

Idolatry and Sin in Love Songs

by [Kenneth Francis](#) (July 2022)



Audio DNA, Peter Max, 1967

Human history is the long terrible story of Man trying to find something other than God which will make him happy.—C.S. Lewis

With the word 'Sin' in the title of this essay, I'm assuming this essay will only appeal to my Christian readers. But I'm also hoping that people of other faiths or world views might ponder or agree with the message of my article. There's nothing like a little gentle persuasion in spreading the Word (Logos), even if it puts 'a stone in someone's shoe'. And C.S.

Lewis, metaphorically, certainly put a lot of stones in a lot of shoes.

To begin, many music lovers might not be aware that some of the words in the greatest love songs ever written are infused with idolatry. I'm not referring to standard love songs void of worshiping the love interest of a man or woman. It's when they deify their subjects of desire, I believe that in certain cases criticism is justified.

Some love lyrics are intentionally idolatry, while others are innocently written with a passion to create a beautiful song. There are also lyrics that are blatantly vulgar or sinful. Unfortunately, for the devout Christian, many of these songs are classics. One of my all-time *guilty* pleasures, in the real meaning of the adjective, is 'Me and Mrs Jones,' a stunningly seductive love song about adultery, sung in 1972 by the late, great soul-singer, Billy Paul.

In the *Financial Times* (April 17, 2015), Ludovic Hunter-Tilney wrote: "'Me and Mrs Jones, we got a thing going on,' Paul sang in a beautifully sultry tone. 'We both know that it's wrong, but it's much too strong to let it go now.' Tinkling piano, strings and a sighing saxophone made the extramarital liaison sound the very height of sophistication. Never has the Seventh Commandment been broken so smoothly."

As for the music industry that regularly breaks the First Commandment: One would have to be incredibly naïve or blind to not notice how diabolically possessed this hellhole of debauchery has become. Almost every gig or music video is accompanied by satanic symbolism and raw sexual exhibitionism. It's difficult to know when exactly this begun but The Beatles were a good candidate for the musical 'Big Bang' that set the ball rolling and created some dark elements amongst fellow musicians and fans that, over a span of almost 60 years, has continued to this day.

Whether these bands were created Psy-Ops, is unclear, but many conspiracy theorists, whose past predictions have almost all come true, believe lots of groups were manufactured to brainwash their fans in order to break-up the nuclear family, emasculate men, sexualise society, and breed disdain for Christianity; the perfect agenda for State control over the dumbed-down masses singing along to 'Sympathy for the Devil' and 'Losing My Religion.'

As for the Beatles' lyrics in the albums that followed *Rubber Soul* in the early to mid-1960s, such music continued the journey down the secular 'rabbit hole', combined with morally good lyrics to keep their image wholesome by sugar-coating the negative content. For example: The Godless 'Eleanor Rigby's' lyrics say, "no one can save, all the lonely people." Really? Not even Christ? What a dire, hopeless line of despair to include in a song.

Then, by 1968 on *The Beatles* 'white' album, McCartney sang: 'Why don't we do it in the road?' Within five years, The Beatles went from 'I Want to Hold Your Hand', to why don't we have sex on the road, as "nobody will be watching us"? Raw 'noble-savage' sentiments much closer to animal behavior than civilized Man with respect for God.

Regarding disrespect for God, let's not forget the lyrics in Elton John's 1971 classic hit, 'Tiny Dancer': "... Jesus freaks out on the street/Handing tickets out for God." At the time of its release, some radio stations banned this song, due to the blasphemous opening lines of the second verse, written by Elton John's lyricist, Bernie Taupin.

But it's not only blatantly blasphemous lyrics in songs. Some lyrics or symbolism, possibly innocuous, slip through the net of our consciousness. (As an aside: Most of us are familiar with the ubiquitous one-eye Pagan imagery in the pop industry, which goes back decades. Such early examples can be seen, amongst many other groups, on some Beatles, Walker Brothers,

and Doors' album covers. Today, it's everywhere.



**with
the
beatles**

mono



The Walker Brothers

If You Could Hear Me Now





It's difficult to fully ascertain what the one-eye represents in the music industry, as there are many meanings for it from ancient times. Some close observers of cults believe when you hide one eye, you effectively block half of your vision. They believe that, in symbolic terms, you become half-blind to the truth. By hiding one eye, celebrities symbolically 'sacrifice' a vital part of their being for temporary material gain, thus, 'selling their soul.' Whether this is true or not, it's certainly the subject of an entire essay.)

But back to lyrics: Frontman singer of The Walker Brothers, the late Scott Walker, was a humble but enigmatic recluse who wrote and produced very disturbing, avant-garde material when he left the group. But I want to focus on a song, from a purely theological perspective, that he sang in 1966 while with the 'Brothers': 'The Sun Ain't Gonna Shine Anymore.'

This song is a popular music masterpiece, one of the greatest love songs of all time. It is about a man who is spellbound by an ex-lover. However, and this is where idolatry creeps in, he elevates this woman to the status of a goddess. He implies that, without her, he's going to commit suicide ("... I can't go on ..."). Really? Not even Christ can save him? His fixation and craving for this woman have blinded him spiritually, when his priority should be his primary relationship with Jesus, because with Him, you'll never be "without love."

But the life of the lonely character of this song, outside of pursuing his Ex, is empty ("Emptiness is a place you're in"). And she has the power to metaphorically cloud his tearful vision from the sun and stop the moon from rising in the sky (I thought only God could do that).

See how subtle and powerful the lyrics are, ripe for entering the subconscious listener's mind? And the fact that the song has an incredible melody, sung by a teen pop icon with an amazing voice, makes it all the more seductive. As for the lyricist/composer(s): No disrespect to the talented duo Bob Crewe and Bob Gaudio, as it's unlikely idolatry lyrics were on their minds when they crafted this sumptuous number-one hit during the cusp of the 'Summer of Love.'

But theological interpretations aside: What about the atheist who says such dramatic love songs can be secularist and don't need to prioritise God before the human love interest? In that case, the secularist must be consistent with his Naturalistic, non-theistic world view.

In such a world, Naturalism can't present an adequate account of love. Scientifically/biologically, such behaviour is the result of atoms bumping into one another in the brain of an evolved, hairless ape. And what ape would crave another creature's affections—or sing about them so passionately, for that matter? According to atheism, sensory experiences to the brain aren't "about" anything, they're just input/output circuits; there are no "thoughts about love," thus, poignant lamentations in the mind are illusory.

It seems the atheist would be bereft of any phenomenological meaning (the method by which the observer examines the data without trying to provide an explanation of them). He would be at the mercy of the raw physical material of the universe as perceived through microscopes, telescopes and laboratory chemical observations: A great organised network of numerous molecules in motion, enzymes, and massive objects and spheres orbiting stars.

More: This is where it gets bizarre, if God's creation is reduced to Darwinian, Naturalistic grammar: The lyrics of the song's chorus would read something like this: *"The nuclear fusion aint' gonna radiate light anymore/The earth's natural satelllite aint gonna rise in the celestial sphere/The secreted liquid from lacrimal glands are always aerosoling your visual organs/When you're without a chemical reaction in the brain."*

Doesn't have the same romantic ring to it, does it? See original lyrics below in brackets.

*(The sun ain't gonna shine anymore
The moon ain't gonna rise in the sky
The tears are always clouding your eyes
When you're without love)*

In an interview with LifeSiteNews (June 17), Archbishop Vigano said: "... What has the much-celebrated movement of Romanticism taught us, if not that reason must yield to feeling and that

the will cannot govern the passions, that 'the heart is not commanded,' while in fact the opposite is true?"

Maybe I'm over-analysing all this and sometimes a 'cigar is just a cigar,' but one can't deny the lyrics are focused *primarily* and *exclusively* on the love of a flawed, sinful, imperfect human, and not love for a perfect God. It's almost like this wreck of a jilted man's soul can only be saved through the love of his former girlfriend. His extreme idealisation of her has emasculated him and made him weak. But his desperation is nothing compared to the love interest in Barry Ryan's 1968 hit-song 'Eloise':

*You know I'm on my knees yeh
I said please
You're all I want, so hear my prayer
My prayer
My Eloise is like the stars that please the night
The sun that makes the day
That lights the way
And when the star goes by
I hold it in my hands and cry
Her love was mine
You know my sun will shine.*

If you replace the word 'Eloise' in this song with 'God', it makes more sense. But it's not just sad, desperate men who crave the ultimate love of women in these over-dramatic love songs. Consider this lady below who would be better off being a follower of Christ instead of a fallen man. In 1963, Little Peggy March sung, "I Will Follow Him":

*I will follow him, follow him
Wherever he may go,
And near him,
I always will be,
For nothing can keep me away,
He is my destiny . . .*

*I love him, I love him, I love him,
And where he goes, I'll follow, I'll follow, I'll follow.*

According to the Bible, worshiping Man before God is not compatible with Christianity: 'Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshiped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.' (Romans: KJ Bible)

That's not to say all love songs should be about God, but consider the power and beauty of the lyrics in the hymn 'Oh Holy Night.' This song could never refer to a human being, as it would sound delusionary, over-the-top worship-mania. But when referring to God, it makes so much sense. The same goes for most, if not all, Christian hymns. And it's not just Christians like me who feel this way about certain love lyrics that border on idolatry and broken, worldly dreams.

The late rock-star, Frank Zappa, who was no friend of Christianity, said the following about romantic love lyrics: "I detest love lyrics. I think one of the causes of bad mental health in the United States is that people have been raised on 'love lyrics.' You're a young kid and you hear all those 'love lyrics,' right? Your parents aren't telling you the truth about love, and you can't really learn about it in school. You're getting the bulk of your 'behaviour norms' mapped out for you in the lyrics to some dumb f*****g love song. It's a subconscious training that creates desire for an imaginary situation which will never exist for you. People who buy into that mythology go through life feeling that they got cheated out of something."

A lot of what Zappa says is true. Although love for one another is a good thing if it's Holy, for many it's driven by carnal lust and possession of the other person. Worldly love is also finite, but the love of God is eternal.

Some of the greatest love songs don't deify the love interest in the lyrics or even mention the word love; I'm thinking here

about songs like Clifford T Ward's poignant 'Home Thoughts From Abroad': A song about a breezy, romantic chap who, in the form of writing a letter, expresses how he misses his ex-girlfriend. Also, in another example, if you listen to this beautiful song below sung by Cat Stevens (now known as Yusef Islam) and written by Christian author, Eleanor Farjeon, you'll find it hard not to be elevated to a higher place. And the word 'love' is not mentioned throughout the entire song. So, enjoy 'Morning Has Broken,' a song about *praising* the gifts God gave us but not idolizing them...

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