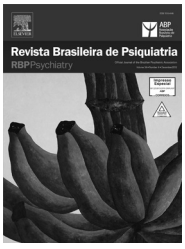
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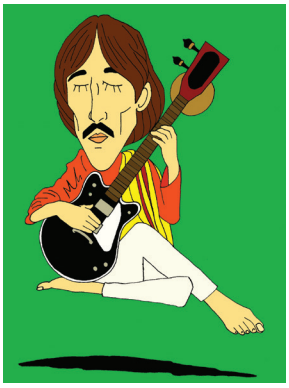
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Psychiatry and the arts

George Harrison's inner light



George Harold Harrison was part of the world's most influential music alchemy of all time. The introspective Beatle was responsible for a musical revolution by merging rock with Indian sonorous spices. The big shift from the rocker rebel to the mystic guitarist and composer was influenced by psychedelic drugs (such as LSD) in the mid sixties. LSD is associated to mystic "tours"[1] as George expressed in his biography: "Out of the LSD madness (and there were a few horrors) there came a few 'zaps'. It made me laugh. I'd never thought about, couldn't even say the word 'God'. It embarrassed me, but it was so strange, GOD, and it washed away all these fears and doubts and little things that hang you up"; "I suppose having LSD was like somebody catapulting me out into space".[2] George experienced ineffability, a subjective state of mind that cannot be expressed in words, that is a singular feature of mystic experiences:[3] "Sometimes you just want to yell about God because it's right there, but the moment you try and explain it, it' like rabbiting".[2] At the same time, the unique and contradictory mystical elements are best described through music.[3] Harrison's transcendental sounds can be heard in songs like *Norwegian Wood, The Inner Light, Love you too*, and lyrics that express the contact with God and self devotion such as *My Sweet Lord* and *Give me Love*.

Psychedelic drugs are frequently associated with psychiatric disorders and it is well known the deleterious effects of LSD in other eminent musicians, such as Brian Wilson, Arnaldo Baptista and Syd Barrett.[4] Mystical experiences are observed in many neuropsychiatric conditions such as schizophrenia, mania, epilepsy and drug intoxication (LSD, ayahuasca). Break down of self boundaries can be part of schizophrenia-like symptoms observed in psychotic disorders and LSD intoxication.[5] Interestingly, LSD was used as an experimental model of psychosis to induce transient florid perceptual distortions.[5] Hallucinogenic properties of LSD involve the serotonergic system, mainly via 5-HT2 receptor agonistic effect, and this finding led to the serotonin hypothesis in schizophrenia.[5]

On the other hand, religious and mystical faculties evoked by the use of psychedelic drugs, are related to peaceful, transcendental, musical inspiration and creativity. Even in the absence of drugs, through spirituality and a more tolerant lifestyle, it is possible to have positive experiences of some self dissolution into "a complete whole" or a "universal consciousness".[3] For example, the song *Within you Without You* was inspired by a meditational state. *I Me Mine* is another song composed by Harrison that criticizes the inflated egos, as he argued that the renunciation of egocentrism brings the opportunity to achieve a spiritual state of mind and experience divine feelings.

As a rock guru, George Harrison (Figure 1) taught that music can be a unique language of tolerance and comprehension to people in different cultures and with various religious beliefs. George's passing completes a decade but his guitar is gently weeping through all those years ago.

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Figure 1 was drawn by the first author, GNMO, using ink and paper. Then it was scanned, colored and edited with the advice of a professional artist, Dario Velasco.

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