to Landau and Inglis, many scholars and critics identify parody in *The White Album*. Allen Kozinn sees the album as a “fascinating compendium of compositional and performance styles [...] there are some marvelous parodies and tributes here.”⁹⁶ Ed Whitely argues that the interrupted narratives, allusions to past music, and placement of tracks results in an overall comic effect that may lead listeners to interpret *The White Album* as a “parody album.”⁹⁷ In each of the above-mentioned cases, the respective author uses the word parody in the comical sense of the term. As mentioned in previous chapters, parody is a broad device through which The Beatles critically reflect on borrowed material and is not necessarily dependent on humour. Distinction will continue to be made between this understanding of parody and other uses of the word throughout the chapter when necessary.

⁹⁶ Allan Kozinn, *The Beatles* (Singapore: Phaidon, 1995), 180.

⁹⁷ Whitely, “The Postmodern White Album,” 116.

<i>Track</i>	<i>Song</i>	<i>Genre</i>	<i>Composer</i>	<i>Parody</i>
1	Back In The USSR	Rock	McCartney	Yes
2	Dear Prudence	Rock	Lennon	
3	Glass Onion	Rock	Lennon	
4	Ob-La-Di, Ob-La-Da	Reggae/Ska	McCartney	
5	Wild Honey Pie	Experimental	McCartney	
6	The Continuing Story of Bungalow Bill	Children's Song/Folk	Lennon	Yes
7	While My Guitar Gently Weeps	Rock	Harrison	
8	Happiness Is A Warm Gun	Rock/Hard Rock/Doo-Wop	Lennon	Yes
9	Martha My Dear	Music Hall/Pop	McCartney	
10	I'm So Tired	Rock	Lennon	
11	Blackbird	Folk	McCartney	
12	Piggies	Baroque Pop	Harrison	Yes
13	Rocky Raccoon	Country/Folk	McCartney	Yes
14	Don't Pass Me By	Country	Starr	
15	Why Don't We Do It In The Road	Blues/Rock	McCartney	Yes
16	I Will	Pop	McCartney	
17	Julia	Folk	Lennon	
1	Birthday	Rock n Roll	McCartney	Yes
2	Yer Blues	Blues/Rock	Lennon	Yes
3	Mother Nature's Son	Folk	McCartney	
4	Everybody's Got Something To Hide Except Me And My Monkey	Hard Rock	Lennon	
5	Sexy Sadie	Rock	Lennon	
6	Helter Skelter	Hard Rock	McCartney	
7	Long, Long, Long	Folk/Spiritual	Harrison	
8	Revolution 1	Blues/Rock	Lennon	
9	Honey Pie	Music Hall/Pop Standard	McCartney	Yes
10	Savoy Truffle	Hard Rock/Soul	Harrison	
11	Cry Baby Cry	Children's Song/Folk	Lennon	
12	Revolution 9	Avant-Garde/Musique Concrete	Lennon	
13	Good Night	Hollywood Musical/Pop	Lennon	Yes

Table 3.1: Track listing of *The White Album* (1968).

Table 3.1 identifies the songs, songwriters, genres, and use of parody. Sources of imitation include ska and reggae (“Ob-La-Di, Ob-La-Da”), children’s song (“The Continuing Story of Bungalow Bill”), hard rock (“Helter Skelter”), folk (“Blackbird”), blues (“Revolution 1”), country (“Don’t Pass Me By”), Baroque pop (“Piggies”) and the music hall (“Martha My Dear”). The Beatles evoke many of these genres as a way to parody their musical conventions and/or toy with the listener’s expectations and associations with the music.

3.5.1 “Back In The USSR”

“Back In The USSR” is perhaps the clearest examples of parody in The Beatles’ catalogue. The song was written by McCartney and is the first track on *The White Album*. By drawing primarily from the music of Chuck Berry and The Beach Boys, “Back In The

USSR” parodies the American nationalist fantasies found in pop music of the 1950s and 1960s. Inglis considers the song to be an “oblique comment on the continuing Cold War and Russian occupation of Czechoslovakia.”⁹⁸ In particular, The Beatles draw from Chuck Berry’s “Back In The USA” and The Beach Boys “Surfin’ USA” and “California Girls.” In each song, the respective artist lauds American culture while traversing specific geographical locations. Chuck Berry’s “Back In The USA” was written after Berry’s return from an Australian tour in 1959 and opens with the narrator’s declamation of pride as his airplane touches the tarmac of an American airstrip: “Oh well, oh well, I feel so good today/We just touched ground on an international runway/Jet propelled back home from over seas to the USA.” Berry references specific elements of 1950s American youth culture such as drive-in theaters, corner cafes, and hamburgers sizzling on an open grill, while mentioning major cities such as Detroit, Chicago, New York, and Los Angeles. Aside from the obvious allusion to the title, “Back In The USSR” primarily parodies the travel motive that opens “Back In The USA.” The Beatles transform the perspective of the original, as now the narrator complains of the inconveniences of his flight: “Flew in from Miami beach BOAC/ Didn’t get to bed last night/On the way the paper bag was on my knee/Man, I had a dreadful flight.” The Beatles compliment this travel motive by dispersing the sounds of jumbo jets, taken from EMI’s tape library, throughout the track.⁹⁹ The song also evokes pastoral landscapes of the Soviet Union by referencing snow-peaked mountains, farmlands, and ringing balalaikas.

While they allude to Berry’s guitar-driven rock ‘n’ roll sound through prominent riffs and solos, The Beatles primarily parody the sound of The Beach Boys. The Beach Boys, one of the most popular American groups of the 1960s, created a distinct sound that combined complex vocal arrangements (with a signature high-wailing falsetto), up-beat driving rhythms, elaborate melodies, unconventional chord progressions, and lush studio sound. The Beach Boys’ leader, Brian Wilson, was inspired by producer Phil Spector and sought to recreate his “Wall of Sound” through layered instrumental arrangements, high amounts of reverb, and dense mono mixes. The Beach Boys were also part of a larger pop-cultural trend that ennobled California through a depiction of the state

⁹⁸ Inglis, “Revolution,” 123.

⁹⁹ Womack, *Long and Winding Roads*, 221.

as an idealized promised land for America's youth. It was prominently found in films and television shows of the late 1950s to mid 1960s, such as *Gidget* and *The Endless Summer*. The Beach Boys were at the forefront of pop music's contribution and sang songs about surfing, basking in the sun, driving vintage American cars, and impressing all the blonde-haired girls.

In "Surfin' USA," The Beach Boys use their distinct sound to create a musical index of hot spots for American surfing, referencing such beaches as Ventura County Line, San Onofre, and Redondo Beach. They would repeat this formula in their 1965 hit "California Girls." "California Girls" reached #3 on *Billboard's* Hot 100 in 1965 and quickly became one of the band's signature songs. Similarly to "Back In The USA" and "Surfin' USA," "California Girls" mentions specific geographical areas of the United States, while ascribing specific qualities to the women of those areas: "East Coast Girls are hip," while "Mid-West farmer's daughters really make you feel alright." The narrator later reflects about how they have been all around the world, and seen all kinds of girls, but they still long to return to the US to see "the cutest girls in the world."

The Beatles make a direct connection between "California Girls" and "Back In The USSR." In the bridge, the narrator recalls The Beach Boys' hit with the lyrics: "Well, the Ukraine girls really knock me out/They leave the West behind/And Moscow girls make me sing and shout/And Georgia's always on my mind." While McCartney's lead vocal is more akin to Chuck Berry's singing style, the background harmonies skillfully parody the distinctive wailing falsetto of Brian Wilson as well as the bass voice of Mike Love, while the double-tracking of voices adds depth and resonance. The effect is highly evocative of such Beach Boys' hits as "Fun, Fun, Fun" and "Help Me Rhonda." The Beatles also imitate the thick instrumental textures that are characteristic of many Beach Boys' recordings. Lennon, McCartney, and Harrison all contribute multiple drum overdubs, bass parts, and guitar lines in octaves that provide counterpoint during the refrain section, while McCartney and George Martin provide their own piano parts.¹⁰⁰ The production creates a dense arrangement not typically heard in the music of The Beatles.

¹⁰⁰ Ian MacDonald, *Revolution in the Head: The Beatles' Records and the Sixties* 2nd ed. (London: Pimlico Rand, 2005), 309 – 310.

“Back In The USSR” also contains two additional and subtler parodies. The line “And Georgia’s always on my mind” is a reference to the American tune “Georgia On My Mind.” Hoagy Carmichael and Stuart Gorrell wrote “Georgia On My Mind” in 1930 in tribute to Carmichael’s home state.¹⁰¹ Ray Charles made the song popular with audiences of the 1960s by turning “Georgia On My Mind” into a #1 hit on *Billboard’s* Hot 100 chart in 1960. As well, the title “Back In The USSR” parodies the 1968 British political slogan “I’m Backing Britain.” In fact, the song’s roots lie in India, where McCartney would sing “I’m backing the USSR” as a joke with Mike Love of The Beach Boys.¹⁰² Although it began as a grassroots movement built around working longer days for less money, “I’m Backing Britain” was later adopted by Prime Minister Harold Wilson and became part of a national campaign aimed at lowering the British national debt.

The Beatles borrow these different elements in order to critically reflect on the mythology of American culture in popular music. Womack describes “Back In The USSR” as a “brilliant send-up of life behind the Iron Curtain, a world of ostensible mystery and danger – particular from a Western ideological perspective nursed on *Sputnik* and James Bond.”¹⁰³ In “Back In The USSR,” The Beatles construct a façade to challenge the listener’s preconceptions about the Cold War and the Soviet Union and to expose the hollowness of the patriotism exhibited by American popular music. The song uses the same rhetoric as many American artists as a way to romanticize Soviet life and patriotism; however, unlike the American songs, the message is steeped in irony rather than sincere pride. We hear the Soviet Union – the antithesis of Western society – boasting of the same one-of-a-kind people and places, despite the political despotism, oppression, and poverty that plagued it in reality. Roesner believes that, by depicting the Soviet Union as a thriving bed for youth culture and freedom, The Beatles reveal the contradictions of Western fantasy and its notions of purity and goodness.¹⁰⁴ These contradictions challenge listeners to question the validity of what they are hearing in American songs, their understanding of global politics, and their own conceptions of

¹⁰¹ Hoagy Carmichael and Stephen Longstreet, *Sometimes I Wonder: The Story of Hoagy Carmichael* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1965).

¹⁰² Womack, *Long and Winding Roads*, 221.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, 221.

¹⁰⁴ Roesner, “We All Want To Change The World,” 157.

Western life and identity. Although humour may initially be aroused through the ease in which The Beatles champion the Soviet Union, “Back In The USSR” incites a rousing reflection on Western ideology during the Cold War.

3.5.2 “Yer Blues”

“Back In The USSR” is a unique case in The Beatles catalogue as it is one of the few times in which the band directly parodies another artist. Typically, The Beatles draw from broader genres of the past and present. Examples of such songs from *The White Album* include “Yer Blues”, “Happiness Is A Warm Gun”, and “Honey Pie.” “Yer Blues” is a Lennon composition that evokes the British blues revival of the mid-1960s. British blues musicians combined the songs of traditional American musicians with harder rock and psychedelic sounds. Artists such as The Jimi Hendrix Experience, Cream, The Jeff Beck Group, Fleetwood Mac, and Led Zeppelin combined the fuzz overdriven guitars, loud electric bass, and riffs of hard rock with the chord progressions, vocal delivery, and improvisatory spirit of American blues. The British blues revival also brought the role of the lead guitarist to new heights. Improvisation and virtuosity were major attractions of late-1960s rock groups, as guitarists such as Jimi Hendrix, Jeff Beck, Jimmy Page, and Eric Clapton became renowned for their instrumental prowess and experimental performances.

“Yer Blues” is among The Beatles’ deepest ventures into the blues genre. Charles Gower Price notes that, when compared to other acts such as The Rolling Stones, The Beatles were not very effective as bluesmen and typically reserved the genre for works of parody – a concept Price never develops.¹⁰⁵ Lennon was inspired to write the song in India when he was “up there trying to reach God and feeling suicidal.”¹⁰⁶ The song began as a sincere imitation of another genre but evolved into parody out of the fear of inadequately performing the blues. Lennon stated: “There was a self consciousness about singing blues [...] Paul was saying, ‘Don’t call it ‘Yer Blues,’ just say it straight.’ But I

¹⁰⁵ Price, “Sources of American Styles,” 215 and 221.

¹⁰⁶ As quoted in Spizer, *The Beatles on Apple Records*, 111.

was self-conscious and I went for ‘Yer Blues.’”¹⁰⁷ Lennon’s insecurity about writing blues music originated from listening to the likes of Sleepy John Estes, Robert Johnson, and other early American blues artists in school.¹⁰⁸ These mixed feelings regarding mood and ability resulted in Lennon using parody as a way of avoiding a potentially bad imitation of the genre.

<i>Blues Chorus</i>	<i>Form</i>	<i>Metre</i>	<i>Lyrics</i>	<i>Notes</i>
	Count In			
1)	Verse	12/8	Yes, I'm lonely...	
	Refrain	"	If I ain't dead already...	<i>*This refrain concludes every verse</i>
2)	Verse	"	In the morning ...	
	Refrain	"	If I ain't dead already...	
3)	Stop-time verse	"	My mother ...	
	Refrain	"	If I ain't dead already...	
4)	Stop-time verse	"	The eagle picks ...	
	Refrain	"	If I ain't dead already...	
5)	Stop-time verse	"	Blackfly cross my mind...	
	Refrain	4/4 (double tempo)	If I ain't dead already...	
6)	Instrumental Break	"		Lennon's guitar solo
		"		
7)		"		Harrison's guitar solo
		"		
8)	Verse	12/8 (original tempo)	Yes, I'm lonely...	<i>*Lead vocals are absent</i>
	Refrain	"	If I ain't dead already...	
	Fade-Out	"		

Figure 3.1: Formal layout of “Yer Blues.”

Figure 3.1 displays the formal layout of “Yer Blues.” “Yer Blues” immediately evokes blues music through its shuffle rhythms and use of the twelve-bar blues progression. The song is in E major and moves through the chords I – IV – I – \flat III – V – I, which is a variation of the typical I – IV – I – V – IV – I twelve-bar chord progression that serves as the foundation for many blues songs. Each presentation of the chord progression in its entirety is called a blues chorus. “Yer Blues” is composed of eight blues choruses. Although blues choruses typically unfold through twelve measures (as implied by the idiomatic phrase twelve-bar blues progression), the 12/8 metre of the song results in six-measure length blues choruses. The blues choruses follow the typical AAB

¹⁰⁷ Wenner, *Lennon Remembers*, 34.

¹⁰⁸ Walter Everett, *The Beatles As Musicians: Revolver Through the Anthology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 170. Also in Wenner, *Lennon Remembers*, 34.

structure of blues lyrics. The verse consists of a phrase and its repetition, while the refrain contains a new phrase. Each blues chorus concludes with the same enigmatic refrain: “If I ain’t dead already/Girl, you know the reason why.” Beginning in the third blues chorus, The Beatles employ stop-time verses in which the instruments drop out after striking a tonic chord to allow for solo declamation of the text by the singer before reentering at the change in harmony. In the final reprise before the instrumental break, the music shifts from 12/8 metre shifts to 4/4 and the tempo is doubled. The instrumental break consists of two blues choruses, in which we hear guitar solos by Lennon and Harrison, before leading to a return to the original metre and tempo of the opening. The eighth and final blues chorus, however, is missing the lead vocals. In order to create a more raw “live” sound, The Beatles recorded in EMI’s Studio Two Annex – a closet sized room in which all four Beatles huddled with their instruments.¹⁰⁹ The compact studio environment accentuates the band’s counting, shouting, and instrumental feedback during takes, which further creates the illusion of a live blues setting.

It is evident that The Beatles borrowed extensively from blues convention and, to some degree, genuinely attempted to contribute to British blues-rock; however, “Yer Blues” exudes an overwhelming aura of insincerity and tongue-in-cheek play. The lyrics, for example, spoof blues music through their excessively dramatic depictions of suicide and isolation. The narrator sings: “Yes, I’m lonely/Want to die/Yes, I’m lonely/Want to die/If I ain’t dead already/Girl, you know the reason why” in chorus 1 before singing: “In the morning/Want to die/In the evening/Want to die” in chorus 2. The reprise of each chorus is highly ambiguous and leaves the listener unsure as to what is known by the girl of the narrator’s world (is this line some sort of inside joke? Is she the cause of his isolation?). The lyrics also include a reference to Bob Dylan’s “Ballad of a Thin Man” through the line, “feel so suicidal just like Dylan’s Mr. Jones.” In “Ballad of a Thin Man,” Dylan sings of Mr. Jones, a caricature of bourgeoisie intellectuals who found themselves isolated and dumfounded by members of the counterculture. This is a rare example in which The Beatles actually allude to a character from another artist’s song and specifically mention another artist’s name.

¹⁰⁹ Womack, *Long and Winding Roads*, 231.

At the conclusion of chorus 5, the band shifts into 4/4 metre and doubles the tempo in order to lead into an instrumental section in which Lennon and Harrison trade off guitar solos. Although extended virtuosic guitar solos were an integral trait of the British blues sound, the performances of Lennon and Harrison are simplistic and lacking in bravado. In particular, Lennon's guitar solo ignores changes in the underlying harmony and consists entirely of a static alternation between the two parallel fourth dyads: D – G and B – E. While Harrison's solo is more melodic, it does not display the same level of instrumental proficiency and brilliance as the playing of Clapton, Hendrix, or other guitarists of the time. Both performances provide stark contrasts with performance practice in British blues-rock while mocking the listener's expectations about expression and musicality in blues music. Following this instrumental break, the music returns to its original tempo and metre; however, the lead vocals are absent and can only faintly be heard echoing in the background. This effect draws the listener's attention towards the emptiness of the music without the vocals. Perhaps, the absence of the voice represents the death of the narrator, who has, presumably, committed suicide sometime during the guitar solo.

The use of parody in "Yer Blues" instills multiple meanings to the music and further evokes postmodern concepts in *The White Album*. John Docker writes that postmodern works have the tendency to engage simultaneously in the parody of conventionality and parody of self.¹¹⁰ Similarly, "Yer Blues" critically reflects on the conventions and clichés of British blues-based rock (including subject matter and instrumental virtuosity) as well as Lennon's own feelings of isolation and depression. In this way, Tim Riley praises the ability of the song to "walk the tight rope between respectful emulation and high musical satire."¹¹¹ Lennon performed "Yer Blues" on 11 December 1968 as a part of *The Rolling Stone's Rock and Roll Circus* – a TV production that went unreleased until 1996 and included performances by The Rolling Stones, The Who, and Jethro Tull, among others. Lennon was accompanied by Eric Clapton on lead guitar, Keith Richards on electric bass, and Mitch Mitchell on drums, and performed under the band name "The Dirty Mac." Their performance is slightly different than the

¹¹⁰ John Docker, *Postmodernism and Popular Culture: A Capital History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 143.

¹¹¹ Tim Riley, *Tell Me Why: A Beatles Commentary* (New York: Birch Lanes Press, 1988), 259.

recorded version on *The White Album* and expands the notion of parody of self to the other musicians involved. The version by “The Dirty Mac” is faster and sounds more akin to British blues-rock; Mitchell’s drums propel the song forwards similarly to his playing with The Jimi Hendrix Experience, Richard’s bass line is more active, and Clapton uses a greater variety of blues licks in the call-and-response dialogue with the vocals. Clapton’s guitar solo, which replaces Harrison’s, is twice as long (he is given an additional chorus) and is a much better representation of the virtuosity typical of British blues-rock. Lennon, on the other hand, closely adheres to his two-note guitar solo, which contrasts to Clapton’s virtuosity and opposes the improvisatory aesthetic of blues music. The performance suggests that Lennon is playing a trick on the audience and performers, as he places himself in an authentic British-blues rock setting but defies many of its practices. His feelings about playing the blues remain almost as ambiguous as the song’s reprise. The performance also evokes self-parody of Clapton, Richards, and Mitchell, who, perhaps unknowingly, engage in parody of their own genre.

3.5.3 “Happiness Is A Warm Gun”

Lennon frequently obscures the line between admiration and satire throughout his use of parody on *The White Album*. As mentioned in chapter 1, “Happiness Is A Warm Gun” is another example of genre parody. Lennon was inspired to write the song after George Martin showed him the cover of a gun magazine on which the title was printed.¹¹² Perhaps unbeknownst to Lennon was the fact that the gun magazine in question was actually parodying a well-known *Peanuts* comic by Charles Schultz entitled “Happiness Is A Warm Puppy.” Believing this pro-gun phrase to be a ridiculous sentiment, Lennon decided to reinterpret the title and use it to express his new relationship with Yoko Ono and their struggles with drug use.¹¹³

¹¹² Womack, *Long and Winding Roads*, 226.

¹¹³ Lennon is quoted “I just thought it was a fantastic, insane thing to say. A warm gun means you just shot something” in Wenner, *Lennon Remembers*, 115.

<i>Form</i>	<i>Genre</i>	<i>Metre</i>	<i>Lyrics</i>
A	Psychedelic	4/4 (6/4 and 5/4)	"She's not a girl who misses much ..."
B	Blues Rock	6/8 (9/8)	"I need a fix cause I'm going down..."
C	Hard Rock	6/8 + 6/4 + 6/8 + 13/8	"Mother Superior jump the gun ..."
D	Doo-wop	4/4 metre (6/8 polymetre)	"Happiness Is A Warm Gun Bang-Bang-Shoot-Shoot..."

Figure 3.2: Formal layout of “Happiness Is A Warm Gun.”

Figure 3.2 presents a formal diagram of “Happiness Is A Warm Gun.” Instead of using the traditional verse-chorus-bridge form found in popular music, or a variant on that, Lennon organizes the song into four distinct blocks of music, each with its own genre, subject matter, tempo, metre, and chord progression. In this regard, “Happiness Is A Warm Gun” can be thought of as a through-composed song. “Happiness Is A Warm Gun” is also one of The Beatles most ambitious experiments with metre. Each section contains its own metre as well as frequent and complex metrical shifts that create a somewhat disorienting effect for the listener.

In reference to the different genres evoked throughout the song, Lennon described “Happiness Is A Warm Gun” as a miniature “history of rock and roll.”¹¹⁴. Section A evokes psychedelic rock through its use of fuzz guitar and surreal imagery. The lyrics describe Ono as “not a girl who misses much,” before embarking on an abstract and ambiguous tangent involving a “man in the crowd with the multi-coloured mirrors on his Hobnailed boots.” Section B features a narrator lamenting his drug addiction by singing “I need a fix ‘cause I’m going down/Down to the bits that I left uptown,” and is introduced by a bluesy guitar riff played with heavy fuzz overdrive. Section C is the most metrically complicated section of the song as it involves metre shifts from 6/8 to 6/4, back to 6/8, and then to 13/8. This metric sequence is repeated three times while the lyrics repeat “Mother Superior jump the gun” six times. This is the first mention of a gun in its sexual context. When considering that “Mother Superior” and “Mother” was Lennon’s nickname for Ono, the gun adopts a phallic role and the lyrics become an

¹¹⁴ As quoted in Womack, *Long and Winding Roads*, 226.

expression of the sexual nature of Lennon's new relationship. Section D introduces the title of the song "Happiness Is A Warm Gun" through an allusion to 1950s doo-wop. The Beatles parody doo-wop by placing it in this unorthodox context, in which the genre's virtuous depictions of love are confronted with the raw sexuality and drug reference of late 1960s music.

Doo-wop was a genre of R&B that was popular in the 1950s before going out of fashion in the early 1960s. It was characterized by slower tempi, emotionally driven lead vocals, background vocal harmonies singing nonsense syllables, conventional I – vi – IV – V chord progressions, gentle arpeggiated instrumentation, as well as highly romantic lyrics. Often, but not always, doo-wop will be used in ballad settings and in 6/8 metre. Prime examples of doo-wop include "Earth Angel" by The Penguins (1954), "I'm So Young" by The Students (1958) and "There Goes My Baby" by The Drifters (1959). In "Happiness Is A Warm Gun," The Beatles immediately evoke doo-wop through the I – vi – IV – V chord progression. They greatly exaggerate the doo-wop vocals, as Lennon, who sings the lead, is belting out in his highest vocal register, while McCartney, Lennon and Harrison add prominent background harmonies. The backup vocals spoof the call-and-response style of doo-wop with the exclamation "bang-bang, shoot-shoot" at the end of each line.

While at first Section D seems to settle the song's metrical inconsistency by establishing 4/4 as a governing metre, The Beatles employ polymetre during the lines "When I hold you in my arms/And I feel my finger on your trigger/I know nobody can do me no harm/Because..." During this phrase, the vocals, guitars, bass, and piano shift to 6/8 metre for four bars, while the drums remain in 4/4 for four bars and 2/4 for one bar. The result is a jarring effect for listeners, as the overlap of metres creates a strong sense of metrical dissonance. This polymetric phrase connects Section D with the metrical complexity of previous sections and is one way in which The Beatles distort the conventions of doo-wop. By distorting the predictable doo-wop metre, Lennon creates distance between traditional doo-wop and the parody in "Happiness Is A Warm Gun." Furthermore, The Beatles widen this distance by using harsh rock instrumentation to aggravate the sentimentality of 1950s doo-wop.

When placed against the hard rock sounds of the previous sections, doo-wop sounds considerably dated and sterile, especially considering the overwhelming tones of sexuality and drug use imbued in the lyrics. However, the genre's passé quality also creates a sense of irony in the music that enhances the parody. As discussed earlier, doo-wop is typically associated with highly romantic lyrics in which the lead singer, often a male, venerates his love or laments his heartbreak. The Beatles, on the other hand, evoke doo-wop to accompany an incredibly provocative text. Taken at face value, the text glorifies gun culture and describes the narrator's affection for his weapon. On the other hand, the lyrics become filled with sexual innuendo when considering the context of the song. In either case, such explicit lyrics would not be found in doo-wop music and creates a disconnect between the genre and how it is being used. This disconnect incites reflection on the changes that have occurred in conceptions of love and in popular music in such a short period of time. While doo-wop may have captivated listeners a decade prior, its sentimentality is no longer able to resonate with listeners after the sexual revolution. The sexual revolution challenged the Western world's conceptions of love and resulted in many people adopting more liberated approaches to sexuality. These listeners would likely have identified with Lennon's account of love in "Happiness Is A Warm Gun" and would have been forced to reflect on their current views in relation to past conceptions of romance. Womack writes that this parody "teeters between earnestness and kitsch," and that "it basks in the seamy residue of unfettered lust, while ... it whitewashes our sins with a doo-wop chorus lost amidst its own restless insincerity."¹¹⁵ Whitely believes that the song is but one of many examples from *The White Album* that uses confusing and complex tensions in order to represent the changes in pop music that confront the listener.¹¹⁶

3.5.4 "Honey Pie"

These "complex and confusing tensions" fuel much of the parody throughout *The White Album*. "Honey Pie" is a McCartney song that evokes music of the Great American

¹¹⁵ Ibid., 227.

¹¹⁶ Whitely, "The Postmodern White Album," 114.

Songbook or from a vaudeville theatre through its Glenn Miller-style instrumentation, Charleston rhythms, and Lennon's jazz guitar solo, which Harrison claimed "sounded like Django Reinhardt or something."¹¹⁷ The song immediately evokes a sense of nostalgia for listeners. "Honey Pie" begins with a slow speech-like introduction, similar to those heard in the musicals of Cole Porter, in which the narrator reflects on his love for a film star who has moved to America. In the background of this introduction, the crackling sounds of a vintage gramophone player make the voice sound antique for a few words, before an increase in tempo and shift into the first verse. "Honey Pie" borrows many conventions from early twentieth-century popular music, including a 32-bar AABA form (with the B section representing a bridge in the relative minor), circle-of-fifth chord progressions, and a shuffle beat that emphasizes the upbeat. The song adopts a humorous quality in the instrumental section when McCartney begins to sing: "I like it like that," "I like this kinda hot kinda music," and "play it to me, Hollywood blues." McCartney later recalled: "I very much liked the old crooner style – the strange fruity voice that they used, so 'Honey Pie' was me writing one of them to an imaginary woman, across the ocean, on the silver screen, who was called Honey Pie. It's another of my fantasy songs [...] So it's not a parody. It's a nod to the vaudeville tradition that I was raised on."¹¹⁸ Lennon later dismissed the song as McCartney's "fucking Cole Porter routine."¹¹⁹

Although McCartney may not consider his composition a parody, "Honey Pie" quickly adopts that quality for many listeners. McCartney's vocal improvisation during the instrumental section, despite his claim, evokes a satirical reflection on the singing styles of the past. He seems to go to considerable effort to make the genre sound exaggerated and old-fashioned. The kitschy quality of the parody, however, does not imply that McCartney is disrespecting the music, but rather that he is exaggerating vocal styles of the genre as a means to evoke critical commentary. Furthermore, the position of "Honey Pie" on *The White Album* instills the song with deeper meaning. Lennon and McCartney decided the track ordering during a twenty-four hour session at EMI studios

¹¹⁷ As quoted in Kenneth Womack, *The Beatles Encyclopedia: Everything Fab Four* (ABC-CLIO, 2014), 398.

¹¹⁸ As quoted in Barry Miles, *Paul McCartney: Many Years From Now* (New York: Henry Holt, 1997), 497.

¹¹⁹ As quoted in Geoffrey Giuliano, *Blackbird: the Life and Times of Paul McCartney* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1985), 125.

on 16 October.¹²⁰ “Honey Pie” follows immediately after Lennon’s politically charged “Revolution 1,” in which the listener is reminded of The Beatles’ ambivalence towards the rapidly evolving political landscape. Many listeners would likely assume that the next song would develop upon the theme of contemporary issues or at least offer further perspectives on the future. “Honey Pie,” instead, reflects on the naiveté and innocence of the past. This shift in genre and topic may confuse many listeners, as The Beatles take a step back when the listener expects a step forward. In this sense, “Honey Pie” becomes a symbol of the band’s uncertainty regarding the recent political and social instability. The Beatles response to the listener’s demand for political commentary mirrors their aesthetic for *The White Album*: anything is possible.

3.5.5 “Good Night”

The final song of *The White Album* is a Lennon composition called “Good Night,” in which Lennon, like McCartney, revisits music from his early childhood. The song is a lullaby that evokes the lush orchestration found in Old Hollywood film scores by such composers as Gordon Jenkins or Max Steiner. Originally intended as a lullaby for Lennon’s son Julian, the song turned into a parody song after Lennon asked Martin to “arrange it like Hollywood. Yeah, corny.”¹²¹ Kozinn believes that the song “could easily pass as something from the Bing Crosby or Frank Sinatra songbooks.”¹²² “Good Night” takes the listener back to their childhood and uses nostalgia to recreate the safety and security felt when being lulled to sleep by one’s mother or father. Lennon had previously explored themes of childhood and nostalgia in other songs, such as “Strawberry Fields Forever” and “Lucy In The Sky With Diamonds.” In both cases, Lennon pairs nostalgia and childhood imagination with psychedelic and surreal imagery. “Good Night,” on the other hand, evokes nostalgia as a means of stimulating critical commentary.

Ringo sings lead vocals and soothes the listener with such lines as “close your eyes, and I’ll close mine,” “dream sweet dreams for you,” and “now the sun turns out its light, good night, sleep tight.” Considering the tension and anxiety that riddled social and

¹²⁰ Womack, *Long and Windings Roads*, 242.

¹²¹ As quoted in Schaffer, *The Beatles Forever*, 115.

¹²² Kozzin, *The Beatles*, 181.

political life of 1968, the lullaby adopts new meaning beyond a simple bedtime song. Womack writes that “Good Night” is the band’s “explicit attempt to console their audience, to provide palpable reassurance in the cataclysmic wake of ‘Revolution 9.’”¹²³ He believes that the shocking and provocative sounds of the *musique concrète* inspired track demanded a positive and soothing response to conclude *The White Album*. However, the implications of the lullaby are greater still. Lennon evokes the safety and comfort that a child seeks in a parent as a way to represent the listener’s own quest for reassurance from The Beatles. The band adopts the role of the comforting parent who tries to console the worries of their young child. Ringo does not sing to a child who struggles to sleep, but rather to the listener who struggles with the world around them. The song’s exaggerated sentimentality, however, quickly becomes saccharine and ironic. By drawing from the lush orchestral style of Old Hollywood, Lennon transforms “Good Night” into a cliché happy ending one would expect to find in a Hollywood movie of the first half of the century. Such an ending would unlikely be met with satisfaction from listeners. The overwhelming “corny” quality of the song exposes the hollowness of Lennon’s lullaby as well as the prospect of a quick solution for the troubling times. Simply closing our eyes and dreaming does not solve life’s problems. No lullaby or piece of music can calm the uncertainties of tomorrow, for the future was something from which not even The Beatles could protect their listeners.

3.6 Conclusion

Through analysis of these songs, we have seen the different ways in which The Beatles use parody as well as the diverse commentaries evoked throughout the album. “Back In The USSR” and “Yer Blues” parody more recent artists and styles, while such tracks as “Honey Pie” and “Good Night” evoke music of a more distant past. “Happiness Is A Warm Gun” directly juxtaposes doo-wop with more contemporary rock genres in order to enhance the parody. In each case, The Beatles use parody to evoke a specific genre of music. Parody, therefore, becomes an important component behind the musical diversity and fragmentation of *The White Album*. Considering the variety of genres throughout the

¹²³ Womack, *Long and Winding Roads*, 238.

album and the parodic reference to past music, it is not surprising that many critics and scholars have employed postmodern concepts when discussing *The White Album*. While Roessner argues that parody on *The White Album* functions specifically as a means to express political opinion, we can see, upon closer inspection, that its function is much broader. Parody gave the band a means to express their desire to imitate, to engage with postmodern trends of the contemporary art scene, and a way to reflect on society. With “Honey Pie” and “Good Night,” parody became a vehicle for nostalgic reflection. As will be discussed in Chapter 4, The Beatles combine parody with nostalgia to construct a large-scale narrative in *Sgt. Pepper’s Lonely Hearts Club Band* (1967).

Chapter 4: Parody in Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band

4.1 *Sgt. Pepper's* and “The Summer of Love”

Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band is considered by many to be a milestone of popular music and a defining moment in 1960s culture. The album was released on 1 June 1967 and accompanied the blossoming “Summer of Love” – the pinnacle of the countercultural movement in America. Although primarily originating in San Francisco, the Summer of Love radiated inflections of peace and love across the continent and over the Atlantic Ocean. The Beatles, too, quickly became enraptured by it. Harrison noted: “The summer of 1967 was the Summer of Love for us [...] There was definitely a vibe: we could feel what was going on with our friends – and people who had similar goals in America – even though we were miles away.”¹²⁴ Starr claimed: “*Sgt. Pepper's* was a special album [...] It was Flower Power coming into its fullest. It was love and peace; it was a fabulous period, for me and the world.”¹²⁵ At this time, the counterculture had become personified by the “hippie.” Scott MacFarlane describes hippies as “adherents of the counterculture who subscribed to pacifist tendencies, and who, in various capacities, participated in the alternative lifestyle of the era [...] those who immersed themselves in the idealism and disaffection of the counterculture.”¹²⁶ They were typically young people who advocated anti-establishment, nonviolence, and gender and racial equality. They had recently fashioned a de facto motto from Timothy Leary's infamous phrase “Turn on, tune in, drop out.”¹²⁷ Leary, a controversial psychologist and countercultural icon, championed hallucinogenic drugs and encouraged an entire generation to open their

¹²⁴ As quoted in The Beatles, *The Beatles Anthology*, 254.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, 248.

¹²⁶ Scott MacFarlane, *The Hippie Narrative: A Literary Perspective on the Counterculture* (Jefferson: McFarland & Company Inc., 2007), 16.

¹²⁷ The phrase “Turn on, tune in, drop out” was first used by Leary in a New York press conference in September 1966 and later restated by Leary in 1967 when addressing a crowd in San Francisco's Golden Gate Park.

minds and experience life in new ways. The Beatles had also begun experimenting with LSD two years prior.

Leary's views represented the counterculture's fascination with alternative states of mind and sensory perception. These interests would manifest themselves in psychedelic art and music, in which bright colours, elaborate designs, and distorted sounds are used to evoke surreal sensual experiences. Interests in the state of mind and sensory perception also yielded appreciation for Eastern religions and philosophies. Nick Bromell writes that the effects of hallucinogenic drugs provided users with the same sense of wonder that is formalized in the world's religions.¹²⁸ The Beatles, as well, had become interested in Eastern culture. In 1966, Harrison began an intensive study of Hinduism and the sitar under Pandit Ravi Shankar. Previously, he featured the sitar on such Beatles tracks as "Norwegian Wood (This Bird Has Flown)" from *Rubber Soul* as well as "Love You To" and "Tomorrow Never Knows" from *Revolver*.

Psychedelic music was an integral component of the counterculture. Often drawing from rock music, it provided listeners with a surreal soundscape and a musical outlet in their quest for an alternative state of mind. Bromell believes that the inclusion of psychedelics into popular music allowed artists to describe a fantastic world beyond the limits of reality while providing the listener with a connection to their vision. The music also provided listeners with a sense of belonging and community to help overcome feelings of isolation. He writes: "the fusion of rock and psychedelics works on the problem of loneliness not just by offering nearness, pluralism, and intimacy as antidotes to the unreality of a stable world and the burden of other-directedness but by presenting an intensification of loneliness, or emptiness, for aesthetic contemplation."¹²⁹

Sgt. Pepper's is arguably the band's deepest immersion into psychedelic music and contains some of their most experimental works. The Beatles evoke psychedelic music through the use of fuzz electric guitars, prominent electric bass, Eastern-inspired melodic figures and drones, Indian instruments, analog tape effects, and drug references. Russell Reising and Jim LeBlanc identify love and acceptance, exploring the psyche, detachment and disillusionment, global peace, and rejuvenated innocence as common

¹²⁸ Nick Bromell, *Tomorrow Never Knows: Rock and Psychedelics in the 1960* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 62.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, 76.

themes of psychedelia in The Beatles' music.¹³⁰ Throughout *Sgt. Pepper's*, the band mixes psychedelic rock with inflections of the British music hall, Baroque and Classical music, and music from the contemporary avant-garde scene. In addition to genre mixing, The Beatles pair an eclectic group of instruments with the latest innovations in recording technology.

For many listeners, *Sgt. Pepper's* was an embodiment of the times. Steven Turner writes that: "for anyone who was young at the time, the music automatically evokes the sight of beads and kaftans, the sound of tinkling bells and the aroma of marijuana masked by joss sticks."¹³¹ Greil Marcus writes that expectations about the release of the album were so great that radio stations were prohibited from playing any parts of the record until a specific hour, after which "they played the record all night and all the next day, vying to see which station could play it the longest."¹³² Critic Lester Bangs was so impressed with the album's reception among young people that he claimed: "The closest Western Civilization has come to unity since the Congress of Vienna in 1815 was the week the *Sgt. Pepper* album was released [...] For a brief while the irreparably fragmented consciousness of the West was unified, at least in the minds of the young."¹³³ For The Beatles, on the other hand, *Sgt. Pepper's* was more than just a reflection of the countercultural scene. It was a showcase of artistic rejuvenation, the overcoming of hardship, and the beginning of a new era.

4.2 The Beatles in 1966

After the popular and critical success of their 1966 LP *Revolver*, The Beatles were challenged with topping the success of the previous year. *Revolver* dominated the #1 spot on US *Billboard* Top LPs chart for 13 weeks and spent 34 weeks on the UK Albums chart. It also set a new artistic direction for The Beatles. *Revolver* replaced the Beat

¹³⁰ Russell Reising and Jim LeBlanc, "Magical mystery tours, and other trips: yellow submarines, newspaper taxis, and the Beatle's psychedelic years," in *The Cambridge Companion to the Beatles*, ed. Kenneth Womack (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 107–8.

¹³¹ Steve Turner, *A Hard Day's Write: The Stories behind Every Beatles Song* (London: Carlton, 2000), 144.

¹³² Greil Marcus, "The Beatles," in *The Rolling Stone Illustrated History of Rock & Roll*, ed. J. Miller (New York: Random House, 1976), 176.

¹³³ As quoted in *ibid.*, 176.

sound of earlier albums and the folk rock of *Rubber Soul* with the musical variety that would become the standard in later albums. *Revolver* is also arguably the first album in which the listener is able to discern the individual qualities of each songwriter. McCartney's "Eleanor Rigby" pairs the composer's pop-songwriting charm with a Classical string octet to lament the loneliness of the older generation; "Love You To" features prominent sitar, tambura, and tabla and was Harrison's deepest immersion into Hindustani music to date; Lennon's "I'm Only Sleeping" employs a reversed-tape guitar solo as a means of depicting drowsiness and lucid dreaming. *Revolver* further distinguishes itself from previous albums through its experimentation with analog tape, electronic sounds, and a new lyrical approach in which Eastern texts and mind-altering experiences with drugs inspire a metaphysical exploration of the self. These traits culminate forcefully in "Tomorrow Never Knows," the final track of the album. Lennon was inspired to write the song after reading *The Tibetan Book of the Dead*. "Tomorrow Never Knows" instantly evokes a psychedelic trip by asking the listener to "turn off your mind, relax, and float down stream." The music is built entirely on a drone in C, played by McCartney on the electric bass and Harrison on the tambura, and a drum ostinato. The song also exhibits influence of *musique concrète*. McCartney, who had recently become involved with the burgeoning avant-garde scene in London, encouraged each Beatle to contribute a tape sequence made of pre-recorded music and sounds to the song.¹³⁴

Critics immediately praised such innovation and elevated the album to a work of art. Upon the release of *Revolver*, Richard Goldstein of *The Village Voice* predicted "we will view this album in retrospect as a key work in the development of rock 'n' roll into an artistic pursuit."¹³⁵ Writing years later, Reising claims that *Revolver* "illuminates a path dedicated to personal freedom and mind expansion, and [...] represents what many fans, scholars, and critics of popular music elevate as a far more 'revolutionary' recording that anything else The Beatles ever did."¹³⁶

While the studio experimentation and musical variety of *Revolver* may have laid the foundation for *Sgt. Pepper's*, the completion of the album contributed to the band's

¹³⁴ Spitz, *The Beatles: Biography*, 601.

¹³⁵ Richard Goldstein, "On *Revolver*," *Village Voice*, August 25, 1966, 26.

¹³⁶ Russell Reising, "Vacío Luminoso: 'Tomorrow Never Knows' and the Coherence of the Impossible," in *Reading the Beatles: Cultural Studies, Literary Criticism, and the Fab Four*, ed. Kenneth Womack and Todd F. Davis (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2006), 111.

overwhelming feelings of musical exhaustion. Although Tim Riley claims that the studio achievements in *Revolver* “single-handedly made Beatlemania irrelevant,” concert performances and fanatic audiences were still objects with which the band needed to contend.¹³⁷ In 1966, The Beatles embarked on a frantic world tour in which they would visit parts of Asia and America for the very first, and last, time. The tour was plagued with problems that inevitably took a toll on the band. As Womack notes, the surviving audio and video footage of the concert reveals that the band sounds unhappy, sloppy, out-of-tune, and ultimately exhausted from the shows.¹³⁸ The Beatles also found themselves in the middle of international controversies during the tour. While performing in the Philippines in July 1966, Lennon, McCartney, Harrison, and Starr were invited as distinguished guests to an event held by President Ferdinand Marcos and First Lady Imedla Marcos. The invitation, however, never made it to the band. Unaware that their presence had been requested, they went about their business and performed two concerts that day. That evening, news reports began detailing the band’s apparent snubbing of the Filipino royal family. After a failed attempt to apologize by manager Brian Epstein, The Beatles found themselves forced to pay income tax on funds they had not yet received for their concerts in the Philippines, declared “illegal immigrants” by the state, confronted with angry mobs after the mysterious disappearance of their government-issued security, and forced to flee the country after a lengthy negotiation with Filipino immigration while taxied on the airstrip. The group referred to the incident as their “near-death experience in the South Pacific.”¹³⁹ After a few weeks recuperation back home in London, The Beatles set out to begin the American leg of their tour; however, the remainder of the tour would provide further anxiety.

On 29 July 1966, American magazine *Dateline* republished a now infamous remark made by Lennon earlier that year regarding religion in the United Kingdom. Lennon stated: “Christianity will go. It will vanish and shrink [...] We’re more popular than Jesus now; I don’t know which will go first – rock and roll or Christianity. Jesus was alright, but his disciples were thick and ordinary. It’s them twisting it that ruins it for

¹³⁷ Riley, *Tell Me Why*, 176.

¹³⁸ Womack, *Long and Winding Roads*, 151.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, 152.

me.”¹⁴⁰ Although the comment did not originally draw controversy, its later inclusion in American print incited riots, record burnings, and radio bans of The Beatles’ music in Southern states. The controversy coincided with The Beatles’ tour of America and raised tensions between the band and their audiences, despite numerous press conferences given by Lennon and Epstein. On 19 August, the band performed at the Mid-South Coliseum in Memphis, Tennessee, where the Ku Klux Klan had organized a protest and ignited a firecracker near the stage. Lennon recalled: “There had been threats to shoot us, the Klan were burning Beatle records outside, and a lot of the crew-cut kids were joining in with them. Somebody let off a firecracker and every one of us – I think it’s on film – look at each other, because each thought it was the other that had been shot. It was that bad.”¹⁴¹

On 29 August, The Beatles performed in San Francisco’s Candlestick Park. The concert was 10,000 seats shy of a sell-out (a rare occurrence during Beatlemania) and the band performed behind a six-foot high wire fence as a precaution. Upon boarding the flight back home, Harrison exclaimed: “Right – that’s it. I’m not a Beatle anymore.”¹⁴² The hectic touring schedules and conditions of Beatlemania had proven to be too much for the band. While playing 30-minute concerts for auditoriums and sports venues filled with crazed fans may have satisfied The Beatles at first, it quickly posed threats to the artistry and to their lives. The San Francisco performance would be their last concert appearance.

4.3 The Inception of *Sgt. Pepper’s*

Upon their decision to abandon touring and devote their time exclusively to studio production, The Beatles parted ways with one another to take a break from the recent stresses. Lennon accepted a role in Richard Lester’s absurdist comedy film *How I Won The War*; McCartney took part in a two-week safari through Kenya with road manager Mal Evans; Starr took an extended vacation to spend time with wife Maureen and one-year-old son Zak; and Harrison left for Bombay to commence a rigorous eight-week

¹⁴⁰ As quoted in The Beatles, *The Beatles Anthology*, 223.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 227.

¹⁴² As quoted in Spitz, *The Beatles: Biography*, 640.

study of the sitar under Ravi Shankar.¹⁴³ The Beatles would reconvene in late November to begin work on Lennon's "Strawberry Fields Forever" and McCartney's "Penny Lane." Although both were recorded during the sessions of *Sgt. Pepper's*, the two tracks were released separate from the album as a double A-side single in early February 1967. "Strawberry Fields Forever" is a psychedelic reflection on Lennon's childhood memories of playing at the "Strawberry Fields" Salvation Army orphanage.¹⁴⁴ "Penny Lane" is McCartney's nostalgic reflection on the Liverpool Street and combines psychedelic imagery with Baroque-pop instrumentation. The double-A side single was enthusiastically received by critics, yet failed to reach number 1 in Britain – the first Beatles single not to reach the coveted spot in over four years. "Strawberry Fields Forever" and "Penny Lane" reflect the band's initial concept for an album that would consist of musical vignettes based on childhood memories and specific locations in Liverpool.¹⁴⁵ Although this concept was abandoned in its infancy, The Beatles had wanted "Strawberry Fields Forever" and "Penny Lane" to be included on what would later become *Sgt. Pepper's*. Epstein, however, feared that the band, which had not released new material in over five months, were losing touch with their audience and demanded a new single be released. George Martin begrudgingly obliged. Martin later claimed he made a "dreadful mistake" by not including both songs on *Sgt. Pepper's*.¹⁴⁶

After The Beatles abandoned the nostalgic Liverpoolian concept, McCartney came up with an idea to create an album in which The Beatles, exhausted from their struggles with fame, would dispense of their identities and start fresh – a *tabula rasa*. McCartney recalled: "We were fed up with being the Beatles. We really hated that fucking four little Mop-Top boys approach. We were not boys, we were men. It was all gone, all that boy shit, all that screaming, we didn't want any more, plus, we'd now got turned on to pot and thought of ourselves as artists rather than just performers [...] Then suddenly on the plane I got this idea. I thought, 'Let's not be ourselves. Let's develop alter-egos so we're not having to project an image which we know.'"¹⁴⁷ It was Mal Evans

¹⁴³ Womack, *Long and Windings Roads*, 158.

¹⁴⁴ MacDonald, *Revolution in the Head*, 216.

¹⁴⁵ Allan F. Moore, *The Beatles: Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 20.

¹⁴⁶ Martin and Hornsby, *All You Need Is Ears*, 119.

¹⁴⁷ As quoted in Miles, *Paul McCartney*, 303.

who, when playing with salt and pepper shakers, came up with the name “Sgt. Pepper’s Lonely Hearts Club Band” as a spoof of the longwinded names of contemporary San Francisco-area psychedelic groups such as “Big Brother and the Holding Company” or “The Quicksilver Messenger Service.”¹⁴⁸ This idea continued to develop over the next five months and became a concept that allowed the band to adopt different personas, wear elaborate costumes, and record under the pseudonym “Sgt. Pepper’s Lonely Hearts Club Band.”

4.4 The Music of *Sgt. Pepper’s*

In addition to providing The Beatles with a new identity, *Sgt. Pepper’s* became one of the band’s most commercially and critically successful albums. It went on to win the Grammy Award for Album of the Year in 1968 and was heralded as “the greatest album of all time” by *Rolling Stone* magazine in 2003.¹⁴⁹ The success of the album can be attributed to a variety of factors. As mentioned earlier, the album was a marvel of 1960s recording technology and made use of a vast array of instruments and sounds. The album also contains a remarkable variety of musical genres.

<i>Track</i>	<i>Song</i>	<i>Genre</i>	<i>Composer</i>
1	Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band	Music Hall/Rock	McCartney
2	With a Little Help from my Friends	Music Hall/ Pop	Lennon/McCartney
3	Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds	Psychedelic	Lennon
4	Getting Better	Pop/Rock	McCartney
5	Fixing a Hole	Psychedelic/Baroque Pop	McCartney
6	She's Leaving Home	Classical/Pop	Lennon/McCartney
7	Being for the Benefit of Mr. Kite	Psychedelic/Circus Music/Waltz	Lennon
8	Within You Without You	Hindustani	Harrison
9	When I'm Sixty-Four	Music Hall/Pop Standard	McCartney
10	Lovely Rita	Pop/Rock	McCartney
11	Good Morning, Good Morning	Psychedelic/Rock	Lennon
12	Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band (Reprise)	Music Hall/Rock	McCartney
13	A Day in the Life	Psychedelic/Avant-Garde	Lennon/McCartney

Table 4.1: Track listing of *Sgt. Pepper’s*.

¹⁴⁸ Womack, *Long and Winding Roads*, 168.

¹⁴⁹ Rolling Stone, “The 500 Greatest Albums of All Time,” *Rolling Stone*, December 11, 2003, 83 – 178.

Table 4.1 illustrates the track listing of the album as well as the genres evoked in each song. Some genres, such as Hindustani music or Circus music, are only evoked in single songs, while other genres, such as psychedelic or the music hall, recur throughout the album. The prominence of psychedelic music should not be surprising given the popularity of the genre in 1967 and The Beatles' prior experiments in *Revolver*. The music hall, however, was not a widely used genre in 1960s rock or in previous works by the band and imbues the album with deeper meaning. Ed Ward, Geoffrey Stokes, and Ken Tucker describe *Sgt. Pepper's* as "an astonishingly eclectic grab bag of musical and lyrical approaches ranging from English music hall to Indian monastery."¹⁵⁰ Ian MacDonald cites the album's "unmatched versatility" as a crucial factor behind its reputation.¹⁵¹ For some critics, however, this musical variety fails to mesh. Reising argues that *Sgt. Pepper's* represents a musical regression for The Beatles and describes such tracks as "When I'm Sixty-Four" and "She's Leaving Home" as "schmaltzy and often trivial vignettes."¹⁵² His overall consensus is that the album is "ear candy" lacking in any philosophical or poetic sublimity.¹⁵³ However "schmaltzy" the songs may seem, Reising fails to recognize the underlying themes that connect the tracks of *Sgt. Pepper's*.

The allusion to the music hall on the album becomes a way for The Beatles to evoke music of the past and resurrect a dying tradition. As opposed to instances on *The White Album* in which the band evokes a past genre for a particular song, *Sgt. Pepper's* involves a large-scale cultural borrowing that encompasses the entire album. In table 4.1, we see that music hall idioms are frequently combined with other genres. This combination has confused many critics and resulted in a variety of different interpretations. Heilbronner writes that *Sgt. Pepper's* "serves as a homage to the English past and express[es] the band's ironic distance from these traditions." His use of the word "homage" and "irony" in the same context is somewhat confusing, as the two terms are not typically placed beside each other and seem to contradict one another. Homage typically refers to a sincere tribute or imitation of another, while irony implies that such an imitation would not be sincere. Similar to Heilbronner, Barry J. Faulk interprets the

¹⁵⁰ Ed Ward, Geoffrey Stokes, and Ken Tucker, *Rock of Ages: The Rolling Stone History of Rock and Roll* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1986), 370.

¹⁵¹ As quoted in Moore, *The Beatles: Sgt. Pepper's*, 47.

¹⁵² Reising, "Vacio Luminoso," 127.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*, 127.

incorporation of the music hall with English rock as an ironic gesture. He believes it depicts a “willful appropriation of the past, aimed at instructing an audience in a specific way of viewing its national history, and thus potentially reconstructing or rewriting that history. In other words, The Beatles’ sampling of the sounds of the pre-War past at this moment in their career is less an exercise in nostalgia than a sign of an emerging historicist consciousness with British rock itself.”¹⁵⁴ Faulk’s assertion denies the integration of nostalgia and critical commentary in the music. The reference to the music hall on *Sgt. Pepper’s*, however, involves both qualities. It becomes a nostalgic reflection on a past generation as well as a vehicle to provide commentary on the present day.

Nostalgia is a recurring theme in the music of The Beatles. “In My Life” from *Rubber Soul* is a notable early example of nostalgia in the band’s catalogue. The lyrics reflect on the different people and places of the narrator’s life, while the song contains a Baroque-influenced piano solo played by George Martin that imbues the music with inflections of the past. “Strawberry Fields Forever/Penny Lane,” the band’s most recent single before *Sgt. Pepper’s*, exhibits their continued exploration of nostalgia and captures the album’s initial childhood Liverpool theme. As discussed in Chapter 3, The Beatles pair nostalgic reflection with critical commentary in such tracks as “Honey Pie” and “Good Night.” From these examples, it is evident that nostalgia and critique do not stand as opposing poles in The Beatles’ music.

Eco, to recall, writes that artists must confront the past but cannot revisit it through innocence; they must approach it ironically.¹⁵⁵ The Beatles, similarly, do not evoke the music hall with earnest intentions. Although reference to the past remains an essential quality of the album, The Beatles transform and distort much of the past music evoked throughout. As mentioned earlier, they combine music hall idioms with modern genres to impart new meaning into the music. In this sense, *Sgt. Pepper’s* is a reconceptualization of the music hall. By adapting the music hall to the present day, The Beatles connect *Sgt. Pepper’s* with past tradition and explore the relationship between the past and the present. This often results in ironic inflections in the music, in which

¹⁵⁴ Barry J. Faulk, *British Rock Modernism, 1967 – 1977: The Story of the Music Hall in Rock* (Farnham: Ashgate Publishing Ltd., 2010), 54.

¹⁵⁵ Eco writes that the postmodern “reply to the modern consists of recognizing that the past, since it cannot really be destroyed, [...] must be revisited: but with irony, not innocently,” in Eco, “Postmodernism, Irony, the Enjoyable,” 67.

particular conventions of the past are used in different settings and adopt new meaning. As will be discussed, the album generates substantial critical commentary through its mixing of the past and present. These critiques reflect the band's own commentary on the evolving musical landscape as well as the current state of their careers.

4.5 Parody in *Sgt. Pepper's*

For these reasons, *Sgt. Pepper's* can be thought of as a parody of the music hall as a form of entertainment as well as a musical style. As opposed to individual cases of parody on *The White Album*, the parody in *Sgt. Pepper's* unfolds across the entire album and draws the disparate genres together. This large-scale parody also suggests a narrative for the listener. The parody implies a narrative through its establishment of the band (Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band) as performers in a fake music hall setting and its use of musical variety and spectacle to create the illusion of a fictional music hall concert. As discussed in Chapter 1, the reference to the fictional band has led many to consider *Sgt. Pepper's* among the earliest concept albums. The concept, however, was only ever applied to the title track, its reprise, and "With A Little Help From My Friends." For example, Lennon and Harrison composed songs for *Sgt. Pepper's* without the fictional band concept in mind. Lennon later argued that the concept "doesn't go anywhere. But it works 'cause we said it works.'" ¹⁵⁶ The music hall is initially evoked through atmospheric sound clips of prerecorded audiences. These sound clips, however, are absent after the fade out of the album's second track "With A Little Help From My Friends." This has confused some critics who raised doubts regarding the consistency of the narrative. Nevertheless, the music hall narrative perseveres, albeit in more abstract ways, and becomes an integral component to the listener's perception of the album and their interpretation of the music.

The variety and spectacle associated with performers in the music hall is represented throughout the songs of *Sgt. Pepper's*; however, the disparate mediums of the music hall, such as singing, dancing, comedy, or magic, are replaced with extravagant modern pop sounds. In this sense, the diverse songs on *Sgt. Pepper's* adopt the role of the

¹⁵⁶ As quoted in William J. Dowling, *Beatlesongs* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1989), 160

different acts of the music hall. Tracks such as “Lucy In The Sky With Diamonds” “Being For The Benefit Of Mr. Kite!” and “Fixing A Hole” combine contemporary psychedelic sounds with innovative studio technology to create a sonic spectacle. This also adds an element of irony to the narrative, as The Beatles use a past model (the music hall) to represent the new (innovative popular music).

4.5.1 The Album Cover

In addition to musical cues, the extravagant album cover also suggests the fictional Sgt. Pepper’s Lonely Hearts Club Band. Now an iconic image in pop culture, the album cover provides the listener with their first impression of the fictional band. It displays The Beatles, disguised as Sgt. Pepper’s Lonely Hearts Club Band, dressed in elaborate costumes that blend regal British military attire with flamboyant psychedelic colours. The band holds traditional military instruments, such as a French horn, cor anglais, piccolo, and trumpet, as they stand behind an elaborately decorated bass drum displaying “Sgt. Pepper’s” on the skin. Martin claims that the military rank of “Sgt. Pepper” and vibrant new take on military garb are spoofs of the pomp and grandeur of Imperial Britain.¹⁵⁷ They also reflect the military qualities that were found in songs and performances of the music hall.

Behind the band stands a collage of famous historical figures plastered onto cardboard cutouts. Recognizable faces range from political, social, and artistic figures of the past such as Karl Marx, Carl Jung, T.E. Lawrence, and Oscar Wilde, to more contemporary figures such as Marlon Brando, Karlheinz Stockhausen, and Bob Dylan. These historical icons come from a variety of backgrounds and represent the combined achievements of Western society, at least according to The Beatles. Among these historical figures are wax figures of The Beatles from Madame Tussands’ Wax Museum in London dressed in matching suits and sporting their signature Mop-Top haircut. The wax figures embody Beatlemania and the band for which the bubble of fame burst only a few months prior. They assimilate into the background with the cardboard historical icons. Womack interprets the wax models as The Beatles own contribution to the

¹⁵⁷ George Martin and William Pearson, *Summer of Love* (London: Pan Publishing, 1995): 120.

collective consciousness of Western society.¹⁵⁸ The contrast between the old lifeless wax Beatles and the vibrant new Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band epitomizes the band's desire to sever ties with their former image and embark in a different direction. Furthermore, their dazzling attire adds colour to the faded black-and-white figures of the past and symbolizes the band's rejuvenation of the music hall.

4.5.2 The Music Hall

The music hall was a British theatrical tradition that emerged in the 1830s and dominated British popular culture of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. It was the prime form of entertainment in the United Kingdom before the advent of the phonograph, cinema, and radio, and entered extinction in the late 1950s.¹⁵⁹ Similarly to American vaudeville, the music hall featured a variety of acts, including singers, dancers, actors, comedians, magicians, ventriloquists, and circus performers. Many of these performers were revered among fans and achieved minor celebrity status by becoming music hall stars. Such famed performers include Harry Champion, Lily Morris, Dan Leno, and Marie Lloyd. Actor Charlie Chaplin was also a music hall performer before moving into cinema. Unlike the concert hall, the music hall was a social tradition in which audiences would meet friends or engage in conversation during the show. The relationship between performers and audiences was also less formal. Audiences were often goaded by performers to laugh, yell, applaud, or sing along.¹⁶⁰ Although open to all, the music hall was closely associated with the working-class and typically featured acts that dealt with relatable values and issues. According to Peter Bailey, common themes of music hall songs include: alcohol, romantic adventure, marriage, mother-in-laws, dear old pals, seaside holidays, and so forth.¹⁶¹ He believes that the recurrent emphasis on the domestic and everyday made the music hall a medium that documented and confirmed the British working-class way of life. Bailey argues: "The great popularity of the songs is said to come from the audience's recognition and identification with the routine yet piquant

¹⁵⁸ Womack, *Long and Winding Roads*, 183.

¹⁵⁹ Peter Bailey, "Conspiracies of Meaning: Music-Hall and the Knowingness of Popular Culture," *Past & Present* 144 (1994): 138.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 150.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 139.

exploits of a comic realism that validates the shared experience of a typically urbanized, class-bound world seen from below.”¹⁶²

The music hall adapted to popular styles of the time. While music hall songs of the mid-nineteenth century would naturally borrow characteristics of English folk ballads or art songs, music hall performers of the twentieth century would draw from more recent styles such as ragtime or jazz. Due to the absence of recording technology during the early days of the music hall, knowledge about performance practice from this time is limited to descriptions in historical accounts. For example, Bailey uncovers sources from the nineteenth century that describe the typical music hall singing style as a robust and physical display that incorporates the shouting, physical gestures, and extravagant eccentric stage dress necessary to win the attention of the otherwise eating, drinking, conversing, or lounging crowds.¹⁶³ By the early twentieth century, however, music hall performers began to be recorded. From these recordings, we can observe comical performance gestures along with a musical style that combines English folk song with elements of ragtime and military marches. An example can be heard in Lily Morris’ performance of “My Old Man Said Follow The Van” from Adrian Brunel’s 1935 film *Variety*. “My Old Man Said Follow The Van” was a popular music hall song that was written in 1909 and was performed by many music hall stars. Its lyrics recount a husband and wife who pack up their belongings late at night to skip rent. After loading the van with their possessions, they realize there is no room for the wife in the van. She is told to follow on foot but inevitably gets lost along the way. Morris enters the stage dressed in nineteenth-century costume and carries an empty birdcage for her “ol’ cock linnet” mentioned in the song. In the final chorus, Morris addresses the audience and rallies for them to sing along. The hall erupts with full voices and applause. Elements of military marches permeate the music: the song is in 2/4 metre with emphasis on the upbeat, the bass alternates between the root and the fifth of the harmony, and the brass section of the orchestra interjects after each vocal line with passages in dotted rhythms. March characteristics are widely found in music hall performances from this era, including Charlie Coborn’s “The Man Who Broke the Bank at Monte Carlo” and Harry

¹⁶² Ibid., 139.

¹⁶³ Ibid., 143.

Champion's "I'm Henry the Eighth, I Am." These music hall songs suggest a deep-seated influence of imperialism in British musical culture. As will be shown, The Beatles explore these militaristic musical qualities in *Sgt. Pepper's*.

The music hall was a tradition with which The Beatles were very familiar. Opening in 1913, Crane's Music Hall was the main theatre in Liverpool and was later renamed the Epstein Theatre in tribute to The Beatles manager. Lennon, McCartney, Harrison, and Starr were of similar working-class backgrounds and would have shared a cultural habitus that included the music hall. Further to the point, Paul's father, James McCartney, was a bandleader and music hall performer who familiarized his son with many of the music hall traditions.¹⁶⁴ During the early 1960s and before the onset of Beatlemania, Epstein had The Beatles tour England along with other bands and retired music hall stars.¹⁶⁵ Oded Heilbronner insists that the band's interaction with these performers during this time influenced their early stage behaviour. He argues that the band's whimsical humour and formal synchronized bow during concerts reflect music hall performance style.¹⁶⁶ In *Sgt. Pepper's*, The Beatles continue to adapt the music hall into their act by directly borrowing its musical conventions.

4.5.3 "Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band"

The opening title track of *Sgt. Pepper's* immediately establishes the fake concert setting through the sounds of orchestral tuning and audience chatter. The presence of the audience is heard through pre-recorded sound clips of applause, hollering, and fits of laughter. These reactions suggest the music hall atmosphere as well as the audience's customary informal relationship with performers on stage. The music hall setting, however, gives way to the pounding drums, booming electric bass, and electric fuzz guitars of 1960s psychedelic rock. The contrast between the setting and the music prompted Faulk to refer to the song as "comic extreme."¹⁶⁷ McCartney assumes the role of Master of Ceremonies and introduces the fictional Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club

¹⁶⁴ Moore, *The Beatles: Sgt. Pepper's*, 20.

¹⁶⁵ Oded Heilbronner, "The Peculiarities of the Beatles: A Cultural-Historical Interpretation," *Cultural and Social History* 5 (2008): 110.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 109 – 110.

¹⁶⁷ Faulk, *British Rock Modernism*, 53.

Band. His introduction describes the act as a twenty-year-old band, led by the illustrious Sgt. Pepper, and as “the act you’ve known for all these years.” This brief line establishes the fictitious band within the simulated past of the listener and inflects irony into the band’s identity. For the listener, the act they’ve known for all these years is The Beatles – the Fab Four from Liverpool who sang such hits as “I Want To Hold Your Hand” and “She Loves You.” Yet, that is precisely the band that is absent from the recording. The subtle play in this line is an acknowledgement by the band of their trickery on the listener and further separates The Beatles of the past from their new identities in the parody.

In his depiction of the MC, McCartney adopts the robust vocal delivery of a music hall star, as he shouts over the rock accompaniment and noises of the crowd. The MC introduces Sgt. Pepper’s Lonely Hearts Club Band before a short brass interlude reminiscent of a small military band. This inclusion of the brass ensemble adds an air of whimsy to the song and embeds hints of military music that was customary of the music hall into the psychedelic rock. Lennon, McCartney, and Harrison begin to sing in vocal harmony and represent Sgt. Pepper’s Lonely Hearts Club Band in the song. The band engages with the fake audience (and listener) in a similar way to music hall stars, by singing: “we hope that you enjoy the show” and “you’re such a lovely audience/we’d love to take you home with us.” Addressing the audience, or “breaking the fourth wall” as it is often referred to, is not commonly found in studio pop albums.

The MC returns to introduce the lead singer for the next act – the famed music hall star Billy Shears. “Sgt. Pepper’s Lonely Hearts Club Band” segues into “With A Little Help From My Friends” through a cliché sounding \flat VI – \flat VII – I rising chord progression, artificial applause, and a tacky proclamation of the singer’s name. While listeners may expect that Lennon or McCartney would embody the fictional Billy Shears, it is Ringo Starr who, in an extreme role reversal, plays the part of the headlining singer. “With A Little Help From My Friends” evokes popular tunes of the early twentieth century through up-tempo shuffle rhythms, a walking bass line that provides emphasis on the upbeat, and piano and electric guitar accompaniment that responds on the downbeat. The call-and-response singing between Billy Shears and the backing vocalists accentuates the camaraderie of the lyrics.

Billy Shears inevitably becomes a comical portrait of a music hall star. While many music hall stars, such as a Harry Champion or Charlie Coborn, would use cheeky humour to create a cocky persona, Billy Shears frets about his insecurities and performance anxieties through such lines as “What would you do if I sang out of tune?” and, “Lend me your ears and I’ll sing you a song, and I’ll try not to sing out of key.” The allusion to the music hall star persona creates a commentary on celebrity status in the present day. The insecurities of Billy Shears make the singer a false idol of the music hall audience and leave the listener unsure as to why he is so revered. The Beatles manufacture Billy Shears and his admirers to critique their listener’s own idolization of performers and musicians. Perhaps, The Beatles want their fans to reevaluate their own frenzied behaviour given the recent mishaps of the band’s 1966 world tour. “With A Little Help From My Friends” concludes with Billy Shears sustaining an E4, for which Starr received coaching from his fellow Beatles, as the sounds of audience applause bring the song to an end.

4.5.4 Musical Variety throughout *Sgt. Pepper’s*

After the fade-out in “With A Little Help From My Friends,” the listener is instantly transported to the psychedelic sounds of “Lucy In The Sky With Diamonds” and the music hall setting is seemingly left behind. The fake audience does not return until the reprise of “Sgt. Pepper’s Lonely Hearts Club Band” near the end of the album. The musical variety, though, continues the music hall narrative and picks up where the atmosphere left off. We can find the greatest diversity of genres throughout the middle of the album in the songs “She’s Leaving Home”, “Being For The Benefit Of Mr. Kite!”, “Within You Without You”, and “When I’m Sixty-Four” (tracks 6–9).

“She’s Leaving Home” was written primarily by McCartney, with help from Lennon, and provides an immediate contrast to the psychedelic songs heard earlier. The song evokes Classical music through its string nonet and harp arrangement and is one of the few tracks in The Beatles catalogue in which no member of the band contributes any instrumental part. While the Classical elements provide contrast with other material on *Sgt. Pepper’s* and contribute to the reconceptualization of music hall programming, the

song's embodiment of the generational gap conforms to the broader analysis of the past and present. Lennon and McCartney were inspired to write a song depicting the struggle between the younger and older generations after reading an article in the paper about a young girl who ran away from home. McCartney provides the perspective of the narrator throughout the verse and describes a girl who leaves her parents early in the morning, and the reactions of the startled parents who find their daughter is gone. The chorus features a two-part dialogue between McCartney and Lennon, in which McCartney's falsetto depicts sympathy for the young girl, while Lennon's part satirizes the parents, who question, rather foolishly, why their daughter has left them. MacDonald considers the song to be one of the finest from the album and claims it articulates an objective generational gap between different audiences.¹⁶⁸ The parents invest money, time, and personal sacrifice into caring for the daughter, while neglecting her needs for freedom, acceptance, and enjoyment. The commentary extends to the clash of generations in the late 1960s, as the parents in "She's Leaving Home" can also represent many conservative members of the older generation who failed to understand the views of the counterculture. "She's Leaving Home" evokes Classical music as a means of appealing to the older generation. It presents a critique of the failed communications between the young and the old through a genre with which the older generation could identify. William M. Northcutt believes that the use of Classical strings on a "rock" album helps bridge the generational gap in ways that the characters of the song fail.¹⁶⁹

"Being For The Benefit Of Mr. Kite!" mixes psychedelic imagery with the musical qualities of the circus or carnival to provide a stunning contrast with "She's Leaving Home." The song was written primarily by Lennon, and was described by the songwriter as "a painting, a pure watercolour."¹⁷⁰ "Being For The Benefit Of Mr. Kite!" emphasizes the bizarre and freakish qualities of circus music through eccentric instrumentation consisting of piano, bass guitar, multiple electric organs, harmonium, and bass harmonica. It also transforms qualities of early circus-style music through the

¹⁶⁸ MacDonald, *Revolution in the Head*, 138.

¹⁶⁹ William M. Northcutt, "The Spectacle of Alienation: Death, Loss, and the Crowd in Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band," in *Reading the Beatles: Cultural Studies, Literary Criticism, and the Fab Four*, ed. Kenneth Womack and Todd F. Davis (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2006), 140.

¹⁷⁰ David Sheff, *All We Are Saying: The Last Major Interview with John Lennon and Yoko Ono* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000), 183.

inclusion of psychedelic analog tape effects. The overall form of the song is ABAB. The A section consists of verse material over reed organ accompaniment, while the B section contains an instrumental waltz section. Analog tape effects are most prevalent in the B section, as The Beatles attempt to emulate the sounds of a carnival through a jumbling of short pre-recorded sound effects. The final B section provides the outro for the song and features a collection of recorded tape sounds spliced together at random.¹⁷¹ The effect is eerie because it places bizarre psychedelic tape effects over a circus-sounding waltz. Tonal instability heightens the surreal atmosphere, as the A section begins in C minor, while the B section begins in D minor and modulates to E minor, before concluding on a G major chord (a dominant preparation for the return of C minor).¹⁷² “Being For The Benefit Of Mr. Kite!” evokes a sense of nostalgia through its reference to the circus, something typically enjoyed during childhood, while providing a modern psychedelic spin on the surreal spectacle. At the same time, however, The Beatles usurp music from the listener’s childhood and distort it. Through the distortion, The Beatles suggest that the past can no longer be revisited or relived without being confronted by the present. The childhood innocence of the circus is now tainted by 1960s society and the listener’s own maturation.

Harrison’s “Within You Without You” opens the second half of *Sgt. Pepper’s*. The song contains traditional Hindustani instruments (sitar, swarmandal, tambura, and tabla) as well as a Western string section. The song can be considered the metaphysical centerpiece of *Sgt. Pepper’s*. The lyrics preach detachment and disillusionment from the illusions of the world. Lyrics such as “when you’ve seen beyond yourself, then you will find peace of mind is waiting there” express the human condition as trapped behind a “wall of illusion” and advocate looking beyond the illusion in order to find truth. Joan Peyser believes that the song summarizes the first side of the album, and that lines such as “the space between us all and the people who hide behind walls of illusion” adopt new meanings when considering the illusion of *Sgt. Pepper’s* fake concert.¹⁷³ Other critics,

¹⁷¹ Mark Lewison and Paul McCartney, *The Complete Beatles Recording Sessions: The Official Story of the Abbey Road Years 1962 – 70* (London: Bounty Books, 2005), 99.

¹⁷² See Moore, *The Beatles: Sgt. Pepper’s*, 39 – 40, for a more detailed harmonic and tonal analysis of “Being For The Benefit Of Mr. Kite!”

¹⁷³ Joan Peyser, “The music of sound or the Beatles and the beatless” in *Age of Rock*, edited by Jonathan Eisen (New York: Vintage, 1969), 132.

such as Richard Goldstein and Tim Riley, were puzzled by the song's inclusion and argued that the song failed to connect with the rest of the album.¹⁷⁴ As Peyser suggests, the song provides an internal commentary on the narrative. "Within You Without You" reminds its listener about the fantasy and fiction surrounding the illustrious Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band and their audience. At the same time, however, it also perpetuates that narrative by contributing to the variety and spectacle of the modernized music hall concert. Although the buzz of the sitar can be heard in songs by other artists during this time, the degree to which The Beatles evoke Hindustani music in "Within You Without You" would certainly be perceived by listeners as novel and spectacular.

In a startling shift in character and mood, "When I'm Sixty-Four," the next track, employs many of the harmonic and rhythm characteristics of Tin Pan Alley songwriting, such as circle-of-fifth chord progressions, subdominant harmonies, and shuffle rhythms. The song further evokes popular music of the early twentieth-century popular song through its colourful clarinet arrangement, upper register piano, and Ringo's use of jazz brushes. The lyrics depict a narrator that asks his partner whether they will still love them in the future, as he describes an idealized life for the two of them. The lyrics and the genre depict multilayered feelings of nostalgia. On the one hand, The Beatles arrange the song in a style that was popular during their parent's youth. The whimsical music and lyrics are reminiscent of music hall songs and would have likely reminded listeners of the past. The narrator of the song could be interpreted by members of the previous generation as a reflection of themselves. McCartney's father, for example, would likely have pondered over his own future during his youthful years in the same manner as the narrator. On the other hand, the song is also nostalgic for Paul because it was written for his father when he was sixteen years old.¹⁷⁵ Its reprisal for use on the album would likely have incited reflection on his life during the time of its composition. Inflections of youth can also be found in the recording. George Martin sped up the final mix by a semitone in order to raise the treble qualities in McCartney's voice and make him sound younger and more innocent.¹⁷⁶

¹⁷⁴ As discussed in Moore, *The Beatles: Sgt. Pepper's*, 45.

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 20.

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 46.

The music hall atmosphere and audience clips return in the penultimate track and reprise of “Sgt. Pepper’s Lonely Hearts Club Band.” When compared with the opening track, the reprise is much shorter; the sections including the MC and brass sections are removed and the tempo is faster. The melody and chords remain the same, but the lyrics have changed to reflect a farewell from the band to its audience. The audience applauds and the sounds of their cheers eventually decay to end the concert. *Sgt. Pepper’s*, however, is still not over.

4.5.5 “A Day In The Life”

“A Day In The Life,” the last song on the album, occurs after the concert and becomes a sobering wake-up call from the fantasy of Sgt. Pepper’s Lonely Hearts Club Band. Its placement after the conclusion of the concert narrative implies that the song exists outside of the parody. Its lyrics adopt a grim perspective in their exploration of the mundane qualities of everyday life and become a critique of the make-believe narrative of the album. MacDonald describes “A Day In The Life” as “a song not of disillusionment with life itself but of disenchantment with the limits of mundane perception. It depicts the ‘real world’ as an unenlightened construct that reduces, depresses, and ultimately destroys.”¹⁷⁷ It is also one of The Beatles most experimental and original songs. Its unique structure connects two individual song fragments, composed separately by Lennon and McCartney, through two massive sustained orchestral crescendos. McCartney, who conducted the orchestra, recalled: “We just wrote it like a cooking recipe. Twenty-four bars, on the ninth bar the orchestra will take off and it will go from its lowest note to its highest note.”¹⁷⁸ The works of avant-garde composers such as Stockhausen inspired these orchestral climaxes.¹⁷⁹ Lennon described the effect as a “tremendous build-up, from nothing up to something absolutely like the end of the world.”¹⁸⁰

¹⁷⁷ MacDonald, *Revolution in the Head*, 181.

¹⁷⁸ As quoted in Womack, *Long and Winding Roads*, 179.

¹⁷⁹ Moore, *Sgt. Pepper’s*, 20.

¹⁸⁰ As quoted in Everett, *The Beatles as Musicians*, 118.

The song begins with Lennon's section. He based the lyrics of his section on two stories he read in the newspaper, and a film in which he acted, entitled *How I Won The War*. His section borrows from everyday sources to provide cold and desensitized accounts of routine mundane life and the eventual death that awaits its end. After simple reflection on these stories, Lennon sings "I'd love to turn you on" as the orchestra prepares for its first climax. This line echoes Timothy Leary's message of "Turn on, tune in, drop out." In the context of "A Day In The Life," however, the line transcends its association with hallucinogenic substances to become an existential message. Lennon preaches escaping the superficialities of the contemporary Western lifestyle and encourages the listener finds peace of mind beyond its illusions. McCartney's segment of the song follows the first orchestral climax and shifts from the bleak commentary of Lennon's section into a musical recount of a typical morning for the average person. A prominent rhythm section and a faster tempo replace the solemn sounding acoustic guitar of the songs opening. McCartney's section was composed as a part of the initial nostalgic Liverpool concept phase. His reminiscence of waking up to catch the bus for school injects elements of nostalgia and personal reflection of the past into the song. His voice is also placed further in the mix in order to create the sense of distance. After a return to Lennon's section and the second massive orchestral crescendo, "A Day In The Life" brings *Sgt. Pepper's* to fantastic finale with a fortissimo E major chord played on three different pianos and harmonium. After an extended fade-out in which the sounds of the pianos slowly decay, The Beatles interrupt the silence with random clips of studio noise. This comically absurd ending displays the influence of The Beach Boys *Pet Sounds*, which similarly used sounds clips after a long fade-out to conclude the album, but also lightens the mood of what would otherwise be a very bleak and grave ending to an otherwise uplifting and whimsical album.

4.6 Conclusion

Due to the depth and scale of the album, *Sgt. Pepper's* proves to be one of the most ambitious uses of parody throughout The Beatles oeuvre. The music hall provides the album with a large-scale historical model from which The Beatles reimagine an old

English tradition. Northcutt argues that the blending of the music hall with rock creates intriguing dichotomies between high and low culture as well as the old establishment and burgeoning youth culture. He believes that the creation of fresh new sounds through the provocation of the “unhip” is a quintessential aspect of *Sgt. Pepper’s*.¹⁸¹ Other critics focus on the album’s depictions of fantasy and reality. Peyser argues that *Sgt. Pepper’s* demonstrates that humanity cannot live with or without illusion, while Riley interprets the album as an expression of the necessity of fantasy and the danger of indulging in it.¹⁸² It is evident that the album produces different meanings for different listeners. No interpretation, however, can ignore the album’s ability to channel the past.

By reconceptualizing the music hall, The Beatles engage the listener in a critical dialogue with past traditions and modern music. Considering the discussion and analysis in Chapters 2 and 3, *Sgt. Pepper’s* can be contextualized among The Beatles’ ongoing use of parody as a reflection on the changing landscapes of music and society. By drawing from a recently extinct British tradition, The Beatles challenge the listener to think about the role of popular music in contemporary society. The band suggests that the antiquated properties of the music hall were not so different from the modern pop album. Both adhere to their own similar conventions that use variety to provide audiences with perspectives on daily life. While the music hall was an outlet for the British working-class, *Sgt. Pepper’s* provides an outlet for the modern pop consumer and member of the counterculture. In this respect, *Sgt. Pepper’s* functions as the music hall for 1960s youth culture.

The parody of the music hall also allows The Beatles to create commentary on other aspects of modern music making. The band uses the variety and spectacle of the narrative as a means to explore different genres of the past and their pre-existing associations with listeners. For example, “She’s Leaving Home” uses Classical strings to represent the older generation, while “Being For The Benefit of Mr. Kite!” reimagines the circus in an attempt to recapture long-lost childhood. The Beatles also evoke the music hall star persona as a means to comment on celebrity status in modern life. As The Beatles transitioned from performers to exclusively studio recording musicians, their

¹⁸¹ Northcutt, “The Spectacle of Alienation,” 137.

¹⁸² Moore, *The Beatles: Sgt. Pepper’s*, 63.

listeners were now realizing that The Fab Four they once knew and loved were not going to last forever. Like the stars of the music hall, the pop frenzy of The Beatles would eventually die away and be replaced by something new, whether it is the fictional Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band of 1967 or the non-fictional artists, styles, and fads of later years and today. This commentary is as relevant today as it was for The Beatles. In the end, parody in *Sgt. Pepper's* enriches the band's perspectives on the past and extends their palette of musical imitation.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

Parody has a unique function in the music of The Beatles. It provided the band with a new twist on their already blooming penchant for imitation while encouraging the adaptation of different genres into their eclectic sound. The emergence of parody in the middle of their careers indicates the band's growing awareness of different kinds of music and the meanings attributed to that music. It also reflects their desire to connect with artists and genres of the past. Although some examples of parody may produce more profound commentary than others, each instance reflects the ability of The Beatles to formulate new meaning by transforming pre-existing genres. Broadly speaking, the band uses parody as a means of creating nostalgic reflection, playful emulation, and critical commentary.

As discussed in previous chapters, reflections of nostalgia are apparent in such songs as "Good Night", "Honey Pie", and "When I'm Sixty-Four." These songs exhibit the ways in which critique can be found among the band's more sentimental reflections on the past. Parody, in these cases, is often evoked through the ironic contexts in which nostalgia is used and relies heavily on other tracks on the respective album. In each case, music of the past is used in juxtaposition with the music and meaning of other songs. The old-fashioned sound of "Honey Pie," for example, provide an ambiguous answer to the album's call for political revolution; the Hollywood-esque quality of "Good Night" lent a simulated happy ending to *The White Album*; and the contrast between psychedelic rock and "When I'm Sixty-Four" portrays the naiveté of the past, while contributing to the modern adaptation of the music hall in *Sgt. Pepper's*. In these examples, The Beatles provide a critical commentary on nostalgia itself. Similar to many of the past musical conventions evoked in the songs, our memories and sentimental longing of youth and childhood cannot escape the overwhelming influence of the present. The Beatles, however, often embrace this quality in the music and reimagine past traditions. As heard in *Sgt. Pepper's*, the band's nostalgic reflection on the music hall results in a modern reconceptualization. By engaging in parody this way, The Beatles choose not to let go of the past, but to help it survive in the modern world.

While the understanding of parody proposed in Chapter 1 made a distinction between parody as a broader critical reflection and parody as a comical effect, one cannot deny that The Beatles' use of parody often comes across as comical. It is hard to imagine that the band is not trying to be humorous in such songs as "Back In The USSR", "Yer Blues", or "Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band." Humour is produced through the ways in which the band distorts qualities of pre-existing songs or genres; however, the humorous effects do not necessarily imply that the band is merely mocking the original work. The humour is often much more playful. In "Back In The USSR," The Beatles humorously imitate the sounds of Chuck Berry and The Beach Boys, two artists whom they often praised, to playfully profess the antithesis of American ideology. The message is of course as joke, as the song's vision of the Soviet Union is not one to which the band adhered. Lennon's exaggerated lyrics and monotonous guitar solo in "Yer Blues" create a comical rendition of British-blues rock without directly attacking musicians and audiences of the genre. Similarly, the "comic extreme" of "Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band" is generated from the prospect of a psychedelic rock band performing in a music hall context and not from any form of insult directed at either genre.¹⁸³ For these reasons, many critics attribute the term parody to these songs; however, they do so purely based on the humorous quality of the songs. As shown, humour is only one facet of parody in the music of The Beatles.

The Beatles use parody quite broadly to generate critical commentary. While the subject of the commentary varies from song to song, we can see that the band frequently employed parody to perform a comparative analysis of popular music of the past and present. Perhaps this is best exemplified in "Happiness Is A Warm Gun" from *The White Album*, in which Lennon juxtaposes four different genres in the song's four sections. The first three genres are psychedelic rock, blues-rock, and hard rock and were common in music of the late 1960s. The final genre is an allusion to doo-wop in which the sentimental romanticism of the genre is replaced with explicit sexuality. By evoking music from the past and juxtaposing it with music from the present, The Beatles draw the listener's attention towards contrasting musical conventions. At the same time, however,

¹⁸³ Faulk refers to "Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band" as "comic extreme" in Faulk, *British Rock Modernism*, 53.

they distort doo-wop by pairing it with highly sexualized lyrics. These new lyrics depict romantic love after the sexual revolution and, when accompanied by doo-wop music, provide a commentary on the changing conceptions of love in the 1960s. The relationship between the past and present was explored in a much broader sense throughout *Sgt. Pepper's*. In the album, The Beatles reconceptualize the music hall to connect the past tradition with modern pop conventions. This reconceptualization forces the listener to reevaluate their preconceptions of the music hall (if they have any) and see its connections to the present day.

After the breakup of the band in 1970, Lennon, McCartney, and Harrison embarked on their own successful solo careers. All three songwriters would intermittently use parody in their individual songwriting; however, to a lesser extent than during their tenure with The Beatles. Moreover, each songwriter largely took parody in different directions. McCartney continued to use parody as a way of exploring music of the previous generation. Notable examples can be found in his 1973 ATV special *James Paul McCartney*. *McCartney* was broken up into several parts and combined the platform of a variety television special with live performances from the ex-Beatle and his recently formed band Wings. Performances throughout the special combined new material by Wings, past Beatles' songs written by McCartney, and popular songs of the past such as "Mary Had a Little Lamb", "April Showers", and "Pack Up Your Troubles in Your Old Kit-Bag." While the nursery rhyme quality of these early popular songs may instill nostalgia into the set list, McCartney, at the same time, emphasizes old-fashioned qualities of the music. In the middle of the program, he performs "Gotta Sing, Gotta Dance." The song is modeled upon musical numbers from old Hollywood movies and features an elaborately choreographed dance routine with dancers dressed in hybrid tuxedo/ballroom gowns. Similarly to "Honey Pie," "Gotta Sing, Gotta Dance" begins with a slow voice and piano introduction in which McCartney sings "who could call me a stick in the mud, when I polish my tonsils and put on my dancing shoes," before the orchestra enters and the tempo picks up. It immediately evokes jazz music of the 1920s through a wailing clarinet line and prominent use of the Charleston rhythm. The song frequently shifts styles and becomes a medley of different arrangements, including a Latin-rhythm section, and a tap dance section reminiscent of Fred Astaire routines. The

song adopts a kitschy quality to it, as the viewer cannot help but chuckle at the schmaltzy and banal use of the past music. It is hard to imagine that McCartney was not aware of the effect. The song is a humorous reprisal of musical numbers from the past and, like *Sgt. Pepper's*, draws attention to McCartney's modern rock adaptation of the variety television special format of the 1940s and 1950s. It also displays the songwriter's continued affinity for early popular music.

Lennon employed parody less frequently than McCartney throughout his solo career. His music initially focused on anti-war activism and social issues, as evident in such songs as "Imagine" and "Working Class Hero," but material released after his death in 1980 reveals that the playful humour and reference to other artists were still floating around the songwriter's head. "Serve Yourself" and "Satire #2" were two songs released posthumously on the *John Lennon Anthology* (1996) and parody songs by Bob Dylan. Written in 1980, "Serve Yourself" criticizes Dylan's 1979 hit "Gotta Serve Somebody" as well as the inclusion of Christian themes in his songwriting. "Serve Yourself," for which only a demo exists, consists of Lennon skeptically reflecting on those who claim to have found truth in the teachings of Christ, Mohammed, Buddha, and Krishna in an exaggerated Scottish accent. In the chorus, Lennon references Dylan's "Gotta Serve Somebody" by claiming: "You gotta serve yourself, ain't nobody gonna do for you." The remaining lyrics provide a critique of organized religion and warn the listener about relying too heavily on their faith. "Satire #2," also recorded in 1980, is more a light-hearted parody of Bob Dylan's songwriting style during the mid-1960s. In the song, Lennon quite obviously reads new stories verbatim from a newspaper in the lazy drawn-out singing style of Dylan circa his 1966 album *Blonde on Blonde*. The line "stuck inside of lexicon with the Roget's thesaurus blues again" is in reference to Dylan's "Stuck Inside of Mobile with the Memphis Blues Again" and satirizes his abstract and nebulous lyrical style during that phase of his career. In both parodies, the listener detects Lennon's frustration with Dylan. Perhaps, this was due to Dylan's recent embrace of organized religion, a topic with which Lennon struggled throughout his life.

One of the most obvious cases of parody by Harrison can be found in "Isn't It A Pity" from his Grammy award winning album *All Things Must Pass* (1970). The song's lyrics reflect on the heartbreak of lost love and broken relationships. They symbolize

Harrison's feelings of sadness over the messy breakup of the band that same year. "Isn't It A Pity" is a self-parody as it borrows from The Beatles' "Hey Jude" to incite reflection on The Beatles. Much like "Hey Jude," "Isn't It A Pity" is a seven-minute epic song with a prolonged fade-out. The fade-out borrows from the highly recognizable melody of the extended coda in "Hey Jude." Although the chords have changed, the melody is kept in tact as the background vocals sing "na, na, na, na-na-na-na, na-na-na-na, isn't it a pity?" The appropriation of one of The Beatles' most recognizable melodies in Harrison's somber meditation steepens the music with a bittersweet reflection on his time with the band.

Each of these songs pay testament to the enduring relationship between parody and the songwriting styles of The Beatles. As we can see, parody is recurring device that adds a distinct flair to their music. While this thesis provides a new perspective to The Beatles, it also addresses a gap in musicological scholarship. The role of parody in popular music is an underdeveloped concept in the literature. The understanding of parody put forth in this study and its application to the music of The Beatles can hopefully create new opportunities for further scholarship dedicated to parody in the music of other popular music artists.

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Appendix

<i>Song</i>	<i>Genre</i>	<i>Songwriter</i>	<i>Parody</i>
Please Please Me (1963)			
I Saw Her Standing There	Beat Music	McCartney	
Misery	Pop	Lennon/McCartney	
Anna (Go To Him)	R&B	Arthur Alexander	
Chains	R&B	Gerry Goffin/Carole King	
Boys	R&B	Luther Dixon/Wes Farrell	
Ask Me Why	Pop	Lennon	
Please Please Me	Beat Music	Lennon	
Love Me Do	Skiffle	Lennon/McCartney	
P.S. I Love You	Pop	McCartney	
Baby, It's You	R&B	Mack David/Barney Williams/Burt Bacharach	
Do You Want To Know A Secret	R&B	Lennon	
A Taste Of Honey	Pop	Bobby Scott/Ric Marlow	
There's A Place	Beat Music	Lennon	
Twist And Shout	Beat Music	Phil Medley/Bert Russell	
With The Beatles (1963)			
It Won't Be Long	Beat Music	Lennon	
All I've Got To Do	Beat Music	Lennon	
All My Loving	Beat Music	McCartney	
Don't Bother Me	Beat Music	Harrison	
Little Child	Beat Music	Lennon/McCartney	
Till There Was You	Pop	Meredith Willson	
Please Mister Postman	R&B	Dobbins/Garett/Gorman/Holland/Bateman	
Roll Over Beethoven	Rock'n'Roll	Chuck Berry	
Hold Me Tight	Beat Music	McCartney	
You Really Got A Hold On Me	R&B	Smokey Robinson	
I Wanna Be Your Man	Beat Music	Lennon/McCartney	
Devil In Her Heart	R&B	Richard Drapkin	
Not A Second Time	Beat Music	Lennon	
Money (That's What I Want)	R&B	Janie Bradford/Berry Gordy	
A Hard Day's Night (1964)			
A Hard Day's Night	Beat Music	Lennon	
I Should Have Known Better	Beat Music	Lennon	
If I Fell	Pop	Lennon	
I'm Happy Just To Dance With You	Beat Music	Lennon/McCartney	
And I Love Her	Pop	McCartney	
Tell Me Why	Beat Music	Lennon	
Can't Buy Me Love	Beat Music	McCartney	
Any Time At All	Beat Music	Lennon	
I'll Cry Instead	Rockabilly	Lennon	
Things We Said Today	Country/Rock	McCartney	
When I Get Home	Beat Music	Lennon	
You Can't Do That	Beat Music	Lennon	
I'll Be Back	Beat Music	Lennon	
Beatles For Sale (1964)			
No Reply	Beat Music	Lennon	
I'm A Loser	Folk/Rock	Lennon	
Baby's In Black	Folk/Rock	Lennon/McCartney	
Rock And Roll Music	Rock'n'Roll	Chuck Berry	
I'll Follow The Sun	Pop	McCartney	
Mr. Moonlight	Pop	Roy Lee Johnson	
Kansas City/Hey, Hey, Hey	Rock'n'Roll	Leiber/Stoller/Penniman	
Eight Days A Week	Pop	Lennon/McCartney	
Words Of Love	Pop/Rock	Buddy Holly	
Honey Don't	Rockabilly	Carl Perkins	
Every Little Thing	Pop	McCartney	
I Don't Want To Spoil the Party	Country/Rock	Lennon	
What You're Doing	Pop	McCartney	
Everybody's Trying To Be My Baby	Rockabilly	Carl Perkins	

<i>Song</i>	<i>Genre</i>	<i>Songwriter</i>	<i>Parody</i>	<i>Genre</i>	<i>Genre</i>	<i>Songwriter</i>	<i>Parody</i>
Help! (1965)				Revolver (1966)			
Help!	Beat Music	Lennon		Taxman	Rock	Harrison	Yes
The Night Before	Rock	McCartney		Eleanor Rigby	Pop	McCartney	
You've Got To Hide Your Love Away	Folk	Lennon		I'm Only Sleeping	Psychedelic	Lennon	
I Need You	Pop	Harrison		Love You To	Hindustani	Harrison	
Another Girl	Rock	McCartney		Here, There, And Everywhere	Pop	McCartney	
You're Going To Lose That Girl	Beat Music	Lennon		Yellow Submarine	Children's Song	McCartney	
Ticket To Ride	Rock	Lennon/McCartney		She Said, She Said	Psychedelic	Lennon	
Act Naturally	Country	Johnny Russell/Voni Morrison		Good Day Sunshine	Pop	McCartney	
It's Only Love	Pop	Lennon		And Your Bird Can Sing	Rock	Lennon	
You Like Me Too Much	Pop	Harrison		For No One	Baroque Pop	McCartney	
Tell Me What You See	Pop	McCartney		Doctor Robert	Rock	Lennon	
I've Just Seen A Face	Country	McCartney		I Want To Tell You	Rock	Harrison	
Yesterday	Pop	McCartney		Got To Get You Into My Life	R&B	McCartney	
Dizzy Miss Lizzy	Rock'n'Roll	Larry Williams		Tomorrow Never Knows	Psychedelic/Avant-Garde	Lennon	
Miscellaneous Singles (1963 - 65)				Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band (1967)			
From Me To You	Beat Music	Lennon/McCartney		Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band	Music Hall/Rock	McCartney	Yes
Thank You Girl	Beat Music	Lennon/McCartney		With A Little Help From My Friends	Music/Pop	Lennon/McCartney	Yes
She Loves You	Beat Music	Lennon/McCartney		Lucy In The Sky With Diamonds	Psychedelic	Lennon	
I'll Get You	Beat Music	Lennon/McCartney		Getting Better	Pop/Rock	McCartney	
I Want To Hold Your Hand	Beat Music	Lennon/McCartney		Fixing A Hole	Psychedelic/Baroque Pop	McCartney	
This Boy	R&B	Lennon		She's Leaving Home	Classical/Pop	Lennon/McCartney	
Long Tall Sally	Rock'n'Roll	Johnson/Blackwell/Penniman		Being For The Benefit Of Mr. Kite	Psychedelic/Circus/Waltz	Lennon	
I Call Your Name	Beat Music	Lennon		Within You, Without You	Hindustani	Harrison	
Slow Down	Rock'n'Roll	Larry Williams		When I'm Sixty-Four	Music Hall/Pop Standard	McCartney	Yes
Matchbox	Rockabilly	Carl Perkins		Lovely Rita	Pop/Rock	McCartney	
I Feel Fine	Rock	Lennon		Good Morning, Good Morning	Psychedelic/Rock	Lennon	
She's A Woman	Rock	McCartney		Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band (Reprise)	Music Hall	McCartney	Yes
Bad Boy	Beat Music	Larry Williams		A Day In The Life	Psychedelic/Avant-Garde	Lennon/McCartney	
Yes It Is	R&B	Lennon		Magical Mystery Tour (1967)			
I'm Down	Rock'n'Roll	McCartney		Magical Mystery Tour	Psychedelic/Pop	McCartney	Yes
Rubber Soul (1965)				The Fool On The Hill			
Drive My Car	Pop	Lennon/McCartney		The Fool On The Hill	Baroque Pop	McCartney	
Norweign Wood (This Bird Has Flown)	Folk	Lennon		Flying	Psychedelic	Lennon/McCartney?Harrison/Starr	
You Won't See Me	Pop	McCartney		Blue Jay Way	Psychedelic	Harrison	
Nowhere Man	Pop	Lennon		Your Mother Should Know	Music Hall	McCartney	Yes
Think For Yourself	Rock	Harrison		I Am The Walrus	Psychedelic	Lennon	
The Word	Rock	Lennon/McCartney		Hello Goodbye	Pop/Psychedelic	McCartney	
Michelle	Pop	McCartney		Strawberry Fields Forever	Psychedelic	Lennon	
What Goes On	Rockabilly	Lennon		Penny Lane	Baroque Pop	McCartney	
Girl	Pop	Lennon		Baby, You're A Rich Man	Pop	Lennon/McCartney	
I'm Looking Through You	Pop	McCartney		All You Need Is Love	Baroque Pop	Lennon	
In My Life	R&B	Lennon					
Wait	Pop	McCartney					
If I Needed Someone	Folk/Rock	Harrison					
Run For Your Life	Rockabilly	Lennon					

<i>Song</i>	<i>Genre</i>	<i>Songwriter</i>	<i>Parody</i>	<i>Song</i>	<i>Genre</i>	<i>Songwriter</i>	<i>Parody</i>
The Beatles (1968)				Abbey Road (1969)			
Back In The U.S.S.R.	Rock	McCartney	Yes	Come Together	Rock	Lennon	
Dear Prudence	Rock	Lennon		Something	Ballad	Harrison	
Glass Onion	Rock	Lennon		Maxwell's Silver Hammer	Music Hall	McCartney	Yes
Ob-La-Di, Ob-La-Da	Reggae/Ska	McCartney		Oh, Darling!	Rock	McCartney	
Wild Honey Pie	Experimental	McCartney		Octopus's Garden	Children's Song	Starr	
The Continuing Story of Bungalow Bill	Children's Song/Folk	Lennon	Yes	I Want You (She's So Heavy)	Hard Rock	Lennon	
While My Guitar Gently Weeps	Rock	Harrison		Here Comes The Sun	Folk/Pop	Harrison	
Happiness Is A Warm Gun	Rock/Hard Rock/Doo-Wop	Lennon	Yes	Because	Psychedelic	Lennon	
Martha My Dear	Music Hall/Pop	McCartney		You Never Give Me Your Money	Pop/Rock	McCartney	
I'm So Tired	Rock	Lennon		Sun King	Rock	Lennon	
Blackbird	Folk	McCartney		Mean Mr. Mustard	Pop/Rock	Lennon	
Piggies	Baroque Pop	Harrison	Yes	Polythene Pam	Pop/Rock	Lennon	
Rocky Raccoon	Country/Folk	McCartney	Yes	She Came In Through The Bathroom Window	Pop/Rock	McCartney	
Don't Pass Me By	Country	Starr		Golden Slumbers	Ballad	McCartney	
Why Don't We Do It In The Road	Blues	McCartney	Yes	Carry That Weight	Rock	McCartney	
I Will	Pop	McCartney		The End	Rock	McCartney	
Julia	Folk	Lennon		Her Majesty	Pop/Folk	McCartney	
Birthday	Rock 'n' Roll	Lennon/McCartney	Yes	Let It Be (1970)			
Yer Blues	Blues/Rock	Lennon	Yes	Two Of Us	Folk Pop	McCartney	
Mother Nature's Son	Folk	McCartney		Dig A Pony	Rock	Lennon	
Everybody's Got Something To Hide Except Me And My Monkey	Hard Rock	Lennon		Across The Universe	Psychedelic	Lennon	
Sexy Sadie	Rock	Lennon		I Me Mine	Rock	Harrison	
Helter Skelter	Hard Rock	McCartney		Dig It	Rock	Lennon	
Long, Long, Long	Folk/Spiritual	Harrison		Let It Be	Gospel	McCartney	
Revolution 1	Blues/Rock	Lennon		Maggie Mae	Folk	Traditional	
Honey Pie	Music Hall/Pop Standard	McCartney	Yes	I've Got A Feeling	Rock	Lennon/McCartney	
Savoy Truffle	Hard Rock/Soul	Harrison		One After 909	Rock 'n' Roll	Lennon/McCartney	
Cry Baby Cry	Children's Song/Folk	Lennon		The Long And Winding Road	Ballad	McCartney	
Revolution 9	Avant-Garde/Musique Concrete	Lennon		For You Blue	Blues Rock	Harrison	
Good Night	Hollywood Musical/Pop	Lennon	Yes	Get Back	Rock 'n' Roll	McCartney	
Yellow Submarine (1969)				Miscellaneous Singles (1966 - 70)			
Yellow Submarine	Children's Song	McCartney		Day Tripper	Pop/Rock	Lennon/McCartney	
Only A Northern Song	Psychedelic	Harrison		We Can Work It Out	Pop	Lennon/McCartney	
All Together Now	Children's Song	McCartney		Paperback Writer	Pop/Rock	McCartney	
Hey Bulldog	Rock	Lennon		Rain	Psychedelic Rock	Lennon	
It's All Too Much	Psychedelic Rock	Harrison		Lady Madonna	Pop/Rock	McCartney	
All You Need Is Love	Baroque Pop	Lennon		The Inner Light	Hindustani	Harrison	
				Hey Jude	Pop	McCartney	
				Revolution	Hard Rock	Lennon	
				Get Back	Rock 'n' Roll	McCartney	
				Don't Let Me Down	Rock	Lennon	
				The Ballad Of John And Yoko	Rock 'n' Roll	Lennon	
				Old Brown Shoe	Rock	Harrison	
				Across The Universe	Psychedelic	Lennon	
				Let It Be	Gospel	McCartney	
				You Know My Name, Look Up The Number	Pop/Rock/Jazz	Lennon/McCartney	Yes