

**"She's Not a Girl Who Misses Much" - The Representation of Women in the
Beatles' Song Lyrics**

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Pro gradu –tutkielmani käsittelee The Beatles –yhtyeen sanoituksia ja niiden muodostamaa naiskuvaa. Tutkielmani tarkastelun kohteena on kolme yhtyeen albumia: *Revolver* (1966), *Sgt. Pepper’s Lonely Hearts Club Band* (1967) ja *The Beatles* (1968). The Beatlesin tuotanto on mittava, joten päädyin tarkastelemaan kyseistä kolmea albumia pääasiassa niiden ilmestymisajankohdan ja kiinnostavuuden takia. Yhtyeen sanoitukset muuttuivat mielenkiintoisemmiksi ja monitahoisemmiksi 1960-luvun loppua kohden ja myös sanoitusten painoarvo ja merkitys ensisijaisena kommunikointikanavana kasvoi yhtyeen lopetettua keikkailun vuonna 1966. Tästä huolimatta yhtyeen laulutekstit ovat usein jääneet heidän saavuttamansa suuren menestyksen ja kulttuurisen merkityksen varjoon. Niinpä tutkielmani tavoitteena on suunnata mielenkiinto takaisin The Beatlesin musiikkiin ja sanoituksiin.

Tutkielmani teoreettisena viitekehyksenä toimivat pääasiassa musikologiset ja kulttuurintutkimukseen liittyvät teoriasuuntaukset. Englantilaisen musikologin Sheila Whiteleyn tutkimusten tulokset ovat keskeisellä sijalla myös omassa tutkielmassani, sillä kyseisen teorian kiinnostavinta antia ovat erilaiset naistyypit, joihin hän on päätenyt tarkastelemalla The Beatlesin sanoituksissa esiintyviä naiskuvauksia. Lisäyksenä Whiteleyn teoriaan olen kuitenkin analysoinut sanoituksia vielä pidemmälle tavoitteenani löytää esimerkkejä siitä, miten naisia kuvaillaan, millaisia rooleja heille annetaan ja miten heihin suhtaudutaan yhtyeen laulujen sanoituksissa. Tekstien analyysin syventämiseksi ja ymmärtämiseksi myös yhtyeen jäsenten taustat ja elämäntarinat ovat huomattavassa roolissa tutkielmassani.

1960-luvun kulttuurinen konteksti on luonnollisesti merkittävässä osassa tutkielmani aiheen kannalta. 60-luvun poliittinen aktivismi, naisliikkeen vahvistunut asema ja psykedelia ovat läsnä Beatlesin teksteissä välillä konkreettisina esimerkkeinä, välillä taas taustavaikutteina. Yhtyeen sanoituksissa esiintyvät naiset ovat joko itsenäisiä ja vahvoja, etäisiä ja jopa satuttavia, tai eteerisiä fantasiahahmoja. Teksteissä yhdistyy sekä 1960-luvun innovatiivisuus ja radikalismi että perinteisiä arvoja kunnioittava traditionaalisuus.

Asiasanat: The Beatles, naistutkimus, kulttuurintutkimus, rocklyriikka

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1. Introduction

The Beatles have been the subject of several studies, and almost every possible aspect that is even remotely connected to this famous four-member group has been thoroughly analysed. The purpose of this thesis, however, is to bring to focus a different part of the group that has not been quite so widely covered, namely the way they depict women in their song lyrics. The Beatles' lyrics have perhaps been overlooked because of their relative simplicity, as is the case with the material they wrote in the first part of the decade, or because of the psychedelic and almost nonsensical aspects of the songs they wrote between 1966 and 1970. However, most of the Beatles' songs reveal some rather fascinating images and ideas when one simply looks beyond the surface. It is also important to know something about the Beatles' personal history; quite a few of their songs are if not autobiographical then at least heavily influenced by their personal lives.

The Beatles were the first so-called boy band: most of the band's fans were teenage girls and part of the band's appeal was based on their looks and image:

With their soft suits and long, floppy hair and soft voices, they blurred the line between female and male just enough to let women feel comfortable with them. The Beatles were not out to lay you; and they did not seem to feel that women were from some other planet (Tompkins 217).

The four members of the band offered something for everyone: John was the sexy, intellectual one, Paul the cute one, George was the quiet but handsome one, and Ringo was adorable and funny (Norman 172). Not only were the fans mostly female, at least at the very beginning of the band's career, but also most of the Beatles' songs were about relationships and girls, and this was one fact that did not change much throughout the 1960s even though the Beatles did go through several changes during that time period. The decision to give up touring altogether in 1966 gave the band more time to concentrate on their music, and consequently also their

song lyrics began to become more exciting. Love still remained the most prominent subject, but the tone in which it was addressed changed from the childish naivety of youth to a more analytical, even bitter attitude, as illustrated by the lyrics of “Sexy Sadie” (1968):

Sexy Sadie, what have you done?
 You made a fool of everyone. [...]
 Sexy Sadie, you broke the rules
 You laid it down for all to see. [...]
 Sexy Sadie, you’ll get yours yet
 However big you think you are.

The earlier songs had been, according to John Lennon, “Pop songs with no more thought to them than [...] to create a sound” (Turner 13), but this approach soon gave way to more complex and honest ways of writing, as is the case with for example “Sexy Sadie” mentioned above.

By 1966 the band had grown tired of playing live in front of crowds that could not hear a single note the band was playing. The Beatles had released their latest album *Revolver* in April 1966, and by this time it had become obvious that the songs were also getting more and more complicated both instrumentally and vocally and that it was simply impossible to perform them live anymore. In addition to the factors mentioned above, the four members of the band had steadily grown tired of their music being considered secondary to their personal lives: “No one seemed interested in how they wrote, where the ideas came from or how much of themselves they were revealing in the lyrics” (Turner 10). The band’s final concert took place in June 1966 in San Francisco (Norman 267), and although that concert marked the end of one era, it also started another, exciting time-period: after this, the Beatles could concentrate solely on spending time in the studio making records.

The aim of this thesis is to examine the way the Beatles portrayed women in the song lyrics of three of their albums: *Revolver* (1966), *Sgt. Pepper’s Lonely Hearts Club Band* (1967), and *The Beatles* (1968), also commonly known as the *White Album*.

The research questions I intend to answer are:

1. How are women represented in the Beatles song lyrics? What kind of roles are women given?
2. How can these representations be analysed? Is there something radical or challenging about them?
3. Why are women seen as the more appropriate sex to hide behind when discussing disconcerting subjects?

Naturally, the ideal way of approaching these questions would be to examine each and every song the Beatles ever wrote, but because of the vast volume of the material I have chosen to concentrate on analysing the three aforementioned albums. The reason I chose these particular albums is multidimensional. First of all, due to the reasons I have already mentioned above, these albums are lyrically more interesting and revealing than the band's earlier work. The second important factor is the manner in which the Beatles' song texts began to serve as important mediums: since the band had already given up touring, song writing was now their primary channel through which they could address and discuss matters that they thought were important. Especially John Lennon realised quite early on that he could use his song lyrics to make a statement, the song "Revolution" (1968) on the *White Album* possibly being the culmination of this until his later solo work in the 1970s. These three albums are also among the most popular and most analysed and discussed Beatles albums, which is also why this thesis will almost certainly be of more interest to the general public as well. Thirdly, it is astounding that even though so many books have been written about the Beatles and their legacy, their songs have often remained in the background. Tim Riley wonders about exactly the same thing as he writes:

They [The Beatles] saw themselves first and foremost as recording artists, and their records still demonstrate all that pop can be. In order to understand what it was the Beatles had to say to the world, and why their message was so powerful and convincing, their work, both words and music, deserves more attention than their marriages (9).

In order to be able to understand and analyse the Beatles' song lyrics it is important to first examine the environment in which they were written. The first part of this thesis, and the second part of this introduction, is dedicated to the cultural environment of the 1960s and the societal changes that took place in England and the United States in that decade. Nothing exists in a void; The Beatles were naturally influenced by their surroundings and it is crucial to understand the values and attitudes of that time in order to understand what they were actually writing about. Lawrence Grossberg seems to agree with this view as he writes, "A text can never be said to have a singular meaning, or even a circumscribed set of meanings. Perhaps texts cannot be treated singularly and in isolation" (39). This is without a doubt precisely the case.

In the second part of the first chapter, I intend to discuss some of the aspects of the feminist movement of the 1960s to shed more light on the views about the roles of women and the way these roles were starting to get challenged. Finally, in the last part of my introduction the focus will be on the Beatles' personal lives. Like I already mentioned, most of the band's songs are heavily autobiographical and especially John Lennon described his songs as very personal: "'Help!' was personal. 'You've got to Hide Your Love Away' was personal. 'I'm a Loser' was personal. I've always been on that kick" (Turner 6). Therefore, in order to fully understand the songs it is important to know something about the band members' private lives as well.

In chapter two, I am going to introduce the key concepts that will be used throughout this thesis. Musicology, Postmodernism, Cultural studies, and Gender studies are all important fields in analysing the Beatles' song lyrics because they all bring something new to this discussion. They also offer the necessary tools that are needed in the actual analysis part of the texts. The final part of chapter two focuses on the Beatles as artists; the band's decision to stop touring in 1966 also meant that the band began to see themselves more as artists than just

musicians or entertainers. This is when songwriting became the band's main interest as records were now the only direct way to communicate with their enormous fan base.

The actual analysis part of this thesis concentrates on the way the Beatles described women in their song lyrics; that is, how women are represented in their texts. According to John Fiske, the term representative has three connotations: a single text or example can be regarded as representative of the whole, someone can speak for or represent all of us, or a representative can present "selected features of an absent 'reality' or referent" (150). It is also important to note that when talking about representation or representatives, we are also talking about power; representation is an "agency of power and control. [...] the power to control ways of knowing is a power over what is accepted as reality and over those among whom that acceptance circulates" (Fiske, 16). Another closely connected concept is stereotype¹, which also carries a distinctively pejorative meaning and is, therefore, also an expression of power, similar to Fiske's third definition of representative; stereotypes are based on selected features, which in turn means that all other features are thereby ignored. A stereotypical view on women is, thus, only based on certain characteristics while all other feasible qualities are abandoned.

Hence, the aim of this thesis is to analyse the way women are represented in the Beatles' song lyrics. My intention is to find out what their attitude towards women was really like and what kind of roles they placed upon women. As it is common in popular music, the Beatles wrote to and about women. They wrote about love interests, sexual adventures with women, their mothers, and fantasy figures. The spectrum is rather broad, and this is also where the relevance and importance of the topic of my thesis becomes significant. The Beatles' songs certainly offer immeasurable amounts of material for analysis and discussion.

¹ The concept of stereotype "was developed in 1922 by North American journalist Walter Lippman to mean the fixed, narrow 'pictures in our head', generally resistant to easy change" (A Dictionary of Sociology [Internet]).

The easiest and probably the most straightforward way to examine the song lyrics on *Revolver*, *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band*, and *The Beatles* would be to analyse each album separately before moving on to compare and contrast the texts, but I feel this would not be sufficient enough to actually let me draw any real conclusions, which is exactly what I hope to do. My intention is to analyse selected song lyrics from the three aforementioned albums by examining the different types of women the Beatles seem to describe in addition to analysing the way the band viewed certain related concepts as well, such as love and sexual desire. In addition to the three albums mentioned above, I will also take a closer look at some of the Beatles' other material while also keeping an eye on the band members' solo work to try to find some connections and points of interest there. The aim is by no means to simply classify different types of women but to compare the different descriptions women are given, and it is through these descriptions that these categories can actually be formed. However, the main idea is, as Sheila Whiteley describes it, to see "whether the Beatles' representations of gender and sexuality mediate pre-existing notions of femininity or whether they help to construct them" (2006, 56). Then, the main aspects and key points of this thesis will be brought together in the conclusion.

1.1 The Cultural Environment of the 1960s

When talking about the 1960s and London, most people associate the decade with things such as miniskirts and the hippie movement, and the "Summer of Love" of 1967 has become a well-known concept. The cultural environment was slowly starting to expand and diversify and the more liberal and also politically more radical atmosphere had its impact on the popular culture as well. In England several major political changes took place in the 1960s, for example the act to decriminalise homosexuality was passed in 1967. "The Abortion Act

was also passed in the 1967 after a lengthy campaign for safe and freely available contraception. The London Times published an advertisement advocating the legalisation of marijuana to which the Beatles were signatories” (Whiteley 2006, 32).

For the Beatles, London was the heart of everything. The so-called “Swinging London” was the epitome of freedom, at least in popular culture. John Seed goes as far as to state that London was “the vice capital of Europe” (19). In popular music the 1960s were the decade of Flower Power, hallucinogenic drugs, psychedelia, and free sexuality. Culturally, however, the ongoing changes were even more versatile. The main idea that was conveyed through different marketing strategies was to bolster the idea of “the home-centred and family-centred society as the means to the good life” (Laing 74). This view, of course, was fairly traditional and old-fashioned when viewed against the radical and certainly challenging images of freedom, sex, and love. The 1960s youth culture in England was unquestionably an interesting mix of both traditional and offered values and more radically inclined subcultures:

[Youth culture was]... a frantic dialectic between the “consumer” taking what was offered and a more active making and re-making of culture – in the thousands of amateur ‘beat’ groups, the dress style and behaviour of the ‘mods’, and the diverse use of drugs by the different subcultures (Laing 74).

Laing continues to point out that this kind of behaviour was, without a doubt, seen as occurring “against the grain of the powerful dominant media” (74), which illustrates the dichotomy of the cultural environment. The Beatles were extremely skilled at both using some of the more traditional values rooted deep in the society and then moving on to do something completely new and different all the while managing to combine the two to create something interesting and inspiring. Also, until the 1960s art and popular music had been separate, but now, as Jeff Nuttall writes, new “art-student pop groups appeared, with their louder, more violent music, their cultivated hysteria, their painful amplifiers” (34). A new cultural era had begun:

Everywhere there were zippers, leathers, boots, PVC, see-through plastics, male make-up, a thousand overtones of sexual deviation, particular sadism, and everywhere, mixed in with amphetamines, was the birth pill. The established business world, the square commercial world, the promoters, the deathwishers, were completely out-distanced. All they could do was run to keep up (Nuttall, 34-5).

One might say the Beatles' image went from being considered counter culture² to mass culture and back. The clean-cut boys that the nation fell in love with had began their career by playing rock and roll music in dirty strip clubs in Hamburg, Germany; their stage shows, for example, consisted of shouting obscenities at the crowd and insulting the audience by calling them Nazis (Norman 82, 146). However, at the height of Beatlemania the band's image became more polished and socially acceptable; the Beatles became mass culture. Towards the end of the 1960s the band did attempt to break free from their clean-cut image, and the band's experimental and artistically ambitious albums brought the band closer to their original starting point. Naturally the Beatles could never really be considered representatives of counter culture per se, but it is important to note that even though the band's success suggests their music was nothing but mainstream and mass culture, the band's original roots lay elsewhere, and their later albums could be considered at least partially atypical compared to what people had grown to expect from the Beatles.

Nevertheless, it would be unfair to claim that the Beatles were the forerunners in every single area. They were not the only musical phenomenon around even though they were undoubtedly the biggest and the most influential. Their 1966 record *Revolver* captured the sound of Swinging London, but as Philip Norman points out, they weren't the first band to create the feel (274). The Rolling Stones had released their *Aftermath* album a few months earlier, and while the sound and musical experiments were at least equal to, if not ahead of The Beatles, "no one looked to the Stones to catch the zeitgeist, whereas for the Beatles it was

² According to Dick Hebdige, subcultures "express forbidden contents (consciousness of class, consciousness of difference) in forbidden forms (transgressions of sartorial and behavioural codes, law breaking, etc. They are profane articulations, and they are often and significantly defined as 'unnatural'" (91-2).

now almost a duty to be in step with the nation's destiny" (275). The Beatles may not have been the precursors in every respect but their importance and value as mouthpiece for their generation was certainly largely constructed and sustained by the media.

1.2 Music and Feminism in the 1960s

According to Judith Butler, feminism is about "the social transformation of gender relations" (204). The 1960s' the new wave of feminism was certainly something very different from what most people were accustomed to. Instead of petitioning for similar rights and demanding more respect for their work at home, the women of the Women's Liberation Movement in England were actively demanding the end to "women's oppression by men" (Lewis 97). As Lewis points out,

Nineteenth-century feminists had pursued equal rights in the public sphere. Sometimes they refused the idea of sexual difference and emphasised women's common humanity and faith in reason; sometimes they used the commonly accepted idea of 'natural' sexual difference (grounded in biological difference) to support their arguments (97).

There was no clear consensus on what the arguments were or should have been, and it is possible that the obscurity weakened the power of the message these women were trying to get through. In fact, what Lewis calls "the culture of femininity" still had a strong audience among younger women: early marriage and childbearing were still very common and the sales for women's magazines offering tips on how to get a man were high (99).

Nevertheless, by the end of the 1960s there had been a drastic change in the way women were perceived and addressed in the society. "Women's labour market participation was accepted to be crucial for economic growth and social progress" (Lewis 102). The problems and struggle did not end here, but the slow journey towards a new age had certainly been embarked on.

In spite of the ongoing political battle for women's rights, the 1960s' counter culture still harboured some rather idealistic views on women: "Both the lifestyle and the musical ethos of the period undermined the role of women, positioning them as either romanticised fantasy figures, subservient earth mothers or easy lays" (Whiteley 2000, 23) These characterisations can also be seen in the Beatles' song lyrics. Women are generally seen as either objects of sexual desire and lust ("Well, the Ukraine girls really knock me out/[...]/and Moscow girls make me sing and shout" ("Back in the USSR", 1968)), idealised love interests ("Who knows how long I've loved you/you know I love you still," ("I Will", 1968)), or almost mythical creatures that are one with the universe ("Her hair of floating sky is shimmering, glimmering in the sun. /Julia, morning moon, touch me," ("Julia", 1968)). Sheila Whiteley takes this even further by stating that the progressive rock scene of the 1960s and 1970s "remained hostile to women" (11). Whiteley is mainly arguing for the female singers and songwriters that were still rather rare at the time, but her statement can also be seen as a comment on the general attitude in popular culture: women were often sung about but they were only allowed to remain objects or figures that were inspected through the views of men. Whiteley's views are actually quite in conjunction with some of the most central themes of the Women's Liberation Movement that focused on stressing the importance of personal freedom and self-expression (Lewis 113). It would be rather farfetched to call the Beatles feminists in the traditional sense, but John Lennon for one did speak rather overtly about the existing prejudices against women, partially because of the problems he had encountered after marrying his second wife Yoko: "She's a woman and she's Japanese, there's racial prejudice against her and there's female prejudice against her. It's as simple as that" (Wenner 143). Lennon would later go on to address these issues even more strongly in his 1972 song "Woman Is the Nigger of the World" in which he sings:

We make her paint her face and dance
 If she won't be slave, we say that she don't love us
 If she's real, we say she's trying to be a man
 While putting her down we pretend that she is above us

Woman is the nigger of the world...yes she is
 If you don't believe me take a look to the one you're with
 Woman is the slaves of the slaves
 Ah yeah, better scream about it.

However, most of the Beatles' early material did very little to challenge the existing views on women, and it was not until the later part of the 1960s that the band's songs began to grow more political.

1.3 The Beatles behind the Myth

So much has been written about the personal lives of the "Fab Four" that it is not easy to separate facts from fiction. However, the Beatles themselves have spoken rather candidly about their lives on various instances, so for the most part the boys' lives are extremely well documented. The Beatles were so hugely successful that the band has become almost like a myth: they exist more as an entity instead of being thought as four individuals in people's minds. Nonetheless, the four members of the band were more than just Beatle-John, -Paul, -George, and -Ringo, and some information about their background is not only beneficial but almost crucial in order to be able to appreciate all the nuances in their song lyrics.

Probably the most discussed aspect of the Beatles' personal lives is their relationships with women, especially their mothers. Only George Harrison had what one might call a relatively normal childhood, and the other members of the band were from broken homes. Both John Lennon and Paul McCartney lost their mothers at an early age; Paul's mother Mary died from cancer when Paul was fifteen, leaving Paul and his older brother Michael in the

care of their father Jim. John Lennon's mother Julia was killed in a car accident when a drunken police officer hit her with his car. John was sixteen years old at the time of his mother's death. John's life had not been easy until that point either; as Coleman writes, John was brought up by his mother's sister Mimi because Julia's husband and John's father was not around and Julia was not able to look after John herself (113). Mimi was married with no children of her own and she was very responsible and strict, thus it was seen as the perfect solution to place John in her care. Both Mimi and Julia were very important figures in John's life and both made it to his songs as well.

This loss that both John and Paul were forced to encounter at such an early age seemed to have been a contributing factor to the way they would later talk about their mothers. Nevertheless, it is clear that for both John and Paul mothers became almost heavenly figures who were placed on a pedestal and whose purity and wisdom were compared to that of angels and saints. For John and Paul mothers were hardworking, loving, and most of all sensible. For example, Paul's song "Let It Be" (1969) talked about Mother Mary whispering words of wisdom, and John's "Julia" (1968) compared her to the beauty of ocean and sky: "Julia/sleeping sand/silent cloud".

Ringo Starr (his original name was Richard Starkey) was from a relatively poor family: out of all the Beatles he was definitely the financially least fortunate one. Mrs. Starkey was a single mother and so Richard spent most of his time in the care of his grandfather. Little Richard also suffered from poor health for almost all of his childhood and he spent years in different hospitals (Norman 155-6). The image of the Beatles as working class boys was not totally accurate on John Lennon's part either as he was actually from a financially stable middle-class family. The following example illustrates the dichotomy that existed between the Beatles' image and reality:

She [John's aunt Mimi] recalled, with heavy irony, a conversation with John at the start of the Beatles frenzy. "I told him off about his accent. I said: "What's all this

Scouse accent about, John? You weren't brought up as a little Scouser. You know how to speak properly." John just looked at her and rubbed his fingers together. "It's about money," he replied. "The fans *expect* me to talk like that" (Coleman 132).

Along with their relationships with their mothers, the Beatles' relationships with women have also been well documented, and while the band member's social statuses are hardly relevant when discussing their music, some knowledge about their personal lives may well provide some valuable insight into the band's song lyrics.

John Lennon married his art school girlfriend Cynthia Powell in 1962 and she gave birth to their son Julian in 1963. The couple divorced a few years later though when John had fallen in love with a Japanese artist called Yoko Ono. She would become one of the most prominent topics in John's songs. Both Ringo Starr and George Harrison also married in the 1960s, but Paul McCartney remained the only bachelor of the band up until 1969 when he married Linda Eastman (Norman 244, 279, 376).

Adultery and sexual adventures are also well presented in the Beatles' work. For example, John Lennon admitted to having been unfaithful to his first wife on several occasions in addition to also having been violent towards women. These issues will both be discussed later in this thesis.

In spite of the tragic similarities in their lives, John Lennon and Paul McCartney were from very different backgrounds. Paul was very practical and hardworking. He grew up in an old-fashioned home where music was a favourite past time that brought people together. He may have lost his mother but he was still showered with affection and love. John, however, came from a middle-class home and his "deprivations were emotional rather than material" (Turner 11). John also had a more artistic approach to music, and this became evident in his songwriting as well. Whereas Paul was a master at writing carefully constructed, beautiful ballads, John's songs would be more frank, more direct, and less polished. These differences between them were also mirrored in their relationships: Paul was the last Beatle to marry, and

his marriage would last for over thirty years. Moreover, it is interesting to note that Paul's wife Linda was happy to accept the fairly old-fashioned views on what a good wife should be like: "She idolised and deferred to Paul [...]. Clinging to his arm, she would gaze up at him with awe and say what an honour it would be to bear his children" (Norman 349). John, on the other hand, married twice and one might say he was constantly looking for a mother figure, a new Julia. This is clear in his song "Julia" (1968), a song dedicated to his late mother in which he compares his new partner Yoko to his deceased mother: "'Julia/ocean child/calls me". The parallel becomes understandable once one finds out that Yoko's name is Japanese for "ocean child" (YokoOno.com).

George Harrison may have been the youngest member of the band but he was also the one with the most carefree childhood and background. Harry and Louise Harrison had four children, and even though times were rough and Harry was by no means earning a lot of money, he made sure the family never lacked for anything (Norman 40). George married his first wife Patricia "Patti" Boyd in 1966 and they stayed together for almost ten years, living a relatively private life.

The Beatles were, above all, a tight group consisting of four close friends and their entourage. The four members of the band were viewed as parts of something that was even larger than the sum of those parts. This is why it is sometimes difficult to determine whether the life stories of the four members of the group actually matter at all. However, in order to be able to understand the different connotations and underlying meanings in song lyrics it is certainly advantageous to pay attention to the personal experiences of the authors of those texts.

2. Mapping the Theoretical Field

It is rather surprising that the role of women in popular music song lyrics has not been analysed as much as one would expect. Women's role in the music industry on the other hand seems to be one of the more popular topics along with the analysis of the texts of female songwriters. Nevertheless, the fact still remains that there are more male song writers in the music industry – or at least this was the case in the 1960s and 1970s – and therefore it seems a waste to ignore the opportunity to analyse the way women are perceived from the outside, from other people's perspective. How do men write about women? What do they reveal in doing so?

In this theory chapter I will introduce the key terms which I will use in the actual analysis part of this thesis. The Beatles' song lyrics cannot be seen as texts that have been detached from the culture and time period from which they originate because both aspects are imprinted deep within the songs themselves.

The Beatles' song lyrics could well be regarded as literary texts: "After all, their songs – like our greatest works of literature – almost exclusively concern themselves with the human condition and the dilemmas that confront us regarding the interpersonal relationships that mark our lives" (Womack & Davies 2). However, song texts are forever chained to their melodies; by removing either part the end result becomes no longer be perfect because something vital is missing. This is exactly why musicology studies songs as multidimensional works of art. Both melody and lyrics are of equal importance even though this particular study only concentrates on the words. According to musicologist Simon Frith, "Songs are more like plays than poems; song words work as speech and speech acts, bearing meaning not just semantically, but also as structures of sound that are direct signs of emotion and marks of character" (203). Hence, it is necessary to look beyond the semantic surface.

2.1 Musicological and Social Approaches to the Beatles

The Beatles have usually been studied either as they were experienced, in which case the purpose has been to examine the sociological and psychological aspects of the band's success and the impact their music had on their following, or from a purely technical and musicological viewpoint with heavy emphasis on the analysis of the musical qualities and structures of the Beatles' songs. These two approaches, however, overlook the lyrical treasure chest of the band's lyrics, which is why it has been delightful to notice that there seems to have been a subtle increase in lyrical analysis in musicology. Sheila Whiteley has examined music as a whole, both textually and melodically, from a feminist point of view, and her views on the Beatles' music focus rather heavily on song lyrics.

Music is universal and the role of music as an establishing factor in creating and sustaining certain senses of nationhood or group identity is not a new discovery. The Beatles not only had a unifying function but they also helped in shaping and shifting new cultural groups. The ongoing cultural and social changes meant that music groups and music in general had to be able to keep up and reflect those changes: "Music still conformed the desires of youth, but those desires were changing: music was needed, now, to symbolise and express the feeling of a new generation that it could embody real culture and political change" (Frith and Horne 56). This is what the Beatles successfully managed to do. The changes in their song lyrics may not have been the most noticeable ones – after all, the Beatles were also setting new trends in fashion and hairstyle – but the transition from the simple and partially also childish song lyrics, such as "I'll send all my loving to you/[...]/darling I'll be true" ("All My Loving", 1963) to more profound and interesting texts: "She's leaving home after living alone for so many years" ("She's Leaving Home", 1967). Not only are the lyrics more

genuine but also the viewpoint has changed. The writer is no longer writing about his own feelings, reassuring his girl back at home that he will not be unfaithful to her. He is now describing the events from the girl's point of view; he has stepped in her shoes and taken her emotions momentarily as his own to be able to tell her story. The songwriter himself is not even an active party in the song anymore. Hence, it seems that the writer has finally gained enough self-confidence and sense of self that he no longer feels overshadowed. These changes of perspective reveal a similar change in attitude; the author is now regarding women as subjects rather than mere objects of love or lust. The girl in "She's Leaving Home" is an active party, she has her own free will, and the author at least understands if not justifies her actions. This is undeniably a drastic transformation compared with the girl who was simply a stationary object of reassurance and words of love.

Musically the largest change in the Beatles' work during the 1960s was what Paul Willis calls the loss of "big beat". Willis goes on to point out that the Rolling Stones, for example, never strayed far away from the strong rhythm and blues beat that made their music not only distinguishable but also easier to dance to. The Beatles on the other hand went from playing rock music to experimenting: "They became more sophisticated, using melodic asymmetry and complex rhythm patterns. The later music became very much harder to dance to" (47). However, it is also important to acknowledge the fact that the Beatles were heavily influenced by American rock and roll music. Chuck Berry, Little Richard, Buddy Holly, and Elvis were their heroes, and later on Bob Dylan would also become a powerful influence for the band. In fact, the Beatles recorded several cover versions of the rock and roll songs they so greatly loved – even going as far as to do their own versions of American girl group hits³.

³ "Boys" and "Baby It's You" (recorded in 1963), both songs originally by The Shirelles, "Please Mr. Postman" (1963), original version by The Marvelettes.

2.2 The Beatles, Postmodernism and Feminism

This thesis is about women and, more importantly, about the way men or in this case four specific Liverpool musicians and songwriters viewed the opposite sex. This is not as straightforward as it sounds, though, because first it is necessary to determine what we actually mean when talking about women and femininity. As Judith Butler points out:

Terms such as “masculine” and “feminine” are notoriously interchangeable; there are social histories for each term; their meanings change radically depending upon geopolitical boundaries and cultural constraints on who is imagining whom, and for what purpose (10).

Gender is a social attribute, and even though we are talking about women as members of the female sex it is still important to bear in mind that the attributes with which we describe women or the stereotypes we compare individuals to are very much culturally constructed. The Beatles wrote about the women in their lives, going as far as to actually name real people, as is the case with Lucy (“Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds”), Mary (“Let It Be”), Julia (“Julia”), and Prudence (“Dear Prudence”), but they also revealed their attitudes and their cultural and socio-economic background by labelling women with certain expectations and norms. People draw from the experiences in their own lives and this is also why it is important to pay attention to the similarities and parallels between the women in the Beatles’ song lyrics and the women in the boys’ personal lives. The similarities may not always be consciously constructed, but most of the time they are present.

Women remain a minority in music. Musicologist Susan McClary claims that, “Women are located within the discourse in a position of both desire and dread – as that which must reveal that it is controlled by the male or which must be purged as intolerable” (152). The Beatles may not have been the most radical women’s rights advocates, but it seems that the sociological and cultural changes did affect at least the way they wrote about women.

Postmodern views on popular music in general have been received and regarded with varying attitudes.⁴ Popular culture in itself is a complex term, and as Grossberg points out, one of its fundamental qualities is the directness of the effects it has upon the body (79). These kinds of bodily reactions explain why people at times seem somewhat reluctant to analyse popular culture in the first place: “Too much intellectual legitimisation will redefine the possibilities of its effectiveness; it will become increasingly a meaningful form to be interpreted rather than a popular form to be felt on one’s body and to be lived with passionately and emotionally” (79). People’s reluctance to analyse and examine songs that are dear to them seems to stem from the idea that analysis is primarily intellectual and therefore removed from the emotional. It seems that the transition between the two is perceived as a one-way street; once the emotional aspect has been momentarily abandoned, it is impossible to return to simply being a fan and enjoying music as it is. Why does such a dichotomy have to exist when the metaphorical fences are little more than creations of imagination?

Furthermore, the Beatles’ music can surely be regarded as postmodern since the band’s music was already perceived as a mixture of traditional and innovative music styles in the 1960s. According to Lawrence Grossberg, one of the “markers” of postmodernism is the fragmentation of identity (223), and one of the most interesting characteristics of the Beatles’s songs is that it is extremely difficult to describe or define their music because their music varies from simplistic rock and roll music to psychedelic rock (“Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds”), heavy metal (“Helter Skelter”), experimental rock (“Tomorrow Never Knows”) and children’s music (“All Together Now”), among other things.

The band’s changing interests around the time *Revolver* and *Sgt. Pepper’s Lonely Hearts Club Band* were released were becoming more and more apparent in the band’s songwriting. As Sheila Whiteley points out, “By 1967 women seem to fall into radically different

⁴ Postmodernism usually refers to a cultural, intellectual, or artistic state lacking a clear central hierarchy or organising principle. It is “a period label generally given to cultural forms since the 1960s that display certain characteristics such as reflexivity, irony, and a mixing of popular and high art forms” (Makaryk, 612).

categories for the Beatles: those who hurt, those who nurture, those who exist as potential new love interests, and those who offer the possibility of one-night stands. We also find those women who are etherealised, including lost mothers” (2006, 66). While Whiteley’s groups seem valid and functional, it might be better to simplify things by stating that it appears that the Beatles saw women as objects of love or lust, or as nurturing mother figures, and the women who hurt could be seen as treacherous love interests. Then again, it is slightly unclear what Whiteley actually means by the term “women who hurt” since this could either refer to women who are doing the hurting or women who have been hurt by some other party. This ambiguity creates an unnecessary parallel between aggressive and victimised women. Whiteley goes on to state that these categories draw on “traditional definitions of femininity” (66) all the while suggesting that the lyrical emphasis on the Beatles’ albums was shifting towards “an increasingly masculine point of view” (2006, 66). The relevance of Whiteley’s claims is somewhat undermined by the statement that the Beatles were actually moving away from feminine points of view instead of perhaps gaining some insight and understanding which might have resulted in the band writing more realistic lyrics. Actually, during the 1960s the women in the Beatles’ songs were becoming increasingly more independent and influential. From the woman who made the songwriter feel like “he’s never been born” (“She Said She Said”, 1966) to the girl who no longer needs her man (“For No One”, 1966), these women seem to be gaining more strength and power of their own. This serves as proof that the Beatles were not, in fact, growing more masculine, but that they were slowly starting to view women as counterparts instead of objects. For example, the girl in “Happiness Is a Warm Gun” is very much an independent woman; she is “not a girl who misses much”. The runaway in “She’s Leaving Home” is leaving because she wants to be free and now, for once in her life, “she’s having fun”. These women are not victims nor are they objects.

2.3 The Evolving Artistry of the Beatles

The Beatles first shot to success with their simple three-minute pop songs that were catchy and melodic. They were also one of the first bands to write their own material instead of recording guaranteed hits offered by the record company. All four members of the Beatles were from the city of Liverpool, which meant that they were inescapably influenced by their surroundings, and Liverpool was among the first cities in the country where the cultural changes began to show. As Jeff Nuttall writes, “Liverpool is a roaring, seedy, working-class port. It has something of the old red-nose Lancashire comedian about it. It has the whimsical grandeur of the nonconformist north. ... There is nothing toffee-nosed about Liverpool” (123). Liverpool’s cultural scene was extremely state-of-the-art even though most of the influences were extremely diverse. The Mersey sound⁵ was one of the biggest phenomena to come from Liverpool in the 1960s, and yet, “the so-called Mersey Beat [sic] was a Lancashire version of the heavily negroid Tamla Motown sound” (Nuttall 124). The Beatles were surrounded by varied influences from jazz and vaudeville to American rock music performers such as Little Richard, Elvis, and Buddy Holly. Also, the Liverpool Poets were influential in the Beatles’ style and music as well⁶.

John Lennon and Paul McCartney were widely regarded as the songwriters of the band even though George Harrison had also written several songs for their albums. The dominant duo of Lennon and McCartney made it hard for Harrison to make himself heard and it was not until the album *Help!* in 1965 that he was allowed to have his own composition on the new

⁵ “Merseybeat was a British take on the black and white musical mix of rock and roll: a basic line-up of lead guitar, rhythm guitar, bass guitar, and drums (with shared vocals) provided local live versions of American hit records of all sorts.” Along with the Beatles, the music of for example Gerry and The Pacemakers, Billy J. Kramer and The Dakotas, and The Swinging Blue Jeans was often referred to as the Mersey sound (“British Invasion.” Encyclopedia Britannica Online).

⁶ The Liverpool Poets were Adrian Henri, Roger McGough, Brian Patten, Mike Evans, Tonk, and their local followers. They formed “a style for public reading with pop groups” (Nuttall 124). Their style was heavily influenced by 1950s Beat poetry.

Beatles album. Ringo Starr was neither interested nor talented in songwriting, but he did write a song for the 1968 double album *The Beatles*.

Most of the Beatles' songs were clearly written by only one member of the band. At the early stages of their career in the early 1960s Lennon and McCartney still collaborated and wrote most of the songs together, predominantly because the songs had to be written in between shows. The collaborative stage did not last long, and even though they would still occasionally write songs together, more often than not the songs would be written by either one of the two men. However, seeing as John and Paul always credited all of their songs to both of them, it would be illogical to attempt to determine which one of the two actually was behind each song. As far as official records are concerned, most of the Beatles' songs were written collaboratively by the songwriting duo of Lennon and McCartney. Thus, in this thesis the songwriter will only be identified if it bears significance to the possible interpretation and reading of the song's text.

The evolving artistry of the Beatles has been widely discussed by both cultural critics and musicologists in the last few decades. Most people see a clear mark in the band's work where their artistic pursuits started to lead them in a new direction, and the album that is most often mentioned as having started the new trend is the second album they released in 1965, *Rubber Soul*. The change had not happened overnight but *Rubber Soul* is undoubtedly the first album on which the transformation can clearly be heard. Not only is the album instrumentally more interesting (for example the use of sitar on "Norwegian Wood" was something very new and exciting) but it was also lyrically more multidimensional. However, this was only the beginning, and it was the 1966 album *Revolver* that really marked the change in the band's music.

With their previous albums the Beatles had gradually moved towards more intricate songs and lyrics. With the release of *Rubber Soul* in 1965 the Beatles offered their fans

numerous clues of things to come. Traces of psychedelia and new ideologies were certainly present in songs such as “Nowhere Man” and “The Word”, in which the writer claims that he is “here to show everybody the light” and that you just have to “say the word and you’ll be free, say the word and be like me”. The word, of course, was love. When *Revolver* was finally released in October 1966, it was obvious that the Beatles had further developed both their sound and style. It was this album that finally allowed the band to break away from their earlier image as loveable mop-tops:

Gone were the paeans to boy-girl relationships and the standard set-up of two guitars, bass, and drums. An eclectic assortment of instruments and effects were brought to bear on songs with lyrics that were at once more introspective, poetic, and surreal than anything that Lennon, McCartney, and Harrison had ever attempted. The results were dazzling (Frontani 119).

The Beatles’ growing interest in visual arts was also evident in *Revolver*’s album cover. The cover was a black and white drawing of the band members’ heads with tiny photographs of the boys almost growing around and out of their hair. Their artistic pursuits continued on *Sgt. Pepper’s Lonely Hearts Club Band*, the 1967 follow-up to *Revolver*. George Harrison’s fascination with Eastern cultures and especially India had resulted in the song “Within You Without You”, “Lucy in the Sky With Diamonds” was a psychedelic fairy tale with its dreamlike descriptions of the world, and “She’s Leaving Home” told the story of a young runaway girl while combining the heartbreak of the story with soothing string arrangements. The band also demanded that the album be released everywhere in the world in the same programmed form that it was released in. No alterations to the track listing were allowed. This illustrates the intensity and devotion with which the Beatles regarded their new album: the band strove to acclaim their work as art (Frontani 139).

After the rainbow-coloured *Sgt. Pepper* album and the equally psychedelic soundtrack album *Magical Mystery Tour* (1967) the 1968 self-titled double album *The Beatles* was a move to the opposite end of the spectrum. The lack of cover art alone was a startling contrast

to the band's previous albums. The white cover, the lack of a proper name, and the less polished songs were something completely unexpected. It appears that this was exactly the point, as Jeffrey Roessner points out how "The Beatles' turn to parody serves not as an escape from but as a specific response to key cultural tensions" (148). *The White Album* "offers multiple voices and world views in place of a single privileged voice" (Marshall 15), partly because the songs on that album were clearly written by four individuals instead of having been born out of group effort. This was very much a symbolic factor as well, as Ray Coleman writes how "the album remained John's favourite Beatles work because it demonstrated the development of personalities rather than the Beatles as an entity, of which by 1968 he had become tired" (477). The Beatles' growth as individuals was both beneficial to the group as well as being slightly detrimental: the songs grew more interesting, but the collaboration between the four group members would never return to the productivity of the early 1960s.

3. The Beatles and Women

As I have already mentioned in previous chapters, the Beatles wrote primarily about women and love. This was true for both Lennon and McCartney, but the difference between the duo was that whereas Lennon wrote about his personal experiences, McCartney focused on telling stories:

He [Lennon] was, as McCartney himself has said, a more autobiographical writer than his partner. Events in his life directly influenced the songs he wrote: with McCartney, the same is not as often true. [...] McCartney's texts are usually witty, charming, narrative, or sentimental. Lennon's are more extreme: acerbic, confessional, or maddeningly obtuse (Riley 21).

One might say McCartney's texts are more perceptive; he seems to be able to skilfully step in other people's shoes, whereas Lennon's texts are usually more thought-provoking and challenging and certainly more personal.

On *Revolver*, for example, McCartney's "Eleanor Rigby" (1966) tells the story of a lonely woman who "died in the church and was buried along with her name", but Lennon, on the other hand, criticises that, "You tell me that you've got everything you want, and your bird can sing/ but you don't get me, you don't get me" ("And Your Bird Can Sing", 1966). But why are women the most popular subject in popular music? Sheila Whiteley writes: "The role of the woman, her image, her purpose [...] certainly accounts for that well-known question: 'What is a musician without a woman?' and its apocalyptic answer: 'Broke and homeless'" (2000, 11). Most importantly, love has always been among the most prominent subjects in art and literature, and seeing as the popular music world is still largely male-dominated, it is only natural that the main focus should be on women.

On the three albums that I am using as my primary reference material most of the songs deal with women, love, and relationships in one way or another, and the women the Beatles wrote about seem to fall into certain groups: some women are seen as victims or alternatively

as aggressors, other women are portrayed as caretakers and motherly figures. Women are also seen as love interests or objects of sexual desire; after all, most of their songs are about falling in love and being in love in addition to expressing lust, desire, and devotion. However, even though women are very strongly present in the songs' texts, youth culture is still "often actually "boy culture": whether or not they consciously recognise it, the onus is invariably on girls to find ways of making cultural institutions fit them" (Warwick 59). Warwick uses the Beatles' *Revolver* as an example:

What do female listeners make of *Revolver*? Should they will themselves to be like Paul McCartney's ethereal spirit guide in "Here, There and Everywhere", emulate the sensual earth goddess who grounds George Harrison in "Love You To", become cold and materialistic like the subjects of "For No One" and "And Your Bird Can Sing", or else resign themselves to Eleanor Rigby's lonely fate? (58-59).

3.1 Women Who Hurt

The title of this chapter is purposefully ambiguous as it is impossible to tell whether we are discussing women who are being or have been hurt, or whether the focus is on women who are the aggressors and are hurting someone else. Both types of women are present in the Beatles' lyrics even though women are much more widely featured as objects. The woman in "For No One" (1966) is a good example of an independent woman who has abandoned a relationship she no longer needs. It is interesting that instead of writing from first-person perspective, the songwriter is actually describing the situation as if it was happening to the listener: "Your day breaks, your mind aches/ you find that all her words of kindness linger on when she no longer needs you". Maybe the writer is distancing himself from the text by this change of perspective, or perhaps the intention is to make it easier for the listener to relate to the story. In doing so, the narrator is also refusing to take responsibility for the events:

The use of “you” in the lyrics pins the listener uncomfortably in the position of the abandoned lover, compulsively rehearsing everything that went wrong, and also creates distance between the narrator and the actors in the story. [...] While “you” usually implies “I”, and thus a dialogue between us, this song provides no way for its characters to speak, no insight into why the woman behaved as she did (Warwick 63-4).

Whatever the case may be, the woman in the song is the aggressor and the one who is doing the hurting by saying that “her love is dead”, and as Warwick mentions above, the woman is denied the right to explain her actions, which leaves the listener with an image of a cold, heartless woman.

As a contrast to the hurtful woman in “For No One”, the Beatles also wrote about abused women. Possibly the most startling revelation came in the song “Getting Better” (1967) when the writer confesses his violent past:

I used to be cruel to my woman
I beat her and kept her apart
From the things that she loved
Man, I was mean but I’m changing my scene
And I’m doing the best that I can.

Even though the “I” mentioned in the song and the songwriter are not necessarily the same person, in this case it seems the song’s lyrics had actually stemmed from John Lennon’s personal life; Lennon would later talk about his violent behaviour in several interviews and he admitted the song “Getting Better” referred to his aggressive tendencies: “I sincerely believe in love and peace. I am a violent man who has learned not to be violent and regrets his violence” (Turner 124). John’s first wife Cynthia also wrote about her husband’s aggressive behaviour in her autobiography: “He [John] was deeply ashamed of what he had done: I think he had been shocked to discover he had it in him to hit me. So, although he was still verbally cutting and unkind, he was never again physically violent to me” (Lennon 51). It is fairly irrelevant whether or not Lennon actually abandoned his violent behaviour because the fact still remains that he had been violent and he had hit women. Lennon seems to fulfil the

stereotypical role of a man whose inability to voice his emotions results in physical bursts of violence.

“Getting Better” is actually a simple love song in which the author states that even though things have been rough, “it’s getting better since you’ve been mine”. It is also a seemingly autobiographical song that starts with descriptions of the songwriter’s school years and how he “used to be angry young man”, a statement that is further explained by the revelation about the domestic violence mentioned above. However, the listener is left with the feeling that even though the writer is expressing his remorse by admitting that his behaviour had been spiteful, it also appears that he is removing some of the blame by stating that he is doing the best that he can, that is, he cannot help it if that is not good enough. Also, it is important to note that whereas in “For No One” the woman had hurt the man by leaving him, in “Getting Better” we have moved from emotional damage to physical violence. It seems that the Beatles associate emotional pain with women whereas men are the ones who hit. Causing emotional pain is not something they appear to feel the need to apologise for. Interestingly enough, at first glance the 1965 hit “Don’t Let Me Be Misunderstood” by The Animals⁷ seems to be an exception, but in reality the song was actually first recorded by Nina Simone in 1964, thus transforming the song into yet another example of an apologetic woman and thereby undermining the song’s partly deviant nature (NinaSimone.com).

Another example of women being emotionally abusive can be seen in the song “Don’t Pass Me By” (1968) in which the writer is sitting at home, waiting for his girl. It remains unclear whether the woman has actually left him or if he is simply so insecure that he feels the need to beg and plead all the while asking her if she still loves him: “I wonder where you are tonight and why I’m by myself/ I don’t see you, does it mean you don’t love me anymore?”

⁷ The Animals also recorded a cover version of Nina Simone’s “House of the Rising Sun” in 1963, which went on to become a huge hit for the band (NinaSimone.com: House of the Rising Sun [Internet] Available from <<http://boscarol.com/nina/html/where/houseoftherising.html>> [Accessed 27 April 2008]).

Even though it is unclear whether the woman in question is actually going to leave, it is still obvious that the writer at least thinks it possible:

Don't pass me by, don't make me cry, don't make me blue,
 'Cause you know darling I love only you,
 You'll never know it hurt me so,
 How I hate to see you go,
 Don't pass me by, don't make me cry.

“Don’t Pass Me By” provides an interesting role shift; it is usually the woman who is pleading her man to stay. Not only is the songwriter reassuring his woman that he loves only her, but he is also showing his vulnerability by telling her how much he is hurting. The song “has a daft and charming lyric, and it achieves [...] an effect of complete sincerity” (Quantick 117), so as a result the listener actually feels sorry for the writer who is so patiently waiting at home. After all, the changed roles do create a fascinating situation in which the man is the abandoned lover and his woman is the independent and ignorant party.

Portraying women as deceitful and emotionally deceptive is a fairly common theme in popular music. The Beatles were by no means the only band writing such lyrics in the 1960s popular music scene. For example, in their 1965 hit single “A Hard Day’s Night” Herman’s Hermits warned the listener about a woman who is “nothing but trouble”, and who is “a complete impossibility”. Other examples of such songs include “Build Me Up Buttercup” (1968) by The Foundations, “Evil Hearted You” (1965) by the Yardbirds, and “Get Out of My Life Woman” (1966) by Lee Dorsey.

Another interesting and also rather typical characterisation of women is portraying them as objects of patronisation. For example, in “Martha My Dear” (1968) the writer addresses a woman by calling her a “silly girl” while reprimanding her by telling her to see what she has done. Yet, at the same time he is pleading her to be good to him:

Martha, my dear
 You have always been my inspiration
 Please, be good to me

Don't forget me, Martha, my dear.

As Quantick writes, most Beatles fans are aware that “it’s really a song about his [Paul McCartney’s] Old English sheepdog” (99), but in spite of this background information, “Martha My Dear” remains textually interesting. It is irrelevant whether or not the writer is actually talking to a dog because by putting the song on an album for people to hear, the writer of the song is also giving people an option to interpret the song the way they understand it, and naturally, without any additional background information, the song strikes the listener as a text about a woman named Martha who is being patronised, reprimanded, and adored at the same time. This dichotomy is interesting: the woman in the song is described as a powerful person since it is the man who is begging her to remember him, not the other way round, and yet he is also downplaying and ridiculing her actions by calling her a “silly girl”. Here, the girl is without a doubt the victim as the man once again plays the aggressor. The phrase “silly girl” can be interpreted as a term of endearment but at the same time it is also highly belittling and condescending. It is interesting that Paul McCartney decided to publish this song because even though he claims to have written it about his dog, he must have been aware of the fact that people with no prior knowledge would interpret the text as a traditional love song dedicated to a woman called Martha. After all, prior knowledge is – not nor should it ever be – mandatory.

Consequently, “Martha My Dear” comes across as an admonishment of sorts:

Take a good look around you
 Take a good look you're bound to see
 That you and me were meant to be for each other
 Silly girl.

Hold your hand out you silly girl see what you've done
 When you find yourself in the thick of it
 Help yourself to a bit of what is all around you
 Silly girl.

The songwriter seems to be telling the woman what to do in an obviously deprecating manner. The lines resemble something a parent might say to a disobedient child when s/he has misbehaved. The writer is even making the assumption that she will come to the conclusion that they “were meant to be”, consequently denying her of her own free will. This supposition bears some similarity to the expectations expressed in “When I’m Sixty-Four” (1967), another Paul McCartney song which will be discussed in more detail later in this chapter.

Undoubtedly the most famous hurt woman in the Beatles’ texts is “Eleanor Rigby”, a story of a lonely woman who dies alone in a church. The song creates an atmosphere of hopelessness and desolation, and the story does not have a happy ending as in the end, “no one was saved”. “Eleanor Rigby” seems to be a characterisation of a woman who has lost everything, and the story might even serve as a warning to women: be careful, you do not want to end up this way. It would seem that no woman would ever want to associate herself with the hopeless spinster called Eleanor, and yet, in 1969, Aretha Franklin declared, “I’m Eleanor Rigby” (Warwick 65). Franklin even recorded her own version of the song, transforming the lyrics and omitting lines while also changing the perspective. “I’m Eleanor Rigby. I pick up the rice in the church where a wedding has been,” she sings. However, in the last verse Franklin goes back to being an observer by singing in the third person like the Beatles did. Franklin is also making a radical statement with her interpretation of the song. She is showing the world that Eleanor Rigby might just as well be a black woman, or a woman who is robust and confident instead of being a dour and friendless spinster (Warwick, 66). Also, by changing the point of view in the last verse Franklin is now moving back to being an observer instead of an actor. She seems to be employing both roles at once, perhaps to show that it is possible for a woman to actually be both. Not all women are “Eleanors”, and not all “Eleanors” are necessarily women. Could “Eleanor Rigby” be a story of a man? The name of the person would seem to be irrelevant because it is the story itself that is

meaningful. Could it not be a man who dies alone and whose funeral no one attends? When it comes to loneliness and isolation, does gender really matter? Father McKenzie is the other character mentioned in the song, and his loneliness seems startlingly similar to Eleanor's situation. After all, he is "writing the words of a sermon that no one will hear" while "no one comes near", which also suggests that he has been somehow shunned from our society. This seems fitting since loneliness is something people do not want to be reminded of. Moreover, Father McKenzie is also "darning his socks in the night when there's nobody there". It seems like the two characters in the song are almost like mirror images of each other; the only notable difference between them is their gender whereas loneliness and desperation are the factors that bind them together even more tightly. The writer describes Father McKenzie wiping his hands "as he walks from the grave, no one was saved", so the insinuation is that loneliness is something none of us can escape or avoid. All human beings are potential Eleanors or Father McKenzies, the writer seems to be saying. As a description of a woman "Eleanor Rigby" paints a portrait of a person who has been hurt. Conversely, Aretha Franklin's version shows that being hurt and being helpless are not necessarily synonymous.

On a more cultural level, "Eleanor Rigby" provides insight into the "1960s concern for alienation" (Whiteley 2002, 210). Whiteley writes: "Career, family, education, morality and personal freedom were issues that had been fronted in the counterculture's stand against a prevailing ideology which was concerned, above all, with upholding the status quo of western capitalism" (210). "Eleanor Rigby" is, again, a warning of what might occur. It is almost like a worst-case scenario in today's culture where nobody wants to be alone but loneliness has become a bigger problem than one might ever have foreseen. Still, Aretha Franklin's version of the song takes a stand in this matter as well: her version uses several backing vocalists, and as Warwick points out, "backing female vocalists demonstrate that Rigby is far from alone" (66). Loneliness is, after all, also a matter of perspective just as much as it is relative.

One of the Beatles' most famous songs, "She's Leaving Home" (1967) is another example of a girl who has been hurt, but at the same time it is also a song about independence and breaking free. The song is lyrically interesting because it tells the story of a "domestic drama by voicing the parents' worst fears which have suddenly come to life:

(She...) We never thought of ourselves
 (is leaving...) Never a thought for ourselves
 (home...) We struggled hard all our lives to get by

and later:

(She...) What did we do that was wrong?
 (is having...) We didn't know it was wrong
 (fun...) Fun is the one thing that money can't buy
 (Something inside that was always denied for so many years)
 Bye, bye (Riley 218).

The title of the song alone lets the listener know what the text is about. Interestingly enough, though, the story does not centre solely on the girl; we see her leaving the house and "leaving a note that she hoped would say more", and the next time we return to her story she is already "far away, waiting to keep the appointment she made, meeting a man from the motor trade". It is clear that she has gained what she wanted in the first place: independence. The girl meeting a man seems to also subtly hint at her sexual awakening. However, simultaneously the narrative continues in the house she left behind, and now the listener gets to witness the heartbreak of the girl's parents:

Father snores as his wife gets into her dressing gown
 Picks up the letter that's lying there
 Standing alone at the top of the stairs
 She breaks down and cries to her husband, "Daddy, our baby's gone!
 Why would she treat us so thoughtlessly? How could she do this to me?"

It is hard not to feel at least the slightest bit of sympathy for the parents the girl left behind. After all, it seems they tried their hardest and they "gave her everything money can buy", but they simply did not realise that money cannot buy happiness. Sheila Whiteley points out that

the preoccupation with love and loneliness is “seldom confronted, except as an outsider’s commentary” (2000, 40), and in “She’s Leaving Home” the writer is simply telling the girl’s story without actually stepping into her shoes. It is clear, however, that the songwriter sympathises with the girl even though the parents’ views are also heard. The song suggests that the girl’s parents’ conduct is understandable but undeniably wrong: “The narrator judges their [the parents’] punishment to be a significant one: their daughter is running away with someone from the lower class and will obviously gain sexual experience” (Northcutt 138). It is almost as if this song has two purposes: it might be seen as a warning to parents, telling them to pay more attention to their children’s needs or they might lose them forever. On the other hand, the song serves as an example and encouragement for teenagers who are in a similar situation; it seems to be promoting youth rebellion (Northcutt 138). For example, the hippie movement adopted the song as an anthem of sorts; “A 15-year-old boy who left home to become a hippie interprets the Beatles’ songs as a put-down of his parents: ‘They’re saying all the things I always wanted to say to my parents and their freaky friends’” (Porterfield 108). The line “she is free” creates an image of a girl who has been held captive in her own home, by her own parents. One might say that the girl has abandoned the role of the sufferer and the victim and she is taking control over her own life. In a way, the song is a story about one girl gaining her independence.

The Beatles had written about strong women before. For example, the woman in “For No One” was most certainly an independent woman, and on the 1965 album *Rubber Soul* they sang about the girl who “came to stay” and who knew she was attractive: “When you say she’s looking good, she acts as if it’s understood” (“Girl”, 1965). “She’s Leaving Home”, however, is the first song in which the parents’ views and juxtaposed with the girl’s actions. She is leaving home, but the parents still maintain they gave her most of their lives and that they never thought of themselves. The parents are the martyrs in this song, and the girl does

not feel remorse or regret, she does not stop to look back because at last she feels free. Thus, one might say the song is a story of triumph, of overcoming difficulties, and it is without a doubt aimed at those misunderstood teenagers who wish they had the courage to be like that girl.

“She’s Leaving Home” tells the story of a girl whose unhappiness drove her to run away from home. “Eleanor Rigby” is a tale of a lonely woman, and the woman in “Martha My Dear” is both idolised and patronised at the same time. “She Said She Said” was released in 1966 on the album *Revolver*, and while the song seemed to be about a conversation between the songwriter and a nameless woman, the actual dialogue had in reality taken place between two men. Warwick addresses this issue as she writes:

The woman in one of the songs from *Revolver* underwent a sex change before the final version of the piece was recorded: “She Said She Said” is famously based on a conversation between John Lennon and Peter Fonda, pin-up boy of the California counterculture. [...] the Beatle and Easy Rider talked about a near-death experience in Fonda’s childhood. Lennon was appalled by the macabre discussion and his efforts to shut Fonda up served as the basis for a song that skilfully conveys frustration and discomfort. [...] Why would a conversation about death be more acceptable to the mainstream if between a boy and a girl?” (60)

Warwick’s explanation is that the purpose of this sex change is to deliberately differentiate the woman as much as possible from the man in the song, and that the opposition between them would be less compelling “had the character retained Peter Fonda’s gender, and the song would have been a complicated presentation of different kinds of masculinity rather than a conventional binary of male vs. female” (61). So, in other words, in its original form the song would have been about two men battling for masculinity. The story has been altered to feature a man and a woman, so what does the song tell about her? What is this “manmade” woman like?

The song’s dialogue borders on the aggressive and neither party seems to stop to pay attention and think about what the other has said. Still, the woman holds some power over the

man by making him feel worthless: “She said, ‘I know what it’s like to be dead. I know what it is to be sad.’ And she’s making me feel like I’ve never been born”. This is why the man starts to fight back by saying, “No, no, no, you’re wrong. When I was a boy everything was right”, and he is now leading the conversation to a place where she cannot follow; she has never been a boy and she cannot argue with his logic of how tremendous things were when he was young. The man is efficiently excluding her from the conversation. Subsequently, he goes back to addressing the woman: “Who put all those things in your head? Things that make me feel that I’m mad. And you’re making me feel like I’ve never been born”. Now the man is certain that someone has planted these thoughts into the woman’s head, it is almost as if she could not possibly have any original ideas. So, what could have been a song about two men arguing and trying to see who is right, what we have now is a story of a conversation between a man and a woman where the woman is constantly being undermined and doubted. One might also say that the woman is actually the one who is the aggressor here because he is the one who is attacking back and lashing out. Perhaps the man feels the need to defend himself because the woman has unintentionally insulted him by having more insight or having experienced more than him: “Her smugness makes him feel impossibly small and defenceless. The intensity is palpable; the singer is wrestling with feelings he barely understands – inadequacy, helplessness, and a profound fear” (Riley 188). So, in this sense, the woman in “She Said She Said” is also a woman who hurts, but instead of being an object, she is now the aggressor. The man finds the conversation both unsettling and dissatisfactory and he reveals his uneasiness by saying “Even though you know what you know, I know that I’m ready to leave”, and here he is mocking the woman’s story by clearly stating that he simply does not care. Even the name of the song creates an image of a he said/she said situation in which the man’s word is placed against the word of the woman. However, since the name is “She Said She Said”, the use of the same pronoun twice suggests that the man’s word is not even

questioned here. This is not a situation of man versus woman but an attack against the woman's message, or possibly even an assault against women.

There is something extremely patriarchal about the way the woman is portrayed in this particular song. I have mentioned before how Sheila Whiteley argues that the Beatles shifted towards a more masculine point of view in their writing (2006, 66), and while I do not completely agree with her views, the song "She Said She Said" is admittedly an example of a masculine way of writing and portraying women. Nevertheless, as I pointed out before, the woman in the song is still a powerful figure who is not afraid to stand up for herself, and even though the writer of the song does not allow her to reply to his arguments, it is still apparent that this is an independent woman who refuses to be told to keep her thoughts to herself. Thus, one might actually argue that while the perspective of the song is rather patriarchal and conventional, the woman in the song is very much independent and strong in all her assertiveness.

Women who are either objects of hurtful behaviour or who act as aggressors themselves seem to be rather common in popular music, and at least in the 1960s there seemed to be no shortage of songs dealing with these particular issues.⁸ The Beatles certainly wrote about abusive women almost as much as they wrote about abused women. The violent behaviour of women was still very much a taboo, so even though the Beatles did not sing about women who are physically abusive, the fact that they did not focus solely on women's role as objects shows that they were not afraid to address controversial issues in their songs. As I have mentioned earlier in this chapter, it seems the Beatles associated physical violence with men and masculinity – men's emotionally abusive behaviour does not seem to be an issue at all – whereas women are perceived as more capable of emotional abuse and aggression. The song "Sexy Sadie" on the *White Album* (1968) might have been another example of this sort of

⁸ For example "Under My Thumb" (1966) and "Stupid Girl" (1966) by The Rolling Stones, "Maudie" (1966) by The Animals, "Baby Get Your Head Screwed On" (1966) by Cat Stevens, "I'm Waiting for the Day" (1967) by The Beach Boys, and "One of Us Must Know (Sooner or Later)" (1966) by Bob Dylan.

behaviour, but I have made a conscious choice to address that song in later chapters since its topic is more multidimensional even though the resemblance and relationship between “Sexy Sadie” and “She Said She Said” is rather obvious. However, before moving on to a more in-depth look at love and sexuality, it is important to pay attention to the women who might be seen as the polar opposites of the female aggressors that have been one of the topics in this chapter.

3.2 Women as Caretakers

Women’s role as mothers, nurturers, and caretakers is probably the oldest stereotype and myth; not all women can or want to be mothers, and not all women are good mothers or caretakers. Also, not only are women often perceived as mother figures, they are also rendered some rather Madonna-like qualities; qualities that both depersonalise and etherealise them. These stereotypes stem from religion and religious art, ancient myths and stories among other things. At the other end of the spectrum stand of course the women whose hard work as full-time mothers is taken for granted.

The most famous Beatles songs about mothers and caretakers are probably “Lady Madonna” (1968), “Mother Nature’s Son” (1968), “Cry Baby Cry” (1968), and “When I’m Sixty-Four” (1967). It is fundamental to remember that when using the word caretaker we are not talking solely about mothers. Sheila Whiteley refers to these women as nurturers (2006, 66), and “When I’m Sixty-Four” is a prime example of women being portrayed in this manner. The song starts off by the songwriter asking the woman if she is still going to need him when he is old. The recurring lines “Will you still need me, will you still feed me when I’m sixty-four?” create an interesting image of this couple’s relationship. If the man is so old and poorly that he cannot feed himself, it seems odd that he is assuming that his wife will be

fit and healthy enough to look after her husband. The songwriter seems to either concur with the statistical fact that women's life expectancy is longer than that of men, or he may also be assuming that his wife will be considerably younger than him, which would consequently make her more vigorous to actually take care of him. This, however, seems like a dubious and somewhat disconcerting scheme. Then, in the second verse the man goes on to describe all the things they could do when they are older:

I could be handy, mending a fuse when your lights have gone
 You can knit a sweater by the fireside
 Sunday mornings go for a ride
 Doing the garden, digging the weeds
 Who could ask for more?
 Will you still need me, will you still feed me
 When I'm sixty-four?

The patriarchal assumption that the man is going to be the one to mend a fuse whereas the woman will just sit in front of the fire and knit does nothing but reinforce the old stereotype of the difference between men's and women's chores. Some critics have argued that "When I'm Sixty-Four" is actually a parody of the music and ideals of the time (Northcutt 138). The innocence that the writer demonstrates by such lines as "give me an answer, fill in a form/ mine for evermore" and "indicate precisely what you mean to say" is "not looked at with nostalgic warmth; instead, it stands as one with staid Britannica and its unnatural ideology" (Northcutt 139). The song seems almost like a picture postcard of what retirement and old age should be like according to one generation and its ideals: "Every summer we can rent a cottage in the Isle of Wight/ if it's not too dear", and of course the couple "shall scrimp and save".

"When I'm Sixty-Four" is obviously a song about a relationship where the woman is expected to be the nurturer, the caretaker. The man is asking for reassurance by wanting to know if she will still need him when he is older. Riley states that the song is "nothing more than a dressed-up love song (222), which is at least partially true. The song is also rather

useful in the way that the writer is actually describing this couple's life the way he pictures it, and while the patriarchal roles of both the man and the woman may not be surprising, they are undeniably revealing. The woman is the caretaker in the family and the man is almost like a child because he needs to be fed and taken care of. The woman is once again both strong and weak at the same time; she is the one who looks after the man, and yet she is also the one who has to stick to knitting while it is the man's job to "be handy". Children are not mentioned but the line "grandchildren on your knee, Vera, Chuck, and Dave" does, of course, suggest that the couple does have children as well. This implies that the woman has employed the role of the nurturer for the most part of her life: after having raised her children she is now taking care of her husband as well. However, it is important to bear in mind that the song does not actually tell a story of what has already happened but it describes the life the songwriter is envisioning, perhaps for himself. Therefore, the attributes attached to the woman are both ideological and personal. The actuality that the writer had planned this whole life for both himself and his wife does strike the listener as a bit troublesome. The woman does not seem to have a say over the matter at all.

The Beatles may have dedicated songs to their mothers and other women in their lives, but writing about women as nurturers did not seem to be fashionable at the time. Perhaps it would have been too much like stating the obvious: women are typically the ones who raise the children and take care of the family. Many second-wave feminists of the 1960s and 1970s argued that "while biological differences between men and women did mean that women were biologically destined to give birth to children, it did not necessarily follow that women had feminine, "maternal" instincts which made them essentially more supporting, nurturing, and caring than men" (Hollows, 10). The Beatles did not dedicate songs to unfit mothers, but it seems that John Lennon's personal experiences did at least drive him to write a song called "Mother" for his first solo album *Plastic Ono Band* (1970), in which he sings:

Mother, you had me but I never had you
 I wanted you but you didn't want me
 So I got to tell you,
 Goodbye, goodbye.

Mothers in general, however, were not uncommon subjects for the band, and another similarly themed song can be found on the Beatles' 1968 *White Album*. "Cry Baby Cry" (1968) was partially inspired by a television advertisement which said, "Cry baby cry, make your mother buy" (Turner, 170), but while the quote is featured in the song's chorus almost word for word, the verses are centred around an "eerie cast of fairytale nobility engaged in bizarrely mundane domestic tasks" (Quantick 149), which is a fairly accurate description of the song's lyrics:

Cry, baby, cry
 Make your mother sigh
 She's old enough to know better.

The king of Marigold was in the kitchen
 Cooking breakfast for the queen
 The queen was in the parlour
 Playing piano for the children of the king.

Coleman views this song as "cruel and spiteful [...] as only children can be" (566), a view with which it is hard to wholeheartedly agree. The song can be seen as a metaphor for "the fear the youth culture's sounds instilled in their parents" (Riley 285), and the attitude towards the mother mentioned in the chorus is both bitter and slightly spiteful at the same time. The line "She's old enough to know better" is similar to the title of "Your Mother Should Know" (1967), a song the Beatles had written for the soundtrack album of their *Magical Mystery Tour* film in 1967. Both songs seem to suggest that these women have no right to complain or grumble because they should know better. It remains unclear what it actually is that these women should know. In "Cry Baby Cry" the line may possibly imply that age equals wisdom, which seems to be exactly what "Your Mother Should Know" is suggesting as well. Still, the songwriter seems to be almost slightly scolding or reprimanding these women and it is impossible to say why. Perhaps the fact that they are women is enough to merit this.

Nevertheless, it is also peculiar that the stereotype of age equalling wisdom is applied only to women, at least in these two songs, whereas men are not mentioned at all.

“Cry Baby Cry” is also a fascinating song because of the number of characters appearing in it. Also, the activities mentioned in the song are both unusual and revealing at the same time. First, the king is cooking breakfast for the queen while the queen is playing piano for the children (“of the king”). Next, the king is “picking flowers for a friend who came to play”, and the queen “was in the playroom painting pictures for the children’s holiday”. Both cooking and picking flowers could well be seen as women’s jobs; surely a king picking flowers for a friend seems a bit unusual to say the least. Then again, the queen seems to be the one who is constantly looking after the children. Furthermore, she is not only playing piano for them, but the writer has felt the need to point out that the king is, in fact, the father of these children. However, it is never mentioned if the queen is their mother. This makes the queen seem like a baby-sitter, especially since she is the one painting pictures for the children and entertaining them by playing music for them. The guests, the Duke and Duchess of Kirkcaldy, are equally confusing as the Duke “was having problems with the message at the local bird and bee” and the Duchess is “always smiling and arriving late for tea”. Once again, the woman, or in this case the Duchess, is portrayed as a slightly silly, forgetful but kind person whose smile never falters. This may refer to the stereotype according which women are seen as saint-like individuals who never complain and always smile in a docile manner.

As I have stated before, the Beatles’ song lyrics began to get more complex and difficult to decipher in the latter part of the 1960s, and “Cry Baby Cry” is a prime example of a song that can be interpreted in several different ways.⁹ Nevertheless, the song is very traditional in the way it portrays women even though it does, interestingly enough, challenge the traditional

⁹ Quantick (149), Riley (285), and Coleman (566) all offer different but equally plausible interpretations of this song. John Lennon himself regarded the song – in his typical fashion – as “a piece of rubbish” (Quantick 149).

men's roles by portraying the king and the Duke as domestic characters who are not in so much control as one might perhaps expect.

The songs mentioned in this chapter are by no means the only songs the Beatles ever wrote about mothers and caretakers. However, since quite a few of these songs not only portray women as nurturers but also as almost divine beings, they will be analysed more thoroughly later in this thesis.

4. “Love Me While You Can” – The Beatles and Love.

“Love Me Do” (1963), “All My Loving” (1963), “She Loves You” (1964), “All You Need Is Love” (1967). These titles alone leave no doubt as to what the majority of the Beatles’ songs deal with. Love was unquestionably the most common subject for the band to write about, and by love we are primarily talking about romantic love and relationships even though songs such as “Mother Nature’s Son” (1968), “Lady Madonna” (1968), and “Within You Without You” (1967) do address love on a more general level as well. However, the band’s early love songs were by no means consistent. John Lennon’s style of writing, for example, did undergo several alterations: “The attitude of the lover towards his beloved in early songs is constantly shifting – Lennon can be spiteful and pretentious as easily as he can be vulnerable and paranoid. Women seem to taunt him as much as they symbolize satisfaction” (Riley, 33). Lennon’s “Run for Your Life” (1965) is an excellent example of the paranoia and insecurity that seem to alternate with love and devotion; the man would rather see his woman dead than with another man: “Baby, I’m determined and I’d rather see you dead/ [...] Catch you with another man/ that’s the end, little girl”. Also, the way the Beatles wrote about love changed dramatically with time. Sheila Whiteley states that there is a “shift in emphasis from romantic naïveté to the more knowing sexuality associated with the late 1960s” (2006, 67). A good example of this can be seen in the song “Lovely Rita” (1968) in which the writer “nearly makes it” with Rita the meter maid while “sitting on the sofa with a sister or two”. “Why Can’t We Do It on the Road?” (1968) is another, even more apparent example of the way the Beatles addressed sexual behaviour in their songs. “No one will be watching us/ why don’t we do it on the road?” was a far cry from the chaste reassurances of love the public had grown to expect from and associate with the band.

In addition to love and sexuality, the third main focus of this chapter is on etherealised women. Whiteley mentions the song “Julia” (1968) as a prime example of a text that is about “lost mothers” where the woman is “magically transformed [...] to the rank of goddess” (2006, 66). “Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds” (1967) is also an example of a song about woman (or “a girl with kaleidoscope eyes”) whose characteristics are those of a divine, goddess-like being. These ethereal women are discussed in the last part of this chapter.

4.1 Romantic Love

Love is quite probably the most popular theme in popular music. Love is the ultimate higher power that can both hurt and excite at the same time. The Beatles themselves were mostly known for writing love songs, and their 1967 hippie movement anthem “All You Need Is Love” lives on in the minds of people around the world. It has been said that the Beatles were the ones who transformed ordinary love songs by changing the perspective in songs like “She Loves You” so that the singer was no longer the object or the agent (Norman, 184). “From Me to You”, “I Want to Hold Your Hand”, “Michelle” with its “I love you, I love you, I love you” lyrics all seem to follow the same pattern; the exchange between the songwriter and the object is both direct and personal. “She Loves You” was the first step into another direction, and as their career progressed the Beatles’ love songs began to grow more intricate and more mature. At the same time, however, the charming silliness and naiveté that had been present in some of the band’s earlier work seemed to give way to a cynical and at times even bitter outlook on life and love. The song “I’m Looking through You” (1965) is a good example of the diminished naiveté in the Beatles’ song lyrics:

Why, tell me why did you not treat me right?
Love has a nasty habit of disappearing overnight.

Here, the blame is being placed solely on the girl's behaviour, and as a result the singer has gained a bitter, cynical attitude towards love because according to his personal experience, love does not and cannot last, hence the line about love disappearing overnight.

On *Revolver*, *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band*, and the *White Album* the Beatles did still write about love and relationships, but they seemed to be doing it in a less obvious manner. Songs like "Got to Get You Into My Life" (1966) and "I Will" (1968) are obviously love songs, but for the most part the material on these albums deals with miscommunication combined with alienation ("Eleanor Rigby", "While My Guitar Gently Weeps" (1968), "Yer Blues" (1968)), everyday life ("Good Morning, Good Morning" (1967), "I'm Only Sleeping" (1966)), and almost fairytale-like stories ("Rocky Raccoon" (1968), "Yellow Submarine" (1966), "Being for the Benefit of Mr Kite!" (1967)). In this chapter, however, the main focus will be on love and love songs.

"I Will" is an enlightening example of the Beatles' love songs. It is a straightforward song about love that will never die and it manages to create an atmosphere of romanticism despite its obvious childish nature (Riley describes the song as "quaint and indistinctive" (260)). The songwriter is simply telling the woman that he will always be in love with her. The element of commitment is very powerfully present in the song as the lyrics could well be straight out of some couple's wedding vows:

Love you forever and forever
 Love you with all my heart
 Love you whenever we're together
 Love you when we're apart.

Even the title of the song seems to be a reference to the "I do" affirmative in wedding vows. Nevertheless, the woman is the more powerful figure in this song as she is the one who is being addressed, she is the one keeping all her thoughts and emotions to herself and she is thereby keeping the upper hand.

However, “I Will” is, for once, a love song without an ounce of bitterness or jealousy in it. The writer is simply voicing his love for this woman. There are no third parties present that could serve as instigators or witnesses to their love. The writer is not asking for anything in return either:

Who knows how long I've loved you
 You know I love you still
 Will I wait a lonely lifetime
 If you want me to, I will.

The song appears to be an exclamation of altruistic love in the sense that for once the writer is not asking her to make up her mind nor is he making promises. The song is similar to another Beatles song called “Long Long Long” (1968) in which the songwriter is describing his happiness now that he has found his woman: “It took a long, long, long time/Now I'm so happy I found you”. Both songs are excellent examples of the way the Beatles seemed to perceive love, and romantic love in particular. Especially in “I Will” the writer is even content to just wait for the woman, even if it takes what he calls “a lonely lifetime”, which seems to imply that he could never fall in love with anyone else and therefore the alternative to having this woman’s love is being alone. Therefore, one might say “I Will” is a song about commitment. According to Sheila Whiteley, commitment and love are rewards for certain kind of behaviour: “Good girls (with the underlying inference that these are also ‘natural’ girls) are valued for their gentleness, their supportiveness, their empathy, tenderness and unselfishness, so subscribing to the traditional attributes of femininity. Their reward is the stability of marriage” (2005, 67). This leads us to presume that the women or girls mentioned in for example “I Will” and “Michelle” are almost virtuous and certainly innocent individuals. This seems to suggest that love is generally associated with purity and righteousness while sexuality and decadence remain its polar opposites.

Another fairly similar song on the Beatles' *White Album* is the song "Honey Pie" (1968), a song that oozes "twenties sentimentalism at the same time that it finds an endearing lovesick optimism, much like 'When I'm Sixty-four'" (Riley 260). It is a tongue-in-cheek tribute to the 1920s dance hall tradition that seems more like a pastiche than a real love song, in spite of the endearment "honey pie" used repeatedly throughout the song. The song's cliché rhymes and humorous metaphors undermine the song's power and effectiveness:

Honey pie you are making me crazy
I'm in love but I'm lazy
So won't you please come home.

Oh honey pie my position is tragic
Come and show me the magic
of your Hollywood song.

David Quantick dismisses the song as "a charming song that outstays its welcome on about the third or fourth hearing" (146), and it is true that while the song's nostalgic feel does seem exciting it soon begins to drown out the lyrics. On the other hand, the lyrics hardly describe the writer's love affair with "a legend of the silver screen" any more than the song itself serves as a true love song.

As I mentioned earlier, most of the Beatles' songs were actually written by only one member of the group despite the fact that most of the songs were credited to Lennon/McCartney (the rest being credited to Harrison or Starkey). Also, as I have pointed out before, it is not always relevant to name the actual songwriter unless it bears great significance to the way the song's text can be analysed. Paul McCartney was, however, decidedly the more commercial songwriter, especially when compared to John Lennon's more idiosyncratic style of writing. Therefore it is not exactly surprising to notice that the songs mentioned above were all written by McCartney. The different songwriting styles evident in for example "Honey Pie" and "I Will" demonstrate "how adept McCartney is at absorbing musical styles, something he was always eager to prove" (Quantick 146). The abundant

romanticism of “I Will” and the tongue-in-cheek “Honey Pie” both seem to have stemmed from his personal life: McCartney’s romantic work was often inspired by his relationship with his long-term girlfriend, whereas the inspiration for “Honey Pie” came from McCartney’s father’s love for vaudeville (Northcutt 138). Both songs, however, describe women as simple objects and their role in the relationship is never questioned or even acknowledged. Whiteley’s argument about women’s role being undermined does seem to be a fairly accurate description: women are positioned “as romanticised fantasy figures” which inevitably means that the characterisations and representations lack character or legitimacy (2000, 23). In both “I Will” and “Honey Pie” the focus is seemingly on the woman, and this is achieved by the use of “you” when addressing her. As a contrast, McCartney’s 1966 love song “Here, There and Everywhere” does not address the woman at all as the whole text is a first-person narrative about a character simply referred to as “her”, leaving the woman both nameless and powerless.

The listener does not pay much attention to the authenticity of first-person narratives such as the songs mentioned above. It is easy to assume that the singer and the songwriter are one and the same and therefore the “I” in the song has to refer to the writer. Obviously this is not always the case. Sarah Dougher has made an interesting perception: “When a man uses the personal voice, he speaks of himself and of a common “I”, a generalised experience [...]. When a woman uses the personal voice, she speaks about herself and only herself. It may resonate in a general sense, but it is regarded as emanating from the woman herself, as her personal, unique experience” (150). What Dougher probably means is that songs written and performed by women might not be interpreted as generalisations as often as songs written by men. Dougher’s claim might have some truth to it but sadly she does not offer any substantial evidence for her argument. Nonetheless, one might say that the Beatles’ songs could actually be regarded as generalisations, but whom or what do these generalisations represent? The

easiest and most straightforward answer seems to be men. Alternatively, even if the songs do not represent men as a whole, the views depicted in the song lyrics' still represent the views of the fundamentally male-dominated music industry and/or cultural world. The Beatles' position as trendsetters and spokespeople for their generation is one of the key elements in this discussion; no matter how widely accepted or factual the generalisations in their song lyrics were the band's views were much more likely to influence and inspire others. This, on the other hand, is exactly the component that makes the Beatles' lyrics worth studying.

The women in the Beatles' love songs seem to be slightly underrated yet at the same time they are depicted as powerful partners in a relationship. This dichotomy is evident for example in the song "Martha My Dear", which has already been discussed in the previous chapter. The concept of needing a woman reappears rather frequently throughout the band's songs, yet the way women are depicted makes it fairly obvious that their image is rather unrealistic since in most cases the women seem to possess almost supernatural qualities. The line "You knew I wanted just to hold you" in the Beatles' 1966 song "Got to Get You Into My Life" suggests that the woman is able to almost read the writer's mind by being able to tell what he really wants, yet at the same time she is satisfied to simply believe what he says: "Had you gone, you knew in time we'd meet again for I had told you". Once again the woman seems to be more of a fantasy than a real person. After all, songs can be seen as escapism of sorts; music has the ability to create emotions, moods, and visions, and by creating a mystery woman the songwriter is able to live out his or her fantasies and dreams in a purely egocentric manner. The woman in "Here, There and Everywhere" is certainly a fantasy figure:

Here, making each day of the year
 Changing my life with a wave of her hand
 Nobody can deny that there's something there.

The power this woman seems to possess for being able to change someone's life with nothing more than a flick of a wrist may well be seen a metaphor; it might be love that changes

everything and the enamoured writer is simply mistaking the power of the emotion for the power of a single human being. The dichotomy between the weaker man and the powerful woman is present in several other Beatles songs as well. George Harrison's 1966 song "I Want to Tell You" is another example of a similar situation:

I want to tell you
 My head is filled with things to say
 When you're here
 All those words, they seem to slip away.

[...]

But if I seem to act unkind
 It's only me, it's not my mind
 That is confusing things.

Tim Riley quotes David Laing by saying that "the lyrics are concerned with communication, [...] not necessarily between lovers or even friends, but perhaps between artist and audience" (196). Despite the fact that the song's lyrics can be interpreted in several alternative ways, the song still creates a fairly powerful image of a couple that struggles to learn how to communicate with each other. Provided that we assume the "you" the writer is referring to is indeed a woman, the song becomes an enlightening example of a dominant woman. Here the man is the one who seems to be at a loss for words whenever he is near her. Russell states that the song "expresses the desire for knowing, a knowing that provides a bond of intimacy between Harrison and his addressee. [...] Harrison's song imagines a perfect interpersonal bond in which communication flows freely" (121). Such bond, of course, does not actually exist. Hence, "I Want to Tell You" is as much about a fantasy as "Here, There and Everywhere" or "Got to Get You Into My Life".

It is difficult to discuss love, marriage, and dating without avoiding the topic of sex since the subjects clearly overlap. At times it is difficult to make a distinction between romantic and sexual interest, such is the case for example in "Lovely Rita" (1967), a Paul McCartney song

from the album *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band*. Paul McCartney admitted to having deliberately hinted at a sexual encounter in the song: "To me 'maid' was always a little sexy thing: 'Meter maid. Hey, come and check my meter, baby'" (*Anthology* 247, quoted in Marshall 18). Whiteley argues that "Lovely Rita" is an example of how the Beatles' "earlier emphasis on love is replaced by [...] the more knowing sexuality associated with the 1960s" (2006, 66). The way the woman – Rita – is described in the song does differentiate her from the nameless women the Beatles usually wrote about:

Lovely Rita meter maid,
 Nothing can come between us,
 When it gets dark I tow your heart away.

In a cap she looked much older,
 And the bag across her shoulder
 Made her look a little like a military man.

Not only is Rita a working class woman but she is also described as someone who even looks a bit masculine; after all, there is hardly anything more predominantly masculine than a military man. The second important notion about Rita is that she is decidedly an independent woman, and this creates an interesting parallel between the song and the 1960s Women's Liberation Movement. One might even go as far as to claim that Rita is the closest one can get to finding a representative of feminism in the Beatles' song lyrics. According to John Fiske's explanation of what we mean by the term representative, Rita's role as a worker and as an equal signifies – or represents – exactly what feminism is all about: equality, independence, freedom. In this respect the second verse is the most intriguing part of the song:

Took her out and tried to win her
 Had a laugh and over dinner
 Told her I would really like to see her again
 Got the bill and Rita paid it
 Took her home I nearly made it
 Sitting on the sofa with a sister or two.

The fact that it is Rita who pays the bill after dinner is undeniably a drastic assertion, as it not only suggests the woman's social equality but also her financial impartiality. The last two lines of the verse hint at the sexual liberation of the 1960s, and Northcutt points out the drastic difference between this song and "When I'm Sixty-Four": "The speaker in "When I'm Sixty-Four" evinces a deep attachment, a nostalgia even, for an increasingly distant and romanticised past, whereas the narrator in "Lovely Rita" enjoys himself with "a sister or two" while Rita busies herself elsewhere. The contrast could not be more striking" (139). Seeing as both songs are on the same album, these binary oppositions are an interesting occurrence. It would seem to suggest that while especially the counterculture of the 1960s was involved in radical social and cultural changes, the more traditional views had not been totally abandoned either. Northcutt quotes McDonald as he writes: "the 'generation gap' which opened in the Fifties turns out not to be a quarrel between a particular set of parents and children but a historical chasm between one way of life and another" (139).

While the song remains an amusing love song on one level ("nothing can come between us") with its wordplay and droll metaphors such as "when it gets dark I tow your heart away" (an obvious reference to towing a car), the song still possesses a level on which it seems to challenge existing notions and views of women. Rita is a working girl whose independence spans across all areas of her life, yet she remains desirable and feminine for she is flirting right back at the writer:

Oh, lovely Rita meter maid
Where would I be without you
Give us a wink and make me think of you.

For a seemingly nonsensical throwaway song, the insinuations hidden underneath the comedy raise the song's importance within the Beatles' song catalogue. Also, while the Beatles themselves never directly addresses racial issues, it is still interesting to question the ethnicity of the women they wrote and sang about. Obviously the band's songs were at least partially

neutral enough to serve as possible objects of identification for people of all races; after all, Aretha Franklin's song "I Am Eleanor Rigby" already highlighted the intercultural aspects of these songs. Therefore one might say that Rita in "Lovely Rita" could just as well be an African American woman. She could even be an Asian woman, or perhaps her roots lie in Latin America. Whatever the case may be, the song offers no clues to this "dilemma", nor does it need to. The fact that one begins to look for clues on racial issues and the way they are addressed in song lyrics actually only speaks for one's own preoccupation with ethnicity. Music is a universal language; hopefully the texts can at least partially follow that philosophy.

4.2 Women as Objects of Sexual Desire

As mentioned above, it is hard and also at least partially unnecessary to separate love, relationships, and sex since the themes are so heavily in conjunction with another. Needless to say, one cannot state that where there is sex there must be love for this is hardly the case, but the key idea is that the subjects do coexist. Since sex is a natural part of human behaviour and interpersonal relationships, it is obvious that sex is present in all areas of society. The themes of sex and sexuality have also inspired musical artists throughout the decades, and popular music is no exception. Most of time, however, sex is something that is either subtly hinted at or the topic is skirted by the use of euphemisms, with varying results.

Part of the Beatles' appeal was sexual. Sheila Whiteley quotes Ehrenreich, Hess, and Jacobs as she writes, "The fanatic adoration of the Beatles by young, predominantly white girls is well documented, and for those 'who participated in Beatlemania, sex is an obvious part of the excitement'" (2006, 56). The Beatles rarely wrote about sex in a direct manner but quite a large number of their songs could well be interpreted as sexual. Even the band's first

hit “Please Please Me” (1963) hints at sexual encounters by the wordplay in the song’s title. This is exactly the manner in which the Beatles often wrote about sex; they could effortlessly get away with obvious hints and wordplays as long as they were not being too straightforward.¹⁰ Songs such as “Day Tripper” (“She’s a big teaser/she took me half the way there”) and Norwegian Wood¹¹ with its insinuations of promiscuity were obscure or perhaps harmless enough to pass the public scrutiny. Later on the Beatles would abandon all caution and opt for a more direct approach instead, and “Why Don’t We Do It in the Road” (1968) is a prime example of this as the lyrics show:

Why don’t we do it on the road?
No one will be watching us
Why don’t we do it on the road?

Even when compared with other successful bands of the 1960s, the Beatles’ sexually rather direct song lyrics were still actually fairly progressive; after all, such sexually charged hit songs as “Honky Tonk Women” and “Let’s Spend the Night Together” by the Rolling Stones were not released until 1969 and 1967, and “Lola” by the Kinks was released as late as 1970 (MacDonald 350, 335, 356).

The Beatles’ earlier material had been fairly full of typical popular music clichés like “make love all day long” (“Love You To”, 1966) and “let me go on loving you/ tonight, tonight/ making love to only you (“Hold Me Tight”, 1963), which are still undoubtedly sexual references even though they address the subject in a placid and publicly acceptable manner. The way the Beatles addressed and discussed sex and sexuality did have a huge impact on their large following. Jane Tompkins writes: “For a woman like me, the Beatles changed

¹⁰ A few of the Beatles’ songs did, however, get banned. “I Am the Walrus” (1967) was banned by the BBC because the song contained the lines: “Pornographic priestess, boy you’ve been a naughty girl you let your knickers down”. The BBC would later also ban a few other Beatles’ songs for their supposed drug references, for example “Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds” (1967) and “A Day in the Life” (1967) (Norman 299 and 438).

¹¹ John Lennon famously wrote “Norwegian Wood” about an extramarital affair, as he himself admitted in 1971: “I was trying to write about an affair without letting me wife know I was writing about an affair [...]. I was sort of writing from my experiences, girls’ flats, things like that” (Wenner 84).

sexuality in our culture [...] into something less terrifying, less overtly marked. [...] They took sexuality out of the realm of that opposition and made it something more malleable, more imaginative, less hidden, [...] and infinitely less scary” (217).

Along with the aforementioned “Why Don’t We Do It in the Road”, “Sexy Sadie” is possibly the most sexually charged song on the Beatles’ 1968 self-titled double album. The song itself resembles the already discussed 1966 song “She Said She Said” in the sense that in both songs the object of the song has undergone a sex change operation, figuratively speaking of course. While “She Said She Said” was inspired by a conversation between John Lennon and Peter Fonda, the woman or Sadie in “Sexy Sadie” was actually inspired by Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, the Indian founder of Transcendental Meditation. “Sexy Sadie” was John Lennon’s acidic reaction to Maharishi’s hypocrisy.¹²

Lennon later admitted to having been too afraid to actually refer to Maharishi in the song, which is why he chose to write about Sexy Sadie instead.¹³ Hence, it is interesting that it seems to be more acceptable or at least less daunting to write about a woman being treacherous. One might assume that it is easier to admit having been hurt by a woman than by a man. However, as Lennon himself admitted, it can also be considered extremely cowardly to fire insults and threats in an indirect and obscure manner. The lyrics reveal the bitterness and hurt the writer is feeling but instead of unleashing his anger on the actual target, he is targeting a woman, or perhaps even women on a more general level instead:

Sexy Sadie what have you done
 You made a fool of everyone
 You made a fool of everyone
 Sexy Sadie, oh what have you done.

¹² The Beatles had been getting into Eastern religions and philosophies and in 1968 the band flew to India to meditate and listen to Maharishi’s teachings. However, the band later found out that while Maharishi had “preached otherworldliness and the life of spirit during the day, he was hitting on the women travelling with the company Beatles at night” (Marshall, 14). However, several years later it was revealed that the allegations were mostly rumours (Quantick 135).

¹³ In an interview conducted in 1971, Lennon revealed the true story behind the song “Sexy Sadie”: “That’s about Maharishi, yeah. I copped out and wouldn’t write ‘Maharishi, what have you done, you made a fool of everyone’” (Wenner 27).

Sexy Sadie you broke the rules
 You laid it down for all to see
 You laid it down for all to see
 Sexy Sadie, oh you broke the rules.

Quantick offers an interesting view on this song by stating how “the saga of Maharishi – how he seemingly lead the Beatles on, promised them earth, and then betrayed them with a woman – is one that parallels Lennon’s early, untrusting view of womankind and lends itself rather well to the song’s narrative” (135). Whether Lennon’s allegations about Maharishi’s behaviour were justified or not, “Sexy Sadie” remains an interesting example of gender-biased conduct. The lyrics are almost aggressive; the writer is obviously hurt by this betrayal he believes he has encountered and his vindictiveness has lead him to threaten the person who hurt him by warning them: “You’ll get yours yet!”. As is the case with “She Said She Said”, this song, too, reveals something rather interesting about gender stereotypes:

We gave her everything we owned just to sit at her table
 Just a smile would lighten everything
 Sexy Sadie she's the latest and the greatest of them all.

One might assume the “we” mentioned here refers to a group of men whose views are now juxtaposed with those of Sadie, the woman. The writer is berating himself for falling for the woman’s charm and looks, and the lines displayed above have an air of sarcasm to them. The writer clearly does not mean to state that this woman truly is “the greatest of them all”, or if he does, the implication seems to be that she is the best at what she does: being a femme fatale. Whiteley writes that femme fatales are considered beautiful but deadly women who both seduce and threaten and thus seem to be deserving of violent treatment (2005, 67). While the woman’s actions are not mentioned in the song, one might assume that she has either publicly hurt the man’s pride by perhaps humiliating him or simply by declining his propositions. Thus, it seems that women who do not immediately succumb to men’s will are

labelled treacherous and most of all difficult. Also, it remains unclear what rules the writer is referring to. When using the phrase “breaking the rule”, the usual implication is that someone has chosen to not follow the set of implicit codes set by the society or certain parts of it. In this case the most plausible explanation would seem to be that since Sadie’s actions take place in a male-dominated world, the rules she is asked to live by were also created by men.

The sexual implications in the song stem from the title, and the song seems to have something in common with the Beatles’ 1965 song “Day Tripper” in which the writer tells the story of a girl who mistreated him by being “a big teaser” and only taking him “half the way there”, both of which are obviously sexual connotations. There is an air of similarity in “Sexy Sadie” as well:

One sunny day the world was waiting for a lover
 She came along to turn on everyone
 Sexy Sadie the greatest of them all.

By using the words “lover” and “turn on”, the writer is clearly creating an image of a sexual woman, an image further enhanced by the song’s title. There seems to be an air of double standardisation present as well; the writer does not seem to condone sexual behaviour per se, but he is condoning the woman’s actions simply because she is indeed a woman and therefore not allowed to behave this way, especially since being rejected hurts his masculine pride. After all, the earliest view on sex was that “the purpose of sex was reproduction, so sex outside marriage was obviously for pleasure and hence a sin” (Weeks 32). The sexual revolution of the 1960s is present in “Sexy Sadie” but it does not seem to apply to the behaviour allowed for women.

Another interesting factor about “Sexy Sadie” is the unambiguous phrase “she came along to turn on everyone”. While the meaning can be seen as sexual, the line may also refer

to the hippy brotherhood, lead by Dr Timothy Leary¹⁴: “an entire new vocabulary evolved to distinguish the hippy from his persecutor, the ‘beautiful’ from the short-haired and workaday, the divine souls who ‘turned on’, ‘tuned in’, ‘freaked out’ and ‘blew their minds’ from the residue of unenlightened humanity (Norman 284). The link between the phrase and Leary’s ideas could not have been coincidental since John Lennon had employed Leary’s thoughts and texts in his earlier material as well; “Tomorrow Never Knows” (1966) quoted Leary’s *The Psychedelic Experience* (1964): “Turn off your mind/ relax, and float downstream”. The term “turn on” was also used on the Beatles *White Album* in the song “A Day in the Life” (1968): “I’d love to turn you on”. Here, the term is equally ambiguous, thus creating an interesting link between the 1960s drug culture and sexuality.

Interestingly enough, both “Sexy Sadie” and the next song I intend to analyse were both written by John Lennon. Both songs even appeared on the same album in 1968. But whereas “Sexy Sadie” is a bitter, vindictive song about punishment, “Happiness Is a Warm Gun” (1968) describes sexuality in more reciprocal terms. The song is full of sexual innuendo and little perversions, which is probably why the song has interested several critics and it has inspired them to analyse the song’s text rather meticulously. Another thing “Happiness Is a Warm Gun” has in common with “Sexy Sadie” is the reference to violence. The title alone hints at violent behaviour – a gun can only be warm right after it has been fired – and the writer is also using terminology related to firearms to describe sexual situations: the line “when I hold you in my arms/ and I feel my finger on your trigger” is a fairly obvious sexual reference. Also, as Riley argues, “Sex is inextricably bound up with the violent phallus of the gun” (269). Thus, if we regard the gun mentioned in the song as a phallic symbol, a warm gun would consequently hint at a post-coital state, which makes the song’s title ultimately sexual

¹⁴ Dr Timothy Leary was an American author and a professor of Psychology who was dismissed by Harvard University in 1963. Leary was an early advocate of LSD experimentation and he coined the phrase “Turn on, tune in, drop out” (*Psychedelic 60s: Timothy Leary*). “Leary and his academic coverts led the awakening interest in drug-inspired literature [...] and of drug-sanctioning Eastern religions” (Norman 284).

and hedonistic; the writer equals happiness with sexual acts as he states that happiness is a warm gun, happiness is the feeling attained through sex.

Interestingly enough, Tori Amos, the American singer, pianist, and songwriter, recorded her own version of the song in 2001 without rewriting the lyrics but still creating a female character for the song, performing the song from a female perspective¹⁵. While Amos deliberately changed the song's focus to evoke a discussion about the legality of firearms, it remains fascinating that a song that seems so phallogentric, sexual and masculine has actually induced a female interpretation. Moreover, "Happiness Is a Warm Gun" truly is an interesting mix of male domination and women's liberation. The song starts with the line "She's not a girl who misses much", and while the line remains ambiguous enough to either refer to the act of longing for someone or to a woman who is ubiquitous and thus never fails to notice the actions going on around her, the image the line creates is that of an independent, fearless woman. The next line that follows hints at her sexual sovereignty and autoeroticism: "She's well aquatinted with the touch of the velvet hand/like a lizard on a window pane". The writer goes on to employ religious terminology in the song's bridge: "Mother Superior jump the gun". The line is repeated over and over again and it seems like this is the part the writer wants to accentuate. The line "combines an incorruptible fantasy status for a female with a munitions cliché – the nun has jumped the gun, fallen from grace" (Riley, 269). This seems to be a deliberate juxtaposition with the virtuous Mother Superior and the sexual girl who does not miss much and whose power is both admired and exploited ("when I hold you in my arms/.../ I know nobody can do me no harm) at the same time. The writer ends the song by stating that "Happiness is a warm gun, mama", and once again the mentions of "Mother

¹⁵ Amos's album *Strange Little Girls* features songs written by male songwriters but reinterpreted from a female point of view. In addition to "Happiness Is a Warm Gun", the album includes songs such as "Heart of Gold", originally by Neil Young, and "Enjoy the Silence" by Depeche Mode (ToriAmos.com).

Superior” and “mama” seem to be allusions to Lennon’s lover Yoko Ono¹⁶, and John Lennon himself admitted this connection (Quantick 97). The song’s violence and sexually charged message, however, seems to be in par with Sheila Whiteley’s argument about the counter culture’s reactionary attitudes towards women: “Discussions about ‘sexual’ liberation were framed in terms saturated with male assumptions, including the very male fantasy of ‘dope, rock, and fucking in the streets’” (2000b, 10). Whiteley’s statement about the aforementioned scenario being the ultimate male fantasy aside, her argument seems to be fairly factual and accurate. Nevertheless, even though by equalling happiness with sexual encounters the writer is reinforcing the stereotype about men being more sexually driven than women, he is also praising the woman’s authority and independence, which in turn can be seen as a fairly contemporary and feminist approach. The line “she’s not a girl who misses much” alone is almost antonymous to the band’s early songs in which the girl is sitting at home waiting for her man while watching the world go by.

While love and sexuality often overlap, sexuality and ethereal women may seem worlds apart. After all, the word ethereal alone evokes images of purity and divinity. Nonetheless, while for example Mother Nature is often thought of as celestial figure, she is still the emblem of fertility, and what is fertility if not sexual? Subsequently, in the next chapter the focus will be on the ethereal women in the Beatles’ song lyrics.

4.3 Etherealised Women

Sheila Whiteley writes:

Songs such as “Julia” and “Hey Jude”, among others, are notable for the way in which they inscribe women within an ideal frame of reference. They draw on

¹⁶ Lennon’s nickname for Yoko Ono was “mother” (Quantick 97).

traditional definitions of femininity. [...] To be fulfilled, according to patriarchy, is to marry, to have children, and to remain faithful, that is, to be a good, reliable mother and wife (2006, 66).

Whiteley insists on drawing a parallel between what she calls patriarchy and the Beatles' songs such as "Julia" and "Hey Jude", the former being a John Lennon song dedicated to his mother, and the latter being Paul McCartney's attempt to encourage and console John's son Julian at the time of the little boy's parents' divorce (Turner 147-8). Whiteley argues that the mother in "Hey Jude" is portrayed as comforter, as suggested by the lines, "Let her into your heart/ then you can start to make it better", whereas in "Julia" "Lennon's late mother is magically transformed via her 'floating hair and seashell eyes' to the rank of goddess" (2006, 66). It remains unclear what it is about the song "Hey Jude" that causes Whiteley to make the assumption that the narrator is a woman or a mother. The lyrics do not support this nor do they deny it, but it is interesting how Whiteley seems to see maternal figures in places where they simply are not present. It seems equally plausible to simply assume that it is the writer who is telling Julian or "Jude" to "take a sad song and make it better". Therefore, it seems pointless to discuss "Hey Jude" in greater detail since the lyrics offer nothing to support Whiteley's assumption about the song being a story about comforting mothers.

The second song Whiteley mentioned in her argument is more straightforward, making Whiteley's views easier to agree with. The song "Julia" creates an image of a heavenly woman whose "hair of floating sky is shimmering/ glimmering/ in the sun". It would be easy to assume that the writer, in this case Lennon, is praising his mother while also asking for her permission to fall in love with another woman as suggested by the line "ocean child calls me". "Julia" is similar to Paul McCartney's 1969 song "Let It Be" in many ways. Both songs are dedicated to deceased mothers and in both texts the writer is seeking either comfort or advice. Both mother figures are also almost celestial beings with supreme knowledge and wisdom, and this is especially evident in McCartney's "Let It Be":

When I find myself in times of trouble
 Mother Mary comes to me
 Speaking words of wisdom
 Let it be.

It seems mothers are described as fantasy figures as opposed to being described as human. Whiteley points out how “the symbolic representation of Julia makes her unattainable and [...] she is denied the self that is human. She is a symbol of beauty and is given no other value than to be beautiful” (2000, 9). Whiteley disregards the notion that the writer is still asking Julia for guidance and the song is almost like a conversation taking place between the writer and his mother (or a mother figure). The writer is telling her how this new woman, ocean child, is calling him and he has to follow, or “sing the song of love”. The ambiguity of the song creates a parallel between the mother and the lover. Which one of them is the one being referred to in the lines about her hair glimmering in the sun? Is it Julia or the other woman who has a “windy smile”? This ambiguity is naturally highlighted by the fact that John Lennon did in fact call Yoko Ono “mother”, and Yoko’s name translates to “ocean child”. Is the writer addressing the mother or the lover? This does not seem to be as relevant a question as one might think since it is obvious both women are described as ethereal beings – not individuals – in the song. These women are “etherealised within a dreamlike and unreal world, detached from reality, defined by the male as fantasy escape from reality” (Whiteley, 2000a, 9). On the other hand, as Riley writes, the writer in “Julia” is singing to Julia but “he’s addressing more the idea of who she is and what her loss still stirs inside him” (274), and in this sense it is plausible to assume that these fantasies of Julia unite with images of the new woman, the new lover, and that neither women are viewed from the realms of realism; he [the writer] is connecting his yearning for the mother who died on him with the woman who now holds his heart” (Riley 275). Hence, instead of being an image of a woman, “Julia’ illuminates the mystery that the image of a woman represents for John” (Riley 275). “The

imagery is that of the imagined woman, [...] drawing on the symbolic associations of the lunar goddess who stands at both ends of the silver cord of life, presiding over fertility, birth, and death” (Whiteley 2000a, 9).

These ethereal women in both “Julia” and “Let It Be” are subjected to both positive and negative appraisal. The women are adored, admired, and even praised; they are comforters and advisors. On the other hand, these women are mere dehumanised visions and fantasies. By raising a woman into the position of a celestial being the writer is removing her from everyday life and denying her the right to participate. Furthermore, by calling the woman “mother Mary” in “Let It Be”, the songwriter is obviously creating a parallel between this woman and the Marys mentioned in the Bible¹⁷, thereby enhancing the image of saint-like beings. Sheila Whiteley compares the women mentioned in these two songs to the story of Eleanor Rigby, and she argues that where Eleanor is “marked by the anonymity of her existence, her unfilled status as a woman, and her nameless grave, the others have succeeded in fulfilling their feminine destinies” (2006, 66). Whiteley seems to be hinting at stereotypical images according to which women’s destiny is to start a family and look after both her husband and children while ignoring her own needs and desires. In this sense Whiteley seems to be correct in assuming that the women in “Julia” and “Let It Be” have in fact fulfilled their destinies, but it is important to remember that Whiteley is actually disagreeing and disapproving of the patriarchy according which women need to marry, have children, and to remain faithful in order to be fulfilled (2006, 66). That being said, Whiteley’s argument about the women in the aforementioned songs having managed to “fulfil their destinies” seems to be above all sardonic.

When talking about mothers it is almost impossible to avoid a discussion about Mother Nature, the ultimate allegorical mother figure. The Beatles’ “Mother Nature’s Son” was

¹⁷ Mary of Magdalene, a sinful woman who was also Jesus’ adherent and Mary, the mother of Jesus Christ (often referred to as the (Blessed) Virgin Mary in Catholicism) (BBC Religion & Ethics).

released in 1968 and it is a song Tim Riley quite fittingly refers to as “a plastic pastoral” (279). The song itself does not address women in a direct manner, but the use of the pronoun “she” in one of the verses does capture one’s interest:

Sit beside a mountain stream--see her waters rise
Listen to the pretty sound of music as she flies.

Whereas in “Let It Be” and “Julia” the women were almost depersonalised or at least dehumanised, in “Mother Nature’s Son” we have the exact opposite; an inanimate fantasy figure is made human – and a woman – by the use of personal pronouns. Nevertheless, Mother Nature is also undoubtedly an insubstantial figure even though she is defined only by her role as a mother, no matter how emblematic this relationship between her and the son – the writer – may be. “Mother Nature’s Son” is on the Beatles’ self-titled 1968 double album, and it is notable that the Beatles were not the only ones approaching nature through their song lyrics. In the years 1968 and 1969 alone the world was rewarded with song such as “What a Wonderful World” by Louis Armstrong, “Going up the Country” by Canned Heat, and, of course, the hippie anthem from the musical *Hair*, “Aquarius/Let the Sunshine in” by Fifth Dimension (McDonald 341-9). McDonald writes,

[T]he burgeoning rock idiom (then referred to as progressive or underground music) was [...] strongly back-to-nature in spirit. Indeed so conscious were contemporary rock musicians of this symbolic division between the two genres that their mandatory retreats for the purpose of ‘getting our heads together in the country’ became a standing joke among the urban cynics of the UK music press (244).

“Mother Nature’s Son” was among the large number of songs the Beatles wrote while in India¹⁸ and the tranquil atmosphere and beautiful nature of Rishikesh had undoubtedly a large role in how the song’s text was shaped. Mother Nature is described as feminine and powerful,

¹⁸ In February – April 1968, the Beatles spent time in Rishikesh, India, meditating and writing songs. Most of the songs on the *White Album* were composed around this time. The Beatles were accompanied by not only their wives and girlfriends, but by fellow musicians such as the band Love, Mike Love from the Beach Boys, and the English folk singer Donovan, whose influence can be heard on the Beatles’ album, especially in John Lennon’s guitar playing (Quantick 21).

and it appears that whereas real women are perhaps too intimidating or simply too real to be addressed without removing part of their humanity by placing them on a pedestal, fantasy figures are possibly too indistinct to grasp without being personalised first. Also, women have almost always been compared to nature, probably due to women's biological ability to give birth and breastfeed, and in "Mother Nature's Son" this position is reversed so that it is now nature that is being compared to a woman.

When discussing the 1960s it is almost impossible to avoid the topic of psychedelia. Bands such as Jefferson Airplane, The Doors, and Pink Floyd often employed surrealistic imagery in their shows to highlight the similar ambiance they were creating with their music and lyrics. For example, Jefferson Airplane's "White Rabbit" (1967) was a combination of Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (1865) and descriptions of an acid trip. The songs' drug references were obscure enough to pass public scrutiny. One of the best examples of the Beatles' fascination with psychedelia along with their 1967 Lewis Carroll pastiche "I Am the Walrus"¹⁹ is the song "Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds" (1967). The song was banned by the BBC because the song's initials spelled LSD, which is a hallucinogenic drug connected with psychedelia and the hippie movement. John Lennon never admitted to having planned the connection between the song and narcotic substances; he insisted the title was from taken from what [his son] Julian had said about his painting²⁰ (Turner 123). Lucy is only mentioned in the song's chorus, that is, the line "Lucy in the sky with diamonds". However, throughout the verses the writer is referring to a nameless woman whose characteristics are more psychedelic than natural:

Somebody calls you

¹⁹ The song was inspired by Carroll's tale of "The Walrus and the Carpenter" from *Through the Looking-Glass* (1871) (Marshall 17). "I Am the Walrus" also resembles Jefferson Airplane's "The White Rabbit".

²⁰ John Lennon denied the rumours that the song had been intended as a reference to LSD. He claimed the song had been inspired by a painting his son had done at school. "'What's that?' John had asked, and Julian had replied, 'It's Lucy in the sky with diamonds'" (Norman 300).

You answer quite slowly
 A girl with kaleidoscope eyes,
 and

Look for the girl with the sun in her eyes
 and she's gone.

The girl returns one last time in the last verse before the final mention in the song's repeated chorus: "Suddenly someone is there at the turnstile/ the girl with kaleidoscope eyes". The obvious interpretation is that Lucy and the girl who the writer only refers to as 'her' are one and the same person. This seems highly probable since the similarities between the descriptions of the girl and Lucy are too similar to refer to two different characters. Lucy, like Julia and Mary mentioned and discussed above, is a fantasy figure and therefore unreal, inhuman. Also, just like the women discussed earlier in this chapter Lucy seems to possess supernatural abilities; she is pictured as being able to fly, phrases such as "the girl with sun in her eyes" suggest that she is in touch with nature or perhaps even more than that, like Heinonen suggests: "[T]he image of Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds" also seems to be based on the archetype of God or Saviour, as is evident from Lennon's Playboy interview:

There was also the image of the female who would someday come save me – a girl with kaleidoscope eyes who would come out of the sky. It turned out to be Yoko, though I had not met Yoko yet. So maybe it should be 'Yoko in the sky with diamonds' (Sheff 1981, 105).

The God – or Saviour –like character of the heroine in the song has also been reinforced by McCartney (2000, 252). In this sense the woman, or girl, is once again the powerful figure even though she is not part of everyday life because she is raised above everyone and denied the privilege of being human. This is perhaps accomplished because a powerful woman, even a powerful fantasy figure, would be too frightening if she were more human and more ordinary. Furthermore, by creating this idealised image of a woman the writer is transferring his own ideas of women into the way she is represented in the song. The woman, Lucy, is

overseeing the world; she appears out of nowhere and her eyes are like kaleidoscopes²¹; she creates beauty and symmetry with her mirror-like eyes. Northcutt suggests “Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds” is actually a song about alienation and loss: “This song, mostly of Lennon’s doing allows the crowd to intrude, but only for a visionary moment. Here, the ability to imagine sets him apart from the crowd. The sudden arrival of a saviour with kaleidoscope eyes is a personal cry for help, lost in the images of the spectacle. [...] But the song is ultimately fantasy” (142). Hence, Lucy is nothing more (and nothing less) than another fantasy figure, a woman whose strength and wisdom are acceptable and admired because of her otherwise ethereal qualities.

It seems that ethereal women are not actually women in the Beatles’ song lyrics; they are more like illusions, combinations of spirituality, autobiographical life events, and fantasies. They are both strong and wise and yet they lack humanity. These women are mother figures and the relationships in the songs are therefore mostly asexual. These ethereal women are advisors and comforters, and this is a startling contrast with the sexual women discussed in the previous chapter. According to Sheila Whiteley’s theory, these women are also the most feminine ones in the Beatles’ songs since they have managed to fulfill their conventional feminine destinies. One would think that songs in which women are praised and worshipped might strengthen women’s position in society, but on the contrary it appears that when women are praised, they are also removed from the mundane. So, are women really only destined for the roles of love interests, sexual conquests or celestial mentors? Sheila Whiteley argues that the Beatles’ early material “inscribed women within the patriarchy”, the emphasis shifts and the band’s later material is conservative, “albeit tempered by the occasional cynicism” (1996, 67). This may be the case, but some of the Beatles’ songs written during the

²¹ A kaleidoscope is an instrument, or a toy, which contains fractions of for example coloured glass and reflecting surfaces or mirrors. The changes of position inside the tube create a variety of beautiful colours and symmetrical forms (Webster Dictionary [Internet] Available from <<http://www.webster-dictionary.net/definition/kaleidoscope>> [Accessed 10th April 2008])

late 1960s do offer challenging views to the patriarchy and conservatism Whiteley mentions. “Lovely Rita” is far from conventional. “Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds” is hardly patriarchal. There may not be a large number of such examples among the Beatles’ song catalogue but by ignoring them altogether one is quite frankly disregarding one of the most fascinating and enlightening parts of the Beatles’ appeal and legacy.

5. Conclusion

In this thesis my aim has been to analyse the Beatles' song lyrics because even though the band has been the subject of numerous studies and the lives of the four Liverpoolian band members have been extremely well documented, there are surprisingly few studies on the actual texts the Beatles wrote. This may be because the band's image and the mass hysteria that followed their success have perhaps overshadowed the band's music, at least as far as song lyrics are concerned. Thus, the research questions for this thesis were:

1. How are women represented in the Beatles song lyrics? What kind of roles are women given?
2. How can these representations be analysed? Is there something radical or challenging about them?
3. Why are women seen as the more appropriate sex to hide behind when discussing disconcerting subjects?

The main focus of this thesis has been on three of the Beatles' albums: *Revolver*, *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band*, and *The Beatles* or the *White Album*. These albums were chosen because they offer a large variety of interesting song lyrics, partly due to the Beatles' decision to stop touring which then enabled the four band members to focus on songwriting as their primary channel through which they could address and discuss topics they thought were relevant and of interest. In addition to the songs on the aforementioned albums I have also chosen a few selected songs from the Beatles' other material, including some examples of the band member's solo material to further illustrate the discussion. Some background information on the band members' personal lives has also been included since it enables the reader to understand the Beatles' songwriting style and technique while also helping with the songs' analysis. The relationships John Lennon and Paul McCartney had with their mothers, for example, seemed to have an immense effect on their songwriting; mothers are frequently mentioned or referred to, sometimes even directly addressed in the band's texts. Also, songs

or texts do not exist in a void, which is why the cultural environment of the 1960s has also been discussed in this thesis. According to Pickering and Green,

The point of conceiving popular song as existing within particular socio-historical cultural contexts is it not so much that the text will inform us about its lived contexts nor that its contexts will inform us about the lived text, but rather that, as well as this, a song text, its immediate situational contexts in which it happens [...] all interconnect with each other (176).

As I mentioned in the introduction of the thesis, the Beatles' earlier song lyrics seem to have either been mainly ignored as pointless or at least relatively simple, whereas the band's later material has been largely dismissed as drug-induced drivel. Then again, their songs were the band's primary channels through which they connected with their audience; it seems obvious that the Beatles' song lyrics offered people something they could easily relate to. In this thesis, however, the main focus has not been merely on the Beatles' song lyrics but on the way the band addressed women in their texts; that is, how women are represented in the Beatles' song lyrics. This particular topic was chosen primarily because the Beatles songs were mainly directed at teenage girls: "By design, a significant portion of their songs dealt with relationships between the sexes, and most involved direct address of their young female audience" (Frontani 50). However, the Beatles' decision to stop touring in 1966 gave the band more time to focus on their individual interests, and the band's increasing productivity resulted in songs that were fundamentally less naïve and more artistic even though love did remain the most prominent subject in the band's work. Thus, also the way women were both depicted and addressed in the songs grew more versatile.

The social and cultural changes during the 1960s have been extremely well documented. The Women's Liberation Movement, the war in Vietnam, the Summer of Love of 1967 and the so-called Swinging London in England are some of the most well known concepts and images of the decade, and the Beatles' success and career is intertwined with all of the factors mentioned above. The band's position – largely created by the media – as spokespeople for

their generation not only meant that the four members of the band could address larger audiences but that a large number of people actually paid attention to what they had to say. This is exactly why the Beatles' song lyrics are such an interesting treasure chest.

In the analysis part of this thesis the Beatles' song lyrics revealed numerous interesting details about the band's attitude towards women. It seems the Beatles saw women either as potential love interests, objects of lust, or maternal and nurturing figures, as is the case in songs such as "Julia" and "Let It Be". The band also used women as cover-ups for otherwise perhaps shameful or unorthodox behaviour; the songs "Sexy Sadie" and "She Said She Said" serve as prime examples. Musicologist Sheila Whiteley argues that the Beatles' material remained fairly conservative even though traces of cynicism can be detected in the song lyrics of that time period (2006, 67). However, as I hope to have pointed out, some of the band's songs do lend themselves to fascinating and challenging readings. For example, "She's Leaving Home" is hardly a conservative song; on the contrary, the song makes a statement that supports the counter culture's views and challenges the more traditional values. Also, even when compared with their peers – that is, other rock groups of the 1960s – the Beatles could even be described as relatively radical and at least just as contemporary as bands that were viewed as less polished and less mainstream. Even the sexual references in the Beatles' songs were fairly radical in the sense that their sporadic straightforwardness was at times more obvious and exciting than for example the Rolling Stones' more sexually direct and therefore less hidden message and image. Also, even though I have employed some of the categories invented and used by Sheila Whiteley, I have hoped to challenge her views by offering different or alternative readings of the Beatles' songs. For example, Whiteley claims the Beatles' music remained fairly traditional and even patriarchal throughout the band's career even though some of the band's songs clearly disagree with this notion.

In conclusion, it seems the Beatles' song lyrics can at times seem extremely traditional while, on the other hand, some of the texts seem exceedingly challenging and innovative, especially for the 1960s cultural environment. The band's media attention meant they were able to reach large masses with their music; the Beatles were extremely influential: "The Beatles, along with other British groups – the Rolling Stones, the Animals – revitalized rock by closely imitating (and frankly crediting) such Negro originators of the style as Muddy Waters, Chuck Berry and Bo Diddley. Soon the Negro 'soul sound' surged into the white mass market. [...] As the Beatles moved on, absorbing and extending Bob Dylan's folk-rock hybrid and sowing innovations of their own, they were like musical Johnny Appleseeds; wherever they went, they left flourishing fields for other groups to cultivate" (Porterfield 107).

The Beatles are undisputedly one of the most popular music groups of the 20th century and their songs are widely known and loved. Their song lyrics, however, have been almost secondary to their media presence and their personal lives, not to mention their effect on popular culture in general. Since the main focus of this thesis has only been on three of the Beatles' albums, it would be illogical to say that the different aspects and themes the Beatles' song lyrics contain have now been fully discussed and analysed. Nevertheless, hopefully this thesis will at least inspire people to stop and take a closer look at the words of the songs they hear so frequently on the radio. On a personal level, I have found this project both fulfilling and intellectually stimulating. I am almost tempted to say that I have now come to the end of one road, yet I feel this is only the beginning; the Beatles' are a wonderful object of study and it is tremendously rewarding – albeit also challenging – to write to a genuinely interested audience, that is, the Beatles' countless fans. Nevertheless, the Beatles' songs deserve more attention, and the purpose of this thesis has been to divert the attention back to the main thing: the music.

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Appendix – the Beatles' song lyrics

Revolver (1966)

“Eleanor Rigby”

Ah, look at all the lonely people.
Ah, look at all the lonely people.

Eleanor Rigby picks up the rice in the church where a wedding has been,
lives in a dream.

Waits at the window, wearing a face she keeps in a jar by the door.
Who is it for?

All the lonely people, where do they all come from?
All the lonely people, where do they all belong?

Father McKenzie, writing the words of a sermon that no one will hear,
no one comes near.
Look at him working, darning his socks in the night when there's nobody there.
What does he care?

All the lonely people, where do they all come from?
All the lonely people, where do they all belong?

Ah, look at all the lonely people.
Ah, look at all the lonely people.

Eleanor Rigby died in the church and was buried along with her name.
Nobody came.
Father McKenzie, wiping the dirt from his hands as he walks from the grave.
No one was saved.

All the lonely people, where do they all come from?
All the lonely people, where do they all belong?

“Love You To”

Each day just goes so fast,
I turn around, it's past.
You don't get time to hang a sign on me.

Love me while you can,
before I'm a dead old man.

A lifetime is so short,
a new one can't be bought,
but what you've got means such a lot to me.

Make love all day long,
 Make love singing songs.

There's people standing round
 who'll screw you in the ground.
 They'll fill you in with their sins,
 you'll see.

I'll make love to you,
 if you want me to.

“Here, There and Everywhere”

To lead a better life, I need my love to be here.

Here, making each day of the year,
 changing my life with a wave of her hand.
 Nobody can deny that there's something there.

There, running my hands through her hair,
 both of us thinking how good it can be.
 Someone is speaking, but she doesn't know he's there.

I want her everywhere, and if she's beside me I know I need never care,
 but to love her is to meet her everywhere.

Knowing that love is to share,
 each one believing that love never dies,
 watching her eyes and hoping I'm always there.

To be there, and everywhere.
 Here, there and everywhere.

“She Said She Said”

She said, “I know what it's like to be dead,
 I know what it is to be sad”,
 and she's making me feel like I've never been born.

I said, “Who put all those things in your head,
 things that make feel that I'm mad,
 and you're making me feel like I've never been born”.

She said, “You don't understand what I said”,
 I said, “No, no, no, you're wrong. When I was a boy,
 everything was right, everything was right”.

I said, "Even though you know what you know,
I know that I'm ready to leave,
'cause you're making me feel like I've never been born".

She said, "You don't understand what I said",
I said, "No, no, no, you're wrong. When I was a boy
everything was right, everything was right".
I said, "Even though you know what you know,
I know that I'm ready to leave,
'cause you're making me feel like I've never been born".

She said, "I know what it's like to be dead,
I know what it is to be sad,
I know what it's like to be dead".

"Good Day Sunshine"

Good day sunshine, good day sunshine.
Good day sunshine.

I need to laugh, and when the sun is out,
I've got something I can laugh about.
I feel good in a special way,
I'm in love, and it's sunny day.

Good day sunshine, good day sunshine.
Good day sunshine.

We take a walk, the sun is shining down,
burns my feet as they touch the ground.

Good day sunshine, good day sunshine.
Good day sunshine.

And then we lie beneath a shady tree,
I love her and she's loving me.
She feels good, she knows she's looking fine.
I'm so proud to know that she is mine.

Good day sunshine, good day sunshine.
Good day sunshine.

"And Your Bird Can Sing"

You tell that you've everything you want,
and your bird can sing,

but you don't get me,
you don't get me.

You say you've seen seven wonders,
and your bird is green,
but you can't see me,
you can't see me.

When your prized possessions start to wear you down,
look in my direction.
I'll be round, I'll be round.

When your bird is broken
will it bring you down?
You may be awoken,
I'll be round, I'll be round.

Tell me that you've heard every sound there is,
and your bird can swing,
but you can't hear me,
you can't hear me.

“For No One”

Your day breaks, your mind aches,
You find that all her words of kindness linger on
when she no longer needs you.

She wakes up, she makes up,
she takes her time and doesn't feel she has to hurry;
she no longer needs you.

And in her eyes you see nothing,
no sign of love behind the tears cried for no one.
A love that should have lasted years.

You want her, you need her,
and yet you don't believe her,
when she says her love is dead,
you think she needs you.

And in her eyes you see nothing,
no sign of love behind the tears cried for no one.
A love that should have lasted years.

You stay home, she goes out.
She says that long ago she knew someone but now
he's gone, she doesn't need him.

Your day breaks, your mind aches,
there will be times when all the things she said will fill her head,
you won't forget her.

And in her eyes you see nothing,
no sign of love behind the tears cried for no one.
A love that should have lasted years.

“I Want to Tell You”

I want to tell you,
my head is filled with things to say.
When you're here
all those words they seem to slip away.

When I get near you,
the games begin to drag me down.
It's all right;
I'll make you maybe next time around.

But if I seem to act unkind,
it's only me, it's not my mind
that is confusing things.

I want to tell you,
I feel hung up and I don't know why,
I don't mind, I could wait for ever,
I've got time.

Sometimes I wish I knew you well,
then I could speak my mind and tell you.
Maybe you'd understand.

I want to tell you,
I feel hung up and I don't know why.
I don't mind. I could wait forever.
I've got time. I've got time.

“Got to Get You into My Life”

I was alone, I took a ride,
I didn't know what I would find there.
Another road where maybe I
could see another kind of mind there.

Ooh, then I suddenly see you.

Ooh, did I tell you I need you
every single day of my life?

You didn't run, you didn't lie,
you knew I wanted just to hold you.
And had you gone, you knew in time
we'd meet again for I had told you.

Ooh, you were meant to be near me,
ooh and I want you to hear me
say we'll be together every day.

Got to get you into my life.

What can I do, what can I be?
When I'm with you I want to stay there.
If I'm true I'll never leave,
and if I do I know the way there.

Ooh, then I suddenly see you.
Ooh, did I tell you I need you
every single day of my life?

Got to get you into my life.
Got to get you into my life.

Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band (1967)

“Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds”

Picture yourself in boat on a river,
with tangerine trees and marmalade skies.
Somebody calls you, you answer quite slowly,
a girl with kaleidoscope eyes.

Cellophane flowers of yellow and green,
towering over your head.
Look for the girl with the sun in her eyes,
and she's gone.

Lucy in the sky with diamonds.

Follow her down to a bridge by a fountain
where rocking horse people eat marshmallow pies.
Everyone smiles as you drift past the flowers
that grow so incredibly high.

Newspaper taxis appear on the shore,

waiting to take you away.
 Climb in the back with your head in the clouds,
 and you're gone.

Lucy in the sky with diamonds.

Picture yourself on a train in a station
 with plasticine porters with looking glass ties.
 Suddenly someone is there at the turnstile;
 the girl with kaleidoscope eyes.

Lucy in the sky with diamonds.

“Getting Better”

It's getting better all the time.

I used to get mad at my school,
 the teachers who taught me weren't cool.
 Holding me down, turning me round,
 filling me up with your rules.

I've got to admit it's getting better,
 a little better all the time.
 I have to admit it's getting better,
 it's getting better since you've been mine.

Me used to be angry young man,
 me hiding me head in the sand.
 You gave me the word,
 I finally heard,
 I'm doing the best that I can.

I admit it's getting better,
 a little better all the time.
 Yes, I admit it's getting better,
 it's getting better since you've been mine.

I used to be cruel to my woman,
 I beat her and kept her apart from the
 things that she loved.

Man I was mean but I'm changing my scene
 and I'm doing the best that I can.
 I admit it's getting better,
 a little better all the time.
 Yes, I admit it's getting better,
 it's getting better since you've been mine.

Getting so much better all the time.

“She’s Leaving Home”

Wednesday morning and five o'clock as the day begins,
silently closing her bedroom door,
leaving the note that she hoped would say more.
She goes downstairs to the kitchen
clutching her handkerchief.
Quietly turning the backdoor key,
stepping outside she is free.

She (We gave her most of our lives)
is leaving (Sacrificed most of our lives)
home (We gave her everything money could buy)
She's leaving home after living alone
for so many years.

Father snores as his wife gets into her dressing gown.
Picks up the letter that's lying there,
standing alone at the top of stairs.
She breaks down and cries to her husband,
”Daddy our baby's gone.
Why would she treat us so thoughtlessly?
How could she do this to me?”

She (We never thought of ourselves)
is leaving (Never a thought for ourselves)
home (We struggled hard all our lives to get by)
She's leaving home after living alone
for so many years.

Friday morning at nine o'clock she is far away
waiting to keep the appointment she made,
meeting a man from the motor trade.

She (What did we do that was wrong)
is having (We didn't know it was wrong)
fun (Fun is the one thing that money can't buy).
Something inside that was always denied
for so many years.

She's leaving home, bye, bye.

“When I’m Sixty-Four”

When I get older, losing my hair,
 many years from now.
 Will you still be sending me a Valentine,
 Birthday greetings, bottle of wine?

If I'd been out till quarter to three
 Would you lock the door?
 Will you still need me, will you still feed me,
 when I'm sixty-four?

You'll be older too,
 and if you say the word,
 I could stay with you.

I could be handy, mending a fuse
 when your lights have gone.
 You can knit a sweater by the fireside.
 Sunday mornings go for a ride.

Doing the garden, digging the weeds,
 who could ask for more?
 Will you still need me, will you still feed me,
 When I'm sixty-four?

Every summer we can rent a cottage
 in the Isle of Wight, if it's not too dear.
 We shall scrimp and save.

Grandchildren on your knee:
 Vera, Chuck, and Dave.

Send me a postcard, drop me a line,
 stating point of view.
 Indicate precisely what you mean to say.
 Yours sincerely, wasting away.

Give me your answer, fill in a form.
 Mine for evermore.
 Will you still need me, will you still feed me
 When I'm sixty-four?

“Lovely Rita”

Lovely Rita, meter maid.
 Lovely Rita, meter maid.
 .
 Lovely Rita, meter maid.

Nothing can come between us,
when it gets dark I tow your heart away.

Standing by a parking meter,
when I caught a glimpse of Rita,
filling in a ticket in her little white book.

In her cap she looked much older,
and the bag across her shoulder
made her look like a military man.

Lovely Rita, meter maid,
may I inquire discreetly;
when you are free
to take some tea with me?

Took her out and tried to win her.
Had a laugh and over dinner
told her I would really like to see her again.

Got the bill and Rita paid it.
Took her home and nearly made it,
Sitting on a sofa with a sister or two.

Oh, lovely Rita, meter maid,
where would I be without you.
Give us a wink and make me think of you.

The Beatles (The White Album) (1968)

“Back in the USSR”

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 I dreadful flight.

I'm back in the USSR.
You don't know how lucky you lucky you are, boy.
Back in the USSR.

Been away so long I hardly knew the place.
Gee, it's good to be back home.
Leave it 'til tomorrow to unpack my case.
Honey, disconnect the phone.

I'm back in the USSR.
You don't know how lucky you are, boy.

Back in the US, back in the US, back in the USSR.

Well, the Ukraine girls really knock me out,
they leave the West behind.
And Moscow girls make me sing and shout,
that Georgia's always on my mind.

I'm back in the USSR.
You don't know how lucky you are, boys.
Back in the USSR.

Show me round your snow peaked mountains way down south,
take me to your daddy's farm.
Let me hear your balalaikas ringing out,
come and keep your comrade warm.

I'm back in the USSR.
You don't know how lucky you are, boys.
Back in the USSR.

“Happiness Is a Warm Gun”

She's not a girl who misses much.
Do do do do do do do do, oh yeah.

She's well acquainted with the touch of the velvet hand,
like a lizard on a windowpane.
The man in the crowd with the multicoloured mirrors
on his hobnail boots
Lying with his eyes while his hands are busy
working overtime.
A soap impression of his wife which he ate
And donated to the National Trust.

I need a fix 'cause I'm going down.
Down to the bits that I left uptown.
I need a fix 'cause I'm going down.

Mother Superior jump the gun.
Mother Superior jump the gun.
Mother Superior jump the gun.
Mother Superior jump the gun.

Happiness is a warm gun.
Happiness is a warm gun.

When I hold you in my arms
and I feel my finger on your trigger

I know no one can do me no harm
because happiness is a warm gun.

Yes it is.

“Martha My Dear”

Martha my dear, though I spend my days in conversation,
please, remember me.
Martha my love, don't forget me,
Martha my dear.

Hold your head up you silly girl, look what you've done.
When you find yourself in the thick of it,
help yourself to a bit of what is all around you.
Silly girl.

Take a good look around you,
take a good look; you're bound to see
that you and me were meant to be with each other.
Silly girl.

Hold your hand out you silly girl, see what you've done.
When you find yourself in the thick of it,
help yourself to a bit of what is all around you.
Silly girl.

Martha my dear, you have always been my inspiration
please, be good to me.
Martha my love, don't forget me,
Martha my dear.

“Don't Pass Me By”

I listen for your footsteps coming up the drive.
Listen for your footsteps but they don't arrive.
Waiting for your knock, dear, on my old front door.
I don't hear it,
does it mean you don't love me anymore?

I hear the clock a-ticking on the mantelshelf.
See the hands a-moving but I'm by myself.
I wonder where you are tonight and why I'm by myself.
I don't see you,
does it mean you don't love me anymore?

Sorry that I doubted you, I was so unfair.
You were in a car crash and you lost your hair.

You said that you would be late about an hour or two,
 I said that's all right,
 I'm waiting here, just waiting to hear from you.

Don't pass me by, don't make me cry, don't make me blue,
 'cause you know darling I love only you.
 You'll never know it hurt me so.
 How I hate to see you go.
 Don't pass me by, don't make me cry.

“Why Don't We Do It In The Road?”

Why don't we do it in the road?
 No one will be watching us.
 Why don't we do it in the road?

“I Will”

Who knows how long I've loved you.
 You know I love you still.
 Will I wait a lonely lifetime,
 if you want me to, I will.

For if I ever saw you,
 I didn't catch your name
 but it never really mattered,
 I will always feel the same.

Love you forever and forever,
 love you with all my heart.
 Love you whenever we're together,
 love you when we're apart.

And when at last I find you
 your song will fill the air.
 Sing it so loud I can hear you.
 Make it easy to be near you.
 For the things you do endear you to me.
 Oh, you know I will.
 I will.

“Julia”

Half of what I say is meaningless
 but I say it just to reach you, Julia.

Julia, Julia, ocean child, calls me.
So I sing a song of love, Julia.

Julia, seashell eyes, windy smile, calls me.
So I sing a song of love, Julia.

Her hair of floating sky is shimmering,
glimmering in the sun.

Julia, Julia, morning moon, touch me.
So I sing a song of love, Julia.

When I cannot sing my heart
I can only speak my mind, Julia.

Julia, sleeping sand, silent cloud, touch me.
So I sing a song of love, Julia.

Hum hum hum hum, calls me
So I sing a song of love for Julia, Julia, Julia.

“Yer Blues”

Yes I'm lonely wanna die.
If I ain't dead already.
Ooh girl you know the reason why.

In the morning wanna die.
In the evening wanna die.
If I ain't dead already.
Ooh girl, you know the reason why.

My mother was of the sky.
My father was of the earth.
But I am of the universe
and you know what it's worth.

I'm lonely wanna die.
If I ain't dead already.
Ooh girl, you know the reason why.

The eagle picks my eye.
The worm he licks my bone.
I feel so suicidal,
just like Dylan's Mr. Jones.

Lonely, wanna die.
If I ain't dead already.

Ooh girl, you know the reason why.

Black cloud crossed my mind.
 Blue mist round my soul.
 Feel so suicidal
 Even hate my rock and roll.

Wanna die, yeah, wanna die.
 If I ain't dead already.
 Ooh girl, you know the reason why.

“Mother Nature’s Son”

Born a poor young country boy,
 Mother Nature's son.
 All day long I'm sitting singing songs for everyone.

Sit beside a mountain stream, see her waters rise.
 Listen to the pretty sound of music as she flies.

Find me in my field of grass
 Mother Nature's son.
 Swaying daisies sing a lazy song beneath the sun.

Mother Nature's son.

“Sexy Sadie”

Sexy Sadie, what have you done.
 You made a fool of everyone.
 You made a fool of everyone.
 Sexy Sadie, oh, what have you done.

Sexy Sadie, you broke the rules.
 You laid it down for all to see.
 You laid it down for all to see.
 Sexy Sadie, oh, you broke the rules.

One sunny day the world was waiting for a lover.
 She came along to turn on everyone.
 Sexy Sadie, she’s the greatest of them all.

Sexy Sadie, how did you know
 the world was waiting just for you?
 The world was waiting just for you.
 Sexy Sadie, oh, how did you know?

Sexy Sadie, you'll get yours yet.

However big you think you are.
 However big you think you are.
 Sexy Sadie, oh, you'll get yours yet.

We gave her everything we owned just to sit at her table.
 Just a smile would lighten everything.
 Sexy Sadie, she's the latest and the greatest of them all.

“Long Long Long”

It's been a long, long, long time.
 How could I ever have lost you
 when I loved you?
 It took a long, long, long time.
 Now I'm so happy I found you.
 How I love you.

So many years I was searching,
 so many tears I was wasting,
 oh, oh.

Now I can see you, be you.
 How can I ever misplace you?
 How I want you.
 Oh, I love you.
 You know that I need you.
 Oh, I love you.

“Honey Pie”

She was a working girl
 North of England way.
 Now she's hit the big time
 in the USA.
 And if she could only hear me,
 this is what I'd say.

Honey pie, you are making me crazy.
 I'm in love but I'm lazy,
 so won't you please come home.

Oh, honey pie, my position is tragic,
 Come and show me the magic
 of your Hollywood song.

You became a legend of the silver screen
 and now the thought of meeting you
 makes me weak in the knee.

Oh, honey pie, you are driving me frantic,
sail across the Atlantic
to be where you belong.

Will the wind that blew her boat
across the sea
kindly send her sailing back to me.

Honey pie, you are making me crazy.
I'm in love but I'm lazy.
So won't you please come home?

“Cry Baby Cry”

Cry baby cry,
make your mother sigh.
She's old enough to know better.

The king of Marigold was in the kitchen
cooking breakfast for the queen.
The queen was in the parlour
Playing piano for the children of the king.

Cry baby cry,
make your mother sigh.
She's old enough to know better
so cry baby cry.

The king was in the garden
picking flowers for a friend who came to play.
The queen was in the playroom
painting pictures for the children's holiday.

Cry baby cry,
make your mother sigh.
She's old enough to know better
so cry baby cry.

The duchess of Kirkcaldy, always smiling
and arriving late for tea.
The duke was having problems
with the message at the local bird and bee.

Cry baby cry,
make your mother sigh.
She's old enough to know better
so cry baby cry.

At twelve o'clock a meeting round the table
for a séance in the dark.
With voices out of nowhere
put on especially by the children for a lark.

Cry baby cry,
make your mother sigh.
She's old enough to know better
so cry baby cry, cry, cry, cry, baby.

Make your mother sigh.
She's old enough to know better
so cry baby cry.