

The Act You've Known For All These Years:  
The representation of Englishness in  
*Sgt Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band*



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Roos Oude Kempers  
S4687256  
Bachelor Thesis  
Prof. Dr. Odin Dekkers  
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## Abstract

In 1967, the Beatles released their best-selling album *Sgt Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band*. The Beatles have been studied in relation to many different topics, but research on the Beatles in relation to national identity or Englishness is scarce. This thesis aims to study the Beatles in relation to Englishness. Building on existing work on national identity, Englishness and Britishness, this research examines how Englishness is represented in *Sgt Peppers' Lonely Hearts Club Band*. Based on literature on Englishness and Britishness, four themes of Englishness have been set out with which contemporary reviews, present-day reviews and the lyrics of the album were analysed: nostalgia and the past; humour; rural vs. urban; and manners and traditions. Analysis demonstrates that the contemporary reviewers recognised more characteristics of Englishness, compared to the present-day reviews. Furthermore, analysis of four of the album's songs demonstrates that characteristics of Englishness are most present in the lyrics cf. the reviews. The outcome of this research shows that Englishness is represented in *Sgt Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band* through different themes of Englishness and that Englishness is definitely present, but not dominant.

**Keywords:** The Beatles, *Sgt Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band*, Englishness, Britishness, United Kingdom, sixties, popular music, popular culture

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## Let me introduce to you...

### Introduction

*“Sgt Pepper is one of the most important steps in our career. It had to be just right.”*

– John Lennon<sup>1</sup>

From 1960 onwards, the Beatles gained considerable performing experience playing in the small clubs of Liverpool and Hamburg. They played over 250 nights in Hamburg, usually over four hours per night,<sup>2</sup> aiming to make it in the music industry. Despite their ferocious determination, the band were rejected by a series of record labels until June 1962 when they were signed by EMI. They scored their first number one hit in 1963 and soon gained popularity in Europe. It was not long before they were flying to New York on 7 February 1964 to make their famous appearance on the Ed Sullivan Show two days later. This marked the beginning of their worldwide success. Everyone adored the mop-topped Englishmen singing about love and holding hands, but through the years the fab four evolved into moustache-wearing, grown-up-fathers-to-be. Whether they were more popular than Jesus is debatable,<sup>3</sup> but it is certain that the crazy fans that came with their enormous success were partly the reason that the Beatles ceased touring in favour of retreating to the studio to continue making, perhaps more grown-up, music.

In 1967, the Beatles went off the beaten track and continued on unexplored terrain with the production of *Sgt Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band (Sgt Pepper)*. In an interview with MOJO, Paul McCartney remembers that “before Sgt. Pepper became an icon, there was a period of critical bemusement, “How dare [the] Beatles band go all weird?”<sup>4</sup> Fortunately they embraced the risk and saw an opportunity to produce music that in those days could not be performed live. Never before had the Beatles and George Martin taken such a long time to produce an album.<sup>5</sup> They experimented with different genres and styles, sang about a great variety of topics and the album is known to be a predecessor to concept albums. The album

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<sup>1</sup> Brian Southall, *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band, The Album, The Beatles and the World in 1967* (London: Carlton Books, 2017), 65.

<sup>2</sup> Forrest Wickman, “The Beatles Say Goodbye to Hamburg,” *Slate*, 17 December 2012, <https://slate.com/culture/2012/12/the-beatles-live-in-hamburg-50-years-ago-the-beatles-played-their-final-shows-at-the-star-club-at-germany-audio.html?via=gdpr-consent>.

<sup>3</sup> During an interview in 1966, John Lennon had argued that the Beatles were “more popular than Jesus”. According to *Rolling Stone*, “the quote had set off an international furor that threatened the Beatles’ future – and their lives.” Jordan Runtag, “When John Lennon’s ‘More Popular Than Jesus Controversy Turned Ugly,” *Rolling Stone*, 29 July 2016, <https://www.rollingstone.com/music/music-features/when-john-lennons-more-popular-than-jesus-controversy-turned-ugly-106430/>

<sup>4</sup> “Paul McCartney Sgt. Pepper Exclusive: “It Was A Risk!,” *The Beatles*, accessed 9 June 2019, <https://www.thebeatles.com/news/paul-mccartney-sgt-pepper-exclusive-%E2%80%99Cit-was-risk%E2%80%99D>.

<sup>5</sup> “50 jaar oud: Sgt. Pepper’s Lonely Hearts Club Band van The Beatles,” *Classic Rock Mag*, 1 June 2017, <https://classicrockmag.nl/classicrockfacts/50-jaar-sgt-peppers/>.

has been hailed “the most celebrated album ever recorded,”<sup>6</sup> and condemned “mishmash of rubbish,”<sup>7</sup> yet half a century later it is still a popular topic of (scholarly) discussion. Released on 26 May 1967, “Sgt Pepper’s Lonely Hearts Club Band, the band’s eighth album became the soundtrack to the ‘summer of love’ but its appeal is timeless.”<sup>8</sup>

Like the Beatles themselves, the album is often considered very British or English. By way of illustration, John Lennon is number eight on the list of greatest Britons,<sup>9</sup> just one below Queen Elizabeth I. According to *Daily Mail*, the Beatles belong to the top 20 British icons,<sup>10</sup> and in *The Guardian*’s list of Britain’s favourite 100 songs, the Beatles appear no less than seven times.<sup>11</sup> With regards to the album, in 2004, *Observer Music Monthly* published a list of the greatest British albums, and *Sgt Pepper* claimed fifth place. In 2012, record shop HMV conducted a poll to find out the best British albums of the last 60 years, in which *Sgt Pepper* was ranked third. A 2016 list of best-selling British albums similarly awarded *Sgt Pepper* third place.<sup>12</sup> On 13 October 2018, *Official Charts* revealed that *Sgt Pepper* is the UK’s biggest studio album of all time.<sup>13</sup>

These rankings confirm that the Beatles are widely associated with Britain and suggest that there is a relationship between Britishness/Englishness and the album. Although many scholars have analysed *Sgt Pepper* from different perspectives, it is difficult to find research on how Englishness or Britishness is represented in the album. The Beatles’ use of the studio to produce *Sgt Pepper* has been researched<sup>14</sup> (Matthieu Thibault), and the same can be said for the whole story behind one verse of ‘A Day in the Life’<sup>15</sup> (Paul Howard). Furthermore, the

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<sup>6</sup> Sacha Pfeiffer, “A Soundtrack To The Summer Of Love, 50 Years Later,” *Wbur*, 31 May 2017, <https://www.wbur.org/onpoint/2017/05/31/soundtrack-summer-of-love>.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> “Sgt. Pepper’s Lonely Hearts Club Band,” *The Beatles*, Accessed 9 June 2019, <https://www.thebeatles.com/album/sgt-peppers-lonely-hearts-club-band>.

<sup>9</sup> “100 Greatest Britons (BBC Poll, 2002),” *Geni*, Accessed 9 June 2019, <https://www.geni.com/projects/100-Greatest-Britons-BBC-Poll-2002/15375>.

<sup>10</sup> Valerie Edwards, “A roast dinner, stripping off at the first sight of sun and apologising all the time: survey reveals the most British things EVER,” 5 January 2016, <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3385495/A-roast-dinner-stripping-sight-sun-apologising-time-survey-reveals-British-things-EVER.html>.

<sup>11</sup> “Full list: Britain’s favourite 100 songs,” *The Guardian*, 8 May 2002, <https://www.theguardian.com/uk/2002/may/08/2>.

<sup>12</sup> “NME’s 100 Greatest British Albums Of All-Time Revisited – Best British Album Revealed,” *Gooddeed*, 13 March 2018, <https://gooddeedseats.com/blog/nmes-100-greatest-british-albums-of-all-time-revisited-best-british-album-revealed/>.

<sup>13</sup> Associated Press, “Beatles’ ‘Sgt. Pepper’ named most popular British album ever made,” 13 October 2018, <https://wjla.com/news/entertainment/getting-better-beatles-sgt-pepper-named-most-popular-british-album-ever-made>

<sup>14</sup> Matthieu Thibault, “The Use of the Recording Studio in Sgt. Pepper’s Lonely Hearts Club Band,” *Editions Mélanie Seteun* 12, no 2 (2016): 242, [https://www.cairn-int.info/article-E\\_VOLU\\_122\\_0129--the-use-of-the-recording-studio-in.htm](https://www.cairn-int.info/article-E_VOLU_122_0129--the-use-of-the-recording-studio-in.htm)

<sup>15</sup> Paul Howard, *I Read The News Today Oh Boy*, (London: Picador, 2016).

album in relation to the world of 1967 has been investigated by Brian Southall.<sup>16</sup> These are a few examples of the album being explored from scholarly perspective and yet Englishness or Britishness in relation to *Sgt Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band* appears to be an unpopular topic of research. This raises the question: how is it possible that *Sgt Pepper* and the Beatles have always been considered as this British cultural phenomenon, but research on Britishness or Englishness in *Sgt Pepper* is almost non-existent? I decided to combine *Sgt Pepper's* popularity as an album with the British/English status that both the album as well as the Beatles have, to find out how the band have communicated Britishness/Englishness through their 1967 album *Sgt Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band*. The research question posed in this thesis will be: How is Englishness represented in *Sgt Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band*?

To answer this question, it is important to realise that despite the fact that Englishness and Britishness are two words used interchangeably, they both have different definitions. In order to clear up potential conceptual confusion, Chapter 1 will explore how exactly the two notions differ from each other. The same chapter will also offer a brief explanation regarding my choice to research Englishness in *Sgt Pepper*, rather than Britishness. It is vital to choose either one of these terms because they are different and should be treated as such. Chapter 2 will look at the reception of the album to discover whether reviewers noticed particularly English aspects in the album. In Chapter 3, I will examine the lyrics of *Sgt Pepper* to identify how Englishness is represented in the songs. The lines will be analysed as well as elements of the story which accompanies them, from this I will conclude what aspects of Englishness are present and how. In the concluding chapter, the research question will be answered.

The expected outcome of this study is that the reviewers will not intentionally identify characteristics of Englishness in their reviews, but it will be present because they point out parts of the songs or genres that can be considered 'English'. Furthermore I expect to find a difference in how Englishness is present in the 1967 reviews and present-day reviews. I expect that the present-day reviews will discuss more aspects or characteristics of Englishness because they are looking back on it with a different (cultural) mindset than that there was in 1967. Lastly I expect to find many characteristics in the songs when I will analyse the album's lyrics. Altogether I expect that Englishness is rather present in the album, but not dominant.

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<sup>16</sup> Southall, *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band, The Album, The Beatles and the World in 1967*.

## Mind the Gap

### Chapter 1: Theoretical Framework

*“Being English used to be easy. They were one of the most easily identified peoples on earth, recognized by their language, their manners, their clothes, and the fact that they drank tea by the bucketload.”*

- Jeremy Paxman, 1998<sup>17</sup>

Terms such as Englishness, Britishness or English and British identity are often used interchangeably despite the fact that there is quite a difference between what is English and what is British. Before analysing how Englishness is represented in *Sgt Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band*, this chapter will investigate how Englishness and Britishness are different from each other, after which I will explain why I opted to research Englishness in *Sgt Pepper*.

#### 1.1 Englishness versus Britishness

Looking up both terms in the Oxford English Dictionary, two definitions are given that are rather similar:

*Englishness*: “the quality of being English or of having characteristics regarded as typically English.”<sup>18</sup>

*Britishness*: “the quality of being British or of having characteristics regarded as typically British.”<sup>19</sup>

Using both definitions, it would be fair to conclude that both terms are related to identity. Identity refers to social categories, people's sense of who they are and how people who share one identity distinguish themselves from others.<sup>20</sup> Both definitions refer to a state of *being* part of that nationality, or *having* characteristics belonging to that nationality. Thus, someone that has the characteristics regarded as belonging to Englishness for example, would identify with the English national identity. The definitions may also be used to conclude that the terms are referring to two different (national) identities. However, when talking about national

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<sup>17</sup> Jeremy Paxman, *The English*, (London: Penguin Books, 1998), vii.

<sup>18</sup> Oxford Dictionaries s.v. “Englishness,” accessed 29 March, 2019, <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/englishness>

<sup>19</sup> Oxford Dictionaries s.v. “Britishness,” accessed 29 March, 2019, <https://www.lexico.com/en/definition/britishness>

<sup>20</sup> Dr Daniel Eltringham, “Week 2: England or Britain?” (lecture, University of Sheffield, England, 12 October 2018).



identity in the UK, Englishness and Britishness are often used interchangeably. Even though all inhabitants of the UK are issued a British passport, not everyone attaches value to their British identity or wants to be seen as predominantly British. Some citizens would easily call themselves British, others find it difficult calling themselves this umbrella term.<sup>21</sup> The UK consists of four constituent countries and some people experience a much stronger identification with the specific country in which they live or were raised. For instance, a person from Wales might feel much more Welsh than British. The separate countries of the UK are proud of having their own culture, and especially the Welsh and Scottish emphasize this idea in their expressions of pride with regards to their individual cultures.<sup>22</sup> The English view themselves more as part of a general culture, or under the umbrella of Britishness: from all of the countries belonging to the United Kingdom, “England (...) was most strongly associated with Britishness. In fact, [...] many participants switched seamlessly and unconsciously between ‘Britishness’ and ‘Englishness’.”<sup>23</sup>

However, there has been a recent increase of English people identifying with being specifically English, in the same way the Scots, the Welsh and the Irish do with their own nationalities, rather than with British. People who are not proud of their British title consider British(ness) as a blank term, or very much linked with the British imperial past and colonialism,<sup>24</sup> a past not everyone wants to be associated with. This shows that the first notable difference between Englishness and Britishness, is one relating to the identity people feel they have. To them, Englishness and Britishness are not the same concept, which some people fail to observe. It is true that on the most basic and objective level ‘British’ is just a general term that encompasses all of the four constituent countries’ nationalities, but more often than not, people have a different definition in mind; one that relates to an empire where the sun never sets and to domestic slavery. Furthermore, the UK has been dealing with several political issues over the past decades. There was devolution of power, the UK was plunged into the EU and they are currently dealing with Brexit. This results in dissension among people as to what it is to be English and British, and people tend to attach more value to either one of the terms.

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<sup>21</sup> ETHNOS Research and Consultancy, *Citizenship and Belonging: what is Britishness?* Commission for Racial Equality, (London: November 2005): 22.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> Bridget Byrne, “England – Whose England? Narratives of Nostalgia, Emptiness and Evasion in Imaginations of National Identity,” *The Sociological Review* 55, no. 3 (2007): 523, DOI: <https://doi-org.ru.idm.oclc.org/10.1111/j.1467-954X.2007.00720.x>.

As a result of the current political climate, Englishness versus Britishness has recently become a popular topic of research. Scholars try to find out what exactly makes Englishness different from Britishness (Langlands, 1999), they research national identity in relation to the European Union (Meek, 2018), or, for example, they place English identity in the context of pop culture (Featherstone 2009). A frequently reached conclusion is that “if we stripped Britishness back to its central values and institutions [...] we should expect to discover predominantly **English** historical myths, values and institutions at the core of **Britishness**.”<sup>25</sup> The main reason why the two concepts –Britishness and Englishness – have been used inconsistently is because at first sight they do not seem to differ greatly. Since the Brexit, the distinction between British and English has become increasingly clearer. Interestingly, there is a correlation between leave-voters and how strongly they identify with being English as opposed to British: “those in England who have a strong or exclusively English identity are significantly more likely to think EU membership is a bad thing and to want to leave the EU.”<sup>26</sup> This shows changing views towards Britain. Englishness has gradually become regarded as independent from Britishness. It therefore makes good sense to continue to distinguish the English cultural identity from the British throughout this thesis. In order to do so, it is key to delve into the differences between the two terms.

## 1.2 The aspects

This paragraph will look at Britishness and Englishness separately, in order to conclude the different characteristics which distinguish each from the other. Subsequently, I can set out criteria which can be used to analyse *Sgt Pepper’s Lonely Hearts Club Band*.

### 1.2.1 Inclusiveness

Starting off with Britishness, pluralism and inclusiveness are two terms that are frequently mentioned. Often, ethnic minorities identify with being British rather than with being English. This is because they view the English identity as something encompassing white people exclusively.<sup>27</sup> They feel that the British identity is more inclusive of other cultural and national backgrounds. However, some people from ethnic minorities do not see the ethnic

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<sup>25</sup> Rebecca Langlands. “Britishness or Englishness? The historical problem of national identity in Britain\*,” *Nations and Nationalism* 5, no. 1 (1999): 56-57, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1354-5078.1999.00053.x>. (italics and bold are original).

<sup>26</sup> Ailsa Henderson et al. “England, Englishness and Brexit,” *The Political Quarterly* 87, no. 1 (2016): 195, <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/epdf/10.1111/1467-923X.12262>.

<sup>27</sup> ETHNOS Research and Consultancy, *Citizenship and Belonging: what is Britishness?*, 7.

diversity of Britain in such a positive light, and “found it hard to divorce Britishness from its colonial history.”<sup>28</sup> Nevertheless, Britain is certainly associated with multiculturalism. Especially since the post-war Brexit climate, some people would argue that multiculturalism undermined British culture.<sup>29</sup> On the other hand, there are people that state “British culture wouldn’t exist without multiculturalism.”<sup>30</sup> Overall it seems that compared to Englishness, Britishness is the more inclusive term because of its association with multiculturalism.

### 1.2.2 Cool Britannia

Another aspect of Britishness is related to “Cool Britannia”. The phrase refers to an increasing pride in the British culture and specifically the renaissance of British culture during the mid 1990s. Tony Blair became prime minister and “his speeches [were] laced with buzz terms like “the young country” and “New Britain”, and he describes himself as part of “a new generation breaking through.””<sup>31</sup> The image of ‘Cool Britannia’ encompassed modern art, music and fashion, three areas which were all thriving during that decade. Typical ‘Britpop’ bands as Blur, Oasis, and Pulp delivered a new sound to the music scene and soon Britain regained her image of ‘cool’. Unfortunately, the reputation that the phrase implies was not sustained after 2000. Its use is now mostly ironic or the subject of mockery. David Cameron attempted to recreate ‘Cool Britannia’ during his time as Prime Minister. A campaign revolving around Great Britain was launched to “inspire the world and encourage people to visit [the UK]”<sup>32</sup>: the GREAT Britain campaign. At last, ‘Cool Britannia’ seems to have left a mark on people, and still today Britain is regarded as “cool and dynamic.”<sup>33</sup>

### 1.2.3 Humour

With regards to Englishness, Anthony Easthope states the following in his book *Englishness and National Culture*: “To judge from the English newspapers there is firm agreement on two things: to be properly English you must have a sense of humour; but comedy (wit, humour,

<sup>28</sup> ETHNOS Research and Consultancy, *Citizenship and Belonging: what is Britishness?*, 7.

<sup>29</sup> Robert Booth, “Four in 10 Think Multiculturalism Undermines British Culture Immigration,” *The Guardian*, 17 September 2018, <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2018/sep/17/four-in-10-people-think-multiculturalism-undermines-british-culture-immigration>.

<sup>30</sup> Lucy Pasha Robinson, “British Culture Wouldn’t Exist Without Multiculturalism - It’s Time To Take This Tired Debate Off The Table,” *Huffingtonpost*, 17 September 2018, [https://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/entry/multiculturalism-immigration\\_uk\\_5b9fbdeee4b046313fbd728f](https://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/entry/multiculturalism-immigration_uk_5b9fbdeee4b046313fbd728f)

<sup>31</sup> David Kamp, “London is Swinging! Again!,” *Vanity Fair*, March 1997, <https://www.vanityfair.com/magazine/1997/03/london199703>.

<sup>32</sup> “Bringing the Best of Britain to the World,” *Great Britain Campaign*, <http://www.greatbritaincampaign.com/#!/about>.

<sup>33</sup> ETHNOS Research and Consultancy, *Citizenship and Belonging: what is Britishness?*, 33.

joking) is absolutely beyond analysis and understanding and should remain so.”<sup>34</sup> Humour is quintessentially English and they are famous for their sense of humour which “is defined mainly by three things: the use of irony; the exposure of self-deception; [and] a tendency towards fantasy and excess.”<sup>35</sup> The English sense of humour might not be something non-English people understand, but it is known to be *their* typical sense of humour. It is “felt to be very close to the heartlands of Englishness, and this is implied by any number of jokes about the humourlessness of other nationalities.”<sup>36</sup> Therefore, it is fair to argue that their sense of humour is something belonging to the English identity.

#### *1.2.4 Rural and Urban*

Secondly, the rural and urban in England are two contributors to English identity. These are topics that are often expressed through poetry and other literary genres. William Blake’s ‘And did those feet in ancient time’, for instance, describes England as this beautiful land with “pleasant pastures” and “mountains green.”<sup>37</sup> Another example is Wordsworth’s ‘I wandered Lonely as a Cloud’, about someone who encounters a field of daffodils and feels the bliss English nature brings with it. Similarly there are many other poems awarding England the status of “green and pleasant land”. The performance of Blake’s ‘And did those feet in ancient time’ by a youth choir accompanied by a dramatic portrayal of English rural life at the 2012 London Olympic Games’ opening ceremony, illustrates how the love of English countryside continues into the present day and remains part of their identity. The urban is also English. Instead of the calm countryside, the urban describes the complicated city life with almost no nature. It is often seen as boring, mundane and sometimes even ugly. For example, in ‘And did those feet in ancient time’, Blake opposes the green and pleasant land by mentioning “dark satanic mills.”<sup>38</sup> With this he rejects the urbanity that came with the industrial revolution. Blake also criticised the urban in his poem ‘London’: “I wander thro’ each charter’d street, near where the charter’d Thames does flow.”<sup>39</sup> Today, the English landscape is still used in songs and literature, e.g. in ‘Castle on the Hill’<sup>40</sup> by singer-songwriter Ed Sheeran, which reached number two in the UK.<sup>41</sup> In the song, Sheeran reminisces about his

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<sup>34</sup> Easthope, 159.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., 163.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., 160.

<sup>37</sup> William Blake, “And did those feet in ancient time,” (1804).

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

<sup>39</sup> William Blake, “London,” (1794).

<sup>40</sup> Ed Sheeran, “Castle on the Hill”, released 6 January 2017, track 2 on ÷.

<sup>41</sup> Mark Savage, “Ed Sheeran Takes Top Two Chart Positions”, *BBC*, 13 January 2017.  
<https://www.bbc.com/news/entertainment-arts-38609564>

childhood and in each verse he recalls memories and describes the countryside. He sings about the “sweet perfume of the mountain grass”, the “roaring fields” and “old country lanes.”<sup>42</sup> In light of this, it appears that the ‘sense of place’ is important to the English identity and has always been featured prominently in literature.

#### 1.2.5 English Manners and Traditions

In his song *Englishman in New York*, Sting quotes William of Wykeham, singing “manner’s maketh a man.”<sup>43</sup> The quote is usually interpreted as a reference to etiquette and morals and it is likely that this was indeed the intended meaning. It is essentially a reference to knowledge of social customs and treating people with kindness and respect. This is an apt example of this theme since the English are famed for their politeness and etiquette. Children are taught to mind their Please and Thank Yous, and expressing gratitude and apologies are also important aspects of the English discourse. Rudeness is frowned upon and privacy is highly regarded. Besides these typical manners, the English are known for their traditions varying from Morris dancing, eating fish and chips, double-decker buses, their music and literary canon.

#### 1.2.6 Nostalgia

Lastly, nostalgia is an important contributor to Englishness, especially since post-war Britain after the collapse of the empire and political decline. As a result, much of the cultural economy has been built around nostalgia: television shows about midwives, books that take place in the Victorian era, and in music.<sup>44</sup> According to Dominic Sandbrook, the longing for the past gathered strength towards the end of the sixties and instead of “throwing themselves into the pursuit of futuristic modernity, artists and designers began to turn back towards Britain’s imperial past and ‘self-conscious historical revivalism’.”<sup>45</sup>

There are many more aspects that define and distinguish Britishness and Englishness, but these are too numerous and pervasive to take up in detail here. With regard to analysing *Sgt Pepper’s Lonely Hearts Club Band*, I have opted to explore the representation of Englishness in the album. After all, the Beatles are a band from England and it seems that Englishness is increasingly being viewed as a separate cultural identity. Therefore, it is of great interest to

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<sup>42</sup> Ed Sheeran, *Castle on the Hill*.

<sup>43</sup> Sting, “Englishman in New York”, released February 1988, track 3 on ...*Nothing like the Sun*. Air Studios.

<sup>44</sup> Ian Jack, “A generation hooked on nostalgia is trying to return Britain to the past,” 1 April 2017, <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2017/apr/01/generation-nostalgia-britain-past-brexite-immigration>.

<sup>45</sup> Dominic Sandbrook, *White Heat*, (London: Abacus, 2007), 147.

find out whether English characteristics can be found in the album. The themes I will look at are: nostalgia and the past, humour, the urban and rural, and English manners and traditions.

## **“I Read The News Today, Oh Boy...”<sup>46</sup>**

### **Chapter 2: Reception**

*“You’ll have to give this one time to grow on you. I think you will find it’s worth it.”*

- Peter Clayton, 1967<sup>47</sup>

Prior to the release of *Sgt Pepper’s Lonely Hearts Club Band*, many people thought that The Beatles were over as a group. The Beatles were tired of moving from one hotel room to the next and the fans had grown so loud they drowned out the music itself. George Harrison remembers: “We got in a rut, going round the world. It was a different audience each day, but we were doing the same things. Nobody could hear. It was just a bloody big row.”<sup>48</sup> It came as a shock to the public that the Beatles’ concert at Candlestick Park 29<sup>th</sup> August 1966 was their last. Back home in England, the band did nothing to confirm or deny their intentions to retire from touring. This eventually resulted in rumours of the band breaking up altogether.<sup>49</sup> The Beatles did not break up, instead they took a break and parted ways for a little while until November 1966, when they went back to the Abbey Road Studios, ready to leave their touring days behind and start devoting their time to working in the studio.

### **“You just wait”<sup>50</sup>**

Over the course of five months they worked on what ended up being one of their most sophisticated, experimental albums. The rumours about the band splitting were only fuelled by the album taking so long to produce. So, after Epstein’s and EMI’s insistence, the Beatles released a single: the double A-side ‘Strawberry Fields Forever/Penny Lane’. George Martin, their producer, considered the songs on this single a “small collection of gems”, “a double-punch that could not fail.”<sup>51</sup> However, in comparison to the Beatles’ previous achievements, it did fail. It failed to reach number one on the UK charts, halting the Beatles’ streak at twelve straight number one singles.<sup>52</sup> Although the Beatles themselves did not think it a cause for

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<sup>46</sup> The Beatles, “A Day in the Life,” recorded January 1967, track 13 on *Sgt Pepper’s Lonely Hearts Club Band*, EMI Studios, Vinyl LP.

<sup>47</sup> Peter Clayton, “Sgt Pepper’s Lonely Hearts Club Band (original Gramophone review from 1967),” *Gramophone*, 1 June 2017, <https://www.gramophone.co.uk/feature/sgt-peppers-lonely-hearts-club-band-gramophone-review-1967>.

<sup>48</sup> George Harrison, quoted in Southall, 44.

<sup>49</sup> Oliver Julien, *Sgt Pepper and the Beatles, It Was Forty Years Ago Today*, (Hampshire: Ashgate publishing, 2008): 1.

<sup>50</sup> Paul McCartney quoted in Laura Ulster, “Sgt. Pepper’ 50th Anniversary: The Making of a Rock Classic,” *Biography*, 30 May 2017, <https://www.biography.com/news/sgt-pepper-50th-anniversary-beatles-facts>.

<sup>51</sup> George Martin quoted in Bob Spltz, *The Beatles: The biography* (London: Little, Brown and Company, 2005).

<sup>52</sup> Bob Spltz, *The Beatles: The biography* (London: Little, Brown and Company, 2005).

concern, the press began wondering: was the group on its last legs? Paul McCartney remembers: “Music papers started to slag us off (...) because [Sgt Pepper] took five months to record, and I remember the great glee seeing in one of the papers how the Beatles have dried up (...) and I was sitting rubbing my hands, saying “You just wait.”<sup>53</sup>

The album came out on 26 May 1967, five days before its official release date. The album had sold over 250,000 copies in the UK, it was on the charts for 149 weeks (almost three years), and spent 27 weeks on number one on the UK charts.<sup>54</sup> In the US, the album spent fifteen weeks on number one.<sup>55</sup> Globally, *Sgt Pepper* had sold over 2.5 million copies within three months, more than any of the previous Beatles albums.<sup>56</sup>

## 2.1 Contemporary reviews

These promising numbers suggest the album was a success in every aspect, however there is a contrast between the success in sales and the views of contemporary critics. Richard Goldstein, critic for *The New York Times* wrote that the “overall effect is busy, hip and cluttered”, and that “like an over-attended child “Sergeant Pepper” is spoiled.”<sup>57</sup> He even went as far as to use Lennon’s lyrics against the album, saying that “there is nothing beautiful about *Sergeant Pepper*. Nothing is real and nothing to get hung about.” He did not seem impressed at all with the album, but made an exception for the final track ‘A Day in the Life’. He described the song as a “deadly earnest excursion in emotive music with a chilling lyric.” Goldstein is infamous for his criticism and McCartney remembers this particular review,<sup>58</sup> but he was not the only one with this opinion. Others admitted that the album is not perfect, and

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<sup>53</sup> Paul McCartney quoted in Laura Ulster, “Sgt. Pepper’ 50th Anniversary: The Making of a Rock Classic”, *Biography*, 30 May 2017, retrieved from <https://www.biography.com/news/sgt-pepper-50th-anniversary-beatles-facts>.

<sup>54</sup> “The Beatles: every album and single, with its chart position,” *The Guardian*, 2016, <https://www.theguardian.com/news/datablog/2009/sep/09/beatles-albums-singles-music-rock-band>.

<sup>55</sup> Keith Caulfield, “Most weeks at No.1 on Billboard 200 By Artist,” *Billboard*, 12 November 2015, <https://www.billboard.com/articles/events/greatest-of-all-time/6760786/beatles-most-weeks-at-no-1-on-billboard-200-artist>.

<sup>56</sup> Southall, 74.

<sup>57</sup> Richard Goldstein, “From the Archives: The Original Review of ‘Sgt. Pepper’s Lonely Hearts Club Band’,” *The New York Times*, 1 June 2017, <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/06/01/arts/music/archives-beatles-sgt-peppers-lonely-hearts-club-band-review.html>.

*NB: to prevent the footnote section from becoming flooded by the same references, I will reference every reviewer once. It can be assumed that the rest of the quotes come from the same reviewer until a quote from a different reviewer is introduced.*

<sup>58</sup> Geoff Edgers, “Meet the critic who panned ‘Sgt. Pepper’ then discovered his speaker was busted. He’s still not sorry,” *The Washington Post*, 11 May 2017, [https://www.washingtonpost.com/entertainment/meet-the-critic-who-panned-sgt-peppers-then-discovered-his-speaker-was-busted-hes-still-not-sorry/2017/05/11/aa0058b4-2f44-11e7-9dec-764dc781686f\\_story.html?noredirect=on&utm\\_term=.7db889f9a9b2](https://www.washingtonpost.com/entertainment/meet-the-critic-who-panned-sgt-peppers-then-discovered-his-speaker-was-busted-hes-still-not-sorry/2017/05/11/aa0058b4-2f44-11e7-9dec-764dc781686f_story.html?noredirect=on&utm_term=.7db889f9a9b2).



shared Goldstein's opinion to a lesser degree. One of the first things George Melly wrote about the album was that "on the musical side there is a tendency to overdo the curry powder."<sup>59</sup> This is a particular reference to George Harrison's 'Within You Without You', inspired by his special affinity with Indian culture and music. However, Melly was friendly about the other songs. Edward Greenfield wrote a review for *The Guardian* and stated: "they are beginning to forget their home base, their ability to write tunes."<sup>60</sup> He argued that the songs were based on good ideas and would have had potential: "but almost all wear thin before the end." In a piece written around 1968, English rock journalist Nick Cohn expressed his opinion that the album "wasn't fast, flash, sexual, loud, vulgar, monstrous or violent. It made no myths.(...) "[it] was flawed but, finally, it worked."<sup>61</sup>

Of course, the album also enjoyed critical acclaim. The opening sentence of Peter Clayton's review for *Gramophone* reads: "Sgt Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band is, like nearly everything the Beatles do, bizarre, wonderful, perverse, beautiful, exciting, provocative, exasperating, compassionate and mocking."<sup>62</sup> He especially enjoyed the simpler tracks and harboured no dislike against the songs in general. Jack Kroll heard the critics that "berated the Beatles for the supersophisticated electronic technology on this record,"<sup>63</sup> but noted that it is no use clinging to the old days of the Mersey sound. Kroll compares the lyrics of 'A Day in The Life' to T.S Eliot and argues that the track is "The Beatles' *Waste Land*, a superb achievement of their brilliant and startlingly effective popular art." Lastly, in a piece for *Times*, William Mann positively commented on a few of the album's songs. He refers to musical comedy and ironical tone in 'She's Leaving Home', and described 'When I'm Sixty-Four' as a "neat vaudeville number."<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> George Melly, "The new Beatles' Dazzler," *Observer* June 1967, retrieved from Richard Nelsson, "The new Beatles' dazzler: Sgt Pepper reviewed - archive, 1967," *The Guardian*, 1 June 2017, <https://www.theguardian.com/music/from-the-archive-blog/2017/jun/01/beatles-sgt-pepper-review-1967>.

<sup>60</sup> Edward Greenfield, "Gramophone Records" *Guardian*, June 1967, retrieved from Richard Nelsson, "The new Beatles' dazzler: Sgt Pepper reviewed - archive, 1967," *The Guardian*, 1 June 2017, <https://www.theguardian.com/music/from-the-archive-blog/2017/jun/01/beatles-sgt-pepper-review-1967>.

<sup>61</sup> Nik Cohn, "What It Was Like to Watch the Beatles Become the Beatles—Nik Cohn Remembers," *The Daily Beast*, 9 February 2017, <https://www.thedailybeast.com/what-it-was-like-to-watch-the-beatles-become-the-beatlesnik-cohn-remembers>.

<sup>62</sup> Peter Clayton, "Sgt Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band (original Gramophone review from 1967)," *Gramophone*, 1 June 2017, <https://www.gramophone.co.uk/feature/sgt-peppers-lonely-hearts-club-band-gramophone-review-1967>.

<sup>63</sup> Jack Kroll, "Sgt. Pepper's' Turns 50: The Newsweek Review Of The Beatles' Masterpiece," 1 June 2017, <https://www.newsweek.com/sgt-peppers-turns-50-newsweek-review-beatles-masterpiece-619008>.

<sup>64</sup> William Mann, "The Beatles revive hopes of progress in pop music," *Times*, 29 May 1967.

### 2.1.1 Englishness in Contemporary Reviews

In order to discover how Englishness is represented in the album, I will analyse what contemporary reviewers said about the album in terms of Englishness. These reviewers wrote for different popular press and I retrieved reviews from three British and three American papers and magazines: *The Guardian*, *Times*, *Gramophone UK*, *The New York Times*, *Newsweek*, and *Daily Beast*. I pursue the themes set out in Chapter 1: nostalgia and the past, humour, the rural versus the urban, and English manners and traditions. Figure 1 will show how often has been referred to these themes per review.

#### *Nostalgia and the Past*

Five reviews refer to the past or nostalgia. Goldstein commented that the mood of the album is “mellow, even nostalgic.” He also argued that the mood of ‘A Day in the Life’ is not whimsical nostalgia but irony. Aside from these two comments, there have been no direct references to nostalgia in the reviews. However, indirect implications about the past have been made. Goldstein, Melly, Kroll and Mann mentioned ‘vaudeville’, better known in the UK as ‘music hall’, a genre of theatre that was popular in the early twentieth century. Clayton made a comment which also may be interpreted as a reference to the past: he speaks of “fairground noises” and “handbill language” in ‘Being for the Benefit of Mr Kite!’. His mention of George Formby, an English comedian who became famous in the first half of the twentieth century, further implies a reference to the past. Lastly, Kroll referred to a ‘nostalgic fanfare’ when talking about the opening song. Greenfield and Cohn did not make any references to this theme.

#### *Humour*

Irony is most frequently mentioned among reviews. Easthope used this as one of the three characteristics that define English humour.<sup>65</sup> Kroll, Cohn, Goldstein and Mann all made reoccurring comments on the mood of the album as ‘ironic’ and that irony is particularly present in certain songs such as ‘A Day in the Life’, ‘Sgt Pepper’s Lonely Hearts Club Band’, and ‘She’s Leaving Home’. Instead of using the word ironic, Clayton called the album “mocking”. Melly and Kroll both recognised satire in the applause at the end of the first track, Kroll for example said “the Beatles make raucous fun of their own colossal popularity.” About ‘Within You Without You’, Kroll noted that the Beatles “deflate their own seriousness

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<sup>65</sup> Easthope, 163.

as the song ends – to be followed by the sound of a crowd laughing” Lastly, Goldstein saw “elements of burlesque” in ‘When I’m Sixty-Four’. All of the critics with the exception of Greenfeeld recognised humour in the album and it featured in their reviews.

### *Rural and Urban*

Only Goldstein and Kroll referred to the rural and urban. Regarding the rural, Goldstein stressed the “fantasy retirement, overflowing with grandchildren, gardening and a modest cottage on the Isle of Wight” that McCartney sings about in ‘When I’m Sixty-Four’. This image of a cottage on the Isle of Wight with enough space for gardening is fitting with the rural. While Goldstein wrote about lyrics in this song, Kroll wrote about the music in ‘She’s Leaving Home’ and stated that “a string group makes genteel aspidistra sounds and a lugubrious cello wraps the soggy English weather around the listener’s ears.” The image of the English weather Kroll portrayed is typical of the country and also corresponds with the idea of the rural. As for the urban, Goldstein thought that in ‘A Day in the Life’, the Beatles captured a “glimpse of modern city life that is terrifying,” which is the opposite of the rural. It is a reference to the complicated city life that belongs to the urban. Kroll said the same track evokes “the catatonic metropolitan crown (like Eliot’s living dead flowing across London Bridge)”, a reference to T.S. Eliot’s *The Waste Land*, a poem that echoes Eliot’s dismay at the “social and civil decline in an uncertain and rapidly changing world.”<sup>66</sup> By referencing *The Waste Land*, Kroll associates ‘A Day in The Life’ with the urban as it reflects contemporary urban life.

### *English manners and/or traditions*

The reviewer’s mention of vaudeville or music hall is not to be interpreted solely as reference to the past. The fact that the genre originates in the past and served as a popular form of entertainment means it could be considered English tradition.<sup>67</sup> Furthermore, Melly and Kroll made several references to authors such as T.S Eliot and Lewis Carroll. Melly also referred to George Formby, as did Clayton, while Kroll made a reference to Chaplin. The reviewers use different people belonging to the English tradition in music, literature and theatre to illustrate their opinions. Lastly, Kroll wrote that the album is a “pulsating collage about mid-century

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<sup>66</sup> Paul Catherall, “The treatment of the theme of Urban Life in Twentieth Century Poetry,” 5 July 2013, <http://www.draigweb.co.uk/draigweb/the-treatment-of-the-theme-of-urban-life-in-twentieth-century-poetry/>

<sup>67</sup> Ruth Cherrington, “Clubs and the Music Hall Tradition,” *Club Historians*, 25 May 2009, [http://www.clubhistorians.co.uk/html/music\\_hall\\_tradition.html](http://www.clubhistorians.co.uk/html/music_hall_tradition.html).

manners and madness.” This makes him the only one talking about English manners, even though not in detail.

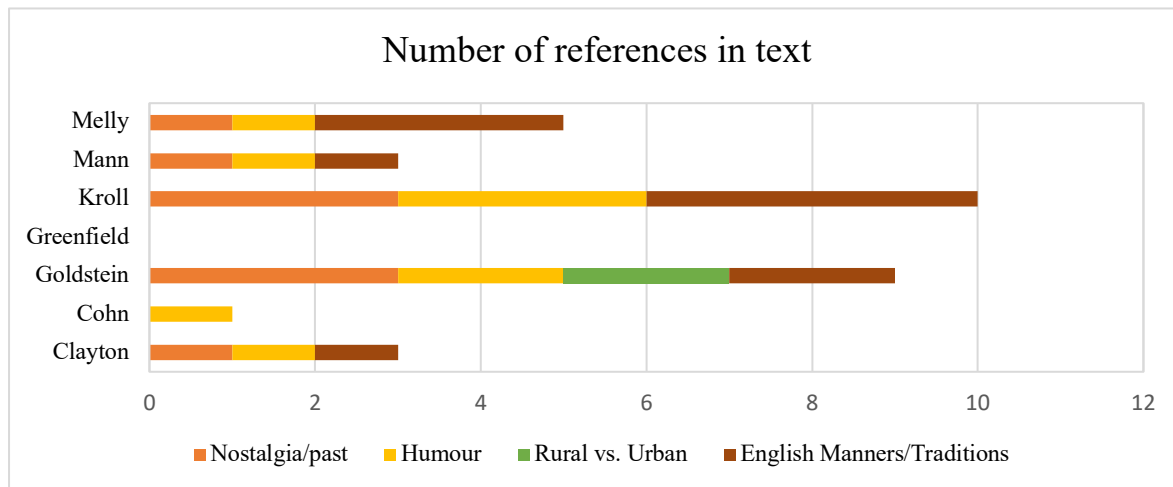


Fig.1: References in text to the themes per review.

*Average word count reviews: 580. Average number of Englishness mentioned per review: 4,4.*

### 2.1.2 Conclusion contemporary reviews

The English as well as American reviewers discussed the themes that were set out in the previous chapter. However, Englishness was not a prevalent feature. While describing the music and genres of the album, reviewers mentioned characteristics of Englishness without labelling them as such. It is interesting to notice that the American and English reviewers noticed the same characteristics of Englishness. Most often recognised was the genre of the music hall, a genre which served as “an homage to the English past and express the band’s ironic distance from this tradition.”<sup>68</sup> Perhaps unexpectedly, Kroll, an American, made the most references to the themes, whereas Greenfield, an Englishman, made none. Goldstein (American) and Kroll were in fact the only reviewers to comment on the rural. Maybe Goldstein was making fun of McCartney’s “fantasy retirement” in the Isle of Wight, or maybe foreigners find certain characteristics of Englishness more noticeable because these things are not usual for them. Overall, it can be concluded from these reviews that the contemporary reception did not revolve around Englishness and the reviewers did not find the album to be particularly English. However, the reviews did make clear that if themes of Englishness were represented, it was done so through the genres that the Beatles used, and the topics they sang about.

<sup>68</sup> Oded Heilbronner, “The Peculiarities of the Beatles,” *Cultural and Social History* 5, no. 1 (2008): 110, DOI: 10.2752/147800408X267274.

## 2.2 Present-day reviews

The themes of Englishness discussed in the first chapter were not predominantly featured in the 1967 reviews of *Sgt Pepper*. Yet, today this idea of *Sgt Pepper* and its relationship with Englishness still lingers. If it was not outstanding in 1967, it could be that in the 50 years since the album was released, views on the matter have developed. In June 2017, *Sgt Pepper*'s 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary was celebrated with the release of a Super Deluxe Edition of *Sgt Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band*. This 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary edition of the album was “newly mixed by Giles Martin and Sam Okell in stereo and 5.1 surround audio and expanded with early takes from the studio sessions, including no fewer than 34 previously unreleased recordings.”<sup>69</sup> When listening to the anniversary edition, the difference in clarity is immediately obvious. The guitars, drums, bass and vocals sound better and are enhanced through the use of modern technology.

Prior to the release of the album's anniversary edition, several articles were written that looked back on the time when *Sgt Pepper* was initially released. Like any other newly released album, this 2017 edition came with many reviews. It is noticeable that these present-day reviews all discuss at least the following two topics: the renewed sound and outtakes, and *Sgt Pepper*'s socio-historical context. In general, reviewers are satisfied with Giles Martin's remixing skills: how “Ringo's drums are noticeably amped up in this new mix giving [‘With a Little Help From My Friends’] more punch”, the “pimped guitars on Getting Better” and “McCartney's supremely agile bass playing.”<sup>70</sup> According to *Rolling Stone*, “the titular opening track finally jumps out of the speakers in a more centralized stereo: It's sharp, vivid, forward leaning – the sound of a big band doing very big things and not fucking around about it one bit.”<sup>71</sup> In short, “the new [edition] is more present and alive.”<sup>72</sup> With regards to the socio-historical context, many reviewers address the 1967's zeitgeist, referring to the Summer Of Love and 1960s subcultures. John Higgs for example says that “[*Sgt Pepper*] deals with the 60s generation gap,” but that “the album has more in common with the first great work of

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<sup>69</sup> “The Beatles Celebrate Anniversary of Sgt Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band with Special Edition Release,” *The Beatles*, <https://www.thebeatles.com/news/beatles-celebrate-anniversary-sgt-peppers-lonely-hearts-club-band-special-edition-release>.

<sup>70</sup> “The Beatles – Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band (Anniversary Super Deluxe Edition) Review,” *Long Live Vinyl*, accessed 31 May 2019, <https://www.longlivevinyl.net/beatles-sgt-pepper-anniversary-super-deluxe-review/>

<sup>71</sup> Mikal Gilmore, “Review: The Beatles' ‘Sgt. Pepper's’ Anniversary Editions Reveal Wonders,” *Rolling Stone*, 26 May 2017, <https://www.rollingstone.com/music/music-album-reviews/review-the-beatles-sgt-peppers-anniversary-editions-reveal-wonders-121092/>

<sup>72</sup> Steve Guttenberg, “The all-new Beatles 'Sgt. Pepper's' remix is a knockout,” *Cnet*, <https://www.cnet.com/news/knocked-out-by-the-all-new-beatles-sgt-pepper-remix/>

British Culture, Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, than [...] psychedelia.”<sup>73</sup> David Quantick, like other reviewers, claims that “rock music was changed by *Sgt Pepper*,”<sup>74</sup> and as a result, in Aaron Badgley's words: “the songs themselves are now part of our collective DNA.”<sup>75</sup>

### 2.2.1 Englishness in present-day reviews

I selected six reviews from different sources, all of which written upon the release of the anniversary edition. As in the previous chapter, about half of these are from American media and the other half from British media. In order to determine how Englishness is represented in the album, I will analyse these contemporary reviews and explore whether the reviewers made any comments about Englishness. Again, I will look for the various themes set out in Chapter 1, and how frequently reviewers discuss them. This will be set out in a graph format too (fig.2).

#### *Nostalgia and the Past*

All of the reviews look back on *Sgt Pepper* with a sense of nostalgia. They give a brief story of the Beatles and provide context on the world as it was in 1967. They emphasize a belief that *Sgt Pepper* changed the course of Rock 'n Roll and how it marked a new beginning in the ways that people wrote about pop music. The Summer of Love is not excluded from the reviews and Higgs even contrasts it to the 2017 Summer of Hate. He describes *Sgt pepper* as “a nostalgic retreat from our current woes.”<sup>76</sup> It is his understanding that the Beatles respectfully discussed topics prevalent to the time, such as the generation gap that came abundantly clear that decade, and that they really understood the “psychedelic lesson that we are all one.” Badgley and Higgs briefly touch upon the genre of music hall which is recognisable in the album and Higgs also considers the Indian music is coming from the “historic links between [England and India]”. In his review for *The Guardian*, Petridis writes how the album “sounds like a high-water mark of hippy-era optimism before disillusion set in. Their fans are lovely and the band want to take them home, life is getting better and a

<sup>73</sup> John Higgs, “Sgt Pepper at 50: How the Beatles masterpiece could unite Brexit Britain,” 31 May 2017, *Guardian*, <https://www.theguardian.com/music/musicblog/2017/may/31/sgt-pepper-at-50-could-the-beatles-masterpiece-unite-brexite-britain>.

<sup>74</sup> David Quantick, “The Beatles - Sgt. Pepper's...50th Anniversary Edition album review,” *Classic Rock*, 24 May 2017, <https://www.loudersound.com/reviews/the-beatles-sgt-peppers-50th-anniversary-edition-album-review>

<sup>75</sup> Aaron Badgley, “Spill Album Review: The Beatles – Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band – Anniversary Edition,” *Spill Magazine*, <https://dev-old.spillmagazine.com/spill-album-review-beatles-sgt-peppers-lonely-hearts-club-band-anniversary-edition/>

<sup>76</sup> John Higgs, “Sgt Pepper at 50: How the Beatles masterpiece could unite Brexit Britain,” *The Guardian*. 31 May 2017, <https://www.theguardian.com/music/musicblog/2017/may/31/sgt-pepper-at-50-could-the-beatles-masterpiece-unite-brexite-britain>

splendid time is guaranteed for all – including traffic wardens, worried parents of errant teens and cosy sexagenarian couples.”<sup>77</sup> Gallucci recognises that not the modern listener is not only encouraged to feel a sense of nostalgia for the period in which the album was released, but that the new tracks and outtakes on the album are nostalgic for the fans too. Now they can listen to the studio chatter and the progress of the songs being made.<sup>78</sup> Gilmore is the only reviewer commenting on the “Victorian brass-band military costumery on the cover,”<sup>79</sup> which is a reference to the past.

### *Humour*

Two out of the six reviews address humour. Higgs briefly mentions that the album is representative of the Beatles looking within themselves, after taking acid and seeing they were “part of the communities, music, culture, landscape and jokes that had nurtured them.” Petridis thinks there is a “certain hilarious bathos about the band’s original idea for the finale of *A Day in the Life*.” However, both of these comments are more about the Beatles or their work in progress as opposed to being about the album directly. Petridis noted the mockery in the burst of laughter at the titular’s track end.

### *Rural and Urban*

Higgs and Petridis are also the only two reviewers to address rural and urban life. Higgs makes a brief comment that the concluding track ‘*A Day in the Life*’ features shifts between the mundane and visionary. Higgs recognises the mundanity in the track, which has to do with the urban: it is John Lennon’s account of someone who is tired with modern life. Perhaps rather than reflect the urban directly, the lyrics are about Lennon’s own clash with the suburb-lifestyle and this might be the main point of reflection in the song.

### *English manners and/or traditions*

Of all the reviews, only Higgs writes about manners and traditions. First, he noticed that “there is a polite enquiry as to whether the parking warden Lovely Rita would take some tea.”

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<sup>77</sup> Alexis Petridis, “The Beatles: Sgt Pepper 50th Anniversary Edition review – peace, love and rock star ennui,” *The Guardian*, 25 May 2017, <https://www.theguardian.com/music/2017/may/25/beatles-sgt-pepper-50th-anniversary-edition-review-lonely-hearts-club-band-remix-album>.

<sup>78</sup> Michael Gallucci, “The Beatles, ‘Sgt. Pepper’s Lonely Hearts Club Band: Anniversary Edition’: Album Review,” *Ultimate Classic Rock*, 23 May 2017, <https://ultimateclassicrock.com/beatles-sgt-pepper-review-anniversary-edition/>.

<sup>79</sup> Mikal Gilmore, “Review: The Beatles’ ‘Sgt. Pepper’s’ Anniversary Editions Reveal Wonders,” 26 May 2017, <https://www.rollingstone.com/music/music-album-reviews/review-the-beatles-sgt-peppers-anniversary-editions-reveal-wonders-121092/>.

This concerns English manners, particularly politeness, something the English are very well known for. Moreover, drinking tea is a tradition that dates back to the 1800s.<sup>80</sup> Higgs' article is about how *Sgt Pepper* could unite Brexit Britain and draws an analogy between *Sgt Pepper* and *Canterbury Tales*. He states that both are "a series of stories told in a wide range of styles, from a courtly romance to a bawdy yarn"<sup>81</sup> and that together the stories have more impact than they do apart. The *Canterbury Tales* are seen as Chaucer's *magnus opus* and it is an important contribution to the English literature, which makes it fitting with this theme. Higgs thinks the album and *Canterbury Tales* are similar because they both are a collection of stories from different kinds of people which combine to make a beautiful entity. He recognises the need for inclusivity among all people, rather than the attitude of the current society which is all too quick to dismiss and divide: "Sgt Pepper shows us that expressing English identity, engaging with the wider world and not rejecting others are entirely compatible. Indeed, to fully achieve one is dependent on accepting the other."<sup>82</sup> Higgs lastly references the famous "Every summer we can rent a cottage on the Isle of Wight, if it's not too dear"<sup>83</sup> line of 'When I'm 64' and recognises the tradition in having such a holiday. The idea of escapism brought about by such a holiday, but also the precaution in financial matters is prevalent in the minds of English people specifically in the working class.

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<sup>80</sup> Elaine Lemm, "A Brief History and Types of British Tea," 7 May 2019, <https://www.thespruceeats.com/history-and-types-of-british-tea-435180>.

<sup>81</sup> John Higgs, "Sgt Pepper at 50: How the Beatles masterpiece could unite Brexit Britain," 31 May 2017, *Guardian*, <https://www.theguardian.com/music/musicblog/2017/may/31/sgt-pepper-at-50-could-the-beatles-masterpiece-unite-brexite-britain>

<sup>82</sup> John Higgs, "Sgt Pepper at 50: How the Beatles masterpiece could unite Brexit Britain," *The Guardian*. 31 May 2017, <https://www.theguardian.com/music/musicblog/2017/may/31/sgt-pepper-at-50-could-the-beatles-masterpiece-unite-brexite-britain>.

<sup>83</sup> The Beatles, "When I'm 64," released 26 May 1967, track 9 on *Sgt Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band*, EMI Studios, Vinyl LP.



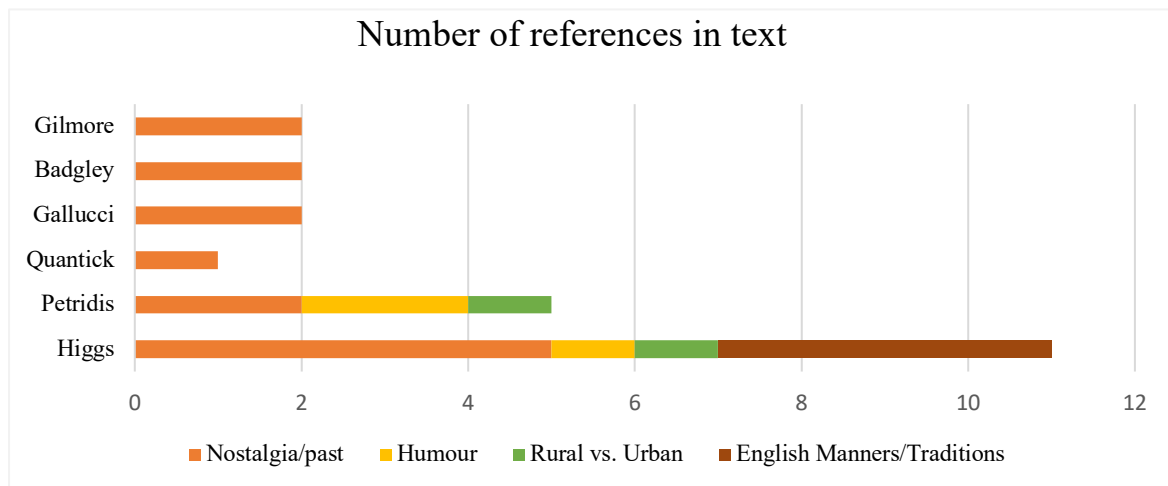


Fig. 2: References in text to the themes per review.

*Average word count reviews: 1160. Average number of Englishness mentioned per review: 2.*

### 2.2.2 Conclusion present-day reviews

What stands out is the fact that Higgs is the only reviewer to have covered all the themes of Englishness mentioned in Chapter 1. Petridis comes second with his discussion of three out of the four themes. It is notable that the only theme covered by the rest of the reviewers is nostalgia and the past. However, when nostalgia is explored, it does not directly relate to the album but instead to the socio-historical context in which the album was released. The reviewers look back on that period with a nostalgia and explore the album from a perspective more related to the Beatles and their story. In contrast, the 1967 reviewers looked album on a track-by-track basis. Again, it can be concluded that the reviews do not revolve around how Englishness is represented in *Sgt Pepper*, but that does not mean the album is not ‘English’ at all. The themes of Englishness are touched upon and are especially prominent in Higg’s review, who connects the album with Brexit and healing a divided culture: “Fixing a Hole tells us that we can roll up our sleeves and fix things that are broken. Getting Better shows us that we can be optimistic, even when the future looks bleak. Within You Without You tells us to look inwards and understand who we are. But this can only be achieved, the album reminds us, With a Little Help from My Friends.”<sup>84</sup>

<sup>84</sup> John Higgs, “Sgt Pepper at 50: How the Beatles masterpiece could unite Brexit Britain,” 31 May 2017, *Guardian*, <https://www.theguardian.com/music/musicblog/2017/may/31/sgt-pepper-at-50-could-the-beatles-masterpiece-unite-brexit-britain>

## “Lend Me Your Ears”<sup>85</sup>

### Chapter 3: Englishness in the lyrics

The songs on *Sgt Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band* are very diverse and the different genres and sounds in the songs did not escape the attention of reviewers. The lyrics were a topic of discussion as well, but only to a certain extent. This chapter intends to elaborate on the lyrics and analyse how Englishness is reflected in them. Although the Beatles have often said that their lyrics were rather random with no particular implicit meanings, it might just be this randomness that makes their lyrics brilliant. The scope of this thesis unfortunately does not allow me to analyse all of the songs. I have therefore selected four songs from the album which I believe illustrate most English characteristics accurately: ‘Fixing a Hole’, ‘When I’m Sixty-Four’, ‘Good Morning, Good Morning’, and ‘A Day in the Life’.

Although it might be expected that there are many scholarly articles on the lyrics of *Sgt Pepper*, the opposite is true. It is rather difficult to find articles on this topic. There are magazines and amateur music bloggers that interpret the lyrics, but it seems these sources have overthought the way they view the lyrics to such an extent that they have brought what they believe to be true into existence. One example may be the assumption that ‘Fixing a Hole’ is about McCartney fixing his Scottish farmhouse, but this was not the case. McCartney is aware of this interpretation and remarked: “It was much later that I ever got round fixing the roof on the Scottish farm, I never did any of that till I met Linda.”<sup>86</sup> I will not look into the stories of the songs in great detail, rather, I will investigate how the themes from Chapter 1 are represented in the lyrics. I will analyse the songs individually to see which themes are present and how. This will also be set out in a graph (fig. 3). Finally, I will present my conclusions.

*Sgt Pepper* has been labelled a drug album many times. The BBC banned a few songs, most famously ‘A Day in the Life’ (for the line “I’d love to turn you on”) for drug references. People speculated that almost all of the songs contained drug references, which the Beatles then denied.<sup>87</sup> Even if these references were not deliberate, it should be recognised that the Beatles were in fact part of the Summer of Love, drug and psychedelia culture: “in the end, the Beatles were aiming for invention. Hallucinogens may have been an influence, but so were ambitions of freedom and experimentalism – ideals that were central to the momentum

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<sup>85</sup> The Beatles, “With A Little Help From My Friends,” recorded March 1967, track 2 on *Sgt Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band*, EMI Studios, Vinyl LP.

<sup>86</sup> Barry Miles, *Many Years From Now*, (London: Secker & Warburg, 1997), 315.

<sup>87</sup> The Beatles, *Anthology*, (London: Cassel & Co, 2000), 247.

of the 1960s; The nature of that moment was to push for new possibilities.<sup>88</sup> The album captures the spirit of that time. Additionally, the Beatles are part of a culture associated with the themes nostalgia and past, the rural and urban, humour and manners and traditions, which formed their own cultural mindset. This mindset may have subconsciously influenced their songs. It is unlikely that the Beatles intended to write a specifically nostalgic or humorous song, but that does not mean these themes are not included. The themes are part of the cultural mindset to which the Beatles belonged.

### 3.1 Englishness in the lyrics

Putting aside the idea that *Sgt Pepper* is a drug album, I intend to explore how Englishness is reflected in the next four songs using the themes established in Chapter 1. The complete lyrics of these songs can be found in the appendix.

#### 3.1.1 'Fixing a Hole'

This song was mostly written by McCartney and the lyrics were inspired by his desire for (personal) freedom. He had grown tired of being told what to do by other people. In his biography, McCartney told Barry Miles what the song was about: “wanting to be free enough to let my mind wander, let myself be artistic, let myself be free enough to let my mind wander, let myself be artistic, let myself not sneer at avant-garde things. It was the idea of me being on my own now, able to do what I want.”<sup>89</sup> This is especially reflected in the lines:

I'm filling the cracks that ran through the door  
And kept my mind from wandering  
Where it will go.<sup>90</sup>

He is fixing the hole and the crack in his door. In doing so, he is essentially fixing everything that allows people to interfere with his thoughts and wishes. He is taking more hold of his life and shutting out a society that had jostled him about for much of his earlier career.

Additionally, McCartney had a history of being accommodating to fans who came to his door. He greeted them and sometimes even let them in. In a way, this eventually escalated and there

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<sup>88</sup> Mikal Gilmore, “Inside the Making of ‘Sgt. Pepper’,” *Rolling Stone*, 1 June 2017, <https://www.rollingstone.com/music/music-features/inside-the-making-of-sgt-pepper-125417/>.

<sup>89</sup> Miles, 314.

<sup>90</sup> The Beatles, “Fixing a Hole,” recorded February 1967, track 5 on *Sgt Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band*, EMI Studios, Vinyl LP.

were obsessive fans “who would set up camp outside McCartney’s home and hope to be let inside,”<sup>91</sup> which is reflected in the following lines:

See the people standing there who disagree and never win  
And wonder why they don’t get in my door  
and  
Silly people run around, they worry me  
And never ask me why they don’t get past my door.<sup>92</sup>

The song fits in with the urban and the rural for McCartney is retreating to his house to calm down and escape from life’s hurriedness.

I’m taking the time for a number of things that weren’t important yesterday  
And I still go.<sup>93</sup>

It fits in with the rural lifestyle because the pace of life he is choosing for is much slower. McCartney chooses the rural over the urban.

### 3.1.2 ‘When I’m Sixty-Four’

McCartney wrote this song back in the Liverpool days. It was used as a filler during their performances in case the electronics did not work. He later revived the song for *Sgt Pepper*, as it came to mind when his father turned 64 in 1966.<sup>94</sup> He was mostly fond of the song, but it sounded too vaudevillian. Therefore, he added and changed some lines to “put the tongue very firmly in cheek.”<sup>95</sup> The song echoes all of the themes of Englishness from Chapter 1. It channels nostalgia and the past because the song is “typical of the mid-Sixties taste for pastiches of pre-war English pop”<sup>96</sup> and the lyrics deal with a person thinking about his future when he is 64. When McCartney’s father turned 64, McCartney might have looked back on the days (with nostalgia) remembering the song and reviving it. Furthermore, it fits in with the theme of humour because McCartney wanted “cod lines to take the sting out of it”, which can be heard in the lines:

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<sup>91</sup> Bryan Wawzenek, “Paul McCartney Praises Pot, Slams Fans On ‘Fixing A Hole’: The Story Behind Every ‘Sgt. Pepper’ Song,” *Ultimate Classic Rock*, 22 May 2017, <https://ultimateclassicrock.com/beatles-fixing-a-hole/>.

<sup>92</sup> The Beatles, “Fixing a Hole”.

<sup>93</sup> The Beatles, “Fixing a Hole”.

<sup>94</sup> Ian MacDonald, *Revolution in the Head*, (Croydon: CPI Group, 2005) 220.

<sup>95</sup> Quoted in Miles, 319.

<sup>96</sup> MacDonald, 220.

**Will you still feed me?** When I'm 64.<sup>97</sup>

which to him was *Goon Show* humour.<sup>98</sup> Most present is the theme of the rural and urban. It mirrors the rural way of life and the lyrics sketch an image of a little house with a nice garden to work in amidst the English countryside:

You can knit a sweater by the fireside, Sunday morning go for a ride  
Doing a garden, digging the weeds, who could ask for more?  
and  
Every summer we can rent a cottage in the Isle of Wight, if it's not to dear.<sup>99</sup>

Lastly, the song fits in with the theme of manners and traditions for the song displays typical things of English suburban life.<sup>100</sup> The man would often assume duties such as gardening and electric maintenance while the woman would attend her household chores and hobbies (knitting). McCartney's question "Who could ask for more?" implies feeling content at the prospect of marital union among the countryside and perhaps suggest a life of small pleasures which is a general aspiration for the English working classes. The previous lines as well as the next lines reflect this:

I could be handy mending a fuse, when your lights have gone  
and  
Send me a postcard drop me a line, stating point of view.<sup>101</sup>

The Beatles were known to express this family-based lifestyle.<sup>102</sup> The song also fits in with this theme because politeness is present in the song. For example in the line:

Yours sincerely, wasting away.<sup>103</sup>

It is typical and polite in English to end a letter (or email) with a closing like this. Despite the protagonist of this song ageing quickly while waiting for the response to his question, he still

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<sup>97</sup> The Beatles, "When I'm 64," released 26 May 1967, track 9 on *Sgt Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band*, EMI Studios, Vinyl LP.

<sup>98</sup> Miles, 319.

<sup>99</sup> The Beatles, "When I'm 64".

<sup>100</sup> Lee Brooks et al. *Mad Dogs & Englishness, Popular Music and English Identities*, (London: Bloomsbury, 2017)

<sup>101</sup> The Beatles, "When I'm 64".

<sup>102</sup> Oded Heilbronner, "The Peculiarities of the Beatles," *Cultural and Social History* 5, no. 1 (2008): 108, DOI: 10.2752/147800408X267274

<sup>103</sup> The Beatles, "When I'm 64".

maintains the politeness the English are famed for. The song is expressive of widely shared notions of Englishness and encompasses all the themes from Chapter 1.

### 3.1.3 'Good Morning Good Morning'

'Good Morning Good Morning' was born out of Lennon's habit of working with the television on in the background. Its chorus and title were inspired by a Kellogg's TV commercial and a few of the lyrics are inspired by the English sitcom *Meet the Wife*.<sup>104</sup> Lennon was spending his days bored at his Weybridge house and started writing about everyday domestic life:

Going to work don't want to go feeling low down  
 Heading for home you start to roam then you're in town  
 Everybody knows there's nothing doing  
 Everything is closed it's like a ruin<sup>105</sup>

The lyrics makes Lennon's dislike for city life abundantly clear and how he felt trapped in suburbia.<sup>106</sup> This fits in well with the theme of the rural and urban. The protagonist in the song, allegedly Lennon himself, is bored with the same dull routine of everyday life.

According to *Rolling Stone*, "it's a rare active moment in a song packed with boredom that borders on nihilism. The word "nothing" appears eight times in the two-minute, 41-second track, and each verse ends with the assertion that the narrator has nothing to say, "but it's OK."<sup>107</sup> The song displays negativity and "daily claustrophobia"<sup>108</sup>:

Nothing to do to save his life.<sup>109</sup>

This line for example shows this boredom in the suburbs caused apathy and nothing bothers him anymore. He feels so stuck in daily routine that nothing matters anymore and he gets sarcastic, which fits in with the theme humour:

Somebody needs to know the time, **glad that I'm here**.<sup>110</sup>

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<sup>104</sup> MacDonald, 235.

<sup>105</sup> The Beatles, "Good Morning Good Morning," recorded February and March 1967, track 11 on *Sgt Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band*, EMI Studios, Vinyl LP.

<sup>106</sup> Jordan Runtagh, "Beatles' 'Sgt. Pepper' at 50: How a Corn Flakes Ad Inspired 'Good Morning Good Morning'," *Rolling Stone*, 30 May 2017, <https://www.rollingstone.com/music/music-features/beatles-sgt-pepper-at-50-how-a-corn-flakes-ad-inspired-good-morning-good-morning-127336/>

<sup>107</sup> Ibid.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid.

<sup>109</sup> The Beatles, "Good Morning Good Morning".

<sup>110</sup> The Beatles, "Good Morning Good Morning".

However, there is a glimmer of hope.

You go to a show, you hope she goes.<sup>111</sup>

Commentators have thought that this is a reference to Lennon's future wife Yoko, and "though it's pure speculation (and likely that she hadn't captured his imagination just yet), Lennon's involvement with Ono meant that his days adrift in a sea of domesticity at Kenwood were numbered."<sup>112</sup> In addition to the urban, the theme of manners and traditions is briefly touched upon in the song as well, which for example can be found in the line:

It's time for tea and meet the wife.<sup>113</sup>

Drinking tea is an English tradition that dates back to the 1800s,<sup>114</sup> and *Meet the Wife* was on the BBC for three years during the 1960s.

### 3.1.4 'A Day in the Life'

This is arguably the most interesting track of the album. First of all, the song fits in with the theme of the rural versus the urban, for this is a "song not of disillusionment with life itself but the disenchantment with the limits of mundane perception, [it] depicts the 'real world' as an unlightened construct that reduces, depresses, and ultimately destroys."<sup>115</sup> The song not only depicts the dullness of the urban life, it also emerged as a consequence of it. By simply reading the *Daily Mail*, Lennon came up with a large portion of the song. The paper's stories about Tara Browne who was involved in a car crash, and the 4,000 holes in the road in Blackburn, Lancashire inspired the verses of the song. Lennon's own part in the film *How I Won The War*, further inspired him to write the verse about the English army winning the war.<sup>116</sup> This sense of routine in the urban life is enforced with McCartney's middle-eight:

Woke up, fell out of bed  
Dragged a comb across my head,

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<sup>111</sup> The Beatles, "Good Morning Good Morning".

<sup>112</sup> Jordan Runtagh, "Beatles' 'Sgt. Pepper' at 50: How a Corn Flakes Ad Inspired 'Good Morning Good Morning'," *Rolling Stone*, 30 May 2017, <https://www.rollingstone.com/music/music-features/beatles-sgt-pepper-at-50-how-a-corn-flakes-ad-inspired-good-morning-good-morning-127336/>

<sup>113</sup> The Beatles, "Good Morning Good Morning".

<sup>114</sup> Elaine Lemm, "A Brief History and Types of British Tea," 7 May 2019, <https://www.thespruceeats.com/history-and-types-of-british-tea-435180>

<sup>115</sup> MacDonald, 229.

<sup>116</sup> MacDonald, 230.

Found my way downstairs and drank a cup,  
Looking back, I noticed I was late.

Found my coat and grabbed my hat,  
Made the bus in seconds flat,  
Found my way upstairs and had a smoke,  
And somebody spoke and I went in to a dream<sup>117</sup>

McCartney somewhat dismisses his contribution as “a little party piece”<sup>118</sup> but it really displays the routine in waking up, quickly getting ready to catch the bus where it was still allowed to smoke upstairs, before slipping into a daydream. The lyrics might initially seem rather simple, merely depicting a mundane life, but the song’s weary sound could be argued to serve as satire because it “contrasts a series of tragic or absurd events with a deceptively sweet melody, (...) the lyrics end in absurdity and poetic condemnation of what some elements of our culture have chosen to recognize as value.”<sup>119</sup> This makes ‘A Day in the Life’ a rather sarcastic song, which makes it fitting with the theme of humour. It seems to encourage the listener to re-evaluate their priorities in light of more pressing societal issues, even if it means momentarily halting the rigmarole of their cyclical daily lives. Thirdly, the reference to the war,

The English army had just won the war,  
A crowd of people turned away,<sup>120</sup>

is a reference to World War II, which fits in with the theme of the past and nostalgia. When the album was released, the war had happened twenty years earlier. It was still fresh in the minds of many listeners, and working class cities such as the Beatles’ hometown Liverpool had still not rebuilt fully by the 1960s. The song also fits in with this theme because in this description of daily life there is a certain feeling of nostalgia. The world today can only be compared to the past. In his description of daily life in this song, Lennon expresses dismay at the dull mundane routine. This is fitting with nostalgia because there is an underlying feeling that in the past everything was better. Overall, Lennon’s many lyrical references serve to sketch a typical English image. He sings of the “House of Lords”, “English army”,

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<sup>117</sup> The Beatles, “A Day in the Life.”

<sup>118</sup> The Beatles, 247.

<sup>119</sup> Steven Carter, “The Beatles and Freshman English,” *College Composition and Communication* 20, no. 3 (1969): 230, [https://www-jstor-org.ru.idm.oclc.org/stable/pdf/354135.pdf?ab\\_segments=0%2Fdefault-2%2Fcontrol&refreqid=search%3A2f90a2a382a62d0c1622df080e82e192](https://www-jstor-org.ru.idm.oclc.org/stable/pdf/354135.pdf?ab_segments=0%2Fdefault-2%2Fcontrol&refreqid=search%3A2f90a2a382a62d0c1622df080e82e192).

<sup>120</sup> The Beatles, “A Day in the Life.”



“Blackburn Lancashire” and the “Albert Hall”. This together with McCartney’s middle-eight make up a song that encapsulates impressions of English cultural life and therefore fits in with manners and traditions.

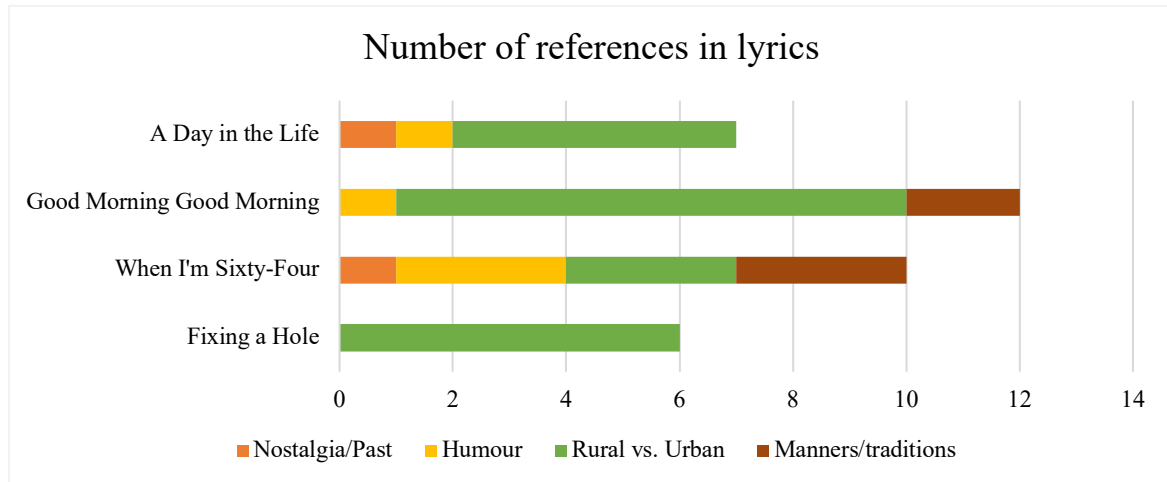


Fig. 3: References in lyrics to the themes per song.

*Average word count lyrics: 197,5. Average number of Englishness mentioned per song: 5.*

### 3.2 Conclusion

I chose to analyse ‘Fixing a Hole’, ‘When I’m Sixty-Four’, ‘Good Morning Good Morning’ and ‘A Day in the Life’ expecting that of all the tracks on the album, these four songs were the most reflective of the themes set out in chapter one. After analysing the four songs, it may be concluded that Englishness is indeed represented in each of them. “When I’m Sixty-Four” is the only song to include all of the themes, but it is ‘Good Morning Good Morning’ which references the themes the most. Like ‘Good Morning Good Morning’, ‘A Day in the Life’ includes three of the four themes. ‘Fixing a Hole’ only discusses one theme. The theme that is reoccurring in all of the songs is the theme of the rural and urban. Both the rural and urban are represented: half of the songs include references to the rural landscape or rural lifestyle, the other half include references to the urban landscape or lifestyle. It stands out that the rural is mostly seen in a positive light. It is understood to be a place where you can retreat and spend self-enriching leisure time. The description of the urban opposes this. In the urban, everything is monotonous and trivial but such a lifestyle is portrayed by the band in a negative light. The songs imply people are captured in that lifestyle, rather than free. Both ‘When I’m Sixty-Four’ and ‘Good Morning Good Morning’ contain elements of the theme humour. It is notable that portrayal of this theme may also be linked to the theme of the rural and urban. ‘When I’m Sixty-Four’ is a positive song which poses a bright outlook on the future and the

humour in this song is intended to be funny and tongue in cheek. 'Good Morning Good Morning', a song about the monotonousness of urban life, instead uses humour to create a sarcastic tone. As for the theme of manners and tradition, the references are mostly regarding drinking tea and politeness. This does not come as a surprise since the English are famous for both of these things. The songs' portrayal of this theme only emphasises this stereotype more and puts it firmly in the category of Englishness. 'When I'm Sixty-Four' and 'A Day in the Life' are the only two songs to deal with the theme of nostalgia and the past. However, the way in which both songs do so are different. While 'When I'm Sixty-Four' is more a product of looking back at the past (to the Liverpool days and when McCartney wrote the song), 'A Day in the Life' has more striking underlying sense of nostalgia.

It is therefore indisputable that the lyrics of *Sgt Pepper* represent Englishness and their discussion of the different themes of Chapter 1 serve as evidence for this. Englishness is mostly reflected through the theme of the rural and urban.

## We hope you have enjoyed the show...<sup>121</sup>

### Conclusion

The aim of this research was to identify how Englishness is represented in *Sgt Lonely Hearts Club Band*. After analysing contemporary reviews and present-day reviews along with the lyrics, it can be concluded that Englishness is represented in the album through the themes that I set out in the first chapter: nostalgia and the past, humour, rural versus the urban, and manners and traditions. There is also a clear contrast to be perceived between the views of contemporary reviewers and that of reviewers in the present day. Contemporary reviewers focussed on exploration of individual songs and genres, whereas modern reviewers looked at the initial album's production process and Giles Martin's new technological interpretation instead. Contemporary reviewers were not always as positive about the Beatles or the album as opposed to the present-day reviewers who had nothing negative to say about the Beatles or the album. This shift may be attributed to the somewhat sacred status the Beatles have achieved in the last fifty years. The Beatles are widely known as one of the most successful (if not *the* most successful) bands in music history. It has therefore become almost impossible to be negative about the band without at least acknowledging their ability to enchant the globe and motivate a generation.

The 1967 reviews cover the themes established in Chapter 1 most, and so it seems that Englishness is most present in these reviews than the ones written in the present-day. This is because they look at the album on a track-by-track basis and widely discuss the genres and music styles. They do also discuss the lyrics, but to a lesser extent. Although the present-day reviews mostly explore the new mix and the story behind *Sgt Pepper*, there are elements of Englishness that can be recognised in these reviews as well. None of the reviews revolve solely around Englishness and *Sgt Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band* and it is purely unintentional when the reviewers do cover the themes in their reviews. The reviewers pointed out what they liked or noticed, which I subsequently identified as Englishness. From the lyrics it can be concluded that all of the themes of Englishness were discussed and multiple references can be found back in the songs. The theme of the rural and urban was represented the most.

These results are partly in line with my hypothesis, namely that Englishness will be present in the reviews and lyrics, but that they do not revolve around Englishness. There were

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<sup>121</sup> The Beatles, "Sgt Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band (Reprise)," Recorded April 1967, track 12 on *Sgt Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band*, EMI Studios, Vinyl LP.

a few examples of songs or reviews which discussed one theme of Englishness, or hardly any at all. At the same time, there were reviews and songs that considered all of the themes. Contradictory to my expectations, I found the reviews of 1967 discussed more elements of Englishness than the present-day reviews. However as my hypothesis suggested it was the lyrics rather than the reviews which included more elements of Englishness.

While these findings might be a step on the way to researching Englishness and *Sgt Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band*, further research needs to be done to determine the relationship between national identity and popular music. This, too, is relevant to the topic. Also, while my thesis looked at *Sgt Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band* and the Beatles, I only analysed four of the album's songs in the last chapter. To be able to fully determine how Englishness is represented in *Sgt Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band*, it is necessary to analyse the rest of the songs. I was also only able to retrieve seven reviews from 1967. It would help further research to find more reviews to develop a broader picture of what reviewers generally thought back in 1967. Further research may also attempt to research Englishness in more depth to find more themes which can be used to research Englishness in *Sgt Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band*. Lastly, it could be interesting for further research to study how Englishness is represented in other albums by the Beatles, to find out if there is a similar outcome as with *Sgt Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band*, or if there would be a notable difference.

With this thesis I attempted to provide further insight into the relationship between Englishness and the Beatles, by studying how Englishness is represented in *Sgt Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band*. Although the album does not revolve around Englishness, different aspects of Englishness are definitely present in the album. Englishness is represented in *Sgt Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band* through different themes of Englishness: nostalgia and the past, humour, the rural and urban, and manners and traditions. Although the themes are not dominantly present, at the core of the album is the Beatles' English background. We hear about stories of runaway girls, we experience a Victorian fair, we can imagine digging up the weeds at the Isle of Wight cottages and listen to lyrics inspired by children's literature. "On *Sgt Pepper* we have Bishopsgate, the Isle of Wight, Blackburn, the House of Lords, the Albert

Hall;”<sup>122</sup> and other different aspects of Englishness can be recognised in *Sgt Pepper’s Lonely Hearts Club Band*, and a “splendid time is guaranteed for all.”<sup>123</sup>

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<sup>122</sup> Ian Inglis, *The Beatles, Popular Music and Society: A Thousand Voices*, (London: Palgrave MacMillan, 2000), 89.

<sup>123</sup> The Beatles, “Sgt Pepper’s Lonely Hearts Club Band (Reprise),” Recorded April 1967, track 12 on *Sgt Pepper’s Lonely Hearts Club Band*, EMI Studios, Vinyl LP.

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## APPENDIX

### 1. Fixing a Hole

Released 1 June 1967

Label: Parlophone

Writers: Lennon-McCartney

Producer: George Martin

I'm fixing a hole where the rain gets in,  
And stops my mind from wandering  
Where it will go.

I'm filling the cracks that ran through the door,  
And kept my mind from wandering  
Where it will go.

And it really doesn't matter  
If I'm wrong, I'm right  
Where I belong, I'm right  
Where I belong.

See the people standing there  
Who disagree and never win  
And wonder why they don't get in my door.

I'm painting the room in a colorful way,  
And when my mind is wandering  
There I will go.

Ooh ooh ooh ah. Hey hey hey

And it really doesn't matter  
If I'm wrong, I'm right  
Where I belong, I'm right  
Where I belong.

Silly people run around,  
Who worry me and never ask me  
Why they don't get past my door.

I'm taking the time for a number of things,  
That weren't important yesterday  
And I still go.

I'm fixing a hole where the rain gets in,  
And stops my mind from wandering  
Where it will go,  
Where it will go.

## 2. When I'm Sixty-Four

Released 1 June 1967

Label: Parlophone

Writers: Lennon-McCartney

Producer: George Martin

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? Ooh

You'll be older too.  
Ah, 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?

Ev'ry 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 forevermore.  
Will you still need me, will you still feed me,  
When I'm sixty four? Ho!

### **3. Good Morning, Good Morning**

Released 1 June 1967

Label: Parlophone

Writers: Lennon-McCartney

Producer: George Martin

Nothing to do to save his life call his wife in  
Nothing to say but what a day how's your boy been  
Nothing to do it's up to you  
I've got nothing to say but it's O.K.

Good morning, good morning, good morning...

Going to work don't want to go feeling low down  
Heading for home you start to roam then you're in town  
Everybody knows there's nothing doing  
Everything is closed it's like a ruin  
Everyone you see is half asleep.  
And you're on your own you're in the street.

After a while you start to smile now you feel cool.  
Then you decide to take a walk by the old school.  
Nothing had changed it's still the same  
I've got nothing to say but it's O.K.

Good morning, good morning, good morning...

People running round it's five o'clock.  
Everywhere in town it's getting dark.  
Everyone you see is full of life.  
It's time for tea and meet the wife.

Somebody needs to know the time, glad that I'm here.  
Watching the skirts you start to flirt now you're in gear.  
Go to a show you hope she goes.  
I've got nothing to say but it's O.K.

Good morning, good morning, good morning.

#### 4. A Day in the Life

Released 1 June 1967

Label: Parlophone

Writers: Lennon-McCartney

Producer: George Martin

I read the news today, oh boy.  
About a lucky man who made the grade.  
And though the news was rather sad,  
Well, I just had to laugh  
I saw the photograph

He blew his mind out in a car;  
He didn't notice that the lights had changed.  
A crowd of people stood and stared,  
They'd seen his face before,  
Nobody was really sure if he was from the House of Lords.

I saw a film today, oh boy;  
The English army had just won the war.  
A crowd of people turned away,  
But I just had to look,  
Having read the book

I'd love to turn you on.

Woke up, fell out of bed,  
dragged a comb across my head.  
Found my way downstairs and drank a cup,  
and looking up, I noticed I was late.

Found my coat and grabbed my hat  
Made the bus in seconds flat.  
Found my way upstairs and had a smoke.  
And somebody spoke and I went into a dream.

Ah I read the news today, oh boy,  
Four thousand holes in Blackburn, Lancashire  
And though the holes were rather small,  
They had to count them all  
Now they know how many holes it takes to fill the Albert Hall.

I'd love to turn you on.